

RESOLUTION OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF ORANGE COUNTY

**In Support of Enhanced Private Attorney Involvement with LSC-Funded Programs**

**Whereas**, since 1958 the Legal Aid Society of Orange County has been providing free, high-quality essential legal services to the low to moderate income communities and senior citizens in Orange County;

**Whereas**, since 1984 the Legal Aid Society of Orange County has been providing essential legal services as Community Legal Services to the low to moderate income communities in southeast Los Angeles County;

**Whereas**, in 1981 the Legal Aid Society of Orange County created Amicus Publico, the predecessor organization to the Public Law Center, as the *pro bono* program serving Orange County, designed to organize the *pro bono* work of the private bar, enabling the client community of the Legal Aid Society of Orange County to access those *pro bono* services;

**Whereas**, Amicus Publico was the predecessor organization to the Public Law Center in 1982, which the Legal Aid Society of Orange County has continued to partner with and fund to organize the *pro bono* work of the private bar in the effort to provide civil legal services to the indigent in Orange County;

**Whereas**, the Legal Aid Society of Orange County continues to support and work closely with the Public Law Center and the attorneys it recruits to represent members of the client community served jointly by the Public Law Center and The Legal Aid Society of Orange County;

**Whereas**, since 1982, for those who cannot obtain services directly from the Legal Aid Society of Orange County, the Legal Aid Society of Orange County's State Bar certified Lawyer Referral Service has been providing free and low cost advice and consultation from members of the private bar in a range of subject matter areas of concern to the client community of the Legal Aid Society of Orange County;

**Whereas**, the Senior Citizens Legal Advocacy Program of the Legal Aid Society of Orange County provides legal services to senior citizens with the assistance of thousands of hours annually from volunteer Emeritus Attorneys;

**Whereas**, the Legal Aid Society of Orange County created a three-tier delivery service system in 1996 in an attempt to fill the "justice gap" by expanding the availability of legal services through the Hotline, self-help clinic services, and in-depth legal services;

**Whereas**, since 1996, the Legal Aid Society of Orange County contracted with private attorneys on a reduced-fee basis to supplement staff attorney time in the supervision of the Hotline, as it serves as the Legal Aid Society of Orange County's centralized intake system to its legal services while functioning as the moderate income community referral system to the Legal Aid Society of Orange County's Legal Resolutions Center;

**Whereas**, the Legal Aid Society of Orange County, in partnership with the Superior Court of Orange County, created I-CAN!<sup>TM</sup> Legal (Interactive Community Assistance Network), an Internet-based and kiosk-operated legal services system designed to effectively provide pro per litigants convenient and vital legal services by combining the efficiencies of self-help technology with professional services of the private bar;

**Whereas**, the Legal Aid Society of Orange County offers family law clinics conducted by staff attorneys and private attorneys for uncontested dissolutions of marriage, landlord/tenant, and bankruptcy legal matters;

**Whereas**, in 2006, the Legal Aid Society of Orange County added a Judicare component to its Private Attorney Involvement Program to compensate private attorneys to provide unbundled family law and landlord/tenant legal services to indigent residents of southeast Los Angeles County;

**Whereas**, the Legal Aid Society of Orange County has contracted with Justice in Education since 2007 to provide services to families with children that have special education needs, to provide information regarding their rights and responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; and to provide advocacy and legal representation in the area of School Procedure and Special Education Law to parents and children in need of such services;

**Whereas**, the Board of Governors of the State Bar of California, at its December 9, 1989 meeting and as amended at its June 22, 2002 meeting, adopted a *Pro Bono Resolution* urging all attorneys, law firms and members of the legal community to devote at least 50 hours per year, to provide or enable the delivery of *pro bono* legal services to the poor or disadvantaged with the purpose of improving the legal system and increasing access to justice; and

**Whereas**, the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation, at its April 2007 meeting, adopted Resolution 2007-003 supporting and encouraging private attorney involvement and urging governing boards of LSC-funded programs to collaborate with other organizations to effectively engage lawyers in *pro bono* representation and other services that benefit low-income persons.

**Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved** that the Board of Directors of the Legal Aid Society of Orange County, in an effort to help close the justice gap in The Legal Aid Society of Orange County, supports and encourages private attorney involvement with the Legal Aid Society of Orange County and will endeavor to:

- Urge all attorneys to devote a reasonable amount of time, at least 50 hours per year, to provide or enable the direct delivery of legal services, without expectation of compensation other than reimbursement of expenses, to indigent individuals, or to not-for-profit organizations with a primary purpose of providing services to the poor or on behalf of the poor or disadvantaged, not-for-profit organizations with a purpose of *improving the law and legal system, or increasing access to justice*;
- Collaborate with all law schools to develop and facilitate educational efforts that demonstrate the extent of the unmet civil legal need and encourage collective responsibility and participation of law students in *pro bono* activities within Orange County & southeast Los Angeles by both public and private entities to help meet this unmet civil legal need;
- Urge all law firms and corporate employers to promote and develop effective strategies for engaging associates and partners in *pro bono* representation and other services that benefit low-income persons;
- Urge all the attorneys, law firms, law schools, and other entities to contribute financial support to the Legal Aid Society of Orange County and other non profit organizations that provide free legal services to the poor; and
- Develop collaborations with community organizations for the provision of innovative counseling and/or services programs to improve and increase access to justice.

**Be it Further Resolved**, that the Board of Directors of the Legal Aid Society of Orange County will continue to:

- Promote, support and encourage private attorney involvement initiatives by publicizing and recognizing private attorney involvement in the work of The Legal Aid Society of Orange County and by collaborating with national, state and local organizations to create opportunities for such publicity and recognition.
- Maintain long-standing relationships with the Public Law Center, volunteer Emeritus Attorneys, and Panel Attorney members of the Lawyer Referral Service to meet the unmet civil legal needs of low-income persons with the provision of *pro bono* services;
- Develop strategies that encourage *pro bono*, including creative recruitment methods and delivery models, attorney practice and continuing legal education rules, and training, mentoring, support, and recognition of volunteers.

Adopted by the Board of Directors of The Legal Aid Society of Orange County on March 5, 2008.

  
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R. Thomas Peterson, President  
The Legal Aid Society of Orange County

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