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Funding News

➤ **Several States Report Major Gains in State Appropriations for Legal Services** – The 2007 legislative session has thus far produced significant state funding increases for legal services in New Mexico, New York and Washington. In New Mexico, work by the Access to Justice Commission, which held hearings around the state to spotlight the need for additional services, and strong support from the supreme court resulted in a new appropriation of \$2,500,000. Advocates in New York, benefiting from the leadership of the new governor and strong supporters in the legislature, obtained \$8,000,000 in new funding, more than doubling the amount available to legal services in recent years. In Washington State, a unified and coordinated judicial branch effort, the Justice in Jeopardy Initiative, resulted in an annual increase of \$2,635,000, bringing the total to over \$11,000,000. For more information, contact Meredith McBurney, ABA Resource Center for Access to Justice Initiatives, at meredithmcburney@msn.com or 303/329-8091.

➤ **New Chicago Bar Foundation Campaign Raises \$900,000** – The Chicago Bar Foundation has raised \$900,000 from the legal community in its inaugural Investing in Justice Campaign. Campaign organizers estimate that over 90 percent of the 1,600 contributors are new donors to the Chicago Bar Foundation and legal services generally. The funds from this year's campaign will be distributed in special grants to increase attorneys' salaries at the many legal services programs in the Chicago area. It is estimated that there are sufficient funds to increase salaries by eight to ten percent. For more information, contact Bob Glaves, Executive Director, Chicago Bar Foundation, at bglaves@chicagobar.org or 312/554-1205.

➤ **Supreme Court of Arkansas Adopts IOLTA Comparability Rule** – Effective February 1, 2007, lawyers practicing in Arkansas are required to place their IOLTA accounts only in a financial institution that pays those accounts the highest interest rate or dividend generally available at that institution to other customers when IOLTA accounts meet the same minimum balance or other qualifications. Known as "comparability," this IOLTA revenue enhancement strategy has been adopted in a total of 12 states and has proven to be an important source of additional IOLTA income. For more information about this and other strategies for enhancing IOLTA revenue, contact Bev Groudine, Counsel, ABA Commission on IOLTA, at btgroudine@staff.abanet.org or 312/988-5771.

Pro Bono News

➤ **Legal Services Corporation Adopts Pro Bono Resolution** – On April 28, 2007, the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) Board of Directors adopted a resolution calling upon each of its grantees to collaborate with other organizations in its service area, including state and local bar associations, to develop effective strategies for engaging lawyers in pro bono representation and other services that benefit low income persons. In addition, grantees are urged to collaborate with bar associations and others to develop and facilitate educational efforts that demonstrate the extent of the unmet need for civil legal services. To obtain a copy of the resolution or for more information regarding it, contact Stephanie Edelstein, LSC Program Counsel, Office of Program Performance, at edelsteins@lsc.gov or 202/295-1557.

✎ **Some Bankruptcy Code Provisions Not Applicable to Pro Bono Bankruptcy Lawyers** – Following an adverse ruling on the matter in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Florida, the United States Trustee reversed its initial position and published guidance that bankruptcy lawyers who represent clients pro bono are not *debt relief agencies* as that term is defined under the Bankruptcy Code [as revised by The Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act of 2005 (BAPCPA)]. As a result, pro bono bankruptcy lawyers are not subject to the strict notice, disclosure and other requirements imposed under BAPCPA and codified at sections 526 through 528 of the Code. For more information, contact Allyn M. O'Connor, Assistant Staff Counsel, ABA Center for Pro Bono, at oonnera@staff.abanet.org or 312/988-6398.

Hot On the Web

📖 **The National Pro Bono Opportunities Guide** – This online directory of over 1,100 pro bono programs is a joint project of the ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service, its project, the ABA Center for Pro Bono, and Pro Bono Net. The *Guide* enables listed organizations to submit updates and new organizations to be easily added to the directory. To view this directory, go to volunteerforprobono.org. For more information, contact Bill Jones, Technology, Information and Content Coordinator, ABA Center for Pro Bono, at jonesw@staff.abanet.org or 312/988-5789.



Washington Update

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science on March 29, 2007, held a public hearing on FY 2008 funding for the Legal Services Corporation. Congressman Alan Mollohan (D-WV) chairs the subcommittee; Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ) is the Subcommittee's new ranking Republican. LSC Board Chair Frank Strickland and LSC President Helaine Barnett made the case for LSC's requested \$82 million budget increase.

More than 300 ABA, state and local bar leaders participated in ABA Day in Washington, April 18-19, 2007. LSC funding was a primary focus; at press time, participants and other ABA grassroots action team members were working with the ABA Governmental Affairs Office to gather Congressional signatures in support of increased funding.



For more information about the ABA's grassroots efforts in support of LSC or about ABA Day, please contact Julie M. Strandlie, ABA Director of Grassroots Operations/Legislative Counsel, at jstrandlie@staff.abanet.org or 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.