RESOLUTION
of the Board of Directors of
the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles
in Support of Enhanced Private Attorney Involvement
with LSC-Funded Programs

Whereas, the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) and the programs it funds, including the legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, have long recognized that 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 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 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 professional responsibility of every lawyer to provide *pro bono* legal assistance to persons of limited means; and

Whereas, the Board of Governors of the State Bar of California adopted a Pro Bono Resolution on June 22, 2002 urging 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 the legal system, or increasing access to justice," and

Whereas, the *Action Plan for Justice,* prepared by the California Commission on Access to Justice in 2007 at the request of the state legislature, found that California has by far the largest low-income population of any state.

- Since 1980, California's population has increased by 40 percent while the number of Californians living in poverty has increased by 60 percent.
- One of every five children in the state is poor.
- Though the total resources available to provide civil legal services in California grew to $198 million, the "justice gap"—the difference between the total amount of resources available and the total funding needed to truly meet the legal needs of California's poor—grew to more that $394 million dollars.

Whereas, the *Action Plan for Justice* concluded that, in order "[t]o help close the justice gap, not only must the number of pro bono volunteers increase, but the amount of pro bono service that lawyers provide must also increase.... The goal of these recommendations is to increase the depth and breadth of pro bono involvement."

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

- Collaborate with other organizations and entities in the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles service area to develop and facilitate educational efforts that demonstrate the extent of the unmet civil legal need and encourage collective responsibility within the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles service area by both public and private entities to help meet this unmet civil legal need;

- Collaborate with other organizations and entities in the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles service area to develop effective strategies for engaging lawyers in *pro bono* representation and other services that benefit low-income persons;

- Consider including in that collaboration organizations and entities such as state and local bar associations, access to justice entities, law firms and corporate law departments, law schools and clinics, government and military law offices, and state and federal courts; and

- 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 the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles will promote, support and encourage private attorney involvement initiatives by publicizing and recognizing private attorney involvement in the work of the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles and by collaborating with national, state and local organizations to create opportunities for such publicity and recognition.

Adopted by the Board of Directors of the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles on October 24, 2007.

Glenn D. Pomerantz
President, Board of Directors
Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles