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Funding News

➤ **Colorado Bar Association-Sponsored Credit Card Benefits Legal Services** - Two years ago, the Colorado Bar Association (CBA) Board of Governors approved a plan to allocate the revenue earned from the CBA-sponsored credit card to entities that provide legal services to the poor. To date, this initiative has raised over \$44,000, with funds being distributed to the Legal Aid Foundation of Colorado and the Colorado Lawyer Trust Account Foundation. The credit card company bears all creative development and marketing expenses and administers the accounts, providing the CBA with royalties based on the number of active accounts and a percentage of the account balances. The CBA provides the credit card company with a list of members and its endorsement of the card. For further information, contact Charles Turner, Executive Director, Colorado Bar Association, at 303/860-1115.

➤ **IOLTA Litigation Update** - On February 18, 2000, the Washington Legal Foundation filed a notice of appeal in the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in the remanded case of *Washington Legal Foundation, et al. v Texas Equal Access to Justice Foundation, et al.* The district court dismissed the case with prejudice on January 28, 2000, ruling that the Texas IOLTA program did not violate the First or Fifth Amendment of the U. S. Constitution. There has also been recent activity in the case of *Washington Legal Foundation, et al. v Legal Foundation of Washington, et al.* In that suit, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals heard oral argument on February 9, 2000. The case challenges the application of the IOLTA concept to limited practice officers - individuals licensed by the Supreme Court of Washington to practice law for the limited purpose of real estate closings. Defendants prevailed in the district court and plaintiffs appealed the decision. For more information, contact Bev Groudine, Counsel, ABA Commission on IOLTA, at 312/988-5771.

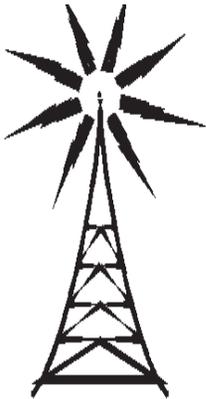
Pro Bono Developments

➤ **Rules Providing CLE Credit for Pro Bono Work Adopted in New York** - On March 5, 2000, the Administrative Board of the Courts for the State of New York adopted rules permitting attorneys to earn continuing legal education credits by performing pro bono work. The rules, in the process of being finalized and subject to approval by the New York State CLE Board, allow attorneys to earn one CLE credit for every six hours of approved pro bono work, up to a maximum of six credits every two years. Supporters of the rules hope that the incentive will encourage more lawyers to complete at least 20 hours of pro bono activity annually, as recommended by the Office of Court Administration. For more information, contact Anthony Cassino, Pro Bono Director, Department of Pro Bono Affairs, New York State Bar Association at 518/463-3200.

➤ **Federal District Court Uses Internet to Recruit Pro Bono Counsel** - U.S. Magistrate Judge Bernard Zimmerman recently announced that the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California will employ the Internet as a means of seeking pro bono attorneys for pro-se civil cases. This innovative approach uses the Court's website (www.cand.uscourts.gov) to post a brief description of the case and enables interested attorneys to sign up for service electronically. The cases may involve prisoner's rights, Title VII, Social Security, civil rights or discrimination claims. The intent of the Internet listing is to geographically broaden the court's outreach to lawyers, as well as to reach more attorneys who practice in midsize, small or sole practitioner firms. For more information, consult the Court's website or contact Robyn Lipsky, Administrative Law Clerk to the Chief Judge, at 415/522-3600.

Other News of Interest

📌 **Texas Supreme Court Holds Hearing on Civil Legal Services** - On January 27, 2000, the Texas Supreme Court held an all-day hearing regarding delivery of legal services to the poor in the state. Attended by all nine Justices, the hearing included testimony by Legal Services Corporation Board Chair Douglas Eakley, as well as many state advocates for improved legal services. The justices asked numerous questions about such topics as the efficacy of mandatory pro bono rules and other potential mechanisms for expanding the resources and services available. For more information, contact Julie Oliver, Executive Director, Texas Lawyers Care, at 512/463-1463 x2155.



WASHINGTON UPDATE

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State, the Judiciary and Related Agencies held a hearing on LSC's funding on February 17. The Senate does not plan to hold hearings. In March, the American Bar Association submitted written testimony to both the Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittees recommending that funding for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) for FY 2001 be restored to \$400 million. LSC last received \$400 million in FY 95, before Congress slashed the Corporation's funding by 30 percent, to \$278 million for FY 96.

The next step in the legislative process will be Subcommittee "markup" of draft appropriations legislation. The Senate and House Subcommittee markups usually occur in mid to late June, respectively. However, many decisions regarding next year's funding are being made right now. As a result, LSC supporters should write their Senators and Representatives immediately and urge them to support increased funding for the LSC. This is particularly important if your Senator or Representative sits on the Senate or House Appropriations Committees. For more information on LSC's FY 2001 budget request, talking points, and information about your own Senators and Representatives, visit the ABA Governmental Affairs Office web page at <http://www.abanet.org/poladv> or contact Julie Strandlie at (202) 662-1764.

For more information about specific items, call the contact person listed for that item. To contribute items to future issues of *LEGAL SERVICES NOW*, or for general information about this bulletin, contact Bev Groudine at 312/988-5771, fax 312/988-5483 or e-mail bgroudine@staff.abanet.org.