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July 11, 2002

HAND DELIVERED

Randi Youells
Vice President for Programs
Legal Services Corporation
750 First Street, N.E., 11th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20002-4250

Dear Ms. Youells:

Enclosed is the self-evaluation submission by Neighborhood Legal Services Program of the District of Columbia (Grantee No. 309080), which is in response to LSC Program Letter 2000-7.

Sincerely,

Willie E. Cook, Jr.
Executive Director

Encl.

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NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

PROGRAM LETTER 2000-7

I. To what extent has a comprehensive, integrated and client-centered legal services delivery system been achieved in the District of Columbia?

A. What are the issues that impact upon low income people in the District of Columbia? How are these issues being responded to?

The issues that are most important to low income people in the District of Columbia fall into two categories: (1) scarcity of resources available to address vital services to the population; and (2) legal needs and priorities that emerge from eligible population groups. Important issues that impact upon low income people in the first category include difficulty of raising funds to support civil legal services providers and budget cuts that threaten vital services to the client population. Important issues in the second category include: (1) a source of revenue to pay for basic necessities; (2) safe, habitable and affordable housing; (3) fair treatment for consumers who deal with business organizations; (4) special help in resolving domestic conflicts; (5) elimination of job and housing discrimination; (6) special emphasis on survival concerns for elderly clients such as social security, SSI, medicaid and medicare; and (7) desire for high quality education for children.

Civil legal services providers in the District of Columbia are attacking the lack of resource problem by aggressive fundraising techniques that target law firms, individual lawyers, foundations, government funding, fundraising dinners, and corporate sponsorship. Budget cuts that threaten vital services to the client population are being addressed largely by legislative advocacy by those civil legal services providers who are allowed to engage in such activities.

Legal needs studies and priority setting has taken place at NLSP for 38 years. Other civil legal services providers also conduct such studies. While there is a long list

of legal needs and priorities, the four most important ones are: housing, income maintenance/public benefits, consumer, and family law. All four of these are a part of NLSP's annual priorities. NLSP addresses them in a number of ways including litigation, negotiation, education, and brief service. The vast majority of the other 30 plus civil legal services providers tend to focus on discreet priorities rather than full service. They likewise use a number of strategies to handle priorities such as litigation, negotiation, education, legislative advocacy and brief service.

B. What are the components of the delivery system?

The components of the delivery system in the District of Columbia are composed of: (1) service delivery organizations and management structures; and (2) delivery system tasks. There are 30-40 civil legal services providers in the District of Columbia, each of which is separately incorporated with a board of directors. Each provider delivers services based upon their mission principles and priorities. There are a number of tasks that emerge from the services delivered by the providers including: (1) technology; (2) training; (3) private attorney involvement; (4) resource development; (5) manuals, form pleadings and other resource material for legal advocates; (6) community legal education; (7) resource development; and (8) referral and intake systems.

C. Has this system created mechanisms to assess its performance in relationship to commonly-accepted external guides such as the ABA Standards for Providers of Civil Legal Services to the Poor, the LSC Performance Criteria or some other set of objective criteria? What is the protocol for undertaking system performance review and when was a review last undertaken?

The delivery system described in B. is not yet a unitary one. There has been no establishment of performance criteria pursuant to ABA or LSC guidelines.

D. Does your statewide system work to ensure the availability of equitable legal assistance capacities to clients – regardless of who the clients are, where they reside or the languages they speak? How does your system ensure that clients have equitable access to necessary

assistance including self-help, legal education, advice, brief service, and representation in all relevant forums? Please describe what steps you anticipate taking to ensure equitable access in the coming years.

All of the civil legal services providers in the District of Columbia aggressively seek to ensure that eligible clients have equal access to available services.

