

JUSTICE-ILAG
Legal Aid Newsletter
May and June 2009

Opening note

Welcome from London - where work is impeded by the heatwave which always takes us by surprise at this time of year and hysteria that the only Brit still standing in the Wimbledon Tennis Championships might finally be beaten only at a satisfactorily late stage of the tournament. This newsletter makes a further move towards a greater collaborative effort by correspondents around the globe and thanks are due to Ab Currie from Canada, Rusudan Tabatadze from Georgia and Richard Moorhead from Wales for their contributions. Please do volunteer a piece – a summary of developments, an important case or a paper or publication: the shorter, the better. The next edition will be sent out at the beginning of September.

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1. Theme of the Issue

News hotspots continue to be those jurisdictions where the legal profession grows restive under the yoke of cuts. Ontario's lawyers are, to all intents and purposes, repeating the English lawyers' rebellion against law fees in what are known here as 'very high cost cases'. New Zealand legal aid practitioners are similarly unhappy. Australian lawyers remain unsatisfied even with a slight hike in funds. The US still ponders the effect of an Obama administration taking office in the face of unprecedented economic meltdown, in legal services as elsewhere. Meanwhile, green shoots emerge in some surprising places. A Chinese official argues for more funding; Sierra Leone's Bar establishes a legal aid scheme. And the Philippine Supreme Court takes a hard line on mandatory pro bono, demanding 60 years legal aid assistance from every lawyer from next January. Georgia's success in establishing a public defender scheme in somewhat difficult circumstances is charted below.

2. Reports from Correspondents

Georgian Legal Aid Service Celebrates Second Birthday

In July this Year, the Legal Aid Service (LAS) celebrates its second anniversary. The Service coordinates the legal aid system of the country as an autonomous agency under the Ministry of Corrections and Legal Assistance. It was established in July 2007 upon adoption of the new law on legal aid. According to the law, legal advice on any legal matters is accessible for everyone despite of the social status of the person, while legal representation is provided for indigent persons on criminal cases only. In Georgia, with its population of 4 million, legal aid is provided through a mixed scheme of Legal Aid Delivery – full time, salaried lawyers in 12 Legal Aid Offices throughout the country and about 120 contracted private lawyers who are paid per case according to complexity of the case. In 2008, legal aid lawyers defended interests of clients on up to 11,000 criminal cases and more than 4,000 legal consultations were rendered. The Service operates through 12 regional offices with up to 120 contracted lawyers and covers almost the whole country. More info about developments within the Georgian legal aid system can be obtained on www.legalaid.ge

Mobile legal aid

The Legal Aid Service tries to keep a dialogue with the population by means of “mobile legal aid” project. Regional legal aid offices organize meetings with rural population with help of the local self-governing agencies, different vulnerable groups like Internally Displaced Persons or refugees etc. At the meetings, public lawyers and legal advisors discuss legal topics and distribute information brochures and fliers on various legal topics. Meetings with high school pupils are organized in schools. The aim is to raise legal awareness of the school children and prevention of crime. As a result of the direct communication with the population, the service gains the serious experience in better understanding of the needs for legal assistance what helps to improve the quality of service rendered.

Evaluation and performance standards for its public lawyers

The effectiveness of the legal aid system is defined by the quality of the service provided by its lawyers. That’s why the Legal Aid Service is working on two documents that aim at enhancing effectiveness of the Service - a new system of evaluation and advocacy standards. The evaluation scheme is aimed at regulating professional promotion, disciplinary liability, bonuses and trainings within the LAS system. The draft document bases the assessment on five criteria: involvement in court hearings, achieved outcomes of the case, professional skills and clients’ opinion. Assessment is made partly by the head of the legal aid office (on regional levels) and partly by external lawyers members of the Monitoring division of the Legal Aid Service.

