



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

NEWS RELEASE

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Supreme Court of Pennsylvania **Student Loan Assistance to Boost Public Legal Service**

HARRISBURG, June 28, 2010 — The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania today announced a student loan forgiveness program for attorneys employed by agencies that help people who cannot afford legal representation.

Beginning Sept. 1, the Loan Repayment Assistance Program — or LRAP — will receive applications for reimbursements for student loans to attorneys working for at least one year with a qualified agency that provides legal assistance in civil matters to indigent Pennsylvanians.

No taxpayer funding will be used to finance LRAP, which will use proceeds from the fees out-of-state lawyers must pay to practice in Pennsylvania courts. The so-called *pro hac vice* fees will fund a three-year grant to administer the program by the Interest On Lawyers' Trust Account board with the Pennsylvania Bar Foundation, a charitable affiliate of the Pennsylvania Bar Association.

“Expanding the pool of bright and talented people to assist indigent and poor Pennsylvanians in all corners of the Commonwealth in relatively low-paying but critical public service jobs is a goal of this new initiative,” Chief Justice of Pennsylvania Ronald D. Castille said. “Having incurred reasonable college and law school debt should not overwhelm one’s decision-making process as to whether to pursue a public service mission as an attorney.”

A recently graduated attorney, who is employed by a legal aid organization funded by IOLTA, is eligible to have \$2,000 in student loan debt forgiven. An attorney can apply for up to 10, one-year forgivable loans over the tenure of qualified employment provided the eligibility requirements are met, including a law license and income and loan criteria. Each loan carries a one-year employment requirement for the loan.

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In addition to easing education debt, the program will help address critical shortages facing many organizations in finding qualified legal assistance across the Commonwealth.

"The members of the IOLTA board are deeply grateful to our Supreme Court for their continuing efforts to ensure that low income Pennsylvanians have access to justice," said William P. Carlucci, IOLTA board chair. "The Court has recognized that crushing levels of student debt have long been a significant deterrent to lawyers who aspire to public service. This is an important first step in our efforts to attract bright young lawyers to serve the most vulnerable of our citizens."

(For more LRAP information, visit: www.paiolta.org)

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