

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF LEGAL AID
OF WESTERN OHIO, INC. IN SUPPORT OF ENHANCED
PRIVATE ATTORNEY INVOLVEMENT EFFORTS**

Whereas, the Legal Services Corporation and the programs it funds, including Legal Aid of Western Ohio, Inc. (LAWO), 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, which note the professional responsibility of every lawyer to provide *pro bono* legal assistance to persons of limited means; and

Whereas, the LAWO Board of Trustees has long recognized the desirability and necessity of involving private attorneys in meeting the legal needs of low-income persons and has worked with bar associations, organized pro bono programs, the judiciary, and individual attorneys to accomplish this goals; and

Whereas, in September 2006, to enhance the involvement of private attorneys and law students in meeting the needs of low-income persons, the LAWO Board of Trustees formally adopted *Goals and Objectives for Private Attorney and Law Student Involvement in the Delivery of Legal Services to Low-Income Persons*; and

Whereas, in 2006 the LAWO Board of Trustees created and funded a new position of Director of Private Attorney and Law Student Involvement to coordinate and direct LAWO's private attorney involvement activities; and

Whereas, LAWO operates the AmeriCorps Pro Bono Legal Corps, with funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service and Equal Justice Works, to facilitate and support the involvement of law students in the delivery of legal services to low-income persons; and

Whereas, in September 2007 the Ohio Supreme Court issued a *Statement Regarding the Provision of Pro Bono Legal Services by Ohio Lawyers* and the Ohio State Bar Association formed a Pro Bono Committee Task Force charged with establishing a statewide network of locally based committees to promote and facilitate pro bono opportunities for attorneys; and

Whereas, the LAWO Board of Trustees wishes to express its support of the initiatives being undertaken by the Legal Services Corporation and the Ohio State Bar Association, and of the statement on pro bono services issued by the Ohio Supreme Court;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Board of Trustees of Legal Aid of Western Ohio, Inc. (LAWO), in an effort to help close the justice gap in Ohio, supports and encourages private attorney involvement with LAWO and with its partner agencies, including its affiliate, Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc., and will endeavor to:

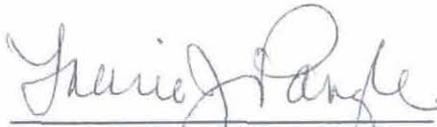
- Collaborate with other organizations and entities in northwest and west central Ohio, and at the state level, to develop and facilitate educational efforts that

demonstrate the extent of the unmet civil legal need and encourage collective responsibility within LAWO's service area by both public and private entities to help meet this unmet civil legal need; and

- Collaborate with other organizations and entities in northwest and west central Ohio, and at the state level, to develop effective strategies for engaging lawyers in *pro bono* representation and other services that benefit low-income persons; and
- Include in that collaboration Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc.; the Ohio State Bar Association and its Pro Bono Committee Task Force; the Toledo Bar Association Pro Bono Legal Services Program; the Greater Dayton Volunteer Lawyers Project; the University of Toledo College of Law; the University of Dayton School of Law; Ohio Northern University Pettit College of Law; local bar associations throughout LAWO's 32 county service area; the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation; and the state and federal judiciary; and
- Develop strategies that encourage *pro bono* activities, 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 Trustees of Legal Aid of Western Ohio, Inc. will promote, support and encourage private attorney involvement initiatives by publicizing and recognizing private attorney involvement in the work of LAWO and by collaborating with national, state and local organizations to create opportunities for such publicity and recognition.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees of Legal Aid of Western Ohio, Inc. on December 6, 2007.



**Laurie J. Pangle, President
Board of Trustees**