A guidebook-type document setting out standards of performance for legal aid lawyers will soon be adopted. It is very process-oriented and stipulates expected behaviour of the public lawyer on different stages of criminal proceedings and in various conditions, as well as the basic principles of avoiding conflict of interest, confidentiality protection, relationships between lawyer and client and lawyer and general public etc.

Rusudan Tabatadze, Director Legal Aid Service. Since writing this article, Ms Tabatadze has resigned her post.

Summary of On-going Research in Access to Justice, Department of Justice Canada **The Research and Statistics Division (RSD)**

The Research and Statistics Division in the Department of Justice Canada is the central research function within the department. The mandate of the division is to produce and communicate high quality empirical research and statistical analysis as an integral part of the policy process supporting the Department's strategic outcomes, with an emphasis on ensuring a fair, relevant and accessible justice system. In addition to providing high quality research relevant to a variety of policy areas, RSD provides research and statistical services such as on-line surveying, data analysis and methodological advice to sectors throughout the department. The division has a staff of about 30 researchers and statisticians, publication officers, administrators and student interns. RSD publishes its research results in a variety of formats; on the Department of Justice web site: in four regular research digests; Victim's of Crime Research Digest, JustResearch, JustStats and Research Précis; and in refereed journals and anthologies.

Current Research in Access to Justice

The 2008 National Survey of Justiciable Problems

In-house analysis of the third Canadian survey of legal problems continues, with an emphasis on support for the development of public legal education and information policy.

Legal Aid

The federal legal aid program contributes approximately \$111 million annually to support the provision of criminal legal aid in the 13 provinces and territories. This represents approximately 37% of total expenditures on a national basis. The research projects listed below support federal policy and joint federal-provincial-territorial policy development. Research for the coming year will include five short-term projects. These include 1) the impact of the recession on criminal legal aid, 2) the impact of the recent introduction of mandatory minimum penalties on legal aid costs, 3) a survey of legal aid innovations and programs that support justice system effectiveness and efficiencies, 4) a preliminary assessment of duty counsel services and gaps in service delivery and 5) a preliminary

assessment of financial eligibility guidelines. These are all in the very early stages of development and research designs have not yet been finalized.

The results of these projects will meet immediate policy information requirements. For the longer term, the results of the research are intended to identify priority issues that are of common interest to the legal aid commissions across Canada. A small number of more focussed research projects will be developed to examine the common themes identified in the current short-term research program.

The program of research also includes support for the development of a delivery model in one of the northern territories, based on the principles of the health care delivery system currently operating in the territory. The research support at this early developmental stage is focused on how the results of the overall body of research in civil justice problems, for example; understanding problems from the point of view of the people who experience them, the frequent occurrence of multiple intersecting problems, the intersection of legal and non-legal problems, trigger and cascade effects that can exacerbate the experience of legal problems, the need for a continuum of service approach and early intervention translate well into the primary health care objectives of the medical care model. Continued research will support the implementation and assessment phases of the project.

Research is currently being developed to examine sources of inefficiency in the criminal justice system. This will include a multi-site court study integrating court and prosecution data. As well, efforts are under way to identify and, where possible, carry out limited assessments of the effectiveness of initiatives or projects in the provinces and territories designed to improve justice system effectiveness and efficiency.

Ab Currie, Ministry of Justice, Canada.

3. News: Summaries and Links

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.

Australia

Victoria Legal Aid wins funding increase: <http://www.thenewlawyer.com.au/article/Victorian-legal-aid-funding-needs-federal-backing-LIV/479951.aspx>; but overall position remains perilous: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/business/story/0,28124,25445017-17044,00.html>; Commonwealth government comes through with one-off \$20m package

<http://www.thenewlawyer.com.au/article/Government-comes-through-on-legal-aid/480859.aspx> but fails to appease Victoria's lawyers: <http://www.thenewlawyer.com.au/article/Victoria-loses-out-on-legal-aid-lawyers/481326.aspx> or Australia's <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/business/story/0,28124,25482073-17044,00.html>;

