



IOLTA History

IOLTA programs were first established in Australia and Canada in the late 1960s and early 1970s to generate funds for legal services to the poor. In the late 1970s, the Florida Bar and other organizations filed a petition to establish the first U.S. IOLTA program in Florida. After legislation permitted the establishment of interest-bearing checking accounts in the early 1980s and the Florida advocates obtained important tax rulings from the IRS, the Florida Bar Foundation launched the first IOLTA program in 1981. Shortly thereafter, California, Idaho and Maryland followed suit.

Today, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands operate IOLTA programs. Thirty-one jurisdictions require lawyers to participate in IOLTA. Lawyers can opt out of participation in nineteen others, and participation is voluntary in two others.