

DIALOGUE

Spring/Summer 2013

VOL. 16, NO. 4

News and Perspectives from the ABA Division for Legal Services

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New Lawyer Inc(ubator) Program By Marion Smithberger and Jocelyn Armstrong

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2013 National Lawyer Referral Workshop
October 23–27, 2013 | Westin Peachtree Plaza | Atlanta, Georgia

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Charitable Giving Strategies for Bank Aligned Foundations By Thurman Smith

Let us acknowledge that raising money is not easy. Today's foundations face less than favorable economic conditions (including the woefully familiar scenario of low interest rates and lower returns in the equity markets) all while deluged with increased demands by an endless ebb of deserving philanthropies. [Read more...](#)

From the Chair... By Penina Lieber

In April, the Commission held its spring meeting in Albuquerque New Mexico. We were fortunate to be joined by members of the Center for Civic Values, the entity that administers Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA). Present were Michelle Giger, President and CEO; Anthony Gonzales, Treasurer and CFO; and Lynda Latta, Board Chair. [Read more...](#)

Grantee Spotlight:
Immigration Services and Beyond: Catholic Migration Services
By Robert McCreanor

On a Tuesday evening in the Woodside section of Queens, NY, hundreds of immigrants gather in the meeting space of a parish hall. Reflecting the unrivaled diversity of their city, they hail from dozens of different countries, ethnicities and religious backgrounds. [Read more...](#)

News and Notes

The Commission on IOLTA congratulates newly appointed IOLTA directors Melissa Flynn and Stephanie Libhart. [Read more...](#)

Pro Bono

Advancing Pro Bono through Access to Justice Commissions **By Steve Grumm, Director, ABA Resource Center for Access to Justice Initiatives**

Access to Justice Commissions are spearheading creative, and replicable, initiatives to engage all segments of the private bar in pro bono work that rewards lawyers while narrowing the justice gap. [Read more...](#)

From the Chair... **By Larry McDevitt**

The Pro Bono Committee is the principal entity charged with the missions of developing and expanding pro bono policies, programs, and representation throughout the United States. [Read more...](#)

News & Events

2013 ABA Pro Bono Publico Awards and Luncheon and the 2013 National Celebration of Pro Bono [Read more...](#)

LAMP

The ABA and MOAA: A Partnership to Support the Caregivers of the Military Wounded **By Jason Vail, Chief Counsel, ABA Standing Committee on Legal Assistance for Military Personnel**

With the military conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan of the past decade, the Standing Committee on Legal Assistance for Military Personnel (LAMP) has, in recent years, expanded the scope of its focus and work to support military attorneys not only through education and policy development—as it has traditionally done—but also by delivering programs that directly reach these attorneys' military family clients. [Read more...](#)

From the Chair... **By David G. Ehrhart, Brig Gen, USAF (Ret.)**

One of the greatest benefits of involvement with the Standing Committee on Legal Assistance for Military Personnel (LAMP) is that I, my fellow committee members, and our liaisons are all constantly reminded of the tremendous work done by military legal assistance attorneys both on bases here at home as well as locations around the world. [Read more...](#)

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By Marion Smithberger and Jocelyn Armstrong

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The Columbus Bar Association (CBA) created a fifteen month inc(ubator) program to help new lawyers (inclings) who wanted to establish a small or solo practice. While new attorneys may have the legal acumen to "hang their own shingle," they may not necessarily have the requisite business or management experience to start and maintain a law practice. The CBA recognizes this challenge and worked with the local legal community to develop a program designed to help ensure the success of these new lawyers. In April 2011, the CBA opened the doors of Columbus Bar inc, A Professional Development Center.¹ The CBA is currently the only bar association sponsor of an incubator program. Other incubator programs are sponsored by law schools of which the incubator program at CUNY is the longest operating program that we know of. There is at least one incubator program sponsored by a Legal Aid Society (The Legal Aid Society of Orange County in New York).

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The CBA program provides substantive law practice tips for the new lawyer and mentoring in an environment that provides an array of business resources: offices, equipment, mentors, special "101" level continuing legal education, training in best practices for law office management and specially designed networking opportunities to help new lawyers build a successful practice. The inc program accelerates the learning curve, reduces the false starts and minimizes the pain and danger of the more typical "trial and error" approach.

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A relatively stringent application process was implemented to ensure that applicants took this opportunity seriously. Applicants had to be admitted to practice in Ohio within the last two years. They were required to submit a business plan, including a marketing plan, a three-year budget, recommendation letters, and agree to undergo a background check.

After the applications were screened, the individuals were invited to a "mixer" of sorts, so a panel of interviewers could evaluate the applicants in person and determine how well the individuals might interact with one another. Thereafter, eight applicants were selected, required to undergo intense ethical training on the nuances of operating in this kind of program, and given their keys.

The CBA scheduled as much training as possible in the first two months because as the inclings' practices started to grow, their court schedules interfered with their participation in the training sessions. An important component of the program was the in-office mentor — a practicing lawyer and teacher who was winding down his own practice as he was preparing to retire. He was on site frequently giving easy access for the inclings to informally talk to him about their procedural and strategic questions.

The CBA supplemented the in-office mentor with a panel of lawyers who agreed to make themselves available on a timely basis to help answer procedural questions also.

Budget

Inasmuch as the development of Columbus Bar inc was somewhat of an

experiment, the CBA entered into the first year with a pilot program mindset, looking to donors and sponsors to help underwrite the expenses. The building landlord graciously donated the space for the first year (just one floor beneath the bar association offices). Lexis–Nexis donated case management and billing software and Affinity Consulting donated their IT services to build a compatible suite of programs for these individuals in a cloud based computing system for portability. The Columbus Bar Foundation made a \$50,000 grant to cover start–up expenses and the hiring of a part–time administrator and Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease, a local law firm, donated furniture. Willis of Ohio, the CBA's endorsed insurance broker, made a generous donation and helped us develop a cost–effective professional liability policy for individuals participating in the program. Program participants also receive a number of in–kind benefits, including a 50% reduction in their Lawyer Referral Service dues, free CLE, and access to a number of CBA benefits and services.

While the costs associated with the first year of the pilot program were relatively nominal, the total value of the program exceeds \$100,000. The costs are offset by the \$350 monthly program fee paid by the participants. The monthly fee helps defray overhead costs such as phones, copiers, and office supplies.

The Office Administrator

A part–time program administrator (a newly minted lawyer) was hired to help bring the program to fruition and manage the daily operations of the incubator program once launched. In addition to meeting the administrative needs of the participants, the administrator recruits and coordinates visiting mentors, develops educational opportunities, and organizes networking events designed to assist the new lawyers with developing a client base.

