

JUSTICE – ILAG

LEGAL AID NEWSLETTER

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R. Smith

International Developments in Legal Aid - January 2011

Major themes of the issue

Welcome to the new look newsletter on legal aid developments. This covers events in November and December 2011. Alas, one step forward so often leads to half a step back and the website is currently recovering from a major malfunction. However, this will keep you up-to-date with the most recent developments while the website is fixed. The two contributions cover the use of new ways of delivering services in Ontario and provide a summary of proposals for fundamental reform of the legal aid system in England and Wales. It seems unlikely that 2011 will provide much good news, at least from those countries where economies have come under threat from the current financial crisis. One of the few bright lights might come from a greater realisation of the benefits of new technology. Thus, the two contributions this issue may well provide a fair introduction to what is to come. In any event, from a London where the snow has melted and there is just the betraying hint, just for the moment, of a false spring which has no chance of being sustained, happy new year.

Contributions

Contribution 1:

Applying New Client Service Technologies Legal Aid Ontario, Canada

By Charles Lafortune, Director, Strategic Technology and Innovation

Client service expectations and a need to demonstrate value for tax dollars continues to shape how legal services are delivered by public agencies in the social justice sector. Clients expect

and require an engagement that is simple and transparent and which is responsive to their needs.

Service delivery mechanisms that are fully accessible, standardized and permit a seamless client service interaction are most valued. New, innovative uses of technology often allows for a detailed measurement of operational efficiency that helps lower the cost of each client transaction while meeting or exceeding client service expectations.

In December 2008, Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) launched a toll-free help line that is today a major service access point. The help line is staffed by more than 70 employees networked from locations across the province. On an annualized basis, the help line assists over 318,000 individuals. A wide range of services are available in over 120 languages, including 18 aboriginal languages and dialects.

A call centre infrastructure helps LAO increase efficiency in service delivery and makes the legal system more accessible to low income individuals. To best meet client needs, staff who respond to client calls are organized into service tiers:

- Tier 1 assists clients with general information, referrals and performs client triage;
- Tier 2 provides application services so that eligible clients may receive full representation;
- Tier 3 provides summary legal advice services in criminal and family law.

Technological solutions assist in providing an enhanced client service experience. Interactive

Voice Response (IVR) systems are being introduced and expanded so that clients may receive automated services from the help line, 24-hours a day. A new feature permits clients who do not wish to wait on the line to determine eligibility for full representation to be connected to the next available representative via an automated call back without losing their place in the queue. The technology also permits the prioritization of calls. Persons who are victims of domestic violence experience a shorter wait time than persons who are requesting general information, for example.

New, web-based software solutions form the backbone to the service. Though the client may not be aware of their existence, core software tools are critical to the effective delivery of timely and accurate information to clients. For example, as the representatives who handle the calls are located across the province, controlled use of instant messaging and social media software permits immediate staff or management engagement in situations where help is needed to respond to a client's query. At the same time, the use of innovations, like Google mapping, allow representatives to locate specific community resources for clients and even provide clients with specific directions to help the client reach the destination. As the information in these systems are maintained by staff in their local communities, accurate information is guaranteed. What is more, the system can easily be converted into a client-facing self-help tool that allows for client self-service

over the internet.

When selecting supporting hardware and software infrastructure, the focus has been to engage inexpensive, secure products that provide flexibility in configuration. We have found that there is no one silver bullet. An original attempt to move to a pure VOIP infrastructure (voice over internet protocol) resulted in a greater number of dropped calls than anticipated. However, a mix of hard lines and VOIP usage has proven to be the most reliable mix. Representatives use softphones, which have a computer screen interface. Testing is planned to provide representatives with more than one computer screen so that call management does not interfere with the delivery of substantive client services.

At all times, call center management best practices are emphasized to maximize effectiveness and value. Key performance indicators and relevant service guidelines include wait times that average less than three minutes and an abandonment rate of less than 10%. Call volume forecasts are updated daily and the appropriate resources deployed to meet the anticipated demand.

Though TTY (Teletypewriter for speech or deaf impaired) enabled, the help-line is challenged in instances where the client is unable to communicate over the telephone. For example, the client may not be able to read a document that he

or she has received, or may have a cognitive difficulty.

LAO does not intend for our web-based and phone services to be the only service access points for our clients. Clients who are unable to access toll-free services can also access services in LAO courthouse locations, Duty Counsel, District Offices, and staff-operated Family Law Service Centers. The objective is to create strong links among service streams to increase continuity of service, reduce duplication and reduce the number of court appearances.

