

LCBA **Lebanon County Bar Association**
Trust Us to Know Better

242 South Eighth Street
Lebanon, Pennsylvania 17042

Phone: (717) 273-3113
Fax: (717) 273-3211

November 25, 2008

The Lebanon County Bar Association has recognized an overwhelming need for access to the legal system for low to moderate income residents whose income exceeds the local legal aid income guidelines and whose resources were clearly insufficient to pay prevailing legal rates. Lebanon County MidPenn Legal Services has estimated that approximately 40 cases per month are turned away that fall into the income level of approximately \$13,000.00 to \$26,000.00 annually, which is approximately 250% of the Federal Poverty Guideline. Eligibility for the Modest Means program is based on type of legal matter, client income and assets, and availability of participating attorneys.

The Modest Means attorney has agreed to provide legal services for a flat fee in the following areas: Family law; Landlord/Tenant; Simple Wills, Powers of Attorney; Deed transfers; Unemployment Compensation Hearings before Referee; PFA – Plaintiff/Defendant and Chapter 7 Bankruptcy. The proposed Modest Means Program is purely voluntary and each attorney who participates is not required to represent the individual assigned to him/her if he or she is not comfortable or does not want to take the case.

Discussion is in the works with the Court of Common Pleas Judges and County Commissioners to establish a fair way to reduce the cost of filing and litigation expenses, especially in domestic cases where a litigant must pay for a Conciliator and Special Master. Until guidelines can be agreed upon, the client will be responsible for any court fees and other direct costs, such as long-distance phone charges and photocopying expenses.

The LCBA is anticipating a high percentage of the membership to participate in the program, which will be underway in January 2009.