

DIALOGUE

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From the Chair...



By Lora Livingston

Commission on Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts

In spite of challenging times, the Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA) community has accomplished much over the last year to diversify sources of funding for civil legal aid to the poor, to develop and implement IOLTA rule revisions, and to share ideas and resources with one another. The Commission has been proud to work with the National Association of IOLTA Programs (NAIP) and through its joint committees to support and facilitate these efforts and exchanges.

IOLTA news from around the country suggests that while IOLTA revenue losses remain substantial in most states, many IOLTA program trustees and staff, together with other access to justice advocates, continue to successfully generate new sources of funding. In Washington state, Bar President Mark Johnson called the bar's attention to the devastating loss in IOLTA income and urged bar support for IOLTA. As a result, the Washington State Bar ultimately made a grant of \$1.5 million to the Legal Foundation of Washington (LFW), the state's IOLTA program. LFW also obtained \$3 million over three years in new grant funding for the support of civil legal aid to the poor from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. In Pennsylvania, the IOLTA program and its allies achieved both a temporary filing fee increase and a temporary increase in attorney registration fees, which together are expected to offset about one-half of IOLTA revenue losses over the past two years. These are just a few of the new funding initiatives that have recently been achieved by IOLTA programs and their partners. These efforts are a true testament to the extraordinary creativity and commitment of the IOLTA community and its leaders.

The Commission held its fall meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, and had the opportunity to meet with the executive director and trustees of the Missouri Trust Account Foundation, as well as representatives from the Missouri Bar and the Missouri Supreme Court. We learned a great deal about the enormity of what has been achieved to advance IOLTA in Missouri over the past few years, including critical technology updates and the 2008

implementation of mandatory IOLTA and interest rate comparability. Several additional jurisdictions have made similar rule changes over the past year; as of January 1, 2010, 41 states will have mandatory IOLTA and 31 states will have adopted interest rate comparability.

The Commission, and in particular, the Joint Technical Assistance Committee of the Commission on IOLTA and NAIP are available to provide input and assistance on a wide range of IOLTA-related issues. Please contact [Bev Groudine](#), Commission Counsel, or call 312/988-5771, if you should need any assistance.

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