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Funding News

➤ **State Legislative Funding for Legal Aid Increased in Eight States in 2016** – This was a relatively good year, with increases reported in 11 states and no decreases (although many states that receive their state funding from filing fees continue to see reductions due to fewer filings). New York led the way, adding \$15 million to its appropriation. Other increases included California (a one-time \$5 million increase in its appropriations); Connecticut (approximately \$1 million additional annually due to changes in the court fees); Hawaii (\$150,000 more in appropriations); Massachusetts (\$1 million more in appropriations); Nebraska (an additional \$1 filing fee surcharge, expected to raise up to \$500,000 more annually); North Carolina (\$100,000 to Pisgah Legal Services to serve veterans); Oregon (a one-time additional appropriation of \$200,000 for work on housing issues); Pennsylvania (a \$200,000 appropriation increase); Washington (an additional \$537,000 annually to offset increased costs of operations); and Wyoming (\$241,000 more in FY2016 and an additional \$100,000 per year for the 2017-18 biennium). For more information about state legislative funding, contact Meredith McBurney, Resource Development Consultant, ABA Resource Center for ATJ Initiatives, at meredithmcburney@msn.com or 303/329-8091.

➤ **IOLTA Income Sees Small Increase While IOLTA Grants Continue to Decline** - Data collected by the ABA Commission on IOLTA reveals that in 2015, IOLTA income nationwide was \$78 million. That figure represents a modest 3.75% increase from the previous year and is the first year an increase has been seen since 2007. Given that the Federal Funds Target Rate did not increase until December 2015, this increase in IOLTA income is likely due to higher principal balances held in some IOLTA accounts and increased participation by financial institutions in honor roll programs. Unfortunately, there was not a corresponding increase in grants for legal aid: between 2014 and 2015 they declined by 7%. This was due largely to the fact that many programs pay grants from the previous year's income, as well as because most IOLTA programs had exhausted their reserves, which were used in the past to help stabilize grants. For more information, contact Bev Groudine, Counsel, ABA Commission on IOLTA, at bev.groudine@americanbar.org or 312/988-5771.

Pro Bono Developments

➤ **ABAFreeLegalAnswers Launches in 19 States** - The American Bar Association has launched its new web program, ABAFreeLegalAnswers.org, to give income eligible users the ability to pose civil legal questions to volunteer attorneys. The new service, a virtual legal advice clinic, is now available in 19 states. States currently online are Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Nebraska, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia and Wyoming. Geared to expand legal services for low-income communities, users of the service will have to meet income eligibility guidelines applicable to each state. While expanding access to legal services, the ABA Free Legal Answers program also expands pro bono opportunities for attorneys in a convenient way to match their schedules. Overall, there are plans to have service available in the majority of states by the end of this year. For additional information, contact Tali Albuherk, National Administrator, at Tali.Albuherk@americanbar.org or 312/988-5704.

➤ **Tennessee Releases 2015 Pro Bono Report** - The Tennessee Supreme Court Access to Justice Commission recently released its 2015 Pro Bono Report. Pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 9, Section 10.10 (effective since 2010), attorneys are asked to file a voluntary report of their pro bono hours with their annual attorney registration. Tennessee attorneys reported 568,170 hours of pro bono services in 2014, an average of 74.61 hours per reporting attorney. Just over 41% of attorneys reported that they had provided some type of pro bono service during 2014. In addition, 18.79% of Tennessee attorneys reported making voluntary financial contributions to organizations that provide legal services to individuals of limited means. The report also includes information about attorney characteristics; types of services provided; continuing legal education credits for pro bono; and the Tennessee Supreme Court's pro bono recognition program. For more information regarding this report, contact Anne-Louise Wirthlin, Access to Justice Coordinator, at anne.louise.wirthlin@tncourts.gov or 615/741-2687.

➤ **Kansas Adopts Military Spouse Rule** - The Kansas Supreme Court adopted a new licensing rule granting a temporary permit to practice law for military spouse attorneys stationed in Kansas alongside their service member. Kansas is the 20th jurisdiction to adopt such a rule. The rule permits an attorney admitted to practice law in another state or the District of Columbia, and who is married to a military service member stationed in Kansas, to be admitted to practice law in the state without the need for an additional bar exam. The spouse must be employed as an attorney by or with an active Kansas attorney in good standing to qualify under the rule. Such rules open the door to local pro bono participation by military spouses. For more information, contact Elizabeth Jamison, Communications Director, Military Spouse JD Network, at communications@msjdn.org.

Washington Update



When Congress returned from its summer recess in September, it enacted a Continuing Resolution (CR) that keeps the government funded through December 9, 2016. Unless another CR is passed, Congress will need to approve by that date the Commerce, Justice, Science & Related Agencies (CJS) FY2016 Appropriations legislation, which includes funding for the Legal Services Corporation. At this juncture, the Senate Appropriations Committee has approved \$395 million for LSC, a \$10 million increase over LSC's current funding. The U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee approved funding legislation that provides only \$350 million for LSC in FY2017. If the discrepancy between the House and Senate Appropriations Committees' numbers remain upon vote of each chamber, a resolution will have to be reached through a conference committee.



The ABA will continue its advocacy for adequate funding for LSC. For more information on the ABA's efforts in this area, contact Aloysius Hogan, Legislative Counsel, ABA Governmental Affairs Office, at Aloysius.Hogan@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.