

# DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMMISSION

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**June 5, 2007**

## **D.C. CITY COUNCIL ALLOCATES \$3.2 MILLION FOR CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES IN FISCAL YEAR 2008**

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Sunil H. Mansukhani,  
Executive Director

Today, the D.C. City Council finalized legislation that will provide \$3.2 million for civil legal services in fiscal year 2008, which begins on October 1, 2007. This is the second straight year that the Council has provided this funding, and comes in response to recommendations made by the D.C. Access to Justice Commission. The Commission was created by the D.C. Court of Appeals in 2005 to address low and moderate-income residents' unmet need for civil legal services. The Commission includes D.C. Court of Appeals and Superior Court Judges, past Presidents of the D.C. Bar, Executive Directors of leading legal services providers, and other community leaders.

As requested by the Commission, the money will go to the D.C. Bar Foundation, which will run a competitive grant program to distribute these funds. The funds will provide support for additional legal services in housing-related matters, put more lawyers in underserved areas of the District, and pay for a shared legal interpreter bank. A portion of the appropriation will also fund the District of Columbia Poverty Lawyer Loan Assistance Repayment Program Act of 2006. The Bar Foundation recently awarded the FY 2007 public funds in the areas listed above. In addition, the loan repayment program, which is being administered by the Bar Foundation in FY 2007, is providing loan repayment assistance to more than twenty legal services lawyers living and working in the District.

“By continuing public funding for civil legal services in fiscal year 2008, the District government has renewed its commitment to help those most in need. The funding will support about thirty lawyers in the legal services network, which translates into significantly more assistance for our City’s most vulnerable residents. These lawyers solve residents’ problems before they reach a crisis point, and give many more people living in poverty a meaningful opportunity to present their case if they must go to court,” said Commission Chair Peter Edelman. “We are extremely pleased that the District has taken this step and are committed to ensuring that this funding continues in future years because the needs continue to be vast.”

For more information about the D.C. Access to Justice Commission, please contact its Executive Director, Sunil Mansukhani, at 202-344-4441 or [Sunil.Mansukhani@dcaccesstojustice.org](mailto:Sunil.Mansukhani@dcaccesstojustice.org).

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