

**RESOLUTION
OF
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF LEGAL AID OF EAST TENNESSEE**

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

Whereas, the Legal Services Corporation and the programs it funds, including Legal Aid of East Tennessee, have long recognized that the overarching values of private attorney involvement to LSC-funded programs are increased access, increased human and capital resources, and increase *pro bono* commitment; and

Whereas, at its April 2007 meeting, the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation 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*, which found that 50 percent of the potential clients requesting assistance from an LSC grantee were turned away for lack of resources on the part of the program;
- The *LSC Strategic Directions 2006-2010*, which 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*, which 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 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 Associations's Model Rule 6.1 and similar state bar rules note the professional responsibility of every lawyer to provide *pro bono* legal assistance to persons of limited means;

Whereas, in Tennessee:

- The Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services has commissioned a study performed by the University of Tennessee School of Social Work Office of Research and Public Services and published the Report from the Statewide Comprehensive Legal Needs Survey for 2003 documenting the unmet civil legal needs of low income Tennesseans;
- Legal Aid programs, the Tennessee Bar Association and local Bar Associations in East Tennessee have a long history of successful collaboration on Pro Bono and Access to Justice activities;
- Legal Aid of East Tennessee itself has a long history of successful attorney recruitment and involvement in Pro Bono programing and leadership;
- Legal Aid of East Tennessee recognizes that much more must be done to close the "Justice Gap";

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

- Collaborate with other organizations and entities in Tennessee to develop and facilitate educational efforts that demonstrate the extend of the unmet civil legal need and encourage collective responsibility within by both public and private entities to help meet this unmet civil legal need;
- Collaborate with other organizations and entities in Tennessee to develop effective strategies for engaging lawyers in *pro bono* representation and other services that benefit low-income persons;
- 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.

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

Adopted by the Board of Directors of Legal Aid of East Tennessee on June 22, 2007.

Cherie Monson, Esq., Board Chair