NLSP has developed a number of strategies to address the equal access issue. The most important steps that NLSP took to ensure maximum access to the client community was the decision in 1964 to make neighborhood offices the centerpiece of its delivery approach. NLSP has three neighborhood offices that are located in areas where our clients live. Also, those three neighborhood offices each cover a specific geographical area of the city such that each of the four quadrants are covered. Each of the neighborhood offices offers the same diversity of services such as: community legal education, advice and counsel, brief service, and legal representation in all relevant judicial and administrative forums. Thus, all clients in all sections of the city have the same access to all of NLSP's services. The District of Columbia has a growing Latino poverty population, measuring approximately 7% of the poverty population. For the 20 years prior to March, 2001, NLSP always had several full-time staff members who were fluent in English and Spanish. Unfortunately, we lost all of our bilingual staff in March, 2001. We have been desperately trying to hire bilingual replacements; but, have been unsuccessful. We are presently aggressively recruiting bilingual secretaries and attorneys.

As was mentioned earlier, there are 30-40 civil legal services providers in the District of Columbia. Each of them specializes in serving particular segments of the population. For instance the Legal Counsel for the Elderly services elderly clients. They have an aggressive and well rounded delivery system that serves a wide range of elderly needs. Ayuda specializes in serving the Spanish-speaking population in immigration issues and domestic violence. The Legal Aid Society represents clients

in: family matters, landlord-tenant, public benefits and disability and special education. They also have some staff members who are bilingual. This is just a sampling of some of the services offered by several of the 30-40 civil legal services providers. The real impediment to providing equitable access to the entire poverty population in the District of Columbia is scarcity of financial resources available to all 30-40 civil legal services providers. This issue is being tackled by concentrating efforts on increased fundraising strategies.

E. How does the legal service delivery system employ technology to provide increased access and enhanced services to clients throughout the state? What technological initiatives are currently underway and how will they support the integrated statewide delivery system?

There are a number of strategies that are being employed to enhance client access through state of the art technology. Perhaps the most important city-wide initiative is one that was undertaken by the District of Columbia Bar in 1998. The D.C. Bar spearheaded an effort to pair all 30-40 civil legal services providers with a large law firm. The purpose of the pairing was to have the technology departments of the large law firms partner with each civil legal services provider to assist in upgrading each provider's technology capacity. This assistance resulted in a number of arrangements including: donation of upgraded computers to all providers; installation of networks; internet and e-mail connections; long-term technical assistance by large law firm information technology staffs to individual providers, etc.

NLSP was the recipient of major technology help from several major law firms that included: (1) replacement of all computers and accessories with upgrades; (2) installation of a computer network in both office locations. The District of Columbia Bar arranged a donation of all software from Microsoft to all providers. Two law firms are presently working to further upgrade NLSP's technology capacity. NLSP has done the following to upgrade its technology capacity: (1) we licensed case management

software from TIME in the fall of 2001; (2) we purchased a state-of-the art server in December, 2001 to handle anticipated increased capacity; (3) we contracted with Verizon in December, 2001 to install DSL lines for internet connections for all NLSP computers in both of our locations, including network connections between both office locations. One of the two law firms has developed a recommendation for internal and external e-mail for each computer at NLSP. This same law firm has donated 35 Pentium II computers to replace all of NLSP's present computers. Also, this same law firm has arranged for Windows 2000 to be installed on all 35 computers. The problem with getting all of these systems activated is that one of the two law firms assisting NLSP on this large project has fallen behind schedule (badly) on the tasks that it agreed to perform. This law firm agreed to provide all of the manpower and assistance for internal connectivity, including: conversion of all data from the old to new computers; connecting all 35 computers to already leased DSL lines; provide VPN connectivity between the two NLSP office locations. This law firm has fallen behind schedule because of a massive computer upgrade at its law firm offices locally and nationally. NLSP has had to wait. The first law firm could not take on this additional responsibility in the first part of 2002. The first law firm has agreed to assume finishing NLSP's remaining computer-related work beginning in July, 2002.