Newest Evolution

The CBA created inc Limited in 2013 to assist attorneys with 0–5 years practice experience who are launching or have already opened a new firm, as well as those who are interested in making a career transition. inc Limited participants receive the benefits of the traditional inc program with the exception of office space. The participation fee is only \$125 per month. This development allows the CBA help more new lawyers in a way that is cost effective for all involved.

Jocelyn Armstrong is the Administrator for the Columbus Bar Association inc Program and was admitted to the Ohio Bar in 2009.

Marion Smithberger is the Director of the CBA Lawyer Referral Service and the Columbus Bar Foundation Executive Director.

¹ In 2012, Columbus Bar inc was recognized by the American Bar Association's General Practice, Solo and Small Firm Division as a recipient of the Solo and Small Firm Project Award.

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From the Chair...

By John Norwine

Standing Committee on Lawyer Referral and Information Service

Time for an audit?

We all know that we have panel members out there who owe us fees for closed files or matters that were completed in the past. Now, they may have simply forgotten that it was an LRS case, they might believe it came from another source, they may have changed offices and left the file at their old office, or they might not have bothered to send in the proper fee. In all of these cases, we often need to remind them that we still have the case open in our files and that they need to close it out and send us whatever fee might be due.

In the spring of 2012 the Cincinnati Bar Association's LRS decided to conduct an audit of past cases that we showed as open on our books. We had not completed an audit since 2006 and we were long overdue. Based upon our current tight staffing in LRS, we determined to bring in an outside person to do most of the review and comb through court records. Our Lawyer Referral Director, Jamie Shiverdecker, was aware of a program through the University of Cincinnati entitled the "University of Cincinnati Federal Work–Study Program." Through this program we were able to hire a very bright and motivated graduate student for \$10 an hour, with the federal government paying 75% of the cost. She began work in June of 2012, finishing in December of 2012. During this period of time she spent about 350 hours on the audit, with that total including the time we spent to train her on our software and on how to search court records. We estimate that our other staff members spent close to 100 total hours on matters relating to this audit.

In doing a cost/benefit analysis of this effort we looked at our total employee expense and the total fees produced. We brought in \$28,993 to date in additional fees. We are still chasing after three panel members on cases, although these do not seem to be cases where large fees will be generated. In addition, we have referred several cases to a collection attorney and expect to file suit in one or two of these matters. The fact that my board authorized filing suit against LRS panel members surprised me a great deal, but their thinking is that if we require our other panel members to remit fees then we should not let others simply ignore us and not pay. Since we do not know the total fees we might be seeking from these attorneys, the suits will have to be in the form of declaratory judgment actions seeking an accounting from each attorney in addition to other relief. I am sure we will encounter some difficulties with these suits, but we are committed to going forward with them.

Lessons learned in all of this? First, we realized that some of our past paperwork in signing up attorneys for the LRS was incomplete. Some of our older forms were not clear, making it more difficult to use those as the basis for a lawsuit. Second, we knew we would make some of our panel members angry, and we did — particularly when we were asking them about referrals from many years ago. However, we had fewer upset panel members than we had anticipated, and I think our staff handled them well. Third, the audit has affected some of the panel member renewals this year.

I believe that some did not renew because they were upset that we were questioning them, or perhaps because they realized that we were going to be more diligent following up with them in the future. On the plus side, if they all realize that we will be more diligent in following up on the referrals we may not have to chase after as many attorneys in the future. Finally, we knew before our audit that we needed to review our old files much more often than we were doing — knowledge which was reinforced when we actually did the audit. We have instituted a new review system that we hope will obviate the need for future full-panel audits like this.

I recommend doing periodic audits — not only for the dollars produced, but also because they remind your panel members who do remit regularly that you are requiring this from all of their colleagues. We need to treat our panel members equally and this helps accomplish that goal too.

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October 23–27, 2013

Make plans to attend! Visit the [Workshop website](#) for hotel and transportation information. We hope to see you there!



Woodruff Park Waterfall
Downtown Atlanta

PHOTO CREDIT: Colin Jaccino

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IOLTA Feature

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Charitable Giving Strategies for Bank Aligned Foundations

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By Thurman Smith

Charitable Giving Strategies for Bank Aligned Foundations

Let us acknowledge that raising money is not easy. Today's foundations face less than favorable economic conditions (including the woefully familiar scenario of low interest rates and lower returns in the equity markets) all while deluged with increased demands by an endless ebb of deserving philanthropies. These organizations are lined up with palms exposed and colorfully printed brochures abundant with the needy asking poetically for more. In this environment, fundraising may seem even harder, and can be frustrating and disappointing. So if you are thinking about dropping this article, don't!

From the Chair

Grantee Spotlight

This article will address the disconnect between IOLTA programs and bank foundations and outline strategies one might consider when approaching a financial institution or its foundation for monetary support. You will find that many of the strategies noted herein also hold true when approaching non-bank organizations or foundations.

News and Notes

Pro Bono

Just remember that so much of the success achieved in developing relationships with funders lies in the following four principles:

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- How well one appeals to the heart and the mind of the person making the decision
- How well one is able to show an alignment of one's mission with that of the giver
- How well one times the ask to maximize success
- Knowing when to follow or break the rules

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The Formula for Winning

The formula for winning follows a plan shared by the most successful directors of fund development. The elements of the plan are: know your audience; align your ask with their mission mandates; differentiate your delivery from the pack; speak with facts rather than anecdote; maximize utilization of marketing mediums; adhere to form and deadlines; make it personal with the decision maker; build inside connections; know how to close.

Know Your Audience

Knowing your audience is considered one of the most important keys for success. Banks tend to allocate charitable giving based on how well a philanthropic organization aligns with the bank on the following (these may or may not be mutually exclusive):

- Charitable Mission
- Community Reinvestment Act Footprint
- Business & Branding Goals
- Civic Goals
- Employee Support Objectives

It is generally understood that no one bank source can provide capital for all of the charitable needs that exist in the universe of need. As such, a bank foundation may narrowly define its philanthropic focus area and likewise rationalize a concentration on fewer grant recipients. This specialization has

a corresponding aim to drive greater, more sustainable and measurable outcomes with fewer more reliable partners. Said another way, a bank may elect to focus on young children versus college students or might elect to focus on person's living with a physical disability versus person's living with Alzheimer's. Note that these are tough and emotional choices both for the bank and the applying organizations.