Canada

New Brunswick judges attack cuts to legal aid: <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/new-brunswick/story/2009/05/07/nb-burke-jackson-judge-525.html>; Boycott by senior Ontario criminal legal aid lawyers gathers pace: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/lack-of-legal-aid-leads-court-to-overturn-conviction/article1172577/>; and spreads <http://www.georginaadvocate.com/News/Regional%20News/article/92951>; and spreads <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/more-lawyers-join-boycott-of-legal-aid/article1181959/>; and spreads <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/lawyers-in-kingston-thunder-bay-join-legal-aid-boycott/article1186307/>; Ontario Law Foundation funds articling fellowships to extend legal aid to minority communities: http://www.legalaid.on.ca/en/info/hot_bytes/0905_articlingfellowships.asp. 50 law professors support legal aid boycott and lament damage to legal system by cuts: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/law-professors-support-legal-aid-boycott/article1200141/>;

Cambodia

Cuts to Cambodia Defence Project: <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/index.php/2009060926360/National-news/Legal-aid-group-shuts-two-provincial-offices-due-to-lack-of-funding.html>;

China

Environmental law crusader visits US: http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/thebusinessofgiving/2009250047_courtesy_of_jingjingu_zhang.html; High party official calls for better legal aid: <http://english.cri.cn/6909/2009/06/10/1321s491825.htm>;

England and Wales

Economy hits nationalism as Welsh protest loss of specialist legal aid jobs to England: <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/2009/05/01/mps-attack-plan-to-move-legal-aid-jobs-from-cardiff-91466-23517088/>; environmental cases hit by lack of legal aid: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2009/may/27/justice-community-groups>; means-testing

introduced for Crown Court (higher court) criminal cases: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/jun/08/legal-aid-defendants-representation>; Local concern at impact of competitive tendering on 'e-bay' model: http://www.theargus.co.uk/news/4424402.eBay_style_legal_aid_system_will_put_Sussex_solicitors_out_of_business_/; national concern too: <http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/law/article6523636.ece>; attack on conditional fees as replacement for legal aid: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-1181307/RICHARD-OHAGAN-No-win-fee-farce-deprives-people-legal-rights.html>;

Ethiopia

Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association provides free legal aid to 18,000 destitute women in 2008:

http://www.waltainfo.com/walnew/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=9936&Itemid=45;

Guatemala

Legal activist survives shooting, wins major cases: <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/index.php/2009060926360/National-news/Legal-aid-group-shuts-two-provincial-offices-due-to-lack-of-funding.html>;

India: 'All India child legal aid cell' established: <http://www.samaylive.com/news/ngo-to-run-legal-aid-cell-on-child-rights/627883.html>; Legal aid in Mumbai mainly on civil matters: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Cities/Begging-for-legal-aid/articleshow/4642003.cms>;

Malaysia

Bar calls for government funding for legal aid: http://www.nst.com.my/Current_News/NST/Sunday/National/2545791/Article/index.html; Bar demonstrates on behalf of five arrested legal aid lawyers: <http://www.thesundaily.com/article.cfm?id=33220>; then decides to sue the government on their behalf: <http://www.thesundaily.com/article.cfm?id=33537>; charges now unlikely against the lawyers: <http://www.thesundaily.com/article.cfm?id=33817>; Bar protests on their behalf: <http://www.thesundaily.com/article.cfm?id=34962>;

New Zealand: Defence lawyers seek legal aid for jury profiling: <http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/stories/2009/05/11/1245afc67d67>; Government looking at reducing trials by jury and amending Bill of Rights so that it can save money: <http://tvnz.co.nz/national-news/power-hints-sweeping-changes-2741919>; remuneration rates

cut: <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO0906/S00001.htm>; review ponders case caps in criminal cases: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/crime/2499972/Funding-of-trials-could-be-capped>; judge criticises legal aid as 'national disgrace': <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/crime/2515527/Judge-legal-aid-system-NZ-disgrace>; Bay of Plenty legal aid lawyers protest at pay cut: <http://www.bayofplentytimes.co.nz/local/news/lawyers-to-march-as-legal-aid-cut/3900650/>;

