ABA ACTIVITIES

The CCVBS held a roundtable discussion on legal services for veterans at the 2013 ABA Midyear Meeting. “Serving Those Who Served” featured presentations on pro bono legal services by Terry Tottenham and Jo Ann Merica of Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans, integrating Family Law into the Veterans Court Model by Renato Izquieta of Santa Ana’s Combat Veterans Community Court, and defending veterans in criminal court by Brock Hunter. The program materials and video are available online at: http://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_services/homelessness_poverty.html

ABA Resource Center for Access to Justice Initiatives

The Resource Center hosted a conference call on initiatives serving veterans for Access to Justice Commission Chairs on March 28. Presenters discussed pro bono efforts, Veterans Treatment Courts, the use of SSVF for legal services, Statesidelegal.org, and the U.S. Depart of Justice Access to Justice Initiative. For more information, please contact Bob Echols at robert.echols@comcast.net or Steve Grumm at steven.grumm@americanbar.org.

ABA Commission on Law & Aging and Standing Committee on Legal Assistance to Military Personnel

David Godfrey of the Commission on Law & Aging and Jason Vail of LAMP are collecting resources for an online guide for caregivers of Wounded Warriors being developed by MOAA and made possible by the Dole Foundation. MOAA has drafted proposed table of contents, and hosted focus groups of caregivers to gather information on their needs. At this point the ABA is providing resources on a couple of selected topics. MOAA will review that information with a caregiver focus group and gather input for development of further resources. We will be calling on ABA Member and Staff experts on a variety of topics to provide resources for the site. For more information, please contact David Godfrey or Jason Vail at david.godfrey@americanbar.org or jason.vail@americanbar.org.

ABA Commission on Homelessness & Poverty

The Commission continues to provide technical assistance related to Veterans Treatment Courts, Homeless Courts, legal services at Stand Down events for homeless veterans (including Homeless Court at Stand Down), addressing child support issues for homeless veterans, expungement, the use of technology to provide legal services to veterans in remote areas, and pro bono legal services programs serving veterans. For more information, please contact Amy Horton-Newell at amy.hortonnewell@americanbar.org or (202) 662-1693.
The Commission’s Child Support Initiative for Homeless Veterans, a partnership with the VA and HHS, was listed in the 2012 Update to the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness as a promising practice. The pilot project launched in 2010 in a dozen cities across the country resulted in legal services to over 1,000 homeless Veterans and resolved outstanding child support issues that served as a barrier to employment and housing. The Commission continues to provide technical assistance to lawyers in communities seeking to launch a similar program in their jurisdiction. For more information, please contact Amy Horton-Newell at amy.hortonnewell@americanbar.org or (202) 662-1693.

The Commission will host a track of sessions at the upcoming National Coalition for Homeless Veterans Conference in DC at the end of May (please see details below under Upcoming Events). For more information, please contact Amy Horton-Newell at amy.hortonnewell@americanbar.org or (202) 662-1693.

The Commission will cosponsor the 5th Annual Veterans’ Legal Assistance Conference on June 7, 2013 at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law (please see details below under Upcoming Events). Contact Kiah Elmore at 410-837-9379 or kelmore@probonomd.org to register.

The Commission will host a training at San Diego’s acclaimed Stand Down for Homeless Veterans on July 12-14, 2013. Please join us in San Diego to observe the nation’s first Homeless Court Program for veterans as well as Child Support Court held on site during the three day event. Registration is limited to the first 20 participants. For more information, please contact Amy Horton-Newell at amy.hortonnewell@americanbar.org or (202) 662-1693.

