

By February 1st, all lawyers will have the opportunity to contribute to the new Justice Gap Fund through their dues statement. I am writing to you to help get out the word -- to members of your firm, your board of directors, and other colleagues -- that it's not too late to contribute.

Because many lawyers never see their dues bill, we need help in publicizing this important opportunity. We've also arranged an online contribution option at <http://calbar.org/justicegapfund>

The Governor and the Legislature enacted AB 2301 last year, calling on lawyers to be leaders in the effort to adequately fund legal aid for the poor. The contributions to the fund will reflect on the legal profession, so I hope you will urge your colleagues to contribute.

As you are well aware, there is a great need for increased legal services for California's poor. In fact, there are over 8,000 poor people for every one legal services lawyer - these are families facing homelessness; grandparents needing guardianships; domestic violence victims, and other vulnerable Californians.

Pro bono work by California lawyers is exemplary - but we also need to financially support the legal aid programs that serve on the front lines. In fact, the 2007 State Bar Dues Bill (SB 686) specifically recognized that lawyers may fulfill their professional pro bono commitment, in part, through financial support of legal aid.

Please review the information posted at: <http://calbar.org/justicegapfund>, and let me know if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for anything you can do to encourage contributions to this new fund.