The District of Columbia Consortium of Civil Legal Services Providers (hereafter referred to as the Consortium) has had one website installed, mostly for legal services advocates, and is planning a second website devoted to serving clients. An LSC team conducted a capability assessment of NLSP during the last week of February, 2002. NLSP received a copy of the draft report on June 14, 2002. One of the conclusions in that report is that NLSP has no plans to either create a website or participate with the Consortium website. This conclusion is absolutely false, and is indicative of the problems posed by getting a version from adversaries of NLSP and not giving NLSP a

chance to respond before a report is written. On the contrary, NLSP is and always has been an enthusiastic supporter of the Consortium website initiative. As a matter of fact, NLSP's Executive Director enthusiastically supported, from the beginning, the website planning. What NLSP has been unable to do to date is provide substantive content for the website; but, we enthusiastically support the effort. In fact, NLSP requested that there be a special demonstration of the website for clients and client community organizations. The Consortium and the District of Columbia Pro Bono Project arranged to have a website demonstration. NLSP's Executive Director arranged for a large representation of clients and client community organization representatives to attend this demonstration. Approximately 20 community representatives attended the Consortium website demonstration on April 3, 2001. Enclosed as Attachment A is a copy of the letter that NLSP's Executive Director sent clients and client groups urging them to attend the website demonstration. Also, NLSP's Executive Director was approached by leaders of the Consortium with a request to submit a joint proposal to LSC in 2001 for funding a technology grant for the creation of this website in the District of Columbia to service legal services advocates and clients. NLSP's Executive Director enthusiastically agreed to submit a joint proposal with the Consortium to LSC for this technology grant. Just prior to the deadline for submitting the proposal to LSC, Consortium leaders called NLSP's Executive Director and said that they decided not to submit a proposal to LSC for the technology grant.

Recently, a second effort was begun by the Consortium to plan the creation of a second website that is specifically designed to help low and moderate income people in the District of Columbia area. The Consortium contacted NLSP's Executive Director and asked him if he would agree to contact the client community and have four representatives attend a planning session for this website on July 18, 2002. NLSP's

Executive Director agreed to get the client involvement needed, and secured promises from four client group representatives to attend the website planning meeting on July 18, 2002. Enclosed as Attachment B is correspondence between the Consortium and NLSP's Executive Director regarding setting up this meeting. Also enclosed with Attachment B is a letter from NLSP's Executive Director to the four client representatives. He contacted them by telephone to first secure their promise to attend the meeting.

So, NLSP is a very enthusiastic supporter of the Consortium's website initiatives because we think those efforts are extremely valuable ways to expand the way in which civil legal services providers communicate and serve clients and community groups. These website initiatives offer exciting new ways to serve this city's low income population, and offers the possibility of total electronic connectivity between and among all legal services advocates and clients in the District of Columbia.

F. How has the legal service delivery system expanded its resources to provide critical legal services to low income clients including hard to reach groups such as migrant farm workers, Native Americans, the elderly, those with physical or mental disabilities, those confined to institutions, immigrants and the rural poor?

Much of the information requested in this section is supplied in section D above. The District of Columbia is an urban area and has no rural poor, migrant farm workers, and few if any Native Americans. A number of the civil legal services providers in the District of Columbia, including NLSP, serve persons with physical and mental disabilities, and those confined to institutions. A number of additional and special arrangements are made by several legal services providers to accommodate people with physical and mental disabilities and the elderly. For instance, at NLSP, home visits by lawyers, paralegals and investigators are provided for those elderly and physically and mentally handicapped clients who are unable to come to NLSP offices.

All of these efforts by legal services providers are designed to give additional attention to hard to reach low income populations.