Nonetheless, LAO's ability to meet client needs and expectations is intrinsically related to our ability to embrace technological opportunities and adopt new ways of doing business. Our clients are web savvy and are accustomed to having access to a wealth of information via the internet. In fact, over 44% of clients who contact the help line obtain the telephone number from the internet. Many clients contact us from mobile or smartphones.

To keep up with client service expectations and continue to meet requirements for value-driven service delivery, LAO will continue to assess and analyze specific technological developments in the areas of mobility, software applications, enterprise systems, e-discovery data processing, social media and collaborative platforms. A perpetual review of our technology infrastructure ensures opportunities

for the enhancement of client service are harnessed.

The LAO experience demonstrates that advancements in technology and the sophisticated

capabilities associated with those advancements present powerful opportunities that, if properly harnessed, contribute to excellent client service and provide immense return on investment of scarce tax dollars.

Contribution 2:

Proposals for the Reform of Legal Aid in England and Wales: A Summary

By Roger Smith

1. The UK Ministry of Justice released a consultation paper on cuts to legal aid in November 2010. The return date for responses is 14th February 2010. The proposed cuts are extensive and, if implemented, will cut the cost of legal aid in England and Wales by almost a quarter. Legal aid currently around £2bn per year.
2. The paper is available on the Ministry's website together with various assessments of the impact of the proposals: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/legal-aid-reform-151110.htm>. The proposals may well have an international influence because of the extent to which developments to the UK systems of legal aid are monitored by other jurisdictions. Domestically, the proposals are highly controversial.
3. In essence, the paper proposes:
 - (a) cuts to eligibility and scope;
 - (b) reductions in remuneration;
 - (c) changes to delivery systems.
4. The background to the paper is the UK government's desire to reduce government spending overall. Most departments have been required to make cuts of comparable levels. The Minister, Ken Clarke, argues in the document itself that:
 1. legal aid has expanded to cases that 'should not require legal expertise to resolve';

2. this has encouraged unnecessary recourse to the courts 'even sometimes when the courts are not well placed to provide the best solutions';
3. the consequence has been overfunding;
4. There is a need to contribute to government cuts;
5. This is part of a wider programme of reform including implementation of a report on the funding of civil cases ('the Jackson report', sentencing reform and family law reform, greater use of mediation in civil cases and reform of criminal justice procedures.
6. There is a need to go back to 'basic principles'.

5. The Ministry's own assessment of the impact of its proposals is:

1. Cuts to clients services will be £286-251m (including £4-11 estimate of payment of increased contributions). 512,000-450,000 will come out of scope; 8000 clients will pay increased contributions; 2-4,000 will lose eligibility on financial grounds.
2. Legal aid providers will get £114-54m less for the same level of services. £41m will be saved on civil fees. £95m on criminal. £8m will be shaved off expert fees. The telephone advice proposals may save up to £10m.
3. Planning assumption is no uprating for inflation over next four years to 2014-5
4. Impact on clients 'case outcomes may be less fair than beforehand'.
5. There may be less use of courts and tribunals. Might be an increase in litigants in person but 'it has been assumed that on balance any such effect should not have a significant impact on ongoing court or tribunal operating costs'.
6. Estimated that the proposals will reduce legal representation (aid) closed cases by 44 per cent and legal help by 68 per cent.
7. Assumption is implementation of fee cuts to practitioners and experts and implementation of supplementary legal aid scheme in 2011, the rest in 2012.
8. Small firms may be disproportionately affected and the impact will be considered later.
9. The proposals have been subject to a 'Human Rights screening' to ensure compliance with HRA
10. Of the clients affected, 27 per cent will be black and ethnic minority and 57 per cent female. People with a disability will also be hit by proposals such as that to cut assistance with education issues.

6. The aim is to target legal aid ‘to those who need it most’. And to contribute to departmental savings of £2bn overall, 23 per cent of its current budget (largely for legal aid, prisons, probation and the courts), by an estimated £350m in 2014-5. Those responding should, says the paper, bear ‘the overall fiscal context firmly in mind’. However, the case for reform is independent of cost savings.

7. The fundamental considerations of the proposals are:

- to reduce unnecessary litigation, to encourage people to take more personal responsibility; to take advantage of alternatives;
- to reduce costs in criminal justice through removal of perverse incentives;
- to provide alternative market mechanisms
- to uphold international and human rights obligations

These reforms ‘complement the wider strategy for reform across many elements of civil, criminal and family justice’ though they are ‘stand alone’ as well.

