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LSCUPDATES

A PUBLICATION OF THE **LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION**

LSC Updates is a biweekly summary of the latest news from the Legal Services Corporation and the national civil legal services community.

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LSC News


Congressman Frelinghuysen Awarded for Support of Legal Services

On March 3, Congressman Rodney P. Frelinghuysen, R-N.J., received the Robert B. Meyner Award from the New Jersey State Bar Association for his support of Legal Services of New Jersey and the Legal Services Corporation.

Frelinghuysen, who represents New Jersey's eleventh Congressional district, is currently the top Republican on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, which funds LSC.

The award is named in honor of Robert B. Meyner, a member of the New Jersey Bar Association and Governor of New Jersey from 1954 to 1962.

[Click here](#) for more information.



**Rodney P.
Frelinghuysen, R-N.J.**

**VIEW AS WEBPAGE
AT A GLANCE...**

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LSC Launches EITC Hotline

Thanks to a grant from the Legal Services Corporation to the Legal Aid Society of Orange County, low-income tax filers across the nation have a new resource for help obtaining the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

SPOTLIGHT



Legal
Services
Corporation

Fiscal Year 2009
Budget Request

**LSC's FY 2009 Budget
Request**



The toll-free phone number, 1-888-4-EITC-4-U (or 1-888-434-8248), will help reach millions of potential beneficiaries. Each eligible caller will be provided a list of local agencies that provide free tax assistance. Legal Aid Society of Orange County maintains a database of agencies in every state for the phone resource, including Income Tax Assistance programs, United Ways, and legal services programs with the EITC in their service plans.

LSC President Helaine M. Barnett said, "We commend the Legal Aid Society of Orange County for creating this important national resource for low-income workers. The project is a superb example of the innovation that stems from LSC's Technology Initiative Grants program, and we encourage legal aid offices across the country to share the number with their client communities."

[Click here](#) for the full press release.

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Two More LSC-Funded Programs Adopt *Pro Bono* Resolutions

The Boards of Directors of two more LSC-funded programs have adopted resolutions aimed at increasing the involvement of private attorneys in the delivery of legal services to their clients, bringing to 81 the total number of programs who have adopted such resolutions. The two programs are:

- **Kentucky's Legal Aid Society**
- **Florida Rural Legal Services**

LSC is encouraging all program Boards of Directors to adopt *pro bono* resolutions modeled after one adopted by LSC's Board in April 2007. Urging programs to adopt local resolutions is a key element of LSC's private attorney involvement action plan, entitled "Help Close the Justice Gap, Unleash the Power of *Pro Bono*."

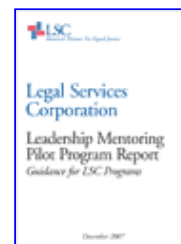
[Click here](#) for the list of LSC-funded programs that have adopted *pro bono* resolutions.

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Field News

LSC-Funded Programs Receive Grants to Fight Foreclosures

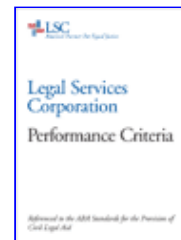
Fifteen LSC-funded programs in fourteen states have received grants from the Institute for



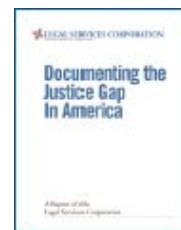
Leadership Mentoring Pilot Program Report



Revised Case Service Report Handbook



LSC's Performance Criteria, Referenced to the ABA Standards for the Provision of Civil Legal Aid



LSC's Documenting the Justice Gap in America

CALENDAR

April 25-26
Board Meeting in
Oklahoma City, Okla.

June 10-11
All Executive Directors
Meeting in
Washington, D.C.

QUOTE

Foreclosure Legal Assistance to bolster efforts to assist the growing number of Americans facing foreclosure.

The grants range from \$75,000 to \$375,000 and were given to groups with successful foreclosure prevention programs in need of additional funding. Twelve other legal aid programs also received grants.

"Legal services attorneys have been on the front lines of fighting against foreclosures for many years, and I am thrilled that we can provide funding to some of our nation's best legal advocates," said Ira Rheingold, Executive Director of the National Association for Consumer Advocates, which manages the Institute.

[Click here](#) for more information, including a full list of grant recipients.

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Kentucky Budget Will Not Eliminate Legal Aid Funding

State funding for Kentucky's four legal aid programs will not be eliminated in Governor Beshear's proposed two-year budget, according to J. Michael Brown, Secretary of the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet.

In fact, the funding never was eliminated, said Brown in a March 9 letter to the editor in Kentucky's *Courier-Journal*, which reported on the supposed cut late last month.

"Whoever searched for the Legal Aid funds in the Governor's budget...was looking in the wrong place," he said.

Brown met with legal aid officials approximately two weeks before Beshear introduced his budget, explaining that the usual \$1.5 million for legal aid would be included, but might suffer a 12 percent cut along with every other program in the Justice Cabinet.

"Trying to set this record straight is a lot like responding to the question about whether you have stopped beating your mother," said Brown. "Funding for Legal Aid has always been part of the Governor's mandate, and he designated this Justice Cabinet and me to be the agents of delivery. We will deliver to the best of our financial ability, and Legal Aid will suffer no more and probably less than others in my cabinet."

