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## Funding News

✎ **Final State Legislative Funding Results Are In** – Results from the 2011 state legislative sessions indicate that state funding for civil legal aid declined for the first time since the ABA began tracking this key funding source in the late 1990's. New or increased funds were obtained in seven jurisdictions (Alaska, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Nevada, New York and West Virginia), but funding was reduced or eliminated in 18 states. The total net loss was \$2.7 million, out of a total of approximately \$250 million of state funding for legal aid. This was not unexpected, given the financial crises faced by most state governments. And, it could have been far worse. Millions of dollars for civil legal aid were saved through the dedicated leadership and hard work of state supreme courts, bar associations and access to justice commissions around the country. For more information about what can be done to preserve this funding as state budget problems continue, contact Meredith McBurney, Resource Development Consultant, ABA Resource Center for Access to Justice Initiatives, at [meredithmcburney@msn.com](mailto:meredithmcburney@msn.com) or 303/329-8091.

✎ **IOLTA Income Declines in 2010** – Data collected from 50 of the 52 jurisdictions operating IOLTA programs has revealed that in 2010, national IOLTA income fell to about \$95 million, the first time that national figure has been below \$100 million since 1995. This decline is due in large part to the historically low interest rates and to smaller principal balances held in IOLTA accounts. IOLTA programs are using various strategies to try to increase their income including: seeking IOLTA rule or legislative changes to mandatory IOLTA and IOLTA rate comparability, if those strategies are not currently in place; and establishing bank honor roll programs, whereby financial institutions paying a higher rate on IOLTA accounts are provided with recognition. Many IOLTA programs are also working with advocates in their jurisdictions to seek additional funding for legal services through a variety of other sources including state appropriations, filing fee increases, cy pres awards, pro hoc vice rules and bar dues add-ons. For more information about IOLTA, contact Bev Groudine, Staff Counsel, ABA Commission on IOLTA, at [Bev.Groudine@americanbar.org](mailto:Bev.Groudine@americanbar.org) or 312/988-5771.

✎ **Law Firm Donates \$1 Million Fee to Illinois Advocates for the Disabled** – The Chicago office of SNR Denton recently received nearly \$1 million in attorneys' fees awarded in a settlement of a pro bono case on behalf of developmentally disabled residents of Illinois. The firm donated those fees to Equip for Equality, the Illinois program that advocates for the disabled and had asked the firm to participate in the case. In an article in *The National Law Journal*, SNR Denton's Chicago managing partner, John Grossbart, said, "It was always our view that to really make it effective, truly pro bono, from the get go, we should make it clear we will not be taking any fee if we win the case or get a great result in the case. We think that's consistent with the notion of making it pro bono." For more information, contact Zena Naiditch, President and CEO, Equip for Equality, at [zena@equipforequality.org](mailto:zena@equipforequality.org) or 312/341-0022.

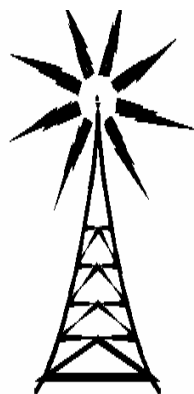
## Pro Bono Developments

✎ **Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Establishes Pro Bono Recognition Program** - The newly established Pro Bono Recognition Program, to be administered by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Services, will honor law firms, solo practitioners, government attorneys, non-profit organizations and law school faculties who provide significant pro bono services. To qualify, the lawyer, firm or organization must certify that the pro bono legal services hours provided per attorney are at least 50 in a year, or that more than 75 percent of the Massachusetts

attorneys of the firm or organization have provided at least 25 pro bono hours in a year. For additional information, contact Carol Lev, Coordinator of Program and Policy Development, Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, at [carol.lev@sjc.state.ma.us](mailto:carol.lev@sjc.state.ma.us) or 617-557-1074.

📌 **Minnesota Justice Foundation Uses Technology to Serve Rural Veterans** – The Minnesota Justice Foundation is using video technology to link homeless veterans in Duluth with volunteer bankruptcy lawyers in Minneapolis, bringing resources to areas with fewer attorneys. Law students from Minneapolis traveled to Duluth to assist legal aid attorneys in performing intake there. Clients meet with volunteer attorneys via interactive TV, the same technology that is used at Minnesota courthouses. For additional information, contact Sara Sommarstrom, Vetlaw Director, Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans, at [ssommarstrom@mac-v.org](mailto:ssommarstrom@mac-v.org) or 651-224-0292.

📌 **Collaborative Effort to Assist Low-Income Seniors to Begin in Florida** – The Senior Citizen Wills and Advance Directives Pro Bono Project, to be held during the 2011 National Pro Bono Celebration week, will provide advance directive documents drafted and executed on site. Support from the Florida Bar General Practice, Solo and Small Firm Section will provide remote technology allowing seniors to leave the clinic with the documentation necessary to organize their affairs, protect their rights and make informed decisions about their healthcare, property and family. The venture is a collaboration between the Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, the Jacksonville Bar Association Elder Law Section, service coordinators at residential centers, Florida Coastal School of Law, and the Northeast Florida Paralegal Association. For additional information contact Kathy Para, Chairwoman, JBA Pro Bono Committee, at [kathy.para@jaxlegalaid.org](mailto:kathy.para@jaxlegalaid.org) or 356-8371, ext. 363.



## WASHINGTON UPDATE

### Washington Update

On September 15, 2011, the Senate Appropriations Committee marked up the FY2012 funding bill for the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS). The bill includes \$396 million for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), which is a 2% decrease from the FY2011 level of \$404 million. In July, the House Appropriations Committee recommended a much steeper cut in LSC funding for FY2012 – to a level of \$300 million. Because it will not be possible to pass a budget by September 30<sup>th</sup> when the fiscal year ends, appropriators in both the Senate and the House are preparing a Continuing Resolution (CR) to keep the government running.

The American Bar Association, state bar associations, access to justice commissions and other LSC advocates will be hard at work in the next months to obtain the maximum funding possible for LSC. For more information, contact Ann Carmichael, Legislative Counsel, ABA Governmental Affairs Office, at [Ann.Carmichael@americanbar.org](mailto: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](mailto:Bev.Groudine@americanbar.org).