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Montana Justice Foundation Newsletter

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President's Message

Over the past fiscal year, the Montana Justice Foundation (MJF) staff and Board of Directors have faced extraordinary funding challenges due to the substantial decline in IOLTA funds. Accordingly, we have been forced to make very difficult decisions regarding program support. The board takes these decisions seriously and we endeavor to act in the best, long-term interests of the MJF and of our grantee organizations and the greater access to justice community.



The challenges we face, not unlike the challenges of the current economy, will not be solved overnight. However, the MJF will continue to maximize our current resources, expand upon existing efforts, and innovatively address the common needs and collective challenges facing legal aid organizations and access to justice initiatives in Montana.

The MJF is moving forward to support access to justice during this critical time. We continue to work with Montana banks to promote higher, more stable interest rates paid on the Interest on Lawyers

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MJF thanks the following leadership banks for their support and commitment to making the IOTLA program a success in Montana:

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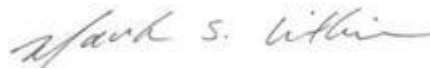
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Trust Account Program (IOLTA). We are increasing our efforts to raise awareness and support among our local communities, businesses, and government for civil legal services and access to justice initiatives in our state.

To realize success on these fronts will require a concerted effort involving the MJF, our grantee organizations, bar leaders, and state access to justice groups. It will be challenging in the future, as it has been in the past, but we believe the MJF is poised and ready to meet those challenges with careful and cooperative planning and unfailing commitment. We appreciate your continued support.

Sincerely,



Mark S. Williams, President, MJF Board of Directors

MJF Grants Distribution: Preserving Access to Justice in Montana

At its May meeting, the Montana Justice Foundation (MJF) Board of Directors awarded \$283,500 to legal service providers across the state. The total amount of grant dollars reflects a greater than 60 per cent decline in Interest on Lawyers Trust Account (IOLTA) revenues in the past fiscal year.

It is an understatement to say that this year has been difficult for IOLTA programs and legal aid providers nationwide. Hundreds of law clinics, legal aid organizations, pro bono programs, self-help law programs, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), community mediation centers, and domestic violence education and service provider programs throughout the country have been drastically cut or eliminated. These organizations provide core legal services such as: preserving housing, protecting subsistence income, obtaining access to health care, family law matters, and protection from abuse and discrimination. National data for 2008 is not yet available, but it is clear that the down cycle we are currently experiencing is far more severe than such cycles have been in the past.

IOLTA funds are a primary funding source for civil legal aid to the poor in Montana. State legal aid providers rely on IOLTA funding to assist low-income families to obtain and preserve the most basic of human needs: shelter, food, clothing and safety. The number of Montanans in need of legal services increases as the economy continues to falter. It is now more important than ever to preserve existing legal aid programs in Montana.

The MJF has already begun to enlist the assistance of attorney and law firm account holders in an effort to bolster the IOLTA program in

Montana. Additionally, we are exploring alternative measures to mitigate further revenue declines. However, because of the depth of the current recession, 2008 may not represent the floor of the present IOLTA down cycle. Several IOLTA programs throughout the nation are projecting much steeper declines than usual in IOLTA revenue through 2010. Accordingly, the MJF is working to strengthen and expand its efforts to raise revenue from non-IOLTA sources including private sector fundraising, cy pres, state appropriations, filing fees, and other means.

These labors will require a collaborative effort between the MJF, legal service providers, bar leaders, and state access to justice groups to be successful. It will be a difficult journey, but together we can work to eliminate systemic barriers to access to justice.

The MJF awarded IOLTA grants to the following service providers:

CASA of Missoula - \$4,000
Cascade County Law Clinic - \$6,000
Community Dispute Resolution Center of Missoula - \$3,000
Community Mediation Center, Bozeman - \$8,750
Domestic Violence Education and Services (DOVES) - \$1,000
Eastern Montana CASA/GAL - \$7,750
Montana Legal Services association (MLSA) - \$250,000
The Nurturing Center, Kalispell - \$3,000

Changes in FDIC Deposit Insurance Coverage

Deposits at FDIC-insured institutions are now insured up to at least \$250,000 per depositor through December 31, 2013. On January 1, 2014, the standard insurance amount will return to \$100,000 per depositor for all account categories except for IRAs and other certain retirement accounts which will remain at \$250,000 per depositor. (This supersedes the October 3, 2008 changes.)

The extension announced on May 20, 2009, does not apply to the Transaction Account Guarantee Program. The unlimited coverage under the Transaction Account Guarantee Program is only in effect for depositors at participating institutions through December 31, 2009.

This means that as of January 1, 2010, funds held in IOLTA accounts, as well as those held in non-interest bearing transaction accounts, will be treated the same as the funds held in all other FDIC insured accounts: each depositor's total funds held in the financial institution will be insured up to a total of \$250,000.

Below is a link to the FDIC webpage containing this information:

<http://www.fdic.gov/deposit/deposits/changes.html>

Donor Recognition

The Montana Justice Foundation Society of Justice

Hon. William J. Jameson Circle

These donors gifts, over the course of their lifetime, meet or exceed \$10,000.

ALPS

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Robert & Bonnie Minto

Hon. Karla M. Gray Circle

These donor's gifts, over the course of their lifetime, range from \$5,000-\$9,999

Cok, Wheat & Kinzler

Williams Law Firm

Tribute Gifts

The MJF gratefully acknowledges those who have made gifts in memory or in honor of colleagues, family, and friends. * **Bolded** names are those being honored or remembered.

In Memory of:

C. Harold Thweatt

Richard Thweatt

DB

Rebekah French

Emilie Loring

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James B. McDonough

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The Montana Justice Foundation Board of Directors Gratefully
Acknowledges the Following Law Firms for Their Support of the
MJF and the Access to Justice Cause*.

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Leading Law Firms contributed \$1,000 or more to the MJF Annual Gift Campaign.

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Murphy, Kirkpatrick & Fain, PLLP
Ragain, Christensen, Fulton & Filz, PLLC
Williams Law Firm
Worden Thane, PC

Supporters

Supporting Law Firms contributed between \$500 and \$999 to the MJF Annual Gift Campaign.

Christensen, Moore, Cockrell, Cummings & Axelberg, PC
Linnell, Newhall, Martin & Schulke, PC
Matovich & Keller, PC

Contributors

Contributing Law Firms made an annual contribution of less than \$500 to the MJF Annual Gift Campaign.

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Bennett Law Office

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