

RESOLUTION
LEGAL SERVICES ALABAMA, Inc.
Board of Directors
In Support of
Enhanced Private Attorney Involvement with LSC Funded Programs

Whereas, the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) and the programs it funds, including Legal Services Alabama (LSA), have long recognized the overarching values of private attorney involvement to LSC funded programs are increased access, increased human and capital resources, and increased Pro Bono commitment; and

Whereas, at its April 2007 meeting, the Board of Directors of LSC 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; and

Whereas, the LSC Board of Directors resolution builds upon the following national LSC initiatives:

- The October 2005 LSC report, *Documenting the Justice Gap in America: The Current Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low-Income Americans*, found that 50 percent of the potential clients requesting assistance from a LSC grantee were turned away for lack of resources on the part of the program;
- LSC *Strategic Directions 2006-2010* calls upon LSC to increase public awareness of, and support for, legal services to low-income persons in order to respond appropriately to more of their legal needs;
- The *LSC Performance Criteria* consider, in evaluating a program's legal representation and other activities intended to benefit the low-income population in its service area, whether that program effectively integrates private attorneys into its work in order to supplement the amount and effectiveness of its representation and other services;
- The Provision for the Delivery of Legal Services Committee of the LSC Board of Directors 2006 meetings, which highlighted the potential, opportunities and challenges of private attorney involvement and determined ways in which this critical resource can be used more effectively by LSC funded programs as a means to help close the justice gap;
- The unanimous adoption in January 2007 by the LSC Board of Directors of a strategic work plan entitled *Action Plan for Private Attorney Involvement: Help Close the Justice Gap, Unleash the Power of Pro Bono*, which highlights the benefits of engaging private attorneys to help represent clients of LSC funded

programs and describes ways in which the LSC Board and staff will work to expand private attorney involvement;

- The American Bar Association's Model Rule 6.1 and similar state bar rules note the ethical obligation of every attorney to provide Pro Bono legal assistance to those unable to afford legal assistance;

Whereas, in the State of Alabama, Rule 6.1 Pro Bono Publico Service encourages attorneys to provide Pro Bono legal services to persons of limited means, to public service or charitable groups or organizations, by service in activities for improving the law, the legal system or the legal profession, and by financial support for organizations that provide legal services to persons of limited means; and the Alabama Access to Justice Commission supports Pro Bono involvement and activities to assist persons with limited income; and the Alabama State Bar, through the ASB Volunteer Lawyer Program, and other activities, encourages involving private attorneys in assisting legal services programs in the provision of legal assistance to low income persons; and

Whereas, in Alabama:

- The Alabama Law Foundation commissioned a study, and formulated a report, the Comprehensive Legal Needs Survey for 2007, documenting the unmet legal needs of low income Alabamians; and
- The Birmingham Bar Association, the Madison County Bar Association, and the Mobile Bar Association, through Volunteer Lawyer Programs, and other activities, encourages involving private attorneys in assisting legal services programs in the provision of legal assistance to low income persons;
- Legal Services Alabama has a long history of successful attorney recruitment and involvement in Pro Bono programming and leadership;
- Legal Services Alabama recognizes that much more must be done to close the "Justice Gap";

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Board of Directors of LSA, in an effort to help close the justice gap in Alabama, supports and encourages private attorney involvement with LSA and will endeavor to:

- Collaborate with other organizations and entities in Alabama to develop and facilitate educational efforts that demonstrate the extent of the unmet civil legal need and encourage collective responsibility within both public and private entities to help meet this unmet civil legal need;
- Collaborate with other organizations and entities in Alabama to develop and promote effective strategies for engaging lawyers in Pro Bono representation and other services that benefit low income persons;

- Include in the collaborations organizations and entities such as state and local bar associations, access to justice entities, law firms, corporate law departments, law schools and clinics, government and military law offices, and state and federal courts;
- Develop strategies that encourage Pro Bono, including recruitment methods and delivery models, attorney practice and continuing legal education rules, expansion of Pro Bono guidelines for members of the Alabama State Bar, training, mentoring, support and recognition of volunteers.

Be It Further Resolved that the Board of Directors of Legal Services Alabama, Inc. will promote, support and encourage private attorney involvement initiatives by publicizing and recognizing private attorney involvement in the work of Legal Services Alabama, and by collaborating with national, state, and local organizations to create opportunities for such publicity and recognition.

Adopted this day by the Board of Directors of Legal Services Alabama, Inc. on March 14, 2008.



William H. Broome, Board President
Legal Services Alabama, Inc.