

Bar Dues Check-Off Competition Questionnaire Responses
Completed 6/18/02

- AZ The Arizona Bar Foundation is the only organization on the bar dues form, and it is not a true check-off; it allows 1% of the bar dues to be spent on pro bono. Raises \$42,000. (11,000 lawyers)
- CO Colorado has had a variety of entities on the bar dues form, including two that generate funding for legal aid providers - one for the Legal Aid Foundation, which raises funds for the statewide staffed legal services program, and one for pro bono programs. In addition, there has been a check-off for the Colorado Bar Foundation, a political education committee, and a minority law scholarship program. None of these, except the pro bono check-off, raise very much money, and the amount generated for the Legal Aid Foundation did not change much as other entities were added. The pro bono check-off has always done better because it is an opt-out; the lawyer must cross out an amount and then total the bill.
- FL Florida has several organizations in addition to the Florida Bar Foundation on its bar dues form: Florida Supreme Court Historical Society, \$25.00, since 2001-02; Attorneys' Charitable Trust (to aid disaster victims, including lawyers), \$25.00, since 2002-03, "Restoring Dignity in the Law" information program, \$45.00, since 2002-03; and the bar president-elect's activity (institutional advertising and public information about the law and the legal system). All were added after the bar foundation. 2001-02 was the first year with two (the foundation and the Supreme Court Historical Society). The foundation's contributions were down from the previous year, when it alone was on the form. However, bar dues were increased on the same statement. Results are not yet available for the 2002-03 year, during which there are all four of the entities identified above on the form. The bar foundation received \$118,000 in 2000-01 and \$82,000 in 2001-02. (51,500 lawyers)
- ID Brett Toresdahl (isbavlp@dwx.com) for the Idaho State Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, responded, saying that "No the only other item on the bar dues which is optional is the Bar Assoc. Foundation." Attempts to reach Brett to clarify this were unsuccessful.
- LA There are three organizations with check-offs on this form: The Access to Justice group of the Louisiana State Bar Association, the Louisiana Bar Foundation, and the Center for Law and Civic Education. The first two were placed on the dues statement in May, 1998, and the third was added in May, 2001. The Access to Justice group reports receiving a greater number of larger donations (>\$250) in the past year, but its overall donations were down slightly (from about \$18,000 to \$15,000). My contact suspects that the addition of the third entity is responsible for the decline, but has no way of actually knowing. (16,000 lawyers)

- ME Maine does not actually have a bar dues check-off. The Maine Bar Registration contains an additional insert which asks for a contribution for the Volunteer Lawyers Project which is a project of the Foundation. It is the only inclusion in the registration mailing, so there is no competition. They net approximately \$17,000. (3,400 lawyers)
- MS The volunteer lawyer program in Mississippi is the only entity on the bar dues form.
- NH Here's one where they are going in the other direction. There were 2 listings on the dues form for several years - pro bono and legal services programs. Our contact doesn't know which went on the form first. Last year, the three NH legal services providers agreed to do their fundraising jointly, and the one entry on the bar dues form is "Community Campaign for Legal Services". Unfortunately, they do not yet have a year's worth of information to know if the combining made a difference either way yet.
- NM The director of Equal Access to Justice, the statewide legal services fundraising organization, has told us that there are two organizations (Equal Access and another) on the bar dues form. Both entities have been on the form for a long time, and any history related to our question is unknown. The Access to Justice part of the check-off raises \$13,400. (4,700 lawyers)
- OR The pro bono program is the only organization that has a check-off on the bar dues form.
- SC This is an "opt-out" rather than "check-off" (the lawyer has to remove the item to not pay it, rather than adding it in if he/she chooses to make a contribution). There is only one item, which is "non-profit organizations meeting the civil legal needs of SC indigent population". In 2002, 68% of the bar made the \$30 donation, raising \$178,000. (This has dropped from approximately 80% in the first few years.) (7,600 lawyers)
- TX Until last year, Texas had several entities listed on the bar dues form. The grand total raised for all the entities had been \$70,000 so it wasn't a critical source of revenue to any one group. Three of the entities, all legal services related, got together and agreed to merge into one access to justice box, and others, like the Center for Legal Ethics, took themselves off. Therefore, there is now just one, for legal services generally. The three legal services related entities agreed on a formula for splitting the funds. The form was re-worked, so that it was more of a opt-out system than an add-on one, and the revenue rose to \$550,000. (The Texas Supreme Court recently approved an additional change, making it a truly opt-out system. The expectation is that the amount collected will increase significantly this year as a result.) (62,500 lawyers)