Align the Ask with the Bank's Mission Mandate

Banks are governed by the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), which holds financial institutions accountable for equitably serving the needs of the communities in its footprint. Many banks have created units that drive compliance with this regulation; one of the many ways compliance is achieved is through charitable giving in low to moderate income communities falling within the bank's CRA Assessment Area. Understanding your organization's physical location and understanding the physical location of the families serviced by your organization positions you to demonstrate CRA overlap. This alignment may broaden your appeal to the bank.

And Why Do You Deserve Our Support

Below is a sample argument showing how IOLTA programs align with the requirements of the Community Reinvestment Act:

No organization does what we do better than we do! We make legal representation, support and research accessible to families which might otherwise be left underserved. Our funds are disproportionately distributed in low to very low income communities and with low to very low income individuals. In recent years and with our help, the most underserved families have weathered the most difficult of economic downturns, preserved their homes and contested predatory lenders. With our help, other not-for-profit organizations have funded programs that have helped low income families access information and assistance needed to avoid foreclosures. In a layman's term, so much of what we do reflects what the Community Reinvestment Act asks of the nation's financial institutions. So much of what we do helps to make communities stronger. All of what we do helps to improve the lives of the underserved, and as such, a partnering of IOLTA strategies with bank run foundations would seem natural.

Maximize Utilization of Marketing Mediums

Sponsorship

Not all bank charitable monies are purely philanthropic. In fact, many banks will distinguish between charitable giving and sponsorships and may even have separate sources and processes for requesting the same. Sponsorships however have an implied "marketing" dimension, whereby the bank derives a marketing type benefit from participation in an activity.

Sponsorship could take the form of the bank's logo appearing on a gala brochure, or banners on a street post at a city marathon. It could be a table at a fund raiser. Because of the marketing implication, it is helpful for the charitable organization's Development Director to understand the bank's business and branding strategy.

This sponsorship information is not generally published and in many cases is fragmented, as different areas of the bank may have very different marketing and business engagement objectives. It is recommended that one looks at what the bank has done in the past. An effective way to look at this history is to utilize the internet and look at the types of organizations that the bank has given to in the past. Also consider looking at peer organizations to see which financial institutions have supported them.

Board of Directors, Trustees, Committee Members

Banks want to be great corporate citizens and may derive business or branding benefits by having their officers hold board, committee or trustee positions with civic organizations. This membership is often accompanied by the expectation that the bank will support that organization financially. You will see that there is often overlap between the board members of these organizations and yours.

Think of it in social media terms. Are you directly or indirectly connected to a decision maker? Typically, the bank's most senior officers are members of these boards and research into the boards on which senior leadership sit can help you navigate a financial institution and discern how connected you are to them. Likewise, one can obtain a sense for the types of philanthropies supported by that bank.

Bank Employees

Banks tend to support their employees by encouraging volunteerism and then financially supporting the organizations of which they are members. Consider the example of PNC Bank's "Grow Up Great" program; PNC employees receive up to 40 paid hours of work a year to volunteer in their communities. If the employee or a combination of employees serve 40 or more hours at a qualified organization (elementary schools, day care centers or organizations serving young children), that organization can receive up to \$3,000 in PNC grants.

Further, the employee may elect to provide a personal gift and receive a matching donation from the bank (up to \$2,500). The employee may also contribute to a bank sponsored United Way campaign and direct those funds to your organization. Aligning with or recruiting bank employees should be considered an important part of your strategy.

Differentiate your Delivery, Speak with Facts

As I shared in the opening, there are hundreds of organizations vying for a bank's limited resources. Success for your fund raising program will rely on the creativity and effectiveness of your ask. I suggest two points: 1) differentiate your delivery from the pack and 2) drive home your message with facts, not anecdotes.

Said another way, tell your story in such a way as to appeal to heart and back it up with facts, bigger numbers are generally better. Most foundations want to know that the funding will be material in impact.

Details that Make a Difference

After completing your due diligence and after crafting your story, the challenge is then to comply with the application process. It is not uncommon that a "form application" is required. Keep these forms and dates in mind. Understand what information is required and have the requisite attachments (financial statements, tax returns, W9's, board bios). With the many requests that banks receive, it is easy to dismiss the incomplete file.

Make it Personal

Though it may seem obvious, do not simply mail or email your request. Make every effort to deliver it personally and ideally in a face to face meeting. The application is not a drop shipment.

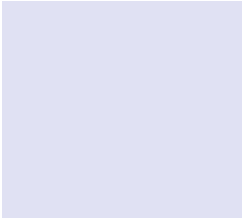
Connections and the Close

Identify bank employees, clients or prospects as advocates for your cause. In advance of the meeting, line up your advocates and if possible, obtain written endorsements from them.

Then close effectively by reinforcing how your cause aligns with the bank on all the important points discussed above. Ask for a timeline on the decision and clarify what else may be needed. Finally, agree to follow up on a specified date.

Conclusion

Remember, you are competing with many deserving causes that merit funding, but no organization does what you do as well as you do! The success you achieve in securing funding will reflect your ability to articulate the compelling value of the IOLTA mission and its good work. The need for programs funded by IOLTA are only likely to grow as families weather the still brisk currents of this financial crisis.



Thurman Smith is a Senior Vice President and head of Community Development for PNC Bank's Wisconsin–Illinois–St. Louis Region. He is a graduate of the Marshall School of Business at the University of Southern California and serves on the boards of more than a dozen community based organizations. He is also on the City of Chicago — 5 Year housing Plan Advisory Committee.

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From the Chair...

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Commission on Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts

In April, the Commission held its spring meeting in Albuquerque New Mexico. We were fortunate to be joined by members of the Center for Civic Values, the entity that administers Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA). Present were Michelle Giger, President and CEO; Anthony Gonzales, Treasurer and CFO; and Lynda Latta, Board Chair. We were also joined by Andrew J. Cloutier, President of the New Mexico State Bar, along with Chief Justice Petra Maes and the Hon. Sarah Singleton, Co-Chairs to the New Mexico Access to Justice Commission.

Our guests provided an opportunity to learn about IOLTA in New Mexico, as well as the work of the Access to Justice Commission, Judiciary and Bar. The members of the Commission and I were not surprised to hear that IOLTA income has remained at record lows. Though the access to justice community has continued to explore new strategies to supplement funding for legal services, the effort has been out-paced by the growing need for legal assistance.


Unfortunately, the report from New Mexico is one that resonates with many IOLTA programs – and has been a familiar theme over the past several years. In response, the IOLTA workshops are convening a forum to address the funding crisis, with a discussion of how IOLTA programs might engage more actively with private foundations to encourage them to fund legal aid. I was happy to learn that the Public Welfare Foundation and the Kresge Foundation are now advocating among their peers for this very outcome.

