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Funding News

✦ **Fourteen Jurisdictions Report Increases in State Legislative Funding for Legal Aid in 2015** - Last year's successes included increased appropriations in Colorado, District of Columbia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, Texas, Utah, Virginia and Washington State, and new appropriations in Ohio, Oregon and Wisconsin. A new filing fee surcharge was authorized in Illinois. In Ohio, an exemption to the filing fee surcharge for domestic cases was removed, which should lead to increased revenue. Finally, in Texas, court challenges to a fee that was imposed on adult entertainment establishments several years ago were finally resolved, and legal aid programs there will receive funding from that fee to serve victims of sexual assault. While only one state reported a legislatively enacted decrease (of \$100,000), several states, including Connecticut, Kansas, Maine, New Mexico, Ohio and Texas, reported decreased revenue from filing fees because of a decline in the number of filings. For more information on state legislative funding, contact Meredith McBurney, Resource Development Consultant, ABA Resource Center for ATJ Initiatives, at meredithmcburney@msn.com or 303/329-8091.

Pro Bono Developments

✦ **Georgia Supreme Court Adopts New Student Practice Rule** - The Supreme Court of Georgia adopted a new Student Practice Rule that has been in effect for several months. The updated rule supports experiential learning opportunities and expands access to justice. Specifically, it enables student practitioners, with attorney supervision, to engage in the same work that a licensed attorney can perform, and permits law students to participate in student practice after completing the first year of law school. Additionally, the rule now defines an eligible client as "any person who is unable financially to pay" for legal services as well as non-profit organizations if their purpose "is to assist low or moderate income persons" and "any state, local, or other government unit or agency." For additional information, contact Mike Monahan, Director, State Bar of Georgia Pro Bono Project, at MikeM@gabar.org or 404/527-8762.

✦ **Tennessee Supreme Court Approves Military Spouse Law Licensing** - A provision adopted by the Tennessee Supreme Court, effective January 1, 2016, permits a military spouse to practice on a temporary basis if that individual is: living in Tennessee or at Fort Campbell pursuant to a spouse's military orders; admitted by examination in at least one jurisdiction; and in active good standing and not subject to discipline in each jurisdiction where licensed. The temporary license to practice law in Tennessee has an initial term of two years, but must be renewed on a yearly basis at the end of the initial two-year term. Tennessee is the 16th state to adopt a rule accommodating military spouse attorneys. For more information, contact Michele Wojciechowski, Tennessee Courts Communications Director, at mwojciechowski@tncourts.gov or 615/532-6047.

✦ **Widener University Delaware Law School Launches Patent Pro Bono Program** - The Delaware Patent Pro Bono Program is a collaborative effort between Widener University Delaware Law School and registered Delaware patent attorneys to help low-income and small business inventors navigate the legal landscape of patents. The program has three requirements for eligibility: a total household income below three times the federal poverty guidelines; demonstrated knowledge of the patent system; and an innovation. This program is a response to the America Invents Act, a 2011 federal statute that calls for each state to establish pro bono programs to foster innovation. For



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more information, contact Alan E. Garfield, Professor of Law, Widener University Delaware Law School, at aegarfield@widener.edu or 302/477-2140.

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 2016 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 **Friday, April 1, 2016**. 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/harristweedaward.

✎ **Pro Bono Publico Award** - This award was established by the American Bar Association in 1984 to recognize lawyers and law firms for extraordinary noteworthy contributions to extending legal services to the poor and disadvantaged. The recipients exemplify the volunteer tradition of the legal profession. The Association's Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service administers the program. Each year the Pro Bono Committee presents five awards to individual lawyers and institutions in the legal profession that have demonstrated outstanding commitment to volunteer legal services. Nomination forms and all supporting materials must be submitted electronically by the close of business on **Friday, February 26, 2016**. For more information, contact Lily Zhen at Lily.Zhen@americanbar.org or 312/988-5766 or see <http://ambar.org/probonoaward>.

Washington Update



WASHINGTON UPDATE

Before adjourning for the year, Congress passed and the President signed into law the \$1.1 trillion omnibus spending bill that funded the federal government for FY 2016. It included \$385 million for the Legal Services Corporation. This amount was \$10 million more than LSC received the previous year, and marked the second year in a row that funding has increased by that amount.

ABA Day in Washington, D.C., which will take place on April 19-21, will provide bar leaders with an excellent opportunity to advocate with Members of Congress for additional funding for LSC so that local programs can continue to do their vital work. For more information on ABA Day and on the ABA's advocacy on behalf of LSC, contact Thomas Susman, Director, ABA Governmental Affairs Office, at thomas.susman@americanbar.org or 202/662-1765.

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.