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Funding News

✎ **New Jersey Legal Services Benefits from Increase in Filing Fees** - In November, New Jersey became the final state to obtain an increase in state funding in 2014 for legal aid. At that time, the New Jersey Supreme Court increased filing fees for a number of services, including \$10 million that will go to Legal Services of New Jersey. Earlier that year, the New Jersey legislature had passed and the governor had signed legislation granting the court permission to increase filing fees. This increase for legal services brings the total amount of state funding in New Jersey to approximately \$25 million, restoring two-thirds of the funding that had been cut in recent years. Including New Jersey, the national total net increase in state legislative funding for 2014 totaled \$35 million. (See the November 2014 issue of *Legal Services Now* for more information on the 2014 legislative sessions.) Many of the 2015 state legislative sessions have begun, and legal aid advocates in a number of states are working on increasing this critically needed funding. For more information about state legislative funding for legal aid, contact Meredith McBurney, Resource Development Consultant, ABA Resource Center for ATJ Initiatives, at meredithmcburney@msn.com or 303/329-8091.

✎ **Congress Adopts Legislation Impacting IOLTA Accounts Held at Credit Unions** - During the final days of the 113th Congress, the Senate passed legislation previously passed by the House that assures that funds held in IOLTA accounts at credit unions receive the same level of federal insurance as funds held in IOLTA accounts at banks (\$250,000 per owner, per institution). The President signed the legislation on December 18, 2014. Previously, the National Credit Union Administration had only provided such coverage if the client was a member of the credit union or if the credit union was designated as low-income. Because in many jurisdictions credit unions pay higher interest rates than banks, this change not only provides necessary protection of client funds held in credit unions, but may also lead to higher income for IOLTA programs. For further information regarding this legislation, contact Bev Groudine, Chief Counsel, ABA Commission on IOLTA, at Bev.Groudine@americanbar.org or 312/988-5771.

Pro Bono Developments

✎ **Supreme Court of Georgia Adopts Disaster Rule** - The Supreme Court of Georgia adopted the American Bar Association's Model Court Rule on the Provision of Legal Services Following Determination of a Major Disaster. The rule provides for out-of-state attorneys to temporarily practice law in Georgia following a disaster in the state or to practice in the state after a disaster in the attorney's jurisdiction. To date, eighteen states have adopted a similar rule. For further information, contact Mike Monahan, Pro Bono Director, Georgia Legal Services Program, at MikeM@gabar.org or 404/527-8762.

✎ **Arizona Court of Appeals Inaugurates Appellate Pro Bono Program** - The Arizona Court of Appeals established a pro bono program in December 2014, through which the Court will appoint pro bono counsel in certain civil and juvenile appeals. The Court of Appeals anticipates selecting cases for the program that are complex, involve a new issue of law, or require specialized legal research. The cases will be referred to one of two volunteer attorney coordinators, who will then identify a volunteer lawyer to serve as counsel for the unrepresented party. To learn more about this program, contact Andrew M. Jacobs, Pro Bono Attorney Coordinator, Arizona Court of Appeals, at ajacobs@swlaw.com or 520/882-1207.

👉 **State Bar of Georgia Launches Pro Bono Campaign** - The State Bar of Georgia launched the Make A Pro Bono Promise campaign in December, just before the holidays, encouraging attorneys to participate in pro bono legal services and to share their promise of pro bono in a 30-second video on Twitter with the hashtag #probonopromise. For more information, contact Mike Monahan, Pro Bono Director, Georgia Legal Services Program, at MikeM@gabar.org or 404/527.8762.

Call for Nominations

👉 **Harrison Tweed Award** - The ABA Standing Committee on Legal Aid and Indigent Defendants and the National Legal Aid and Defender Association are seeking nominations for the 2015 Harrison Tweed Award. This award, created in 1956, recognizes the extraordinary achievements of state and local bar associations in the United States that develop or significantly expand projects or programs to increase access to civil legal services or criminal defense services to persons living in poverty. Nominations forms and all supporting materials must be received electronically by the close of business on **Wednesday, April 1, 2015**. For more information, contact Tamaara Piquion, Program Manager, ABA Standing Committee on Legal Aid and Indigent Defendants, at Tamaara.Piquion@americanbar.org or 312/988-5767 or see www.ambar.org/harrisontweedaward.

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

Washington Update

Prior to adjourning, the 113th Congress passed a spending bill that funded most government agencies through September 30, 2015, including the Legal Services Corporation. It received an appropriation of \$375 million for FY2015, a \$10 million increase over the previous year. Regarding funding for FY2016, President Obama has released his budget and has requested \$452 million for LSC. It is unclear at this time when Congress will turn its attention to the FY2016 budgeting process.

The American Bar Association remains committed to increasing funding for LSC in FY2016 so that local legal aid programs can continue their vital work. The Association will once again sponsor ABA Day in Washington, DC on April 14-16, 2015, at which bar leaders from across the country will meet with their Members of Congress to advocate on behalf of LSC funding. For more information, contact Ann Carmichael, Legislative Counsel, ABA Governmental Affairs Office, at Ann.Carmichael@americanbar.org or 202/662-1767.

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.