

American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division *The Affiliate*

Subgrants: What, How, and Who

By Jaime Ackerman

On October 1, 2010, the 2011 subgrant application process opened. In 2010, approximately twenty-five affiliates across the country received valuable financial assistance to promote almost forty different programs. With support from the American Bar Association Fund for Justice and Education, the ABA YLD awards around \$25,000 in subgrants to help fund young lawyers organizations' programming. Subgrants for public service projects are awarded up to \$2,000 per project. Awards for bar leadership or member service projects will not exceed \$500 per subgrant.

Bar Leadership/Membership Service Awards:

Orientation to the Legal Community

This year, subgrants were awarded for six programs in the bar leadership and member services category. These programs offered opportunities for young lawyers to practice their trial advocacy skills, learn the ins and outs of their local legal community, and provide networking opportunities.

Jacksonville (Florida) Bar Association Young Lawyers Section

The Jacksonville (Florida) Bar Association Young Lawyers Section ("Jacksonville YLS") received a subgrant for its "Noon in June" program. On June 17, 2010, the Jacksonville YLS held its "Third Annual Noon in June" event. This program was designed in 2008 to give summer associates an orientation to the legal community in Jacksonville. Summer associates who attend this valuable program receive a guided tour of city hall, as well as local courthouses.

During lunch, attorneys and judges address the summer associates. Attendees then travel to the Bryan Simpson United States Courthouse, receive a tour of the courthouse, and a district court judge provides an overview of local federal court practice. Next, summer associates go to city hall. In addition to touring the facility, they meet with attorneys from the public defender's office and a chief assistant state's attorney. They also speak with city counsel members to learn how the local city government works.

Finally, attendees tour the offices of Jacksonville Area Legal Aid. An attorney with Legal Aid speaks to the group to give them an understanding of the services that they provide to the community.

Lawyers Association of Kansas City Young Lawyers Section

The Lawyers Association of Kansas City (Missouri) Young Lawyers Section ("Kansas City YLS") offers a similar program to its summer associates, law clerks, and young attorneys. The Kansas City YLS received a subgrant for its "Court Crawl" program. Like the program run in Jacksonville, Kansas City's Court Crawl provides young attorneys and future attorneys the chance to network with local judges and lawyers, while receiving a behind the scenes look at the local judiciary.

This year's event took place on June 24, 2010. Attendees received a tour of the city courthouse and enjoyed a welcome presentation from a judge at the courthouse. They then walked to the Missouri Court of Appeals, again receiving a tour of the courthouse and a judicial presentation. Attendees also received a tour of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Missouri. After the tour, they were addressed by Assistant United States Attorney Jane Brown, Steven Wolfe, law clerk to the Honorable Judge Smith, and finally, by U.S. District Court Judge Ortrie D. Smith.

Following the courthouse tours and judicial presentation, law clerks, summer associates, and young lawyers attended a reception with local attorneys and judges. Continuing legal education credits were available to all attendees.

Public Service Awards

In the public service category, subgrants were awarded for thirty-two programs across the country. These public service projects ranged from affiliates' implementation of the "Wills for Heroes" program and Law Day activities to efforts to eradicate problems with truancy and illiteracy. Other programs sought to provide meals to the homeless during the holidays or afford the public greater access to law clinics and legal advice hotlines. Despite the varied nature of the programs in the public service category, each project was enhanced by funds made available to affiliates through subgrants.

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The Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis (Missouri) Young Lawyers Division

The Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis Young Lawyers Division received subgrant funding for six of its programs: "Wills for Heroes," "Teens Speak Out," "Read Across America," an annual YLD family picnic, a trial advocacy competition, and its "Employment Connection" project.

"Read Across America" is a program designed to promote children's enjoyment of reading, as well as to celebrate Dr. Seuss's birthday. Law students and lawyers volunteer to go to elementary schools in the St. Louis City Public School District. They speak with students about being an attorney and read Dr. Seuss books to the classes.

