

RESOLUTION

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

Whereas, the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) has long recognized that the overwhelming values of private attorney involvement to LSC-funded programs are increased access, increased human and capital resources, and increased pro bono commitment; and

Whereas, the 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 an LSC grantee were turned away for lack of resources on the part of the program; and

Whereas, the LSC Strategic Direction 2006-2010 calls upon LSC to increase public awareness of and support for legal services to low-income persons in order to respond appropriately more of their legal needs; and

Whereas, 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; and

Whereas, the Provision for the Delivery of Legal Services Committee of the LSC Board of Directors focused on 2006 meeting on highlighting the potential, opportunities and challenges of private attorney involvement and on determining ways in which this critical resource can be used more effectively by LSC-funded programs as a means to help close the justice gap; and

Whereas, at its January 2007 meeting, the LSC Board of Directors unanimously adopted 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;

Whereas, 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;

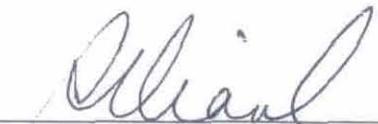
Whereas, Florida's Rule of Professional Conduct 4-6.1 states that a lawyer should voluntarily render public interest legal service and may discharge this responsibility by rendering a minimum of 20 hours of service per year, or donate \$350.00 to a legal aid organization;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Florida Rural Legal Services, Inc. Board of Directors, in its effort to increase access to the civil justice system and close the justice gap, supports and encourages private attorney involvement in the delivery of civil services to low-income Floridians and will continue to:

1. 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;
2. Collaborate with other organizations and entities in Florida Rural Legal Services (FRLS) service area to develop and facilitate educational efforts that demonstrate the extent of the unmet civil legal need and encourage collective responsibility within the service area by both public and private entities to help meet this unmet civil legal need;
3. Collaborate with other organizations and entities in the FRLS service areas to develop effective strategies for engaging lawyers in pro bono representation and other services that benefit low-income persons; and
4. Include in that collaborations organizations, state and local associations, the Florida Bar Foundation and all LSC and non-LSC Legal Assistance providers as well as law firms and corporate law departments, law schools and clinics, government and state and federal court.

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

Adopted by Florida Rural Legal Services' Board of Directors
February 16, 2008



Stella Diamond, President
FRLS Board of Directors