

State Bar and Arizona Foundation Release Survey about Attorney Legal Services Donations

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Now in it's third year, the State Bar of Arizona (SBA) Legal Service donation program is nearing \$500,000 total funding toward free legal services in Arizona. The program asks attorneys to make a \$50 donation each year at the time of paying their State Bar Dues, and these collected donations are used to provide legal services to Arizonans who might otherwise not have equal access to justice.

While excited about the total support, the SBA and Foundation were concerned that the program saw a decline this year of approximately \$20,000. With this concern, the SBA and Foundation staff attempted to collect data which would assist in ascertaining the reasoning behind the decline in participation. The following is a report of what we have discovered to-date:

1) Change in participation

1,587 attorneys who participated in 2006 did not participate in 2007.

1,213 attorneys BEGAN their participation in 2007 – eight legal entities where 11 or more attorneys did not participate in 2007 but had in 2006 – of these eight, one was a governmental legal group – these eight legal groups totaled 140 attorneys out of the 1,587 who didn't participate again this year or 9% of the total.

2) Survey results participation

If ever there was a 'perfect storm' of a survey disaster this recent survey would meet the criteria.

There were many factors which prevented participation:

- a) electronic signature required by email limited the ability to open the message
- b) spam filters which block emails with greater than 100 addressees blocked receipt
- c) human error, on our part, that led us to believe a 'cut and paste' link would operate as direct link to the survey website.

With this perfect storm, there were still 28 attorneys with the patience & computer savvy (both were definitely needed!) to respond to the survey. Ten additional attorneys sent emails explaining the problem. Knowing that 28 out of a little over 900 (those with emails) may not scientifically equate to a representative sample, below are the charts signifying the results of the survey.

Comments accompanying the question of why they didn't participate in 2007:

I did not participate in the State Bar \$50 legal service donation project because of the following (mark any and all that apply)

- have moved to Mass, prefer local charities
- I do not always agree with politics of SBA
- Bar dues are expensive enough without having to pay
- I intended to participate. I must have overlooked

- i wasn't asked
- I thought I did participate.
- Didn't pay attention to the form
- Oppose the politics of many "free legal" causes
- My employer PYT pays my bar fees & won't pay that.
- I am in-house so my company pays the dues.
- Bar Dues are paid by the Firm and exclude extras
- financial reasons

Comments accompany question of what would make them participate:

I would consider giving to the State Bar \$50 legal service donation project (mark any and all that apply):

- If I could do it at a time when I wasn't paying dues
- I will look for the question on the dues form.
- If I was asked
- Not under any circumstances
- I have in the past, so must have been oversight
- I will do it now. Made out to who?
- Do not want Bar choosing free legal for me
- If Pascua Yaqui Legal Aid was a places \$ went to.
- If funding could be earmarked