

Lawyer Referral Programs

State and local bar associations provide services to members and the public by maintaining lawyer referral programs, which may actively advertise the availability of competent, insured attorneys to serve the needs of the public in a number of areas. Financial support for such programs may be derived from both attorney payments and fee splitting or referral.

The Model Rules of Professional Conduct, Rule 7.2 B provide that an attorney may pay a fee to qualified lawyer referral service for the referral of cases without violating prohibitions against fee splitting. See http://www.abanet.org/cpr/mrpc/rule_7_2.html

American Bar Association Division for Bar Services Standing Committee on Lawyer Referral and Information Services www.abanet.org/legalservices/lrisb provides support and assistance to local public service lawyer referral programs that provide information on appropriate, quality legal services to the public. It offers a number of resources for local bar leaders and lawyer referral programs, including an online media kit, LRIS Clearinghouse and link to the ABA Online Lawyer Referral Directory.

The American Bar Association Division for Legal Services Standing Committee on Delivery of Legal Services maintains *A Blueprint for Lawyer Referral and Information Service Modest Means Panels* at www.abanet.org/legalservices/delivery/blueprint1 and this would be a great starting point for any bar association looking to create a modest means panel.

The Toledo Bar Association also maintains a Lawyer Referral Service as a benefit to its members, who pay a fee to belong to the service, as well as to the public, who find lawyers in their given areas. See <http://www.toledobar.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3301>

Modest Means and Non-Poverty Legal Services Programs

Modest means programs, usually associated with a Legal Referral Program, provide attorneys at reduced fees to individuals who fall between the poverty income limits which qualify for *pro bono* services and the realistic ability to pay standard legal fees.

The Ohio State Legal Services Association maintains a website www.ohiolegalservices.org which allows needy clients statewide to obtain a referral to a pro bono by entering their county or zip code, along with a helpful and searchable data base of legal topics, which includes substantial content for *pro se* representation provided by volunteer attorneys through the Ohio State Bar Foundation *Keys to the Courtroom* program.

The Oregon State Bar Association began a Modest Means program www.osbar.org/public/ris/ris in 1994 in collaboration with its Access to Justice Committee, matching low income Oregonians with attorneys willing to work for reduced fees of no more than \$60 per hour after an initial consultation of no more than \$35.

The State Bar of Wisconsin offers a modest means program with rates to be negotiated after an initial consultation of \$20 for individuals who meet certain minimum and maximum income guidelines. See www.legalexplorer.com/lawyer/lawyer-notafford.asp#charge

The Allegheny County Bar Association in Pittsburgh, PA, maintains a Lawyer Referral Service as well as a Modest Means Program with excellent internet access for clients and attorneys. See www.abanet.org/lawyerlocator/searchlawyer and www.acbf.org/Client_Services/Modest_Means.asp