Philippines: Supreme Court, sitting en banc, postpones mandatory requirement on lawyers to undertake 60 hours a year legal aid work until January 2010: <http://www.philstar.com/Article.aspx?articleId=480615&publicationSubCategoryId=200>;

Scotland

Scots Bar leader laments limitations of civil legal aid: <http://news.scotsman.com/scotland/Law-in-the-community.5230786.jp>;

Sierra Leone: Bar association launches legal aid scheme http://www.news.sl/drwebsite/publish/article_200512116.shtml;

South Africa: Legal Aid Board gets makeover, becomes Legal Aid South Africa and gets a new slogan 'Your voice. For justice.' <http://www.legalbrief.co.za/article.php?story=20090629085818830>;

United States

Latino law centre in Oakland, Ca celebrates 40 years since 1969 founding: http://www.insidebayarea.com/oaklandtribune/localnews/ci_12256409; More celebrations for the same birthday for Northwestern Legal Services <http://www.goerie.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090507/NEWS02/305079919/-1/NEWS02>; judicial commission recommends major and far-reaching reform of New York criminal legal aid: http://www.nydailynews.com/opinions/2009/05/07/2009-05-07_new_yorks_poor_deserve_legal_justice_too.html; ABA poll finds two-thirds of public in favour of legal aid funding: <http://stcloud.injuryboard.com/miscellaneous/poll-suggests-that-americans-support-legal-aid-funding-.aspx?googleid=261706>; Florida Bar Association recommends annual donation of 20 unpaid pro bono hours or \$350 buy-out: http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/local/seminole/orl-lawyers-pro-bono-need-051109_0,609570.story; Obama recommends 10 per cent increase in Legal Services Corporation budget: http://www.lsc.gov/press/pressrelease_detail_2009_T248_R12.php; public defenders under pressure:

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hhxFxAKJi-zPBDKPubQO2vZnByZAD98JEC901>; Connecticut court fees raised to meet legal aid funding gap: <http://www.ctlawtribune.com/getarticle.aspx?ID=33998>; California firing public defenders: <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5iw50Y0aVw4iUvj2XK4tgrK83itagD98R8NT81>; Pressure grows for removal of restrictions on legal aid recipients: <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bal-legalaidpreview0626,0,4374050.story>; Greater Boston Legal Services follows major victory against inequality of access in transportation with medical success: http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2009/06/26/2_flagship_hospitals_to_upgrade_accessibility/;

4. Reports

England & Wales: Government's response to Crown Court means testing consultation published - https://consult.legalservices.gov.uk/inovem/consult.ti/crowncourt_manager/listdocuments ; Legal Aid & Focus 60th Celebratory Issue, with a feature on the 'legal aid is 60' campaign - http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/docs/news/Focus_60_June_09.pdf

Scotland: Scottish Legal Aid Board's Corporate Plan 2009-2011 published - <http://www.slab.org.uk/corporateplan.htm>

United States: Report on the 2007/2008 Georgia Legal Needs Study released http://www.gaccj.org/pdf/LegalNeeds_Report+FINAL+SECURED.pdf

Publications

The Perryman Group, "The Impact of Legal Aid Services on Economic Activity in Texas: An Analysis of Current Efforts and Expansion Potential." A report prepared for the Texas Access to Justice Commission, February 2009.

An econometrics study carried out for the Texas Access to Justice Commission shows that spending on civil legal aid services provides a stimulus to the state economy by creating increases in consumer spending, personal income and gross product output.