G. What steps have been implemented within the legal services delivery system and among client communities to identify and nurture new leaders? Do the existing leaders reflect the diversity within the state and within client communities that your delivery system serves? Do your state's equal justice leaders reflect the gender, race, ethnic and economic concerns of important but sometimes overlooked groups within your state? Does the leadership provide opportunities for innovation and experimentation; does it support creative solutions to meet changing needs; are new ideas welcomed; are clients nurtured as leaders? Has the leadership been given sufficient authority and resources to implement needed changes?

There is a wealth of leaders within the client community in the District of Columbia. But, unfortunately, that wealth of leadership has not been incorporated into the District of Columbia's civil legal services delivery systems. In fact, this is the issue that presently stands in the way of a unified state planning effort in the District of Columbia. NLSP has aggressively organized the client community in the District of Columbia to assume real sharing of power in the state planning efforts in the District of Columbia. The Consortium speaks glibly about "client involvement" but have not agreed to a real restructuring of the power arrangements such that all stakeholders have a real say in a city-wide delivery system. NLSP, for years, has been pushing a state planning agenda that incorporates clients and people of color into real decision-making roles in the Consortium's state planning efforts. The District of Columbia's equal justice leaders do not reflect the gender, race, ethnic and economic concerns of this city's population. There are many sources of rich leadership among clients and people of color in the District of Columbia. This significant talent pool must be specifically incorporated into any legitimate state planning effort. The Consortium must abandon the meaningless reference to "client involvement" and embrace a restructuring of this entire effort to include a real power sharing arrangement in which all stakeholders have equal decision-making roles in all state planning efforts.

H. What do you envision will be your next steps to achieve a client-centered integrated and comprehensive delivery system within your state or territory? How will clients be actively involved in the determination of these next steps?

NLSP has a well developed plan which will serve as the next steps in achieving a client-centered, integrated and comprehensive delivery system in the District of Columbia. This plan was submitted to LSC on June 27, 2002 as a special condition on NLSP's 2002 grant. A copy of that plan and report is enclosed as Attachment C. This plan offers a fair way to comprehensively construct a statewide entity to coordinate civil legal services delivery in the District of Columbia, with all stakeholders having a seat at the table. NLSP's Board of Directors plans to invite the Consortium to sit down and discuss these governance issues in an effort to break the log jam on state planning in the District of Columbia. It is hoped that reasonable people will agree on a construct that will benefit this entire community.

I. What has been the greatest obstacle to achieving a statewide, integrated, client-centered delivery system and how was that obstacle overcome, or alternatively, how do you plan to overcome that obstacle?

The greatest obstacle to achieving a statewide, integrated, client-centered delivery system in the District of Columbia has been the inability of NLSP and the client community to convince the Consortium of the necessity of a new power sharing arrangement in the state planning process and all that results from state planning. Despite Consortium leaders' expressions to LSC that they have agreed to NLSP's view on a client-centered process, it just hasn't happened. As mentioned in section H above, NLSP's Board of Directors will be initiating direct contact with the Consortium, proposing a comprehensive plan for cooperation among all stakeholders, in an effort to reach finality on a fair process. We at NLSP are hopeful that this new approach will result in a city-wide, integrated, client-centered delivery system that we all hope for.

J. Has any benefit-to-cost analysis been made in terms of creating a comprehensive, integrated and client-centered legal services delivery system in your state? If yes, what does your analysis show?

A benefit-to-cost analysis has not been made in terms of creating a comprehensive, integrated, and client-centered legal services delivery system in the District of Columbia. This analysis will have to await creating a city-wide structure – perhaps one like that suggested in Attachment C.

K. What resources, technical assistance and support would help you meet your goals?

A statewide delivery system as envisioned by Attachment C will necessitate a large increase in financial support for all civil legal services providers in the District of Columbia. This plan will also require a dramatic increase in technical assistance and other support from the corporate sector, law firms, foundations, and the District of Columbia Bar and the many voluntary bar associations. For instance, the training institute is a function that NLSP's plan suggest be funded and run by the District of Columbia Bar. Carrying out the comprehensive plan as proposed by NLSP will necessitate the support of a number of government and non-government entities.