These Foundations have joined forces to publish a [brochure](#) urging the philanthropic community to partner with civil legal aid programs. They point to the powerful impact this collaboration can have on issues such as: affordable housing; domestic violence; education reform; and access to health. The publication emphasizes the importance of funding legal aid by stating that even minor legal problems can have a larger effect by tearing families apart and driving people further into poverty.

In addition to educating philanthropies on how they can make a difference through funding, the publication identifies IOLTA as a bridge between legal services and the philanthropic community. It describes IOLTA programs as 'experienced legal aid grant makers that can show philanthropies how their funding can impact lives of individuals and their communities.'

Mary McClymont, President of the Public Welfare Foundation, brought this message to the forefront through her [article](#) published in *the Chronicle of Philanthropy*. She writes that we are a country which prides itself on equal access to justice and, as such, addressing the growing need for legal assistance to the most needy should be a priority to grant makers. She continues to state that supporting civil legal aid "can give low-income people and communities an equal shot at the justice they deserve to meet their basic needs, promote dignity and stability in their lives, and create pathways out of poverty."

I am delighted that Mary McClymont will be speaking at the [Summer IOLTA Workshops](#) in San Francisco on Thursday, August 8th. She and other



panelists will discuss their efforts to educate private foundations on how funding legal aid programs can expand their strategic goals. They will also explore ways in which IOLTA programs can communicate and partner with private foundations. In addition to this plenary session, the workshops will address many other timely topics and provide time for discussion and sharing of ideas. I am looking forward to the Summer Workshops and hope to see you there.

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Grantee Spotlight: Immigration Services and Beyond: Catholic Migration Services

By Robert McCreanor

On a Tuesday evening in the Woodside section of Queens, NY, hundreds of immigrants gather in the meeting space of a parish hall. Reflecting the unrivaled diversity of their city, they hail from dozens of different countries, ethnicities and religious backgrounds. As they enter the room, many bring plates of home cooked food to be placed among the pot luck dishes assembled on a long table. Row after row of folding chairs is filled up as the space becomes crowded and familiar faces greet one another.

In the front of the room, a presentation is about to begin and community members are working to set up the audio–visual systems. In the rear of the room, several tables are joined together with chairs on either side. Lined up on one side are individuals and families holding bundles of papers and folders. On the other side, staff attorneys and volunteers from Catholic Migration Services listen to questions, review documents and try to understand the legal issues affecting each person who has come before them.

However, almost every interaction begins with a friendly handshake or hug and a kiss, often accompanied with inquiries about each other's lives. Soon, the room quiets and both attorneys and community members settle in to participate in a discussion about prospects for the inclusion of affordable housing in a nearby re–development zone. Afterwards, all will enjoy the communal feast and the attorneys will resume their consultations. This is the monthly meeting of the Queens Housing Coalition and Catholic Migration Services.

The Changing Nature of Immigrant Life

For over forty years, Catholic Migration Services (CMS) has welcomed newcomers to the United States through a range of legal, educational and social services regardless of religion, national origin or immigration status. Our staff of attorneys and Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) accredited counselors have helped tens of thousands to become U.S. citizens, adjust their immigration status, reunite with family, obtain political asylum and received other forms of critical legal relief.

In the past decade, CMS has sought to respond to the changing nature of immigrant life within its catchment area of Brooklyn and Queens. While these two boroughs of New York City have long been havens for recent arrivals to the U.S., in more recent times our nation's broken immigration system and an influx of new immigrants has led to widespread abuse of undocumented persons. In particular, the incidence of labor violations such as wage theft and unsafe working conditions as well as housing code violations including harassment, unlawful eviction and poor maintenance disproportionately affect recent immigrants for whom lawful status is often unobtainable.

As our clients and their families increasingly reported these issues to us, CMS heard the need for our legal staff to provide assistance beyond our traditional area of immigration legal services. In 2005, we created the Immigrant Tenant Advocacy Program (ITAP) to address substandard housing conditions and related exploitation of low– and moderate–income immigrant tenants. In 2010, we launched the Immigrant Workers' Rights

Program (IWRP) to combat wage theft and other abuses of low-wage immigrant workers. Funding from the Interest on Lawyers' Accounts (IOLA) grant program has helped to make these programs possible, providing us with critical support to maintain our staff of dedicated attorneys and legal assistants.

At CMS, we seek to make the greatest use of our IOLA and other funding through innovative approaches to the provision of non-profit legal services. One clear example of this effort is our involvement in the monthly meetings of the Queens Housing Coalition, a grass roots entity comprised of seven community-based non-profit organizations, including CMS, and hundreds of individual community members drawn from the overwhelmingly immigrant populated neighborhoods of Queens, NY.

ITAP and the Queens Housing Coalition

The origins of the coalition date back to 2005 when CMS first began working in the area of housing legal assistance through its newly created ITAP. Finding that many low-income immigrant tenants suffered from common issues such as landlord's failure to maintain apartments in habitable condition, ITAP's founding attorney sought to maximize the program's limited resources by organizing groups of tenants to bring affirmative code enforcement actions in housing court.



Photo Credit: Catholic Migration Services

Soon, these plaintiff groups were connected with each other and other community-based organizations in large-scale campaigns to combat the illegal business practices of some of the most notorious multi-family property owners in the city. After several successful such efforts, CMS spearheaded the process of formalizing collaboration among tenants and the various community organizations sharing a common goal of preserving and developing safe, clean and affordable housing. The resulting Queens Housing Coalition has, since 2010, functioned not only to carry out additional campaigns but also to more effectively connect those in need to critical legal services.

Empowering the Community

This model of legal services provision brings many advantages. In contrast to some more traditional modes of poverty lawyering, the CMS-ITAP approach facilitates client engagement in problem solving and empowerment of community members. Rather than leading our clients to take a passive role in the process, we encourage them to join with others who share their grievances and work collectively to address them.



Photo Credit: Catholic Migration Services

Although legal representation is often essential to the fulfillment of our clients' needs, we believe that long-term solutions to their housing issues come not from litigation but from empowerment of the community. By moving the point of access for our legal services from our office building to the monthly community meeting, we find that our clients are more likely to participate in the Queens Housing Coalition and thereby to become better aware of their rights and equipped to exercise them.

Addressing Systematic Patterns Affecting the Poor

The robust connection between our legal staff and the community also helps us to more readily identify and address systematic patterns of legal violations affecting poor people. This allows us to focus our resources, including IOLA funding, in a strategic manner that has a greater and more lasting impact. Since 2005, ITAP has won several major legal victories through representation of large plaintiff groups, in some cases receiving precedent-setting trial and appellate court decisions.



