

5th Annual Chicago Bar Foundation Investing in Justice Campaign

For the second consecutive year, The Illinois Judges Foundation is participating in the 2011 Chicago Bar Foundation (CBF) Investing in Justice Campaign. The annual Campaign raises much-needed funds for pro bono and legal aid services in the Chicago area so that people who have nowhere else to turn for help with their legal problems can get the assistance they need. The Campaign, chaired this year by William A. Von Hoene, Jr., Executive Vice President, Finance & Legal for Exelon Corporation, runs throughout the month of March. The IJF has joined with a new record of more than 100 area law firms, corporate legal departments and other law-related organizations that are participating in the Campaign. 100% of the funds raised in the Campaign will go directly towards CBF grants to more than 35 pro bono and legal aid organizations and enable them to provide critical legal assistance to tens of thousands of people in need. In making the Campaign grants, the CBF again will give priority to general operating support, which is especially crucial to these organizations right now, and support for innovative projects that leverage significantly more funding and pro bono resources for this work.

This year's Campaign comes at a particularly important time for Chicago's pro bono and legal aid organizations and the many thousands of low-income and disadvantaged people who rely upon them. One in four people, or more than 1.3 million people in Cook County alone, are eligible for civil legal aid, yet most of them are unable to get this often critical legal assistance because there are not nearly enough resources to go around. This gap in access to justice has grown wider over the past three years as other major funding sources for legal aid are declining or under severe stress.

Those receiving services as a result of Campaign grants include the elderly, disabled, veterans and children; domestic violence victims; people at risk of losing their homes; immigrants fleeing persecution and abuse; and many other low-income and disadvantaged people in the Chicago area in critical need of legal assistance. The Campaign grants fund a continuum of services to these people in need, ranging from web-based information and resources to legal aid hotlines to advice desks and clinics to extended representation to significant impact litigation. We are proud to support this very important initiative, and more information is available at www.chicagobarfoundation.org.