II. To what extent have intended outcomes of a comprehensive, integrated client-centered legal service delivery system been achieved including but not limited to service effectiveness/quality; efficiency; equity in terms of client access; greater involvement by members of the private bar in the legal lives of clients, and client-community empowerment?

A. In terms of the issues impacting upon low-income persons within your state, what strategies have you designed to address these issues and how do you plan to measure your future success in addressing your objectives?

As stated earlier, the most important issues impacting upon low-income people are: (1) a scarcity of financial resources for civil legal services providers; (2) cuts in budgets for governmental services to the client community; (3) family law cases; (4) housing; (5) income maintenance/public benefits; and (6) consumer affairs. One major strategic plan to increase financial resources to all 30-40 civil legal services providers

in the District of Columbia has been spearheaded by the District of Columbia Bar Foundation. In addition to being the District of Columbia's IOLTA funder, this foundation also receives substantial revenue from large law firms, individual attorneys and some corporate sponsorship. The D.C. Bar Foundation makes annual grants to civil legal services providers based on the success of its annual fundraising. The D.C. Bar Foundation has convened several meetings in 2002 of the executive directors of all civil legal services providers to think through new strategies for dealing with revenue shrinkage and expanding their fundraising ability. First, the D.C. Bar Foundation has hired an Executive Director who will be responsible for raising funds for the foundation on a full-time basis. A new set of strategies is being considered to increase the revenue pot for both the foundation and individual civil legal services providers. NLSP's Executive Director has attended all of these meetings. For instance, one initiative is for the D.C. Bar Foundation to take a look at average annual pledges to legal services programs from large and medium size law firms in other states, and compare those with the pattern in the District of Columbia. District of Columbia law firms, particularly the large ones, simply do not make generous cash contributions to legal services providers as a whole. The plan is to collect the data from other states, and involve the District of Columbia Bar and the judiciary in setting some increased standards for cash contributions from law firms and individual members of the bar.

Legislative advocacy is the primary way that budget cuts in governmental services to the client community is being addressed. Those civil legal services programs that are allowed to lobby have done an excellent job in this area, particularly with the District of Columbia City Council and the Mayor.

The four major substantive priorities will continue to be addressed by civil legal services providers and pro bono assistance from private lawyers. When expansion of

the available services to clients is realized through initiatives such as the Consortium's creation of websites, we will begin to get some idea of how much further we are beginning to penetrate the client community. This particular website initiative's success can partially be measured collecting data on website usage. Case management systems' data will also be used as a measure of how successful civil legal services providers are at dealing with priorities and legal needs of low-income people.

B. Has the legal services delivery system expanded access and services through coordination with providers throughout the state? Can this be quantified?

The legal services delivery system has expanded access and services through coordination with providers throughout the District of Columbia; but, this cannot be quantified at this time. While there is a great deal of coordination among providers of civil legal services, a great deal more will be possible, especially when there is some agreement among stakeholders for a city-wide entity, perhaps along the lines as proposed by NLSP in Attachment C.

C. Has the quality of services provided by the legal services delivery system improved. How?

The quality of services provided by the legal services delivery system has improved. An example is the cooperation between the Consortium and NLSP and the client community on planning for the two websites. This very important project offers some measurable benefits to the client community. NLSP envisions access to these websites being made available at: public libraries, community recreation centers, community organization centers, civil legal services provider offices, kiosks within all of the courthouses in the District of Columbia, churches and other locations frequented by the client community. This initiative is going to greatly expand services to the client community.

D. Since 1998, has there been improvement in the relative equity of client access throughout the state for all low income clients regardless of who they are, where in the state they reside, what languages they speak, their race/gender/national origin, or the existence of other access barriers? How is this equity achieved?