"Teens Speak Out" provides local high school students the unique ability to create and present proposals for community change to a panel of community leaders. Each participating group of students receives a volunteer attorney coach who helps the students in the research and preparation of their proposals. Teams make a fifteen-minute presentation to the panel, answer questions from community leaders, and then have the opportunity to make concluding remarks about their proposals.

Northern Kentucky Bar Association Young Lawyers Section

In 2009, the Northern Kentucky Bar Association Young Lawyers Section began its "Truancy Mediation Project." In Kentucky, truancy is a criminal offense. Any child who is absent seven days in a calendar year can be referred for court intervention. The Truancy Mediation Project was designed as a joint effort with the John G. Carlisle Elementary School to address truancy issues.

The program attempts to address student needs and, through early intervention, prevent issues with truancy before they become real problems. Attorney volunteers provide counseling to kids with poor attendance. They attempt to determine why the child has problems coming to school, provide encouragement, and try to teach kids the importance of attending school.

Hawaii State Bar Association Young Lawyers Division

The Hawaii State Bar Association Young Lawyers Division received two subgrants. The first was for its Law Week activities. These activities included a pro bono rally, lunch seminars, social events, and free legal clinics held by young lawyers on Oahu, the Big Island, Maui, and Kauai.

The second subgrant was awarded for Hawaii's mock trial program. Any high school student in grades 9 through 12 is eligible to participate in the mock trial program. The mock trial case is released in the fall, giving teams approximately three months to prepare for the competition. The first rounds are conducted in January and February. Four teams are selected to compete in a state tournament at the Supreme Court Building on Oahu. The winner of this competition then goes on to represent Hawaii at the National High School Mock Trial Championship.

Each team receives an attorney advisor to help the students prepare their cases for the competition. Attorneys and judges volunteer to preside as judges over the mock trials and to evaluate the students. Participants in the mock trial competition are afforded a valuable opportunity to develop their public speaking skills, as well as their ability to think on their feet and gain a greater understanding of the legal system.

Federal Bar Association, New Orleans (Louisiana) Chapter, Young Lawyers Section

The Young Lawyers Section teamed with the Honorable Helen Berrigan, U.S. District Court Judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana, to take at-risk students from New Orleans schools on a tour of the Angola prison. Angola is the Louisiana state penitentiary and the largest maximum security prison in the country. Administrators from Hope Academy, Accelerated Academy, and Excel Academy selected students to participate in the Angola tour.

On February 23, 24, and 25, 2010, approximately ninety students were bused to the penitentiary. On arrival at the prison, an Angola guide came onto the bus to speak candidly to the students about life in prison. Students were able to take a walking tour through certain sections of the prison before meeting with inmates to continue the discussion about prison life.

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Maricopa County (Arizona) Bar Association Young Lawyers Division

In conjunction with its Committee on Domestic Violence, the Maricopa County Young Lawyers developed the Legal Assistance to Women in Shelters (LAWS) program. The LAWS program is designed to educate, inform, and provide resources to women in domestic violence shelters to better represent themselves in court. This program consists of three one-hour long programs taught by at least two attorney volunteers. To better prepare its volunteers, shortly before the program kicked off, a CLE program on the effective representation of domestic violence victims was offered.

The first program provides procedural information to the women, such as an overview of the courts, the appellate process, proper courtroom decorum, and practical information on how to file or respond to a complaint. Additional topics for subsequent seminars are geared toward the needs of the women at the shelters and can include an introduction to family law issues such as child support and custody, bankruptcy and foreclosure law, immigration, or the Violence Against Women Act. The LAWS program provides these seminars free of charge, and the sessions are designed to be informative, rather than free legal advice. Attendees receive handouts of the presentations and a list of resources.

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Does your affiliate have a public service or member service project that could benefit from an ABA YLD subgrant?

Information pertaining to the subgrant process is now available online at www.abanet.org/yld/awards/subgrants.

Applications for 2011 subgrants must be received at the ABA YLD office no later than March 1, 2011. Winners will be announced in May at the Spring Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. For additional information about ABA subgrants, please contact Renee Lugo, Program Associate, at lugo@staff.abanet.org or 312/988-5626.

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