ABA ADVOCACY

The March edition of the ABA Journal included the following report from the ABA Governmental Affairs Office – BABA urges increased funding for legal programs serving the military and veterans:

http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/aba_urges_increased_funding_for_legal_programs_servi
ng_the_military/

VETERANS TREATMENT COURTS

From Our Friends at Justice for Vets:

Last week, Congress approved an appropriations bill that will fund the government until September 30, 2013. While programs across the board were cut, Congress saw fit to provide a $4 million appropriation for Veterans Treatment Courts at the Department of Justice. This is the first time that Congress has approved federal funding specific to Veterans Treatment Courts. Justice For Vets and the National Association of Drug Court Professionals worked closely with Members of Congress to ensure that this
funding was included in the bill. The establishment of this appropriation is the foundation upon which we will build sustained support for Veterans Treatment Courts.

“This funding is the critical first step towards ensuring veterans across the country have the opportunity for treatment and restoration in a Veterans Treatment Court,” said Justice For Vets Director Matt Stiner. “This would not have been possible without the pioneers currently operating successful Veterans Treatment Court programs. Their dedication to service and commitment to aid those who served their country will leave an indelible mark on this nation.”

Want to get involved? There is currently another bill before Congress that would further fund Veterans Treatment Courts. Click here to read about the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act and send a letter to your Members of Congress asking them for their support.

**Uniform Law Commission Study Committee on Model Veterans Court Act**

The Study Committee will consider and make recommendations concerning the need for and feasibility of drafting a model act on veterans courts. For more information, please visit http://www.uniformlaws.org/Committee.aspx?title=Veterans Court Act.

**SAMHSA Grants Now Available for Veterans Treatment Courts**

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) is accepting applications for fiscal year (FY) 2013 Grants to Expand Substance Abuse Treatment in Adult, Juvenile, and Family Drug Courts. Veterans Treatment Courts are eligible to apply. Historically, turnout for this solicitation has been low so don’t miss this outstanding opportunity to fund your program.

Purpose: This program exists to expand and/or enhance substance abuse treatment services to addicted offenders. We encourage you to review the solicitation carefully as these grants can fund several different initiatives. In addition, consider that this grant can also be used to fund your team’s attendance at the inaugural Vet Court Con, December 2-5 in Washington, DC.

Deadline: April 19, 2013


**San Diego Veterans Treatment Review Calendar**

The San Diego Veterans Treatment Review Calendar celebrated its 2nd anniversary in February 2013 with 11 graduates to date, including the first 3 participants in California to receive restorative relief under
Penal Code 1170.9(h) with their cases being fully dismissed and their records sealed. For more information, please contact Steve Binder at steve.binder@sdcounty.ca.gov.

UPCOMING EVENTS

**ABA-NLADA Equal Justice Conference**

May 9-11, 2013 (May 8, pre-conferences)

Hyatt Regency St. Louis at the Arch

315 Chestnut Street

St. Louis, MO 63102

This conference is dedicated to meeting the educational needs of pro bono and civil legal aid attorneys and professionals who are committed to serve poor and low-income individuals in need of legal assistance. The Commission on Homelessness & Poverty is hosting a session on Veterans Treatment Courts: How Civil Justice Practitioners Can Powerfully Advance the Right to Counsel and Clients’ Rights. This session will be held on Thursday, May 9 at 1:30pm. Plans are underway to hold an information sharing and gathering session related to serving veterans along with some possible brainstorming around what pro bono initiatives exist to serve veterans around the U.S. and how we can better coordinate and collaborate. For more information about the session, please contact Cheryl Zalenski at cheryl.zalenski@americanbar.org. For more information about the conference, please visit [http://www.americanbar.org/calendar/2013/05/equal_justice_conference/general.html](http://www.americanbar.org/calendar/2013/05/equal_justice_conference/general.html).