Photo Credit: Catholic Migration Services

Over time, we see the real benefits of these community building efforts as our relationship with former clients and community members continues and our coalition grows in numbers and power.

In 2008, CMS-ITAP and its co-counsel pioneered the use of a recently enacted anti-harassment law, the New York City Tenant Protection Act, in litigation brought by dozens of immigrant families who were targeted by a common landlord engaged in systematic displacement of tenants from their rental homes on specious grounds. Currently, we are representing another large group of immigrant tenants who regularly attend the monthly Queens Housing Coalition meetings. In the course of their interactions with ITAP attorneys, it was discovered that their landlord is illegally overcharging them, in some cases threatening to displace elderly tenants at risk of homelessness.

The Human Connection

Finally, another distinct appeal of this lawyering structure is immediately apparent to any observer of the monthly gathering in the Woodside parish hall. A warm, human connection between attorneys and their client is palpable. Although, as in any attorney-client relationship, there may be strains and challenges, the lasting value of the bond formed through communal efforts is critical sustenance for public interest lawyers who work long hours with little pecuniary compensation. Thus, using our resources in this fashion strengthens both our clients and ourselves to carry on the fight for justice.

Robert McCreanor is the director of legal services at CMS, where he oversees the organization's immigration, housing, and employment legal services programs. He joined CMS in 2005, when he founded the Immigrant Tenant Advocacy Program. He is also an adjunct professor of clinical law at St. John's University.

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New IOLTA Director

IOLTA

The Commission on IOLTA congratulates newly appointed IOLTA directors **Melissa Flynn** and **Stephanie Libhart**.

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Melissa Flynn became Executive Director of the Delaware Bar Foundation in March of 2013. Ms. Flynn's experience includes her position as founding executive director of a mentoring program for at-risk youth in Chester, Pennsylvania and Wilmington, Delaware and work with a program dedicated to improving access to healthcare in underserved areas of Delaware. Ms. Flynn went on to work with the Tulane University Law School Domestic Violence

Clinic.

Ms. Flynn earned her Master's Degree in Education from the University of Pennsylvania and her Bachelor's Degree from the University of Delaware.

New IOLTA Director in Pennsylvania



Stephanie S. Libhart was appointed Director of Pennsylvania IOLTA Board in March 2013 where she served as assistant director since 2008. Before joining the Pennsylvania IOLTA Board, Ms. Libhart held a position with the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts where she provided leadership and training to the Courts of Common Pleas while staff adjusted to a new system designed to standardize and streamline criminal case processing throughout the Commonwealth. In addition, Ms. Libhart

worked with Pennsylvania's three appellate courts as a business analyst.

Ms. Libhart holds a Masters of Studies in Law from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law and holds a B.A. from Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania.

Summer 2013 IOLTA Workshops

The summer 2013 IOLTA Workshops will be held on Thursday and Friday, August 8 and 9, at the San Francisco Grand Hyatt Hotel in conjunction with the ABA Annual Meeting. The workshop sessions will address many timely topics and the two days of programming will provide opportunities for IOLTA staff and trustees to share ideas and network. For more information and to register go to: <http://www.americanbar.org/calendar/annual.html>

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Pro Bono Feature

LRIS

Advancing Pro Bono through Access to Justice Commissions

IOLTA

By Steve Grumm, Director, ABA Resource Center for Access to Justice Initiatives

Pro Bono

Advancing Pro Bono through Access to Justice Commissions

Access to Justice Commissions are spearheading creative, and replicable, initiatives to engage all segments of the private bar in pro bono work that rewards lawyers while narrowing the justice gap.

From the Chair

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Pro bono is a critical component in the legal aid infrastructure. Under-resourced civil legal aid organizations, still reeling from significant drop-offs in federal funding and Interest on Lawyers Trust Account (IOLTA) revenues, rely on the private bar to supplement their work. Bob Glaves, executive director of the Chicago Bar Foundation, which funds the city's legal aid providers, offers, "Pro bono is an integral part of a comprehensive strategy to make our nation's promise of equal access to justice a reality. While it's no panacea by itself, the private bar can marshal tremendous resources and is a major partner in trying to narrow the justice gap. We encourage all of our grantee legal aid organizations to develop strong relationships with pro bono contributors from throughout the legal community." Indeed, more can always be done to encourage even more lawyers to perform pro bono work. But the sheer number and value of hours provided has been a huge boon to the legal aid community.

LAMP

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Meanwhile, Access to Justice Commissions (ATJCs) are state-based, blue-ribbon panels — composed of high-level leaders in the profession — which act on several fronts to improve the delivery of legal services to those on the socioeconomic margins.¹ The ATJC concept is spreading rapidly. The first ATJC was founded in Washington State in 1994. Now, there are ATJCs in 27 states and in the District of Columbia, with 25 ATJCs having been founded since 2000.² With 12 more states now using ABA-administered grant funding to explore the creation of an ATJC, there will likely be over 30 ATJCs within a year.³

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ATJCs have had successes on numerous fronts in strengthening the legal-aid infrastructure and promoting equal justice. One of the foremost areas of success comes in the work of ATJCs to support pro bono. The reason for this is twofold. First, by dint of their membership and their close tethers to state high courts, ATJCs possess the clout to not only build awareness of ATJ issues but to facilitate concrete change. In Tennessee, for example, the high court has embraced the ATJC and its mission, and has appointed Justice Janice M. Holder as the Liaison to the ATJC. ATJC Chair George "Buck" T. Lewis says, "What has happened in Tennessee in the last five years demonstrates what is possible when the entire Supreme Court makes access to justice the number one priority."

Second, ATJCs sit at the center of many segments of our profession — the bench, the private bar, the organized (i.e. state and local) bars, as well as the legal aid and law school communities. Thus ATJCs bring these actors together around the issue of effectively delivering services to poor people. ATJCs foster dialogue about what the judges see as priorities in the courthouse, what the private bar needs to get engaged in pro bono, and where the legal aid organizations can lend their deep expertise to boost pro bono efficiency. Once needs are identified and plans formulated, ATJCs act.

ATJCs are truly unique entities in representing all these interests and channeling them toward the goal of equal access to justice.