There has been improvement in the relative equity of client access throughout the District of Columbia since 1998. The equity has been achieved in a number of ways. First, at least 5-10 new civil legal services providers have been created since 1998. While these new organizations tend to revolve around one or two priority areas, they offer expanded reach to the client community in their areas. Second, the District of Columbia Bar has been especially aggressive since 1998 in exhorting law firms and all members of the bar to increase their participation in pro bono representation. Thirdly, there has been more coordination and cooperation among civil legal services providers in delivering services to clients. All of these efforts have played a role in improving the relative equity of client access throughout the District of Columbia.

E. Since 1998, has there been improvement in the relative equity in terms of the availability of the full range of civil equal justice delivery capacities throughout the state? What mechanisms have been developed to ensure such relative equity is achieved and maintained? Since 1998, has there been improvement in the relative equity in the development and distribution of civil equal justice resources throughout the state? Are there areas of the state that suffer from a disproportionate lack of resources (funding as well as in-kind/pro bono)? If so, is there a strategy to overcome such inequities?

There has been some improvement in relative equity in terms of availability of the full range of civil equal justice delivery capacities throughout the District of Columbia. As mentioned in the previous section II.D., there has been delivery capacity increases brought on by the creation of new civil legal services providers, increased participation by the private bar in pro bono cases, and better coordination among civil legal services providers. These improvements have been achieved by collective actions of the bar, judiciary and civil legal services providers; and in the case of newly created providers, the improvements have been a product of mostly

foundation-related grants. Legal services resources are relatively equally distributed in all areas of the District of Columbia. Even in those areas of the city where there might not be a physical location of a provider, public transportation makes access relatively accessible to all areas of the city. In the District of Columbia, the issue is not whether there are areas that suffer from a disproportionate lack of resources. The problem is that there is serious lack of resources for the delivery of civil legal services period. The strategies for overcoming these resource deficiencies have been discussed earlier in this report.

F. Does this legal services delivery system operate efficiently? Are there areas of duplication?

The legal services delivery system does operate relatively efficiently. There are not so much areas of duplication, but rather, too many civil legal services providers for a city the size of the District of Columbia. NLSP has repeatedly raised this issue in city-wide meetings of civil legal services providers. NLSP has specifically raised this issue with the IOLTA funder because limited IOLTA and law firm funding, which amounts to $600,000 - $750,000 annually, is divided among about 20 civil legal services providers, which does not allow any grantee to get very much. NLSP has been a proponent of the idea that the IOLTA funder ought to restrict annual grants to 2 or 3 civil legal services providers who are serving the broadest group of clients and needs. This proposal is not popular in the District of Columbia to say the least.

G. Has the system expanded the way it involves private lawyers in the delivery of essential services to low-income persons? Does the system effectively and efficiently use the private bar to deliver essential services to low income people?

The system has expanded in the way that it involves private lawyers in the delivery of essential services to low-income people. There was a recent example of this expansion. In the fall of 2001, local and federal judges in the District of Columbia issued a challenge to large law firms to commit to specific pro bono projects and

hourly targets to respond to a shortage of attorneys employed by civil legal services providers. The District of Columbia Bar was instrumental in publicizing and pushing this project. The top 100 grossing law firms in the District of Columbia were targeted. Press reports indicated that the District of Columbia Bar received responses from 41 law firms, which together projected 550,000 hours of free legal services – at an estimated $160 million in equivalent billing value – over the calendar year 2002. This very impressive response from the private bar will certainly dramatically increase essential services to low-income people in the District of Columbia.

III. Are the best organizational and human resource management configurations and approaches being used?

A. For calendar year 2001, what is the current configuration of programs (LSC and non-LSC) that deliver services to low income clients – i.e., what are the components (size, areas of responsibility, governance) of the delivery system? What are the funding sources and levels for each of these components of the delivery system?

