

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Plan for the Delivery of Civil Legal Aid to Low Income People in Washington State (Revised 2006)

The Washington State Access to Justice Board adopted its revised State Plan on May 8, 2006. The revision was developed following the review of the findings in the Civil Legal Needs Study, conclusions from the Supreme Court's Task Force on Civil Equal Justice Funding and Quantitative Report; the 2000 Census; the Legal Services Corporation's 2003 evaluation of the ATJ Board's 1999 State Plan; recommendations from the Access to Justice Conferences; and interactive GIS (Geographic Information Systems) maps of significant demographic and resource data. Many members and supporters of the Alliance for Equal Justice participated in the state plan review process and contributed comments to the various drafts.

#### Goals of the revised State Plan:

- A. Establish minimum thresholds for client service delivery
- B. Substantially expand access to necessary legal aid services for all low income people
- C. Provide an ongoing infrastructure for effective support and accountability
- D. Provide a blueprint for future budget requests and resource allocation decision making

#### Areas of Planning Focus:

- A. Upgrading Rural Delivery. There is insufficient legal aid presence in rural parts of the state. The Plan does the following:
  - Creates 19 regional service areas of not less than 12,000 low income people each (see map on page 2)
  - Establishes a range of legal aid services that must be available to clients within each region
  - Requires that not less than 3.0 legal aid FTE (full time equivalent) attorneys serve each region, with at least 2.0 FTE's resident within the region
  - Directs regional providers to prioritize and coordinate their client service delivery efforts
- B. Strengthening Pro Bono. There are a number of small pro bono programs in areas of the state with insufficient numbers of private attorneys available to provide meaningful and reliable client services. The Plan does the following:
  - Structurally integrates the pro bono function into the regional delivery infrastructure where there is an insufficient number of private attorneys to reliably contribute 1 FTE (1500 hours per year) of legal aid services
  - Upgrades the statewide capacity to provide training, technical assistance and other support for pro bono providers
- C. Centralizing Client Intake and Access in King County. The Plan directs King County programs to develop a plan to centralize intake, access and referral services, much the same way as CLEAR has done for clients living in the other 38 counties.
- D. Expanding Client Access for all Low Income People. The Plan directs that new and innovative efforts be undertaken to address obstacles that limit access to CLEAR and the legal aid system due to cultural, linguistic, status-based, ability-related or other challenges.
- E. Strengthening Statewide Support Functions. The Plan identifies and assigns responsibility for the following key functions: State Planning and Implementation; Evaluation and Accountability; Advocacy Coordination, Resource Development; Professional Development and Training; Pro Bono Support; Technology; Building Support for Equal Justice

#### Implementation and Oversight:

Immediately: ATJ Board will establish a State Plan Oversight Committee

December 31, 2006: King County proposal for centralized intake system; each region will complete an assessment of planning needs; entities responsible for statewide support will submit plans

June 30, 2007: Completion of 19 regional plans

June 30, 2010: Implementation of the State Plan

# WASHINGTON STATE CIVIL LEGAL AID DELIVERY REGIONS