8. Current cost of legal aid is 2008-9 is

<u>Criminal</u>	<u>£m</u>
Advice	192
Magistrates courts	291
Crown Court etc	699
Total	1182

<u>Civil (net)</u>	<u>£m</u>
Help	257
Representation	660
Total	917

Total all **2108**

9. Chapter 4 of the consultation paper deals with the issue of scope. Criminal scope is preserved. Significant cuts are proposed for civil cases. Decision has been made on the basis of

- Importance of the issue;
- The litigant's ability to present their own case;
- The availability of alternative funding;
- The availability of alternative routes to resolution;
- Domestic, European and international obligations.

10. The biggest single cut will be cases relating to ancillary relief in divorce cases where there is no allegation of domestic violence. The result is that the following cases remain in the scheme:

- Asylum but not applications for asylum support.
- Claims against public authorities where they concern abuse of position of power and/or significant breach of human rights; and/or negligent acts or omissions falling very far below the required standard of care.
- Claims arising from allegations of abuse and sexual assault.
- Community care.
- Debt where client's home at risk.
- Domestic violence and family mediation in private law family cases.
- Housing possession cases, counterclaims for disrepair in possession cases; homelessness appeals; serious housing disrepair; county court ASBOs.
- Immigration detention.
- International child abduction and international family maintenance.
- Mental health.
- Public law
- Public law children and separately represented children in private law cases.
- Enforcement of EU judgments.
- A number of miscellaneous cases including advice for inquests but generally not representation.

Among the major exclusions will be:

- Ancillary relief where no domestic violence.

- Clinical negligence.
- Consumer and general contract.

- Legal help for criminal injuries compensation.
- Debt where home not at risk.
- Education.
- Employment.
- Housing matters not included above.
- Immigration where no detention.
- Private law family and children cases where no domestic violence.
- Welfare benefits.
- Appeals to the Upper Tribunal from the General Regulatory Chamber of the First Tier Tribunal.

11. The paper proposes that all access to civil legal aid to be via call centre – the Community Legal Advice (CLA) line. Only in exceptional cases will a prospective client be able to go to a lawyer direct. CLA operators will only transfer to contracted legal aid providers where satisfied the applicant is eligible and in scope. However, ‘Face to face provision will be available where cases are too complex to be dealt with appropriately or where the client’s specific needs would not be met (for example due to mental impairment)’. In addition to this statutory service, the CLA provider will be able to be paid referral fee to commercial providers of services.

12. The paper proposes cuts to civil financial eligibility of income and capital. It also proposes increased contributions from those eligible. The position in crime will be reviewed in 2012 after evaluation of the newly introduced Crown Court means test.

13. Competitive tendering will be introduced for criminal cases and subsequently extend to civil. In the interim, various remuneration rates will be cut. In civil cases, the cut will be 10 per cent across the board.

14. The paper expresses an interest in requiring solicitors to pay income on client accounts ('trust accounts in the US) and possibly a supplementary legal aid scheme where a percentage on civil damages was also taken for funding.

15. The government intends to proceed with the reform proposed by the last government of abolishing the quasi-autonomous status of the Legal Services Commission though it promises that 'individual funding decisions should continue to be made fairly and objectively under agency status'. 'The government is also considering whether further safeguards should be in place to distance ministers from the day to day decisions being taken by the executive agency on individual cases'.

News

These reports are largely compiled from news reports on the internet on the basis of a simple search under the words 'legal aid'. Readers must, just as buyers, beware of authenticity. The links worked at the time of writing but some will fail after a period of time. This section is compiled by Paul Ferrie of the University of Strathclyde.

The last two months have seen some interesting legal aid developments across the globe. In other jurisdictions, such as Australia and New Zealand however, legal aid related news has been reasonably quiet. In Canada, it appears that the problems with legal aid continue. In Botswana, Gambia and Nigeria, improving access to justice seems to be a major focus and from the news articles below, this is evident. In India too, the legal aid system seems to be significantly improving with various new projects starting. Interesting developments may soon occur in the Philippines, with the possibility of a legal aid treaty, and also in Rwanda with the development of criminal legal aid. The news from England and Wales remains to be dominated by the cuts to the legal aid budget, and what effect this may or may not have on those who need legal assistance and also the effect on legal profession. In Scotland, there is also some discussion regarding the cuts to legal aid. In other Scottish news, the Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB) has become responsible for granting criminal legal aid in solemn cases, *LawWorks* has been launched and the first appeal based on the *Cadder* case has been allowed. Finally, across the United States, numerous projects have been launched or expanded with the aim of improving access to justice and legal aid delivery. The most significant of these developments in the United States is arguably the announcement of Walmart's pro bono legal services program.

