

April 30, 2015 • Issue #96

Funding News

✎ **Oregon Legislature Amends Class Action Rule to Benefit Legal Aid** - The Oregon legislature recently amended the Oregon Code of Civil Procedure to add a new section which provides that, in class action cases in which residual funds exist, at least 50 percent of the amount not paid to class members will be paid to the Oregon State Bar for funding legal aid. This makes Oregon the 18th state with a *cy pres* rule or statute specifically allowing class action residuals to be paid to legal aid; in eight of those states, the rule or statute requires that a percentage be paid to legal aid. For more information about the Oregon legislation, contact Judith Baker, Director of Legal Services Program, Oregon State Bar, at jbaker@osbar.org or 503/431-6323. For more information about *cy pres* rules generally, contact Meredith McBurney, Resource Development Consultant, ABA Resource Center for ATJ Initiatives, at meredithmcburney@msn.com or 303/329-8091.

✎ **Supreme Court of Georgia Adopts IOLTA Revisions to Increase Revenue** - On April 14, 2015, the Supreme Court of Georgia entered an order adopting IOLTA rate comparability, effective January 1, 2016. Georgia becomes the 35th jurisdiction to adopt rate comparability. This revenue enhancement strategy requires that lawyers place their IOLTA accounts only in a financial institution that pays those accounts the highest interest rate or dividend generally available at the institution to other customers when IOLTA accounts meet the same minimum balance or other qualifications. For additional information about this IOLTA revenue enhancement strategy and others, contact Bev Groudine, Counsel, ABA Commission on IOLTA, at Bev.Groudine@americanbar.org or 312/988-5771.

Pro Bono Developments

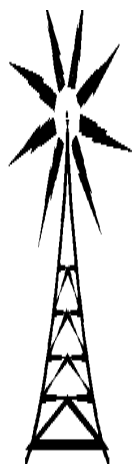
✎ **Louisiana Adopts CLE Credit for *Pro Bono* Legal Services Participation** - The Supreme Court of Louisiana has amended its continuing legal education requirements to allow credit for *pro bono* service. It becomes the 11th state to provide such credit. Attorneys may earn one hour of CLE for each five hours of *pro bono* service to “indigent or near indigent client or clients,” for a maximum of three hours of CLE annually. *Pro bono* matters must be referred from a court, bar association, legal services or *pro bono* organization that has filed a statement with the Louisiana Committee on MCLE. The rule becomes effective May 1, 2015. For more information, contact Monte Mollere, Access to Justice Director, Louisiana State Bar Association, at mmollere@lsba.org or 504/619-0146.

✎ **Ohio Supreme Court Permits Corporate Counsel to Provide *Pro Bono* Service** - The Ohio Supreme Court approved amendments, effective April 1, 2015, to Rule VI (Registration of Attorneys) of the Rules for the Government of the Bar of Ohio to expand the scope of practice for corporate attorneys and permit them to provide *pro bono* legal services through a qualified legal aid organization. The new rule includes attorneys admitted to any United States Territory. The court also amended Rule 5.5 of the Rules of Professional Conduct, for consistency. Ohio is the 32nd jurisdiction to provide for *pro bono* participation by in-house counsel not licensed in the jurisdiction. For additional information, contact Jane Taylor, Director of Pro Bono and Communications, Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation, at jtaylor@olaf.org or 614/715-8560.

➤ **Pennsylvania Supreme Court Launches Pilot Pro Bono Appellate Representation Program** - By order dated March 5, 2015, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court established a pilot program to provide *pro bono* appellate representation to indigent criminal defendants and civil litigants who have a right to appointed counsel in the underlying matter. (This would include an individual facing involuntary termination of parental rights.) The appointed *pro bono* coordinator will maintain a list of experienced appellate attorney volunteers and match attorneys with qualified self-represented litigants who have petitions for appeal pending with the court. The program will be evaluated after a nine month period. For more information, contact Art Heinz, Communications and Legislative Affairs Coordinator, the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, at art.heinz@pacourts.us or 717/231-3317.

Conference of Note

➤ **2015 Equal Justice Conference is Scheduled for May 7-9 in Austin, Texas** - Mark your calendars for this annual event sponsored by the American Bar Association and the National Legal Aid and Defender Association. This conference brings together all components of the legal community to discuss equal justice issues as they relate to the delivery of civil legal services to those living in poverty who are in need of legal assistance. The emphasis of this event is on strengthening partnerships among the key players in the civil justice system. Through plenary sessions, workshops, networking opportunities and special programming, the Equal Justice Conference provides a wide range of learning experiences for all attendees. For more information and to register, go to www.equaljusticeconference.org.



Washington Update

On March 25, 2015, 122 members of the House sent a letter to the chair and ranking member of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) of the House Appropriations Committee requesting that the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) be funded at \$486.9 million in FY2016. A similar letter was sent on April 1st by 34 Senators to the chair and ranking member of the Senate CJS Subcommittee. This amount represents a \$111.9 million increase over the current LSC budget of \$375 million, yet still would be inadequate to meet the enormous need that exists for free civil legal assistance by those living in poverty in our country. At this juncture, it is still not known when the House and Senate will act on LSC's FY2016 budget.

On April 14-16, 2015, over 350 national, state and local bar leaders from 49 states and the District of Columbia took part in ABA Day in Washington, D.C. and educated their members of Congress on the need to increase funding for LSC. For more information on the ABA's efforts in this area, contact Ann Carmichael, Legislative Counsel, ABA Governmental Affairs Office, at Ann.Carmichael@americanbar.org or 202/662-1767.

WASHINGTON UPDATE

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 312-932-6425 or email Bev.Groudine@americanbar.org.