Greetings, Access to Justice Enthusiasts! Do forgive our tardiness as we spent yesterday observing the most solemn of all holidays: Presidents (or Presidents’ or even President’s) Day. At least, it was a solemn event until it was corrupted in the late 20th Century by Big Mattress.

The ATJ news in very, very short:

- new corporate funding supports CT legal aid fellowships
- championing tech solutions in legal aid service delivery
- Biglaw firm institutes required community service for all employees
- L.A. school district will provide some pro bono to students facing deportation
- clearing up how cy pres awards work
- the increasing professionalization of pro bono
- new ABA resolution supports counsel for unaccompanied immigrant kids
- mobile legal clinic rolling out in CT
- proposed bar dues increase to fund IA legal aid fails
- language access a problem in PA’s lower courts
- Legal Aid of NE has a new director
- NYT: “The Shame of America’s Family Detention Camps”
- LSC 2016 budget request: $486.9m
- NJ gov. takes heat for legal aid funding declines
- WI ATJ Commission newsletter
- materials from LSC’s Technology Initiative Grants conference
- a shout-out to OR banks w/ favorable IOLTA policies
- NC legislature’s new requirements of Legal Aid of NC
- in LA, preparing for immigration legal services scams
- NY State Bar pushing for legal self-help center in Albany
- HELP Legal Assistance merges with Iowa Legal Aid
- NY State Court ATJ Program 2014 report
- Arkansas ATJ Commission newsletter

The summaries:
- 2.15.15 – the Associated Press highlights LawyerCorps Connecticut, a corporate-funded initiative which will place one legal fellow with each of the state’s legal aid providers: “Some of the world’s largest companies have chipped in to help provide free legal help to poor people across Connecticut in what’s billed as the first program of its kind in the country.”
  - Happy to note that an ABA ATJ Expansion Grant helped LawyerCorps get off the ground. We think this model’s replicable elsewhere, and here’s what we did about it.
- 2.13.15 – a Dallas Morning News op-ed champions tech solutions in legal aid delivery: “Technology innovations can help legal aid organizations with client intake and initial screenings to increase the number of low-income clients they help each year. Technology can help reduce costs, delays and time in court…. However, the onus is not and cannot simply be on legal aid centers themselves. Those who fund nonprofit organizations must recognize the importance of designating a certain portion of those dollars for technology — whether that means updated office equipment, new software or the development of entirely new apps.”
- 2.11.15 – “Hogan Lovells has put in place a new broad-reaching policy that will require each of the firm’s more than 5,000 employees in about 25 countries to devote 25 hours per year to community service. Employees will be able to count the 25 hours as part of their workday…with the expectation that the approximately 2,500 lawyers who work at the firm will spend their time on pro bono legal services. While mandatory or highly encouraged pro bono work at Am Law 100 firms is hardly unique, Hogan Lovells’ requirement that nonlawyers participate appears to be the first of its kind.” (American Lawyer)
- 2.11.15 – “The L.A. Times reports that the L.A. Unified School District approved a plan to allow its in-house lawyers do pro bono work on behalf of some immigrant students: “Staff attorneys
with the Los Angeles Unified School District will be allowed to voluntarily provide free legal services to unaccompanied minors who live within the district and are facing the threat of deportation….”

- 2.9.15 – clarifying the law governing cy pres awards. **Writing in the National Law Journal,** Public Justice’s chairman boils things down: “The basic rules for the use of cy pres awards are clear:

  ▪ First, cy pres awards should not be used when the funds recovered from the defendants can be effectively delivered to the class members….

  ▪ Second, when the funds cannot be delivered to some or all of the class members, cy pres awards should be used to indirectly benefit them, consistent with the goals of the underlying case….

  ▪ Third, if a cy pres distribution that indirectly benefits the class members is not possible (because no recipient that “fits” can be found), the money should be distributed to other nonprofits, like legal services, that benefit the public….

  ▪ Fourth, the court should not choose the cy pres recipients…. [Class counsel should.]

  ▪ Fifth, when cy pres awards are proper, full attorney fees for class counsel may be based on them….

  ▪ Finally, appropriate cy pres awards are legal and constitutional. [Ed. note: Damn right!]

- 2.9.15 – Appearing originally in Law360, the Association of Pro Bono Counsel (APBC0) makes the case for the increased professionalization of pro bono legal services as a means of narrowing the justice gap. **(Download from APBCo).**

- 2.9.15 – “Mary Ryan, co-chair of the ABA’s Working Group on Unaccompanied Minor Immigrants advocated…” [successfully for the ABA House of Delegates’] “…passage of Resolution 113, supporting appointed counsel for unaccompanied children and special training for state and other courts that hear related cases.” (ABA Journal) Mary also chairs the ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono & Public Service. Mary is aces.