Australia:

Legal Aid to represent man despite budget shortfall – ABC News – 24/11/10

Read more: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/11/24/3075512.htm>

Botswana:

Bonela, private lawyers kick start legal aid – The Botswana Gazette – 23/11/10

Read more: http://gazettebw.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8126:bonela-private-lawyers-kick-start-legal-aid-&catid=18:headlines&Itemid=2

Canada:

Answers required about legal aid funding crisis – Canada.com Daily News – 10/11/10

Read more: <http://www.canada.com/Answers+required+about+legal+funding+crisis/3876698/story.html>

N.W.T.'s outsourcing of legal aid criticized – CBC News – 19/11/10

Read more: <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/north/story/2010/11/19/nwt-legal-aid-arrests.html>

Legal Aid to recoup costs from parents who won't pay for child's lawyer – Winnipeg Free Press – 24/11/10

Read more: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/Legal-Aid-to-recoup-costs-from-parents-who-wont-pay-for-childs-lawyer-110477719.html>

Where does the buck stop with Legal Aid? - Winnipeg Free Press – 2/12/10

Read more: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/premium/where-does-the-buck-stop-with-legal-aid-111180379.html>

Judge vows not to let Legal Aid off the hook - Winnipeg Free Press – 3/12/10

Read more: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/judge-vows-not-to-let-legal-aid-off-the-hook-111257314.html>

Legal aid tab for refugees hits \$15M – Toronto Sun - 6/12/10

Read more: <http://www.torontosun.com/news/canada/2010/12/06/16450366.html>

Legal aid faces 'serious issues,' judge says – CBC News – 8/12/10

Read more: <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/manitoba/story/2010/12/07/man-legal-aid-charter-grant.html>

England and Wales:

Legal aid clampdown will save £300 million – The Telegraph – 13/11/10

Read more: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/8131306/Legal-aid-clampdown-will-save-300-million.html>

Home owners to be hit in legal aid cuts – The Telegraph – 14/11/10

Read more: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/8132298/Home-owners-to-be-hit-in-legal-aid-cuts.html>

Legal aid 'to be limited to those with under £1,000 in assets' to cut costs – Mail Online – 14/11/10

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1329355/Legal-aid-limited-1-000-assets-cut-costs.html#ixzz19L9kl4U>

British Premier Plans Deep Cuts in Aid for Civil Litigants – The New York Times – 15/11/10

Read more: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/16/world/europe/16britain.html>

MoJ backs Jackson's civil litigation reforms – The Lawyer – 15/11/10

Read more: <http://www.thelawyer.com/moj-backs-jacksons-civil-litigation-reforms/1006125.article>

Legal aid gravy train has not yet ground to a halt – Mail Online – 16/11/10

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-1330170/Legal-aid-gravy-train-ground-halt.html#ixzz19L4xS8sO>

The Epilim case shows the flaws in the legal aid regime – The Guardian – 29/11/10

Read more: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/law/2010/nov/29/epilim-legal-aid-flaws>

Legal aid commission "must do better" – Public Service.co.uk – 30/11/10

Read more: http://www.publicservice.co.uk/news_story.asp?id=14879

NAO: Legal aid overpayments treble – The Press Association – 30/11/10

Read more:

http://www.google.com/hostednews/ukpress/article/ALegM5iQDm7wN_dtnl_fDPi9YKMNmLOUlw?docId=N0354971291119054423A

Be realistic about legal aid cuts – Law Society Gazette – 2/12/10

Read more: <http://www.lawgazette.co.uk/opinion/letters/be-realistic-about-legal-aid-cuts>

EU to the rescue on legal aid? – Law Society Gazette – 2/12/10

Read more: <http://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/eu-rescue-legal-aid>

Injustice of legal aid cuts – Law Society Gazette – 2/12/10

Read more: <http://www.lawgazette.co.uk/opinion/letters/injustice-legal-aid-cuts>

Legal aid lawyers were struggling even before the cuts – The Guardian – 3/12/10

Read more: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/law/2010/dec/03/legal-aid-lawyers-struggle>