Civil legal aid is often characterized as a black hole with a nearly endless capacity to absorb public funding. Very much to the contrary, this study argues that spending on legal aid produces a net benefit to the economy. The report argues that a legal system accessible to all produces economic outcomes. For example, productivity is enhanced when the number of workdays missed due to legal problems is reduced and more stable employment, residential and income patterns translate into tangible economic benefits for the society.

The research employed an econometrics model known as input-output analysis to estimate the economic spin-off benefits that derive from direct expenditures to provide legal aid and from the benefits of legal services such as child and spousal support, insurance recoveries, employment benefits and other awards and entitlements. The model calculated economic benefits of providing legal services in terms of gross product output, personal income, retail sales and employment.

Every direct dollar spent on indigent civil legal services generated an estimated \$7.42 in total spending (every dollar that changes hands in any transaction) in the state economy, \$3.56 in gross output (the final value of all goods produced) and \$2.20 in personal income. The analysis estimated that current spending on civil legal aid services in Texas generated 3171 jobs. Moreover, the activity generated \$30.5 million in yearly fiscal revenues to the state and local governments, almost 6.5 times the \$4.8 million in contributions to civil legal aid.

Conventional arguments for the provision of civil legal aid have focussed on the protection of rights, assuring access to justice and supporting the rule of law. More recently, promoting social inclusion has been added to the objectives of legal aid. The social inclusion/exclusion rationale has an implicit economic dimension since recipients of legal services would be less likely to fall away from the mainstream into lives of disadvantage and dependency on social assistance. This analysis leads to the conclusion that the provision of legal aid produces significant tangible economic benefits that outweigh the direct investment in the provision of legal services.

Summarised by: Ab Currie, Chief Researcher, Research and Statistics Division, Ministry of Justice, Canada.

Civil Litigation Costs Review in England and Wales

Lord Justice Jackson, the Court of Appeal Judge asked by E&Ws senior civil Court of Appeal Judge to review the jurisdiction's costs rules has issued his preliminary report. The review aims to cut costs and increase access to justice. At 653 pages (plus a cd with extra data) it's a hefty but carefully researched and written description of the issues with interesting

discussions of the a number of jurisdictions and alternative systems including a very useful and constructive section on Conditional Legal Aid and Supplementary Legal Aid Funds (pp. 177-188). Whilst ruling nothing in or out, and in particular emphasising the unsuitability of a one size fits all approach to all kinds of litigation, Jackson appears to favour modification, rather than outright abolition of the 'English' costs follows the event rules - though it might be abolished for certain types of case or with one way cost shifting being a possibility for certain cases (to tackle the transaction costs of after the event insurance); and greater reliance perhaps being placed on fixed costs. Contingency fees are canvassed as a possibility as is the suggestion that personal injury claimants may have to pay some costs out of any compensation should they succeed (something likely to be resisted by claimant lawyer lobby groups). The report can be downloaded here:

http://www.judiciary.gov.uk/about_judiciary/cost-review/preliminary-report.htm.

Professor Richard Moorhead, Cardiff University, Wales.

ABA summary of relevant US developments

First Meeting of the Tennessee Access to Justice Commission. The Tennessee Access to Justice Commission held its first meeting on April 29 under the leadership of Chair Margaret Behm. Chief Justice Janice Holder attended. The charge of the ten-member commission is to develop strategies and solutions to help meet the legal needs crisis; to foster continued collaboration among the judiciary, access to justice organizations, bar associations, and legal professionals; and to work to educate and focus the attention of the public and policymakers on this civil legal needs crisis .

ABA Survey on Support for Legal Aid. A telephone survey commissioned by the American Bar Association revealed that two-thirds of the respondents supported federal funding for non-profit organizations to provide legal assistance to Americans in need. The poll, released on April 20, involved 1,016 U.S. residents over the age of 18.

South Carolina Access to Justice Commission Web Site and Hearings. The South Carolina Access to Justice Commission has launched a new web site at www.scatj.org. It has also completed an executive summary and a DVD presenting an overview of the statewide Access to Justice hearings held earlier this year. The DVD includes testimony from self-represented litigants, legal service attorneys and individuals with limited English proficiency. Copies of the DVD and report have been provided to all of the state's U.S. Congressional representatives.

