



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

News for Immediate Release

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Supreme Court increases loan assistance to expand number of attorneys who serve the poor

HARRISBURG — In an effort to increase the pool of attorneys available to provide civil legal services to those who cannot afford them, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court has increased support for a student debt loan program for attorneys who work for legal aid organizations.

The Loan Repayment Assistance Program is not funded by tax dollars, but instead by *pro hac vice* admission fees which are paid by out-of-state attorneys who are not licensed to practice in Pennsylvania, but appear in Pennsylvania's courts for a particular legal proceeding. *Pro hac vice* fee revenue has been on a steady decline, jeopardizing the sustainability of the loan program.

The *pro hac vice* fee will be increased from \$200 to \$375, still less than many other states which often charge the fee annually or at each court level. In Pennsylvania the fee is assessed once per matter, regardless of how long the case takes to resolve. Last year, the admission fee revenue totaled \$270,000, a decline of nearly 35 percent from the year before. The increased fee is expected to generate an additional \$260,000 annually and will be effective as soon as program rules are officially changed.

Attorneys who serve the civil legal needs of the poor in Pennsylvania through established legal aid organizations can receive up to \$3,500 annually in student loan debt assistance. The average salary of the 105 legal aid attorneys receiving assistance in the current year is \$50,457, and the average outstanding student loan debt is \$125,582. Since the loan assistance program began in 2010, more than \$1.6 million has been awarded.

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