Institute Supports Matrix Chambers Legal Aid Link Project – PR Newswire – 7/12/10

Read more: <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/institute-supports-matrix-chambers-legal-aid-link-project-111433359.html>

Legal aid cuts 'could cause court delays' – Democracy Live – 13/12/10

Read more: http://news.bbc.co.uk/democracylive/hi/house_of_lords/newsid_9271000/9271820.stm

The legal aid helpline should not be another hurdle for the vulnerable – The Guardian – 13/12/10

Read more: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/law/2010/dec/13/legal-aid-helpline>

Legal aid backlog leaves some defendants unrepresented - Law Society Gazette – 16/12/10

Read more: <http://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/legal-aid-backlog-leaves-some-defendants-unrepresented>

Legal aid tender quality checks 'flawed' – Law Society Gazette – 16/12/10

Read more: <http://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/legal-aid-tender-quality-checks-039flawed039>

MPs warned they will be 'overloaded' due to legal aid cuts – Law Society Gazette – 17/12/10

Read more: <http://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/mps-warned-they-will-be-overloaded-due-legal-aid-cuts>

Big hurdles to leap as big business eyes entry to legal aid sector – The Guardian – 22/12/10

Read more: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/law/2010/dec/22/jon-robins-legal-aid-abs>

Legal aid cuts will hit women the hardest, says justice department – The Guardian – 26/12/10

Read more: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/law/2010/dec/26/legal-aid-cuts-hit-women-justice>

Kingston charities warning on cuts to legal aid – Kingston Guardian – 28/12/10

Read more: http://www.kingstonguardian.co.uk/news/8757800.Charities_warning_on_cuts_to_legal_aid/

Gambia:

Govt Allocates D1 Million to Legal Aid Agency - Solicitor General Jammeh – All Africa – 26/11/10

Read more: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201011261117.html>

India:

HC launches legal aid for domestic violence victims – The Times of India – 28/11/10

Read more: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/HC-launches-legal-aid-for-domestic-violence-victims/articleshow/7002559.cms#ixzz19L4efxhh>

India to set up legal aid clinics in all villages – Trust Law – 21/12/10

Read more: <http://www.trust.org/trustlaw/news/india-to-set-up-legal-aid-clinics-in-all-villages-report/>

India, Myanmar to sign legal aid agreement – The Times of India – 25/12/10

Read more: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/India-Myanmar-to-sign-legal-aid-agreement/articleshow/7158794.cms>

Government launches 'Nyay Rath' in Jharkhand district – Sify News – 27/12/10

Read more: <http://www.sify.com/news/government-launches-nyay-rath-in-jharkhand-district-news-national-km1qOdahgji.html>

Indonesia:

2010 sees decline in justice and human rights – The Jakarta Post – 23/12/10

Read more: <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/12/23/2010-sees-decline-justice-and-human-rights-report.html>

New Zealand:

Legal aid changes don't address issues - The Manawatu Standard – 1/12/10

Read more: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/manawatu-standard/opinion/4409875/Editorial-Legal-aid-changes-don-t-address-issues>

Nigeria:

Council opens more legal aid offices – Next News – 16/12/10

Read more: http://234next.com/csp/cms/sites/Next/Home/5654708-146/council_opens_more_legal_aid_offices.csp

Northern Ireland:

Barristers hit £50m legal aid jackpot – The Belfast Telegraph – 25/11/10

Read more: <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/barristers-hit-50m-legal-aid-jackpot-15013987.html>

Concerns over access to justice following legal aid changes – Belfast Telegraph – 3/12/10

Read more: <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/concerns-over-access-to-justice-following-legal-aid-changes-15020186.html#ixzz18xOSmPg2>

The Philippines:

PH may invoke legal aid treaty – Philippines Journal Online – 24/12/10

Read more: <http://www.journal.com.ph/index.php/national/24664-ph-may-invoke-legal-aid-treaty.html>

Republic of Ireland:

Improving access to justice through Public Interest Law Alliance – The Irish Times – 8/11/10

Read more: <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2010/1108/1224282860064.html>

Legal aid applicants facing long waits – The Irish Times – 16/12/10

Read more: <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2010/1216/1224285654854.html>

At-risk homeowners wait eight months for legal aid – Independent.ie – 20/12/10

Read more: <http://www.independent.ie/national-news/atrisk-homeowners-wait-eight-months-for-legal-aid-2467201.html>

Rwanda:

