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NFPA News



CALENDAR

**AIPS PACE® REVIEW
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Lewis & Clark Law School Announces First Animal Law Degree Program



Robert Klonoff, dean of Lewis & Clark Law School, Portland, Oregon, announced that the school's proposal for an Animal Law LL.M. Program received acquiescence from the American Bar Association (ABA) and unanimous approval from the school's Board of Trustees. The program will start in the Fall of 2012. Demand for an advanced animal law degree is already high, with the school regularly receiving inquiries about its inauguration.

"The ABA's and Board of Trustees' quick and unequivocal actions represent a huge step forward and recognition for the field of animal law, and are yet another example of leadership and innovation at Lewis & Clark Law School," he said.

Lewis & Clark will educate the next generation of lawyers ready to tackle such questions as what are the limits of the Endangered Species Act?; does the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) apply?; are state anti-cruelty, zoning, and private ownership laws working?; as well as other issues ranging from dog fighting and hoarding to pet custody battles.

For more information, please see the Center for Animal Law Studies' website: <http://CenterForAnimalLawStudies.org>.

Congress Pares Down Nationwide Legal Aid

Access to justice for many Americans came to the vote recently as Congress slashed FY12 funding by \$56 million, or 14 percent, for the Legal Services Corporation, which helps subsidize legal aid for low-income residents and provides assistance to lawyers who serve them.

The LSC is the largest provider of civil legal aid in the nation, distributing 95 percent of its funding to legal aid programs in each of the fifty states. This funding provides direct legal services to people who have incomes below or near the poverty line. Due to the economy, the demand for LSC-funded programs has increased. More than 63 million Americans are now eligible for civil legal assistance, including 22 million children. Over the last year, LSC reports that local legal aid staff had twice as many clients seeking help than their programs could handle.

"The ABA will work diligently with Congress to seek restoration of the \$56 million in lost—and desperately needed—funding in a future budget year," said American Bar Association President Wm. T. (Bill) Robinson III..



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Legal Aid Not the Only Program to Face Cuts - We the People Loses Congressional Funding

Funding for We the People was not included in Congress' last budget. This landmark program, co-sponsored by the Center for Civic Education, engages upper elementary, middle and high school students in a curriculum designed to foster understanding of the institutions of American democracy, including the Constitution and Bill of Rights. The culminating activity is a simulated congressional hearing in which students "testify" before a panel of volunteer attorneys, educators and civic leaders. Since the inception of the We the People program in 1987, more than 30 million students and 90,000 educators have participated in this innovative course of study. Approximately 1,200 high school students and their teachers participate annually in the National Finals.

An independent evaluation by RMC Research Corporation found that We the People students scored 30 percent higher than their peers and 36 percent higher than college students on a comprehensive test of political knowledge. Surveys conducted annually from 1999 to 2009 reveal that high school students who compete at the We the People National Finals possess significantly greater knowledge of American democratic institutions and processes than the average American citizen.

Tips to Successful Strategic Planning for Your Association in 2012

Is your local association faced with new challenges in 2012? A successful strategic planning process will examine and respond to change by clarifying your association's mission and goals. Steps to be taken include: 1) form a subcommittee to create a draft Plan for your association's stakeholders, 2) create a list of opportunities and challenges that your association needs member involvement with, 3) contact former (perhaps retired paralegals) members of your association for input into the Plan, 4) make sure the strategic plan is realistic and is a comprehensive assessment of the strengths and limitations, 5) insure your association's vision statement and mission continue to be supported by the membership through their participation and commitment and 6) create a list of best practices – what goals were successfully attained within the prescribed deadline and adopted as policy.

A strategic plan is not a wish list, report card or marketing tool. What it can do is focus on your association's unique strengths and relevant weaknesses, enabling you to pinpoint new opportunities and provide a footprint for future growth of your membership and the course your association wants to go.

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