[Click here](#) to read Brown's full statement.

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Protecting Legal Aid's Good Name

The National Technology Assistance Project (NTAP) has developed a draft protocol to help legal aid programs protect their identities—online and offline—from misuse by fraudulent legal aid organizations.

The protocol provides practical advice to legal services programs on issues such as protecting domain names, monitoring online presence, registering trademarks, and more. The protocol was developed with feedback from LSC, the American Bar Association, the National Legal Aid and Defender Association, and Pro Bono Net.

The National Technology Assistance Project is partially funded through LSC's Technology Initiative Grants program. NTAP's mission is to help legal aid programs improve client services through effective and innovative use of technology.

"If we are to keep our democracy, there must be one commandment: Thou shalt not ration justice."

-Judge Learned Hand

[Click here](#) to download the draft protocol.

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New York State Bar Holds “Civil Gideon” Conference

On March 7, the New York State Bar Association hosted a conference to promote a right to counsel in civil cases for low-income New Yorkers.

According to the *New York Law Journal*, the conference, “An Obvious Truth: Creating a Blueprint for a Civil Right to Counsel in New York,” attracted more than 100 participants. Andrew Scherer, Executive Director of Legal Services for New York City, and Juanita Bing Newton, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives, were among those who delivered remarks.

Kathryn G. Madigan, President of the Bar Association, told the *Journal* that the issues at stake in some civil cases—loss of health care or loss of a home—are just as crucial as the potential loss of liberty in criminal cases, which makes the necessity of legal counsel equally important.

“These are really basic human needs,” said Madigan.

[Click here](#) to read, “State Bar Conference Promotes Right to Counsel in Civil Cases,” in the *New York Law Journal*.

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Former Missouri Legal Aid Head Honored as Ethical Humanist of the Year

The Ethical Society of St. Louis has chosen Missouri Supreme Court Justice Richard B. Teitelman as the recipient of its 2008 Ethical Humanist of the Year Award, which honors an individual or organization for making significant contributions to better the human condition.

Judge Teitelman spent almost his entire career serving the Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, first as a staff attorney, then a managing attorney, and finally as Executive Director and General Counsel from 1980 to 1998. He currently serves on numerous bar association committees at the local, state, and national level, including the Missouri Bar’s Delivery of Legal Services Committee, which he chairs, and the American Bar Association’s Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service. Teitelman is the recipient of innumerable awards for his work, and is the first legally blind and the first Jewish judge to serve on the Missouri Supreme Court.

[Click here](#) for more information on the Ethical Humanist of the Year Award.

[Click here](#) for more information on Judge Teitelman.

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What’s New on LSC Resource Information

The LSC Resource Information (LRI) is an online clearinghouse of best practices, model projects, and other resources for LSC-funded programs.

Legal Services of Northern California’s Senior Mediation Program

The Mediation Program run by Legal Services of Northern California’s Senior Legal Hotline helps the elderly resolve their civil legal problems through effective communication and negotiation. When appropriate, callers to the hotline are referred to professional mediators who set up conference calls with both parties to resolve issues without the emotional stress, investment of

time, and financial burden of resorting to litigation. A successful mediation not only resolves the immediate legal issue, but can foster healthier and more understanding relationships between landlords and tenants, neighbors, creditors and consumers that will preclude future legal problems.

[Click here](#) for more information on the project.

[Click here](#) to visit the LSC Resource Information.

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Success Story from New Mexico Legal Aid

Legal aid is about helping ordinary people with real-life problems. Client stories illustrate the day-to-day struggles—and victories—of poor Americans seeking justice under law.

Life Support Restored

“Jessica” contacted New Mexico Legal Aid in a panic. Her electricity company had just cut off her service, eliminating the power needed to operate her mother’s life support system. She hurriedly told legal aid advocates an almost unbelievable story. When an employee from the power company came to shut off her service, Jessica explained the situation and pleaded with him to leave the power on while another solution could be reached. The employee told her that if she could not pay the bill, her mother did not deserve to breathe.

Her mother’s system could run off a battery pack for a few hours, but what then? Could Jessica really lose her mother over a billing issue? The clock was ticking.

Legal aid attorneys swung into action. They tracked down a letter signed by a doctor stating that the utility company could not shut off service for non-payment. The utility company argued that the letter no longer applied, since Jessica and her mom now lived at a different address than the one referenced in the letter. No one could find the doctor and ask him to sign a new letter.

Finally, in desperation, legal aid attorneys told a power company representative that they would contact the media, and explain that the company was essentially threatening the life of an elderly woman for not paying her bill.

The power company finally relented and turned the power back on, restoring power to Jessica’s mother’s life support system. Later, it was discovered that the power company had been mistaken all along, and that Jessica had paid her bill.

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Created by Congress in 1974, LSC’s mission is to promote equal access to justice in our Nation and to provide high quality civil legal assistance to low-income persons. LSC Updates is produced by LSC’s Office of Government Relations and Public Affairs. Questions, comments, or articles can be submitted to Sean Driscoll at driscolls@lsc.gov.

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