Maine Access to Justice Symposium. Maine's first biennial Access to Justice Symposium is scheduled for October 2, 2009 at the University of Maine Law School. Topics include the birth of legal services as part of the war on poverty; developing a new vision for civil legal aid in the state; racial and cultural diversity in access to justice; and "upstream intervention" to prevent the development of more serious legal problems through medical-legal partnerships, housing-related initiatives, and initiatives relating to low-wage workers.

Self-Help in New York Courts. The New York State Court's Access to Justice Program has developed new DIY forms for self-represented litigants available at <http://nycourthelp.gov/>. The program has also created an attorney-assisted self-help initiative for state residents engaged in foreclosure, personal debt, landlord-tenant, and other lawsuits. Lawyers in the new Volunteer Attorney Program will be provided training to assist self-represented litigants with petitions and other court paperwork, to advise them about what might happen in court and to help them interpret orders from courts.

ABA Resources on Strategies for Pro Bono and Public Service During the Recession. The ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service has created a web page with resources for law firms, public interest firms, laid-off attorneys, new associates whose employment has been deferred, and others affected by the impact of the economic downturn on private law firms. Many law firms and individuals are exploring partially supported public service legal work as an interim option.

Proposed Washington Bar Assessment for Legal Services. In April, Washington State Bar Association President Mark Johnson proposed a \$70 temporary annual mandatory assessment on lawyers to fill the funding gap created by a severe decline in IOLTA revenues and state funding. The Washington Access to Justice Board has supported the proposal, which is currently pending.

Maine Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service. In March, the Maine State Bar Association, in partnership with Justice Action Group, launched a new Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service. The Committee is charged with developing and coordinating donations of pro bono time and legal expertise and will publish a column in the MSBA Journal on noteworthy pro bono efforts.

Tennessee Pro Bono Amendments. The Tennessee Supreme Court has adopted three amendments to its rules that will encourage more lawyers to provide pro bono legal services to needy Tennesseans. One provides that attorney may receive one CLE credit for every five hours of pro bono work; another encourages attorneys to do 50 hours of pro bono work

annually; and the last allows for limited-scope representation in which the attorney providing services need not become the attorney of record.

Texas Supreme Court Justice O’Neill on Threat to Legal Aid. In April, Texas Supreme Court Justice Harriet O’Neill’s comments on the state of legal aid appeared in the Houston Chronicle. She wrote that the “Texas legal aid system is in danger of being decimated” as a result of declining IOLTA revenues and the increased demand for legal services in the wake of natural disasters such as Hurricane Ike.

Mississippi Hearings on Legal Aid. In April, the Mississippi Access to Justice Commission held its third public hearing on the difficulties faced by low-income Mississippians who do not have access to civil legal assistance. The Commission heard testimony on the need for legal assistance in housing, domestic violence, child custody and other matters and will use this testimony to develop recommendations to the Mississippi Supreme Court, state Legislature and the Mississippi Bar on legal aid for the poor.

New Foreclosure Defense Projects. In addition to previously reported state efforts to assist low-income people facing foreclosure, the new projects include:

- **Maine Judicial Branch Commission on Foreclosure Diversion.** On March 31st, the Maine Supreme Court created the Judicial Branch Commission on Foreclosure Diversion to provide parties to foreclosure proceedings relevant information and an effective alternative dispute resolution process. The Commission is made up of representatives of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of Maine state government, as well as representatives of interested stakeholder organizations, individual attorneys, and others.
- **Washington Home Foreclosure Legal Aid Project.** The Washington State Bar Association has launched its Home Foreclosure Legal Aid Project. The WSBA will provide statewide development, training and coordination of attorneys who have agreed to provide pro bono representation to homeowners with legal problems related to foreclosure.
- **Alabama Foreclosure Campaign.** In response to the mortgage foreclosure crisis, the Alabama State Bar and Legal Services Alabama have launched the Alabama Foreclosure Campaign. Homeowners facing foreclosure may call a statewide hotline to speak with an attorney advisor about the foreclosure process and to receive legal assistance including advice and representation in negotiation and litigation, where necessary.

