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Funding News

👉 **Colorado Becomes the 19th State to Adopt a *Cy Pres* Rule/Statute for Legal Aid** - The Colorado Supreme Court has revised Colorado Rule of Civil Procedure 23(g) to provide that, in class action cases where the claims process has been exhausted and residual funds remain, not less than fifty percent (50%) of the residual funds shall be disbursed to the Colorado Lawyer Trust Account Foundation (COLTAF). The funds are to be used to support activities and programs that promote access to the civil justice system for low income residents of Colorado. This revision becomes effective July 1, 2016. As noted above, 18 other states have adopted similar court rules or legislatively enacted statutes, which provide critical funding for legal aid while at the same time providing a balanced resolution to what otherwise can often become a thorny issue in class action litigation. For more information about this rule change, contact Diana Poole, Executive Director, COLTAF, at diana@legalaidfoundation.org or 303/863-9544. For more information about *cy pres* rule and statute changes generally, contact Meredith McBurney, Resource Development Consultant, ABA Resource Center for ATJ Initiatives, at meredithmcburney@msn.com or 303/329-8091.

👉 **California Rural Legal Services Shares in Generous *Cy Pres* Award** - California Rural Legal Services (CRLS) has been awarded \$800,000 in residual funds that will be used to support its mission of helping low-income individuals and communities in rural California. The funds resulted from the settlement in the Providian Credit Card Case, which was originally approved on November 8, 2001. The case is based on claims that the credit card company unfairly added on services and other unlawful interest rate practices against their customers. Following settlement and payout to the class, the remaining, unclaimed settlement funds of \$3.2 million were designated to CRLA and three other organizations equally. The other organizations receiving shares of the funds are the East Bay Community Law Center Consumer Debt Clinic, the Justice and Diversity Center of the Bar Association of San Francisco - Consumer Project, and the National Consumer Law Center. For more information, contact Jose Padilla, Executive Director, California Rural Legal Services, at jpadilla@crla.org or 510/267-0762.

Pro Bono Developments

👉 **Maryland Publishes 2014 Pro Bono Status Report** - The Maryland Judiciary recently published a report of Maryland lawyers' pro bono activity in 2014. Although pro bono service in Maryland is voluntary, Rule 16-903 (effective since 2002) requires all attorneys to annually report on their pro bono activities. Of the full-time licensed attorneys, 53.8 percent reported having performed some measure of pro bono activity throughout the year. A total of 1,144,952 hours of pro bono service were logged. The report also presents information on attorney characteristics; location, beneficiaries, and practice area information about the services provided; and pro bono service differences by firm type and size. For more information, contact Sharon Goldsmith, Executive Director, Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland, at sgoldsmith@probonomd.org or 410/837-9379.

👉 **North Carolina Pro Bono Resource Center Names its First Director** - The North Carolina Equal Access to Justice Commission has hired Sylvia Novinsky, assistant dean for Public Service Programs at the University of North Carolina School of Law, to serve as the North Carolina Pro Bono Resource Center Director. The newly-established Center will be one of only a handful of statewide pro bono resource centers in the country. Among the first tasks of the Center will be to develop pro



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bono projects to match unmet legal needs with recent law school graduates. For more information, contact Jennifer Lechner, Executive Director, North Carolina Access to Justice Commission, at lechner@ncequalaccesstojustice.org or 919-987-3007.

👉 **Connecticut Considering Military Spouse Practice Rule** - If the recent recommendations of the Rules Committee of the Superior Court are adopted, it will be much easier for the spouse of a transferred active military member to practice law in Connecticut, including providing pro bono legal services. Specifically, the Rules Committee recommended to the Bar Examining Committee that a licensed attorney who is the spouse of a transferred active military member be permitted to practice in Connecticut without being required to take the Connecticut bar exam. The ability to practice would encompass and encourage pro bono participation. Since 2012, rule revisions similar to this one, which was proposed by the Connecticut Bar Association's Veterans and Military Affairs Section, have been adopted in 16 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Currently, in addition to Connecticut, 14 other states are considering taking similar action. For more information, contact Emily Trudeau, CBA Veterans and Military Affairs Section, at emily.trudeau@ct.gov or 203/579-6506.

Conference of Note

👉 **2016 Equal Justice Conference is Scheduled for May 12-14 in Chicago** - 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

Last month, President Obama recommended \$475 million in funding for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) for FY2017, an increase of \$90 million over current funding. The recommendation includes \$439.3 million for basic field grants, which fund the delivery of civil legal assistance to low-income Americans, and \$19.5 million for management and grants oversight. It also includes \$5 million for LSC's Technology Initiative Grants (TIG), \$5 million for its Pro Bono Innovation Fund, \$1 million for the Herbert L. Garten Loan Repayment Assistance Program, and \$5.2 million for the Office of Inspector General.

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.