RESOLUTION
OF
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
LEGAL AID SERVICES OF OKLAHOMA, INC.

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

Whereas, the Legal Services Corporation and the programs it funds, including Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma, Inc., 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 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;

Whereas, the Oklahoma Bar Association and Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma, Inc. have a longstanding history of cooperative effort in engaging the private bar in the provision of civil legal assistance to low-income Oklahomans, and in recognizing those efforts,

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

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

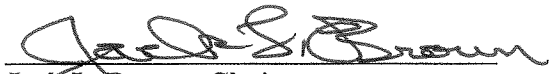
- Collaborate with other organizations and entities in Oklahoma to develop effective strategies for engaging lawyers in *pro bono* representation and other services that benefit low-income persons;

- Consider including in that collaboration organizations and entities such as the Oklahoma Bar Association and its Access to Justice Committee; all local Oklahoma bar associations; the University of Oklahoma College of Law; the Tulsa University College of Law; the Oklahoma City University School of Law; private law firms and practitioners; corporate counsel and law departments; government and military law offices; and state and federal courts, among others; and

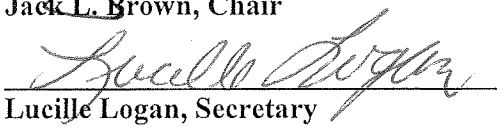
- Develop strategies that encourage *pro bono*, including creative recruitment methods and delivery models, attorney practice and continuing legal education rules, and training, mentoring, support, and recognition of volunteers.

Be it Further Resolved that the Board of Directors of Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma, Inc. will promote, support and encourage private attorney involvement initiatives by publicizing and recognizing private attorney involvement in the work of Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma, Inc. 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 Services of Oklahoma, Inc. on the 21st day of June, 2007.



Jack L. Brown, Chair



Lucille Logan, Secretary