Pennsylvania Attorney Assessment for Legal Aid. The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania has issued an order increasing the annual attorney fee assessment by \$25, with proceeds directed to the state's IOLTA Board.

Arkansas Filing Fee for Legal Aid. In March, the Arkansas General Assembly increased circuit court filing fees by \$10. The anticipated \$500,000 in revenues will go to the two Arkansas legal aid organizations which serve low-income residents throughout the state.

2009 NLADA Beacon of Justice Award Nominations. Nominations are being accepted for the Beacon of Justice Award, which honors law firms providing pro bono representation in partnership with a legal aid program to disadvantaged families in foreclosure proceedings. Nominations must be submitted by May 15.

New York Courts Access to Justice Leadership; Report. Judge Fern Fisher has been appointed to lead the New York State judiciary's statewide access to justice program, as well as serving as Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for the Courts inside New York City. Judge Juanita Bing Newton has been named Dean of the New York State Judicial Institute. The New York Court System has also released a 10-year report on "Expanding Access to Justice in New York."

North Dakota Pro Bono Rule. In March, the North Dakota Supreme Court adopted a rule allowing attorneys admitted in any jurisdiction limited authorization to practice law within the state as an unpaid volunteer with approved legal services organizations.

\$40 Million Increase to LSC; Civil Access to Justice Act of 2009. The Legal Services Corporation has received \$40 Million Increase for FY 2009 under an omnibus appropriations bill which became law on March 11. LSC will now operate on a budget of \$390 million. Senator Tom Harkin has introduced legislation which would increase the authorized funding level for LSC to \$750 million annually. That legislation would also lift several restrictions on the use of non-federal funds and attorneys' fees, and will permit attorneys to bring class-action lawsuits based on existing law.

Arizona Legal Services' Day of Education & Awareness. Arizona Legal Services gathered members of the legal aid community on March 4 for training on legislative advocacy and visits to representatives at the Arizona State Capitol on the importance of legal aid.

5. Research and Events

Papers on legal aid in Belgium, England and Wales on web: <http://www.unimaas.nl/default.asp?template=werkveld.htm&id=2AIUB6NUPBF5J6J72IGX&taal=EN> (six other countries to follow).

Papers on legal aid in the following countries are available on the ILAG website.

-  [Belgium - SG.pdf](#)
-  [Brazil.pdf](#)
-  [Bulgaria.pdf](#)
-  [Canada.pdf](#)
-  [ChineseTaipei.pdf](#)
-  [England - CR .pdf](#)
-  [Hong Kong.pdf](#)
-  [Indonesia - ER.pdf](#)
-  [Ireland.pdf](#)
-  [Moldova.pdf](#)
-  [Netherlands.pdf](#)
-  [New Zealand.2.pdf](#)
-  [New Zealand.3.pdf](#)
-  [New Zealand.pdf](#)
-  [P R China - ZX.pdf](#)
-  [Philippines.pdf](#)
-  [South Africa - JM.pdf](#)
-  [US.pdf](#)

6. And Finally

This newsletter has been compiled by Roger Smith of JUSTICE with assistance from Colette Miller of the University of Strathclyde. If you would like to be taken off the circulation list; add someone or contribute some content: contact rsmith@justice.org.uk.

ILAG was established in 1992 as a way of bringing together academics, administrators and others interested in the development of legal aid. ILAG is constructing a website at www.ilagnet.org. JUSTICE is a UK-based human rights and law reform organisation

dedicated to advancing human rights, access to justice and the rule of law. Its website is
www.justice.org.uk.