Let's take a closer look at just a few (replicable) examples of how ATJCs support pro bono:

Illinois: Practice Rule Amendments

It may not be the most glamorous approach to promoting access to justice, but small practice rule changes have allowed scores of lawyers to more meaningfully engage in pro bono. The Illinois Supreme Court's Access to Justice Commission has been active in facilitating several recent state practice rule changes which allow for more pro bono participation. For instance, in April Supreme Court Rule 756(j) was amended to allow out-of-state attorneys to perform pro bono in Illinois as long as the attorneys are in good standing out of state. At the same time, the court amended a limited-practice rule for corporate counsel that will have the effect of allowing corporate lawyers with out-of-state licenses to perform pro bono in Illinois.⁴

Maine: Creative Community Engagement

The [Justice Action Group](#), which functions as the formal ATJC in Maine, launched its "Lawyers in Libraries" this past May. On May 1, dozens of lawyers delivered presentations and offered brief counsel to attendees in 40 libraries throughout the state. Lawyers in Libraries and its pro bono volunteer force will facilitate similar programs in the future. The overarching goal, of course, is to proactively reach out to communities and individuals who will benefit from this exposure to legal resources.

Massachusetts: Building New Volunteer Communities

The [Massachusetts ATJC](#) launched a Pro Bono Fellowship program in September, 2012, the goal of which is to involve retired (or retiring) attorneys in the delivery of legal services: "[The] program is structured by pairing Fellows with a legal services provider or non-profit organization of their choice. The [ATJC] Fellows Working Group will meet with each Fellow to design a project together with the provider or non-profit. The non-profit will provide training and support while law firms will provide resources, such as administrative support and office space. Each Fellow is expected to devote between 10 to 20 hours per week to individual pro bono projects. In addition, the Fellows will also meet once a month with community leaders, legal services providers, and public interest organizations, among others..."⁵

The program's first class included seven fellows; next year's class will nearly double, to 13 fellows. Susan Finegan, ATJC member and Chair of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court's Standing Committee on Pro Bono, is optimistic about the program's impact: "[T]he Fellows have provided vital legal needs by establishing lawyer-for-the-day programs in various courts, working with nonprofits on corporate governance, representing indigent clients in guardianship cases, and tackling issues involving bankruptcy, immigration law, land conservation, and community agriculture. Our long-term goal is to seek a culture shift in Massachusetts whereby all retiring lawyers will consider participating in the Fellows program, making a real difference for low income [clients]."

Tennessee: Empowering New Pro Bono Actors

The [Tennessee Faith & Justice Alliance](#) (TFJA), launched this past February, began with the recognition that many people who run into problems seek assistance first in their churches and faith communities before going to legal/social services providers. This is often so because those seeking help are unable to define the specific nature of their problems and may not know of the resources available to support them. Thus the Alliance is assisting congregations throughout the state in building an infrastructure to identify and help those with legal needs. The Alliance's pilot project was launched in partnership with the United Methodist Church (UMC). The UMC established a network of volunteer attorneys from within its own congregation to provide assistance to those in need. The goal is to grow the TFJA within other faith

communities and to promote flexibility so that new projects can best accommodate their own needs.

Washington, DC: Recognizing Volunteer Contributions

The D.C. ATJC and the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Program were key partners in launching the [Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll](#), a program through which the D.C. Court of Appeals and the Superior Court of D.C. recognize "attorneys who provide at least 50 or more hours of pro bono services (or 100 or more hours of service for a higher recognition category) per year." Legal Services Corporation President James Sandman, said of the program: "The Honor Roll includes lawyers at all levels of experience, from our newest to our most senior attorneys, and in a wide variety of practice settings, from solo and small firm practice, to government lawyers, to big firm practitioners. The breadth of pro bono involvement is powerful evidence of the strong pro bono culture of DC's legal community."⁶

Conclusion: ATJCs as Hubs for Building Pro Bono

Justice Holder in Tennessee observes, "Access to Justice Commissions can become the public face of access to justice efforts statewide, attracting more members of the private bar by creating a community or culture for access to justice efforts." And as exemplified above, ATJCs go beyond attracting and educating the private bar. ATJCs can drive pro bono innovation and build the pro bono volunteer base through advocacy on any number of fronts — from encouraging practice–rule flexibility, to engaging partners outside the legal community, to harnessing the expertise of what will be a large cadre of lawyers moving into retirement. As new ATJCs emerge in some states and existing ATJCs grow more sophisticated in others, they will comprise a national network to create and share new ideas and to engage even more pro bono advocates in the hard but rewarding work of achieving equal justice.

¹ See National Center for State Courts, *Access Brief: Access to Justice Commissions*, January 2013, <http://ncsc.contentdm.oclc.org/utills/getfile/collection/accessfair/id/271>.

² ABA Resource Center for ATJ Initiatives, *Role of State Supreme Courts in State Access to Justice Commissions*, January 2013, http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/legal_aid_indigent_defendants/ls_sclaid_atj_commissions_table.pdf

³ For more on the ABA Resource Center for ATJ Initiatives' Expansion Project, and our grant disbursements, see http://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_aid_indigent_defendants/initiatives/resource_center_for_access_to_justice/grants.html.

⁴ Illinois Supreme Court, Order, April 8, 2013, available at <http://www.state.il.us/court/SupremeCourt/Rules/Amend/2013/040813.pdf>.

⁵ Massachusetts Court System, Press Release, "Access to Justice Commission Launches New Pro Bono Fellows Program," September 26, 2012, available at <http://www.mass.gov/courts/press/pr092612.html>.

⁶ District of Columbia Courts, Press Release, "D.C. Courts Chief Judges Publish 2nd Annual Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll," June 5, 2013, available at <http://www.dccourts.gov/internet/documents/Honor-Roll-2013-Press-Release.pdf>.

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From the Chair...

By Larry McDevitt

Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service

The Pro Bono Committee is the principal entity charged with the missions of developing and expanding pro bono policies, programs, and representation throughout the United States. The Committee focuses on supporting institutions and attorneys that provide pro bono civil legal services to poor people. Those missions are accomplished through policy development; technical assistance; preparation, collection, and dissemination of information and material; special projects; pro bono awards and recognition; annual conferences; and other strategies. I believe the resources and expertise of the Committee, and its projects, represent the best of what the ABA can be.

My term as Chair of the Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Services ends with the 2013 Annual Meeting. Mary Ryan of Boston will serve as our new Chair and will be a thoughtful, dynamic leader. Still, I thought a brief report and forecast from me might be in order as my tenure draws to a close.