**National Coalition for Homeless Veterans Annual Conference**

May 29-31, 2013

Washington, DC


The ABA Commission on Homelessness & Poverty is coordinating a track of sessions related to legal services for homeless veterans. The NCHV Annual Conference provides the nation’s most comprehensive source of training on homeless veteran services, programs, best practices, and resources for service providers and their partners in government, philanthropy, and the legal community. This year, the Annual Conference will focus on 5 tracks featuring the innovative, research-based practices from the service provider community that have had significant impacts on efforts to end homelessness among veterans by 2015.
• Legal Services: Removing Barriers: The legal track will focus on innovative programs around the country that help homeless and at-risk veterans to remove existing legal barriers to sustained housing, gainful employment, and independent living. Veteran Treatment Courts, Homeless Courts, and other services will be included.

• Federal Partners (leadership sessions): Leaders from the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Labor, and Housing and Urban Development will provide updates on critical programs, and progress in the Five-Year Plan, including the way forward to end veteran homelessness by 2015.

• Target Populations: Meeting Unique Needs: The target populations session track will showcase innovative programs from around the country that target specific populations of homeless and at-risk veterans. Focus populations will include: female veterans, OIF/OEF veterans, veterans with families, rural veterans, minority veterans, aging veterans, and veterans with communicable diseases.

• Housing Services and Philanthropy: This track will reveal ways to engage philanthropy in increasing available housing and services, as well as other housing programs. The VA Grant and Per Diem Program and HUD-VASH will be major topics in this track, including transition in place.

• Employment and Income: Sessions will focus on disability and other benefits available to veterans, and employment programs, with an emphasis on the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP). Learn where HVRP fits in the Five-Year Plan and how to partner with other agencies/programs to maximize the impact and results for each veteran served.

5th Annual Veterans’ Legal Assistance Conference

June 7, 2013, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, 500 W. Baltimore St., Baltimore, MD 21202

*Cosponsored by the ABA Commission on Homelessness & Poverty

Designed for law students, lawyers, veterans, policy makers and other service professionals, this conference will provide a forum for discussing critical issues facing our veterans. This year, the conference will cover topics such as VA claims processing delays, women in combat, and compliance with the Service Member’s Relief Act. The conference also includes a training for lawyers to represent veterans pro bono in claims for service-related disability benefits. This training qualifies for VA-certification credits. Contact Kiah Elmore at 410-837-9379 or kelmore@probonomd.org to register.

ABA Annual Meeting Convocation on the Legal Needs of Military Families and Veterans

2013 ABA Annual Meeting
Saturday, August 10, 2013, 2:00pm to 4:00pm
Cheryl I. Niro, Chair of the Board of Governors Program, Evaluation and Planning Committee, will facilitate the ABA Convocation on the Legal Needs of Military Families and Veterans to be held at the 2013 Annual Meeting in San Francisco on Saturday, August 10, 2013, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Coordinating Committee on Veterans Benefits & Service and the Standing Committee on Legal Assistance to Military Personnel will assist with coordinating the program. Invitations have been sent to the Chairs of all ABA entities asking for a representative to attend the convocation. For more information, please contact Laura Macias of the ABA Planning Office via email at Laura.Macias@americanbar.org or at (312) 988-5407.

RESOURCES

For Veterans Experiencing Homelessness:

Call the National Center for Homeless Veterans at 1-877-4AID-VET.

For Justice-Involved Veterans:

Contact your local Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist! The purpose of the Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) Program is to avoid the unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and extended incarceration among Veterans by ensuring that eligible justice-involved Veterans have timely access to VHA services as clinically indicated. Veterans' Justice Outreach Specialists are responsible for direct outreach, assessment, and case management for justice-involved Veterans in local courts and jails, and liaison with local justice system partners.

http://www.va.gov/homeless/vjo.asp

ABA Home Front: Legal resources for military families


ABA Military Pro Bono


Stateside Legal: Legal help for military members, veterans and their families

www.statesidelegal.org/findinghelp

***Please feel free to forward this update to your friends and colleagues.

Thank you for your advocacy on behalf of veterans, service members and their families!

Please do not hesitate to call upon the ABA Coordinating Committee on Veterans Benefits & Services for assistance; the ABA is happy to support your efforts!