- 2.9.15 – the Hartford, CT based Center for Children’s Advocacy is rolling out legal clinic on wheels to reach homeless youth. The Center “secured about $50,000 worth of grants and donations to buy the van and get it retrofitted.” (Hartford Courant)

- 2.8.15 -“A proposal to add a $100 annual licensing fee for lawyers saw major pushback from attorneys across the state, so the Iowa Supreme Court rejected it. Iowa Legal Aid had asked the court to adopt the fee to support civil legal assistance to help low-income Iowans.” (The Gazette)

- 2.6.15 – “Pennsylvania’s [magisterial district courts] lack consistency in providing interpreters and other services to people whose first language isn’t English, a Temple University law school survey shows. About a third of the courts sometimes rely on friends and family during legal proceedings as translators for defendants and litigants with limited English skills. Half don’t make certified interpreters available in civil cases. And nearly two-thirds expect someone to bring an English-speaking friend or relative to court to help them navigate and understand basic court services.” (Here’s Morning Call coverage, and here’s the report.)

- 2.5.15 – “Legal Aid of Nebraska’s (LAN) Board of Directors announced its next Executive Director, Thomas A. ‘Mick’ Wagoner on Thursday morning. He began his leadership position on February 2, 2015 in the Omaha office…. Mick’s career background is military. He served as a Marine Corps judge advocate from 1997 until his military retirement in 2013.” (WOWT news site)

- 2.4.15 – a New York Times Magazine feature looked at the work of pro bono lawyers advocating for families living in poor conditions in a New Mexico immigration detention camp: “The Shame of America’s Family Detention Camps.”
2.2.15 – LSC submitted its FY 2016 budget request to Congress. Total request: $486.9m, including:
- “$451.3 million for basic field grants that fund the delivery of” civil legal aid
- “$1 million for student loan repayment assistance to legal aid lawyers,
- $19.5 million for management and grants oversight…
- $5.1 million for the Office of Inspector General.”
- $5 million for the Technology Initiative Grant program
- $5 million for the Pro Bono Innovation Fund

2.2.15 – On the left-leaning Huffington Post, a blog post minces no words – not one of ’em – in criticizing NJ Governor Chris Christie for budget choices that have greatly defunded civil legal aid even as the governor has voiced support for the working poor: “New Jersey Legal Services now rejects 9 out of every 10 low-income people who request legal assistance…. Over the first three years of his Governorship, Christie cut legal aid from $30 million to $15 million. In the aftermath, New Jersey Legal Services laid off hundreds of attorneys and began focusing on only ‘the most serious or life-threatening cases’.”

February, 2015 – the Wisconsin ATJ Commission’s February newsletter.
February, 2015 – hey look it’s a treasure trove of materials from last month’s the LSC Technology Initiative Grant conference.

1.28.15 – From Central Oregon, a shout-out to banks supporting IOLTA funding in rough times: “In 2007, IOLTA earnings paid the Oregon Law Foundation some $3.6 million, a number that declined to less than $1 million by 2012…. Some 20 banks around the state, including Bank of the Cascades, have stepped up to help out. These ‘leadership’ banks pay a minimum of 0.7 percent on IOLTA accounts and agree not to charge service fees on them… Other leadership banks in Central Oregon include Wells Fargo, Community, Columbia and Umpqua banks.” (Bend Bulletineditorial)

1.24.15 – in North Carolina, an op-ed singles out the legislature for singling out Legal Aid of North Carolina in a recent funding bill: “I was disappointed…when late in the last legislative session…North Carolina’s already-modest support for legal aid was cut substantially…. [W]hen poring through…the budget bill, I found something that took me aback. Beginning in October, ‘as a condition of continued funding,’ Legal Aid of North Carolina is required ‘to file a quarterly report to the chairs of the Appropriations Committees on cases filed (and providing) detailed information of investigations undertaken by their respective offices.’ The…report ‘shall include a list of site visits by legal aid personnel with sufficient information, even in the case of confidential (matters), to identify the nature of the visit and type of site visited’.” (News Observer)

1.20.15 – “President Barack Obama’s recent executive action on immigration could pave the way for several million undocumented immigrants to remain in the U.S. legally. And that has authorities bracing for a wave of scams targeting people seeking legal advice. Not only can immigrants lose thousands of dollars in such schemes, but they can also put themselves at greater risk of deportation.” (KQED)

1.19.15 – “The New York State Bar Association is seeking $5 million in state funding for the creation of a legal services center in Albany to enhance the availability of legal services to low income individuals. The…center could offer a unified intake system that could direct clients to an appropriate provider… The center also could offer legal service attorneys (including pro bono attorneys) office space to meet with clients and for training, computers and a library of legal resources. The Association’s proposal is supported by the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York, Empire Justice Center and the Legal Project, all of which are providers in the Capital District.” (NYSBA media release)
The office of HELP Legal Assistance has merged with Iowa Legal Aid. Iowa Legal Aid provides legal assistance throughout the state to low-income and senior clients in civil matters involving basic human needs. *(Quad-City Times)*

January, 2015 – it’s the New York State Court System Access to Justice Program’s *(a/k/a the good ol’ NYSCSATJP)* 2014 report, broken into five sections:
- Delivery of Pro Bono Legal Services
- Delivery of Legal Info and Assistance
- Delivery of Services for Persons with Diverse Needs
- Trainings and Presentations
- Recognition


*Author: Steve Grumm*