This past February the Pro Bono Committee released the third iteration of a national empirical study of the level of pro bono provided by America's lawyers. While the data itself is impressive, our Committee is particularly interested in lessons learned — the steps that can be implemented by legal employers, bar associations, state bars, pro bono programs, law schools, and others to advance the provision of pro bono services. Some of these steps include the following:

- Providing ongoing education about the definition of pro bono and continuing to emphasize in both policies and programs the importance of lawyers in providing direct free civil legal services to poor people;
- Increasing education to all lawyers, in all practice settings, about the legal needs of the poor and the impact those needs have on communities, the courts, and the legal system;
- Developing increased mentoring resources and opportunities for attorneys to co-counsel (e.g., sharing the responsibility for a case);
- Expanding the range of case-type and representational options available to prospective volunteers;
- Educating lawyers about the opportunities, resources, and support services that organized pro bono referral programs provide to volunteers, including the provision of malpractice insurance;
- Either matching the expertise of the attorney to whom a case is referred or providing support to help overcome the expertise gap;
- Encouraging State Bars to consider rule modifications permitting partial representation and the use of retired or unlicensed attorneys;

- Recruiting state and federal judges to lend their expertise, prestige, and leadership to the pro bono effort.

In October, 2011 the Pro Bono Committee convened a two day National Pro Bono Summit to facilitate a new discussion about the future of pro bono. The energy generated during the event, and the ideas that were developed, have resonated throughout our work since then. Particular progress has been made to further engage judges as pro bono leaders across the country, to develop new and more accessible resources on pro bono best practices, and to improve existing standards for pro bono programs. Although the pro bono delivery system has grown significantly since the early 1980's, clearly there is enthusiasm for fresh ideas, new leadership, and innovation.

The Pro Bono Committee has devoted considerable time to establishing itself as the principal resource on pro bono activities for other ABA entities. Our efforts have included consulting with section pro bono committees on the development of pro bono projects, serving as a resource on pro bono program management to the recipients of pro bono project grants, and co-sponsoring publications, projects, and programs. The Committee also actively seeks involvement of other ABA entities in the annual Equal Justice Conference which it co-sponsors with the National Legal Aid and Defender Association. While the Committee's role is essential in helping the ABA to live by its core values, I hope that the model we've established within the ABA resonates with other bar associations across the country with whom we collaborate.

The future of pro bono depends on new collaborations and their success in recruiting more attorneys to represent poor people in civil matters. The Pro Bono Committee is pleased to be working with the Pro Bono Task Force of the Legal Services Corporation, with Pro Bono Net, with the National Legal Aid and Defender Association, and with other national organizations which have deepened their own focus on expanding pro bono representation. These collaborations are essential and serve to enhance the ABA's values and work in significant and meaningful ways that can make the promise of freedom a reality in the lives of the most vulnerable of our citizens.

From my work on the Committee I have developed a deeper appreciation for the ABA's leadership in the area of pro bono and the legal profession's vast commitment to serving poor people and the greater cause of justice. Through the ABA I believe our Committee has made a difference, and I look forward to participating as we branch into new efforts to develop, enhance and expand our pro bono efforts. It has been an honor to be part of the developing story of pro bono in America.

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2013 ABA Pro Bono Publico Awards and Luncheon

Monday, August 12, 2013
Moscone Center West | San Francisco, CA

Join the ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service as it hosts the Annual Pro Bono Publico Awards Assembly Luncheon in conjunction with the ABA Annual Meeting.



This year's honorees are:

- Bruce B. Blackwell
- Exelon Corporation
- Jeffrey S. Trachtman
- Leonard, Street and Deinard
- Patricia Lee

Each year the Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service presents five awards to individual lawyers and institutions in the legal profession that have demonstrated outstanding commitment to volunteer legal services for the poor and disadvantaged.

Individual tickets can be [purchased for \\$65 each](#). Reserved tables, seating ten, are available for \$650. Table placement will be made on a first-come, first-served basis. Please [download the PDF form](#) to fax your request or contact [Erin Wellin](#) or call 312.988.5756.

Please visit the [Pro Bono Publico Award website](#) for more information.

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LAMP Feature

LRIS

The ABA and MOAA: A Partnership to Support the Caregivers of the Military Wounded

IOLTA

By Jason Vail, Chief Counsel, ABA Standing Committee on Legal Assistance for Military Personnel

Pro Bono

LAMP

The ABA and MOAA: A Partnership to Support the Caregivers of the Military Wounded

From the Chair

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With the military conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan of the past decade, the Standing Committee on Legal Assistance for Military Personnel (LAMP) has, in recent years, expanded the scope of its focus and work to support military attorneys not only through education and policy development—as it has traditionally done—but also by delivering programs that directly reach these attorneys' military family clients. In 2008 the LAMP Committee launched the ABA Military Pro Bono Project, which provides military attorneys the ability to quickly and efficiently connect their clients with pro bono representation provided by a national network of lawyers who volunteer to take up servicemember cases requiring civil legal assistance beyond the scope of what the military attorneys can provide. In 2011 the LAMP Committee worked with the ABA Section of Family Law to assume management of the Section's Operation Stand By, which for years has been the go-to resource for military attorneys seeking advice and consultation with civilian family law practitioners on matters of state law and local procedure. By incorporating this program into the Military Pro Bono Project, LAMP was able to both grow the list of participating civilian attorney participants as well as expand into coverage of all areas of civil law available for consultation. Also 2011, the LAMP Committee collaborated with a number of ABA entities to create ABA Home Front, an online legal resource center for military families, which provides easy-to-understand legal information on a variety of topics of relevance to servicemembers and veterans, as well as a national directory of programs and organizations providing free and reduced-cost civil legal services.

This year the LAMP Committee has taken an additional step to extend legal assistance to another important population in the military and veteran community facing legal difficulties: the caregivers of wounded and disabled veterans. In partnership with the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), the LAMP Committee is creating an online library of legal resources that specifically targets the unique informational needs of what is estimated to be between 275,000 to more than 1.1 million Americans who are providing caregiving services to their family members who were injured in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

In looking at this growing group of caregivers, a recent RAND Corporation study determined that the typical caregiver is a woman, about 38 years old, with young children and who faces years—or decades—of caring for her wounded husband. These caregivers can spend up to 80 hours a week to assist their veterans with basic living and medical needs, made difficult by physical, and often mental and emotional, damage. This extremely difficult and stressful work can take a toll, and may result in lost wages, a job, or even health insurance for the caregiver. Overall, the study determined that caregivers frequently lack support and information to aid them in navigating all of the complex medical, financial, and legal problems that can arise, as well as the governmental bureaucracies with which they must be involved.

In an effort to directly address the support and informational needs of this community, MOAA recently received a Dole Foundation Innovation Grant to create a program called "Tips for Lifelong Caregiving," which will be an

online guide aimed at assisting caregivers of wounded, ill and injured servicemembers with financial, legal and other issues affecting their lives and well-being.

"We are honored to receive this grant to help us deliver much-needed support to the selfless caregivers who are sacrificing so much of their own lives to care for our wounded, ill and injured heroes," MOAA President Vice Admiral (ret.) Norb Ryan, Jr., said. "In addition to information collected from six years conducting symposia and roundtable discussions, we are working with the caregivers themselves to craft a guide that builds on the lessons they've learned to ease the path for others."

