



NEWS RELEASE
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The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania Doubles Commitment to Public Interest

Chief Justice Ronald Castille and the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania have doubled their commitment to expanding the pool of bright and talented people employed by agencies that help Pennsylvanians who cannot afford lawyers.

On Tuesday, August 24, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania issued an order doubling the fee charged to out-of-state lawyers who want to practice in Pennsylvania's courts. That fee is funding a newly constituted statewide student loan repayment assistance program (LRAP) being jointly administered by the Pennsylvania Interest On Lawyers Trust Account Board (PA-IOLTA) and the Pennsylvania Bar Foundation, the charitable affiliate of the state bar association.

“The court first demonstrated its outstanding leadership and commitment to the people of Pennsylvania by dedicating a funding stream to facilitate the creation of a statewide loan repayment assistance program. This program aims to help those who work tirelessly every day in legal services organizations providing legal representation to clients who cannot afford to pay for those services. The LRAP will assist attorneys providing legal services to the poor better manage the burden of law school debt which might otherwise discourage a career in public service,” notes Pennsylvania Bar Foundation President George Gvozdich, Jr., of Johnstown, “now, less than two months after its initial funding of the program, the Court has taken a step to strengthen the funding stream for the program so that in future years the program can be more

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robust. Chief Justice Castille is to be commended for creating a dedicated funding stream to support those committed to providing indigent individuals with legal representation. We are deeply gratified to be part of this landmark program that will truly make a difference for Pennsylvania's most vulnerable citizens.”

On September 1, 2010, the Bar Foundation and PA-IOLTA will launch the statewide loan repayment assistance program to help attorneys employed at IOLTA-funded legal services organizations better manage their law school loan debt and to help IOLTA-funded legal aid organizations recruit and retain the best and the brightest attorneys for service in the public good.

The program will provide for one-year loans, payable to qualified attorneys quarterly, with a 12-month employment requirement at qualifying organizations. Providing a participating attorney continues to meet the eligibility requirements, the attorney can apply for and receive up to ten, one-year loans over his/her tenure in qualified employment. The loans will be used to repay loans incurred for undergraduate and law school education costs and will be forgiven at the end of each year if eligibility requirements have been met.

Initially, a uniform amount of assistance will be provided to each qualified applicant, and it is anticipated that each qualified attorney will receive about \$2,000. The newly expanded funding means that in future years, the program will have the ability to either increase the amount of each loan award or increase the number of public interest lawyers who are able to receive a loan.

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