

July 25, 2011 • Issue #79

## Funding News

✎ **Maryland State Bar Replaces Gifts to Conventioneers with a Gift to Legal Aid** – The Maryland State Bar Association demonstrated its support for legal aid at its recent annual convention. Instead of providing the usual welcoming gifts – tote bags, mugs, beach mats – the Bar notified convention attendees that a donation of \$5,000, the amount it would have spent on these gifts, was being made to the Maryland Legal Services Corporation. MLSC, which provides funding to the more than two dozen legal aid organizations in Maryland, has seen its revenue shrink drastically due to low interest rates paid on IOLTA accounts. The funds will provide legal assistance to low-income people. For additional information, contact Paul Carlin, Executive Director, Maryland State Bar Association, at PCarlin@msba.org or 410/685-7878.

✎ **States Report Mixed Results for Legal Aid Funding as Legislatures Struggle to Balance Budgets** – To date, five states have report net increases, while nine states have reported net decreases and two states have reported the elimination of state funding for legal aid during this very difficult year. Hawaii, Nevada and West Virginia were among the states bucking the national trend, by obtaining increases in funding for legal aid through filing fees. In New York, new state funding for legal aid was championed by the Chief Judge, who included \$12.5 million for legal aid in the judicial budget. Texas, which had obtained short term additional funding of \$10 million annually in the last biennial legislative session, has obtained \$8.8 million annually for the new biennium primarily through the tireless efforts of members of the Texas Supreme Court. Results are still coming in; a final report will appear in the next issue of *Legal Services Now*. For more information on state funding for civil legal aid, contact Meredith McBurney, Resource Development Consultant, ABA Resource Center for Access to Justice Initiatives, at meredithmcburney@msn.com, 303/329-8091.

## Pro Bono Developments

✎ **Arkansas Adopts Order Permitting Out-of-State Attorneys to Provide Pro Bono Services** – The Arkansas Supreme Court granted the Access to Justice Commission's petition to authorize attorneys licensed outside of Arkansas to provide pro bono services in the state under the sponsorship of legal aid organizations named in the order: The Center for Arkansas Legal Services, Legal Aid of Arkansas, and Lone Star Legal Aid. The rule permits in-house, corporate counsel, as well as other resident attorneys not licensed in the state, the opportunity to provide pro bono legal services to low income residents. For more information, contact Amy Dunn Johnson, Executive Director, Arkansas Access to Justice Commission, at 501/975-3772 or adjohnson@arkansasjustice.org.

✎ **Louisiana Adopts Disaster Pro Bono Rule** – The Louisiana Supreme Court entered an order adopting a major disaster rule in April 2011, becoming the 12th U.S. jurisdiction to do so. The rule, based upon the ABA Model Court Rule on Provision of Legal Services Following Determination of Major Disaster, permits attorneys licensed in other jurisdictions to provide pro bono legal service after declaration of an emergency. For more information, contact Monte Mollere, Louisiana State Bar Association Access to Justice Director, at mmollere@lsba.org or 504/619-0146.

✎ **Tennessee Launches Website Providing Legal Assistance** – OnlineTNJustice.org, a joint project of the Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services and the Tennessee Bar Association, is a virtual walk-in clinic through which income qualifying clients can request brief advice and counsel about a

specific civil legal matter. Volunteer lawyers will provide basic legal advice without expectation of long-term representation. For more information, contact Sarah Hayman, Access to Justice/Public Education Coordinator, Tennessee Bar Association, at shayman@tnbar.org or 615/383.7421.

## Access to Justice Update

📌 **27 U.S. Jurisdictions Have Established Access to Justice Commissions** – As of July 2011, 26 states and the District of Columbia have operating Access to Justice Commissions. These blue-ribbon commissions or similar formal entities are comprised of leaders representing, at a minimum, the state courts, the organized bar and legal aid providers. An ATJ Commission's core charge, provided by or recognized by the highest court in the jurisdiction, is to expand access to civil justice at all levels for low-income and disadvantaged people by assessing their civil legal needs, developing strategies to meet them and evaluating progress. Its primary activities relate to planning, education, resource development, coordination, delivery system enhancement, and oversight; it is not primarily a funder or direct provider of legal assistance. For more information, contact Bob Echols, State Support Consultant, ABA Resource Center on Access to Justice Initiatives, at robert.echols@comcast.net or 207/833-7869.

📌 **State Access to Justice Leaders Gather in Las Vegas** – On May 21, 2011, 120 judges, bar leaders, funders, legal aid representatives and other stakeholders from 35 states and the District of Columbia participated in the tenth annual ABA sponsored National Meeting of State Access to Justice Chairs. Nevada Supreme Court Chief Justice Michael Douglas provided welcome remarks. In a plenary session, New York Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman, in conversation with Helaine Barnett, chair of the Supreme Court Task Force to Expand Access to Civil Legal Services in New York, described his successful efforts to make the case for the need for new funding for civil legal aid in the courts' budget. California Court of Appeal Judge Laurie Zelon, chair of the California Judicial Council's Family Law Task Force, spoke on "Courts for the 21st Century: New Challenges, New Partnerships." In addition, various discussion groups and workshop sessions were held for the participants. For more information, contact Bob Echols, State Support Consultant, ABA Resource Center on Access to Justice Initiatives, at robert.echols@comcast.net or 207/833-7869.



### Washington Update

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On July 13, 2011, the House Appropriations Committee marked up the FY2012 funding bill for the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies. The bill included \$300 million for the Legal Services Corporation, a drastic reduction of \$104 million from the FY2011 level. The entire reduction comes from the basic field services, which is reduced by 27.5% - from \$378 million to \$274 million. It is unclear at this time if the House will bring the CJS bill to the floor before its August 5 recess date. The Senate subcommittee has not drafted its bill yet, and it is highly unlikely that the Senate will act before the August recess. It is expected that the White House will strongly defend its request of \$450 million for 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 312-988-5483 or email Bev.Groudine@americanbar.org.