

(a) (1) If any attorney is entrusted with, or receives and accepts, or otherwise holds, deposit moneys or other trust moneys, of whatever kind or nature, such moneys, in the absence of court order to the contrary shall be expeditiously deposited in an account or accounts maintained as a separate account or accounts for funds belonging to others. In no event shall the attorney commingle any such funds with such attorney's funds or use any such funds for any purpose other than the purpose for which they were entrusted to the attorney.

(2) Each attorney shall have discretion to determine whether such trust moneys are to be deposited in a noninterest bearing checking account, in an interest bearing checking account, in one or more savings accounts, in one or more accounts subject to negotiable orders of withdrawal ("NOW accounts"), or in any combination thereof with any bank or savings and loan association authorized by federal or State law to do business in this State. If in the judgment of the attorney any trust moneys received from any client or beneficial owner are too small in amount or are reasonably expected to be held for too short a period of time to generate at least \$50 of interest or such larger amount of interest as in the judgment of the attorney may be equivalent to the cost of administering an account for the benefit of the client or beneficial owner, such moneys [may] SHALL be pooled and commingled by the attorney with other such moneys held for other clients or beneficial owners, and the aggregate interest earned on such commingled account shall be paid at least quarterly, net of any service charges, by the depository bank or savings and loan association, to the Maryland Legal Services Corporation exclusively for the charitable purposes defined in its statutory charter. THE MARYLAND LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION MAY WAIVE THE PROVISIONS OF THIS PARAGRAPH WITH RESPECT TO AN ATTORNEY OR LAW FIRM THAT DEMONSTRATES THAT IT WILL COST THE MARYLAND LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION MORE IN SERVICE CHARGES TO OPEN AND MAINTAIN AN ACCOUNT FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE MARYLAND LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION THAN WILL BE GENERATED IN INTEREST BY THE ACCOUNT.

(3) [The implementation of programs for the generation of interest on attorneys' trust accounts for charitable purposes pursuant to subsection (a)(2) of this section shall be optional, not mandatory, and no attorney shall be liable in damages if such attorney continues to maintain such trust moneys in noninterest bearing checking accounts separate and apart from such attorney's own funds as required by subsection (a)(1) of this section and in accordance with law and the Code of Professional Responsibility.

(4) Except for trust moneys placed by the attorney in a commingled account for charitable purposes pursuant to subsection (a)(2) of this section, trust moneys in the hands of attorneys may be invested in any other investment vehicle