MOAA approached the ABA to join in partnership to develop the legal information section of the new Guide. (Other national partners have joined to support additional aspects of the site; for example, USAA will develop the financial information portion, and Google will provide digital support services.) MOAA will provide the labor, project management and hosting support to develop and implement the online guide. The tool will be available to the public and will augment existing programs sponsored by the Dole Foundation, Department of Defense, Veterans Administration, the ABA, and other agencies and individuals supporting caregivers.

In response to MOAA's call for partnership, LAMP Committee, working directly with the Division for Public Education and seeking consultation from other ABA entities such as the Coordinating Committee on Veterans Benefits and Services and the Section of Real Property, Trust and Estate Law, has generated extensive content in a range of legal issues confronting caregivers. This content will populate a new "Wounded Veteran Caregiver" section on the ABA Home Front website as well as appearing on MOAA's "Tips for Lifelong Caregiving" site. The LAMP Committee participated in two roundtable events sponsored by MOAA, where actual caregivers discussed the particular legal challenges they face in caring for their wounded warriors. Through this collaborative process, LAMP was able to ensure that the focus of the legal content was directly responsive to the real needs of the caregiver community. Topics covered in the LAMP materials are:

- Credit and Bankruptcy
- Family Medical Leave Act
- Guardianship and the VA Fiduciary Program
- Tax Issues
- Powers of Attorney
- Servicemembers Civil Relief Act
- Wills and Trusts
- Family Law Matters

The content created by LAMP both provide legal information that addresses the concerns and issues of caregivers as well as give direction to obtain in-person legal help from a range of legal providers, including military legal assistance, pro bono and reduced-fee programs, and state and local bar-sponsored military assistance initiatives. "In partnering with MOAA, our goal is to deliver the best, most comprehensive legal information and support to caregivers through both ABA and MOAA web-based platforms," said Brigadier General (ret.) David Ehrhart, chair of the LAMP Committee. "Not only do we want to ensure that they are equipped with resources that will help them in their critically important work, but we also want them to know that they are not alone in their struggles, and that organizations like the ABA and MOAA stand ready to help them and their veterans in the years and decades to come."

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From the Chair...

By David G. Ehrhart, Brig Gen, USAF (Ret.)

Standing Committee on Legal Assistance for Military Personnel

One of the greatest benefits of involvement with the Standing Committee on Legal Assistance for Military Personnel (LAMP) is that I, my fellow committee members, and our liaisons are all constantly reminded of the tremendous work done by military legal assistance attorneys both on bases here at home as well as locations around the world. Many Americans may assume the Judge Advocates practice only in the areas of military justice and operational law—an impression long reinforced in film, television and the media. But the average servicemember knows and appreciates that most military legal services performed by JAG officers and their civilian-lawyer counterparts fall under the legal assistance banner. These civil-law legal services address the same everyday consumer law, family law, landlord-tenant and other legal problems that entangle civilians, with the added complication that deployed servicemembers are entitled to extra legal protection when deployed thousands of miles from their home jurisdictions, and the understanding that unresolved legal issues imperil military morale and readiness. To the average servicemember, then, the most important military lawyer is the one who works to get him or her out of a jam with a creditor, a landlord, a former spouse or a civilian court, or who makes sure his or her estate is in order before deployment.

Each year the Standing Committee on Legal Assistance for Military Personnel has the honor of selecting recipients of the LAMP Distinguished Service Awards. Those chosen for the Award are individuals and units judged to have set the bar for military legal assistance, by pushing themselves and their practices in extraordinary ways. Our award winners, both past and present, provide us with outstanding examples of the fine work done by these lawyers on behalf of our military families, which I would like to share in my column today.

First, it's important to understand that legal assistance lawyers deliver a very high volume of legal assistance under challenging conditions. In this day and age of budgetary cutbacks and limited resources, many of our attorneys find themselves faced with meeting a growing demand for legal services with a shrinking staff. One of our award winners assisted over 1,000 clients in a calendar year that saw her serving as the only legal assistance attorney in her office for three months during a reorganization. Another winner continues to function as the only legal assistance attorney in an eight-state region encompassing over 6,000 personnel. Yet another of our award winners provides much-needed tax law expertise to those personnel stationed in Germany, and clients come from hundreds of kilometers away to seek his thorough knowledge of the NATO Status of Forces Agreement and its German Supplementary Agreement as they apply to tax matters. In short, it is not uncommon that these lawyers will see from 500 to over 1,000 clients in any given year, and they must be prepared to provide legal services in a broad range of civil legal matters.

Not surprisingly, with limited resources, our military attorneys must be innovators in finding new, better, and more efficient means of delivering legal assistance. This includes the creation of programs to effectively meet

the specific needs of any given office. For example, one award winner, when realizing that many of his base's personnel had immigration and naturalization needs, established a partnership with a local U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service office to deliver USCIS services on base. During tax season, one legal office created satellite tax preparation kiosks around base, including in the dorms, medical clinic, and dining facilities, to best insure that the base military personnel received the benefits to which they were entitled. The same office also innovated in the area of social media, creating a comprehensive client engagement system that combines a webpage, Facebook and mobile "apps" for use by its clientele. The system is updated at least weekly and integrates with the new MyMCW ("My Military Communities") smartphone application. Finally, one attorney stationed in Japan operated a distant satellite office for the benefit of those personnel whose duties would not allow them to travel the distance to the main office to receive legal assistance. That same lawyer, by recognizing the language barrier experienced by many foreign national clients recruited a Japanese national as a civilian volunteer to provide translation services, thus ensuring those clients were provided the same high-quality attorney consultation that other clients received.

The demands placed on our legal assistance attorneys go beyond service delivery and innovation. Our award winners routinely publish articles and informational materials for their clients, teach courses, and are tasked with the training of new attorneys and paralegals. They also devote time to liaising with state and local bar associations, where they provide essential expertise on the legal issues of military personnel. This expertise, in turn, results in bar association programming and policy that is better informed about the realities of the legal problems confronting our nation's military families.

I encourage you to take a look at the inspiring stories of our [Distinguished Service Award winners](#). Whether you have experience as a military attorney, or whether it's an area with which you've had no exposure at all, I am certain you will agree that our nation's military legal assistance attorneys, both JAG and civilian, represent the finest ideals and aspirations of our profession.

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We welcome letters to the Editor!

In fact, true to the title of this publication, we hope that some of the articles generate additional dialogue that you would like to share. Please see the following guidelines for submissions:

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- Be limited to 300 words
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