Forum Calls for Criminal Legal Aid – All Africa – 17/12/10

Read more: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201012170234.html>

Scotland:

LawWorks is launched in Scotland - The Journal Online – 8/11/10

Read more: <http://www.journalonline.co.uk/News/1008907.aspx>

Paterson to give Hamlyn Lectures - The Journal Online – 11/11/10

Read more: <http://www.journalonline.co.uk/News/1008924.aspx>

Row over legal aid payment figures - The Journal Online – 11/11/10

Read more: <http://www.journalonline.co.uk/News/1008925.aspx>

First appeal allowed on basis of Cadder - The Journal Online – 17/11/10

Read more: <http://www.journalonline.co.uk/News/1008942.aspx>

Legal aid takes 8% cut in spending review – The Journal Online – 17/11/10

Read more: <http://www.journalonline.co.uk/News/1008945.aspx>

Legal aid a little easier in defamation cases - The Journal Online – 23/11/10

Read more: <http://www.journalonline.co.uk/News/1008965.aspx>

SLAB takes over solemn cases – The Journal Online – 25/11/10

Read more: <http://www.journalonline.co.uk/News/1008977.aspx>

Cadder case applied to questioning during drugs search – The Journal Online – 6/12/10

Read more: <http://www.journalonline.co.uk/News/1009047.aspx>

Blow for customers fighting for refund of bank charges – Herald Scotland – 27/12/10

Read more: <http://www.heraldsotland.com/news/home-news/blow-for-customers-fighting-for-refund-of-bank-charges-1.1073576>

Free legal advice service on its way to Scotland – The Scotsman – 13/12/10

Read more: <http://news.scotsman.com/politics/Law-and-Legal-Affairs-Free.6658285.jp>

Civil legal aid granted in Supreme Court cases where there is wider public interest - Scottish Legal Aid Board – 16/12/10

Read more: <http://www.slab.org.uk/news/documents/Casesofwiderpublicinterest-16.12.pdf>

Legal aid spending unchanged, Board's annual report reveals – The Journal Online – 16/12/10

Read more: <http://www.journalonline.co.uk/News/1009090.aspx>

Lawyers fury at plan for cut-price justice - The Scotsman – 19/12/10

Read more: <http://news.scotsman.com/scotland/Lawyers-fury-at-plan-for.6665430.jp>

United States:

Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice to begin new project through the Legal Assistance for Victims Grant – Asian Journal – 8/11/10

Read more: <http://www.asianjournal.com/community/community-news/7690-los-angeles-center-for-law-and-justice-to-begin-new-project-through-the-legal-assistance-for-victims-grant.html>

Legal Aid launches legal service for veterans - The Charleston Gazette – 10/11/10

Read more: <http://sundaygazette.com/News/201011100894>

Utah courts expand legal-aid program – The Salt Lake Tribune – 22/11/10

Read more: <http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/home/50725013-76/legal-self-program-utah.html.csp>

Walmart Announces Pro Bono Legal Services Program – PR Newswire – 22/11/10

Read more: http://www.marketwatch.com/story/walmart-announces-pro-bono-legal-services-program-2010-11-22?reflink=MW_news_stmp

Orange County explores second Legal Aid Society - Mid-Hudson News Network – 30/11/10

Read more: http://www.midhudsonnews.com/News/2010/November/30/OC_LegalAid-30Nov10.html

Judge Proposes Increase in Civil Legal Aid – WNYC News – 1/12/10

Read more: <http://www.wnyc.org/articles/wnyc-news/2010/dec/01/more-legal-representation-civil-cases-could-be-way/>

New law firm seeks client who can't afford a lawyer - The Baltimore Sun – 4/12/10

Read more: <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/anne-arundel/bs-md-ar-manck-law-20101204,0,5617734.story>

Justice: More legal help for low-income New Yorkers? – City Newspaper – 15/12/10

Read more: <http://www.rochestercitynewspaper.com/news/articles/2010/12/JUSTICE-More-legal-help-for-low-income-New-Yorkers/>

Time to demystify legal aid eligibility – Freep – 20/12/10

Read more: <http://www.freep.com/article/20101220/OPINION01/12200315/1322/Time-to-demystify-legal-aid-eligibility>

Final Note

This newsletter has been compiled by **Roger Smith** of **JUSTICE** in London, UK. If you would like to be taken off the circulation list, add someone or contribute some content, please contact Roger by emailing rsmith@justice.org.uk.