

Associates Bring In Big Bucks For CLS

By **Tony Flesor**
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LEGAL AID FOUNDATION is able to count on Colorado's young lawyers to raise money fast.

Last week, the Legal Aid Foundation announced the results of its 2014 Associates Campaign, a fundraising drive for Colorado Legal Services that brought in \$98,307 in one month. The fast-paced fundraiser provides a boost to the organization's yearly fundraising, which helps make up for a loss in funding to Colorado Legal Services, an organization that provides access to justice to people living near or below the poverty line.

The associates campaign, which ran from April 1 to April 30, is run by young lawyers at firms from around Colorado who are encouraged to reach out to others in their firm, contract lawyers and support staff. Legal Aid Foundation provides direction and materials for the fundraiser, but the associates themselves are the ones who take charge of the fundraising.

Kelly Bossley, associate director at Legal Aid Foundation, said the campaign is a great way to get new leadership involved in the issue of access to justice from the next generation of lawyers.

The campaign includes a competition that recognizes efforts such as funds raised per capita, non-associate involvement and law firms that reach 100 percent associate participation. The competition is intended to add



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an element of team building within the firms and a sense of urgency to get those involved to bring in money in the one-month fundraising period.

Bossley said the associates turn to different strategies to bring in money. The competition helps them bring out the best they can from their firms.

This year, 979 individuals contributed to the fundraiser, and 80 percent of all associates in participating firms made a donation. Also, 29 firms were able to obtain 100 percent associate participation. Compared to last year, the associates campaign got participation from 65

more associates and 120 more non-associates and raised \$13,633 more.

Legal Aid Foundation is the fundraising firm for Colorado Legal Services and brings in about \$1.5 million each year through fundraising campaigns. Legal Aid Foundation executive director Diana Poole said the foundation raises money year round, but it's significant to be able to bring in \$100,000 within one month. She said the money is enough to pay more than the cost of one lawyer with benefits for a full year at Colorado Legal Services.

Colorado Legal Services is a small program made up of 47 lawyers throughout

Colorado and provides services for 900,000 eligible Coloradans who cannot afford access to justice, Poole said.

Fundraising is critical to the nonprofit, Poole said. The organization has lost funding over the past few years because of cuts in state and federal funding and because of low interest rates on COLTAF accounts, which make up one of the primary funding sources for Colorado Legal Services.

According to Legal Aid Foundation, funding from COLTAF has dropped by almost 70 percent over the past five years, from nearly \$2.4 million in 2009 to a projected \$765,000 in 2015. Although the money Legal Aid Foundation raises helps, it does not make up for the loss of money from COLTAF, Poole said.

Although Colorado Legal Services has seen a drop in funding, Poole said there has been good news from the state this year. The state increased an appropriation for legal services for victims of domestic violence by \$1 million, and a significant amount of that fund goes to Colorado Legal Services, Poole said.

To celebrate the success of the campaign and recognize winners of the competition, Legal Aid Foundation is hosting a donor reception on May 22.

"It's great the legal community is stepping up to make up the difference," Bossley said. "That 1,000 donors come together for one cause shows our legal community is strong and supports access to justice in Colorado." •

— Tony Flesor, TFlesor@CircuitMedia.com

Firms With 100% Associate Participation

Arnold & Porter	Kutak Rock
Ballard Spahr	Lewis Bess Williams & Weese
Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck	Littler Mendelson
Burg Simpson	McKenna Long & Aldridge
Burns, Figa & Will	Merchant & Gould
Childs McCune	Morrison & Foerster
Davis Graham & Stubbs	Otten, Johnson, Robinson, Neff & Ragonetti
Faraci Wolanske	Polsinelli
Fennemore Craig	Reilly Pozner
Gibson Dunn & Crutcher	Ryley Carlock & Applewhite
Greenberg Traurig	Sheridan Ross
Ireland Stapleton Pryor & Pascoe	Silver & DeBoskey
Jackson Kelly	Snell & Wilmer
Jones & Keller	Wheeler Trigg O'Donnell
Kaplan Kirsch & Rockwell	

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