

IRS ENCOURAGES GROWTH OF LOW-INCOME TAXPAYER CLINICS WITH \$1.5 MILLION IN GRANTS

WASHINGTON B To help expand the availability of legal assistance for taxpayers, the Internal Revenue Service has awarded nearly \$1.5 million in Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic grants to 34 groups across the nation.

The IRS announced Wednesday that the matching grants have been given to a variety of higher education and non-profit groups providing low-cost legal assistance in tax matters. Congress and President Clinton approved the grant program last year to encourage the creation and growth of low-income tax clinics across the country.

AThese clinics offer tax help to people who may have nowhere else to turn,@ IRS Commissioner Charles O. Rossotti said.

The grant announcement coincided with Rossotti=s Wednesday visit to one of the locations selected for a Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic grant. Rossotti met in Atlanta with leaders of the Georgia State University=s College of Law tax clinic, which received \$99,656 for its program.

Under the IRS program, tax clinics may be run by law, business or accounting schools -- whose students represent taxpayers in tax disputes with the IRS or in the courts -- or by tax-exempt organizations.

These groups can represent taxpayers in tax-related matters, refer taxpayers to qualified representatives and provide non-English speaking taxpayers information about their tax rights and responsibilities. Clinics may charge taxpayers a small fee for legal help.

The program allows the IRS to award organizations matching grants of up to \$100,000 a year to develop, expand or continue low-income taxpayer clinics. The groups selected for the first set of grants include 24 existing programs and 10 new projects.

Among the factors the IRS considers in the grant application process are the clinic program=s quality of service, the number of low-income taxpayers served and how many people in the clinic=s service area use English as a second language.

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Wednesday=s grant announcement -- the first since the program started as part of the IRS Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998 -- covers fiscal year 1999. Later this year, the IRS will begin the selection process for fiscal 2000 grants.

AThis program provides an ideal match with our goal of providing better service to taxpayers,@ Rossotti said. AEveryone should have access to tax help, regardless of their income.@

Rossotti said the clinics mesh with the new IRS mission statement of providing AAmerica=s taxpayers top quality service by helping them understand and meet their tax responsibilities by applying the tax law with integrity and fairness to all.@

The IRS has been helping low-income taxpayers for years through such programs as the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE). More information about those programs is available by calling the IRS=s toll-free help line at 1-800-829-1040.

The groups selected by the IRS for the initial round of Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic grants will divide \$1,458,267. The recipients are:

ARIZONA

Community Legal Services, Inc., Phoenix, AZ, \$24,318.

DNA B People=s Legal Services, Inc., Window Rock, AZ, \$9,324.

ARKANSAS

University of Arkansas at Little Rock School of Law, Little Rock, AR, \$4,225.

CALIFORNIA

California State University at Hayward, Hayward, CA, \$55,000.

Central California Legal Services, Fresno, CA, \$10,461.

Chapman University School of Law, Orange, CA, \$65,100.

Korean Resource Center, Los Angeles, CA, \$12,658.

The University Corporation B California State University at Northridge, Northridge, CA, \$18,644.

University of San Diego School of Law, San Diego, CA, \$60,004.

COLORADO

University of Denver College of Law, Denver, CO, \$27,667.

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CONNECTICUT

Quinnipiac College School of Law, Hamden, CT, \$25,025.

University of Connecticut School of Law, Hartford, CT, \$26,340.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

American University, Washington, DC, \$100,000.

Central American Resource Center, Washington, DC, \$15,000.

Washington DC Center for Public Interest Tax Law, Washington, DC,
\$2,500.

FLORIDA

University of Miami School of Law, Coral Gables, FL, \$40,000.

GEORGIA

Georgia State University College of Law, Atlanta, GA, \$99,656.

IDAHO

University of Idaho College of Law, Moscow, ID, \$32,690.

ILLINOIS

Center for Law and Human Services, Chicago, IL, \$62,674.

Chicago Kent College of Law, Chicago, IL, \$77,877.

Loyola University Chicago School of Law, Chicago, IL, \$12,000.

MARYLAND

Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service, Baltimore, MD, \$27,487.

MICHIGAN

Accounting Aid Society, Detroit, MI, \$22,450.

MINNESOTA

University of Minnesota Law School, Minneapolis, MN, \$40,060.

MISSOURI

Budget and Financial Management Assistance, Kansas City, MO,
\$21,000.

University of Missouri Kansas City Tax Law Foundation, Kansas City, MO,
\$91,841.

NEW JERSEY

Rutgers University, Piscataway, NJ, \$99,988.

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NORTH CAROLINA

University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC, \$100,000.

PENNSYLVANIA

Duquesne University School of Law, Pittsburgh, PA, \$15,947.

Lincoln University, Chester, PA, \$19,379.

University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA, \$22,760.

Villanova University School of Law, Villanova, PA, \$88,287.

RHODE ISLAND

The George A. Wiley Center, Pawtucket, RI, \$27,905.

VIRGINIA

The Community Tax Law Project, Richmond, VA, \$100,000.

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