There are 30–40 civil legal services providers in the District of Columbia, only one of which is LSC-funded. They vary in size from two person operations to 30 staff members. All of the providers are separately incorporated, non-profit organizations, governed by separate boards of directors. There are approximately 20 areas of responsibilities covered by the 30–40 programs collectively, with a number of programs having some of the same areas of responsibility. The funding sources of the 30–40 legal services providers include: law firms, individual attorneys, corporations, federal government grants, and foundations. NLSP does not have specific funding sources and levels for each of these 30–40 organizations.

B. Since October 1998, what other configurations and/or approaches have been seriously explored? Were any adopted? Were any rejected? Are any changes contemplated in the coming year?

Since October, 1998, there have been no serious explorations of changes in configuration and/or approaches. NLSP is the only LSC-funded program in the District

of Columbia. There is deep hostility among the non LSC-funded programs to consider mergers. It is difficult to project whether there will be any changes in the coming year. Right now, it doesn't look like it.

C. Is there any identifiable duplication in capacities or services in the state? How many duplicative systems – accounting systems, human resources management systems, case management systems, etc. – currently exist? Does the service delivery system now in use minimize or eliminate duplications that existed prior to October 1, 1998?

There are a number of civil legal services providers who provide the same service to clients in the District of Columbia; but, the services are not necessarily duplicative. An example is housing. At least 15 of the 30 – 40 civil legal services providers have housing as a priority; but, because housing issues impact so heavily on the client population, there still is not nearly enough capacity to deal with even 10% of the housing need. One hundred percent of the resources of all 30 – 40 civil legal services providers could be devoted to housing, and there still would not be enough resources to meet 25% of the housing needs of low income people in the District of Columbia. Approximately 60,000 complaints for possession of real estate are filed annually against tenants in the Landlord-Tenant Branch of the District of Columbia Superior Court. It is estimated that approximately 75% - 80% of those defendants are low-income people. 90% - 95% of those low income tenants are unrepresented because there are simply not enough lawyers to provide representation. Landlord-Tenant representation is just one of the areas of housing that impact on low-income people. Is it true that the same services are provided by a number of civil legal services providers? The answer is yes. Does it follow that, therefore, there is duplication of those services? The answer is not necessarily. A detailed analysis would have to be done, studying all of the services rendered by all providers, comparing those services with existing client needs, to determine if there is duplication. Such a study has not been done in the District of Columbia. In NLSP's

view, the issue is not duplication of services or capacity in the District of Columbia; but rather, an excess number of civil legal services providers that simply can't be sustained by the limited financial resources that are available. Too many civil legal services providers are going after the same sources of revenue, resulting in all of them being seriously under-funded year after year. NLSP is of the view that the number of civil legal services providers in the District of Columbia needs to be drastically reduced. The service delivery system that is now in use has the same flaw that existed prior to October 1, 1998 – there are too many programs.

D. Since October 1998, what innovative service delivery systems/mechanisms/initiatives been adopted in the state? Have any been explored and then rejected?

There have been a number of innovative service delivery systems/mechanisms/initiatives adopted in the District of Columbia since October, 1998. Below are a few examples.

A prisoners law legal services program was started to provide civil legal services to inmates incarcerated in District of Columbia penal institutions. This was an extremely valuable service addition because prison condition issues are difficult, and there is a scarcity of resources devoted to that population. Prior to the Congressional restrictions in 1996, NLSP used to be extremely active in that litigation arena. But the creation of a prisoners legal services program was a very valuable resource addition, supplementing the fine work that has always been done by the private bar and the ACLU.

Another very innovative service was started under the joint auspices of the local medical society and members of the private bar. These groups, along with social services organizations created a holistic, one stop service center for clients. The idea was to provide a place where the social, legal and medical needs of a client could be addressed at one location. So, there was created: (1) a civil legal services program;

(2) a medical clinic; and (3) a social service organization. Members of the private bar provided funds to staff the legal clinics. Physicians provided volunteer members to staff the medical clinic. And corporate and government funds were used to provide social services to clients. The organization is still in existence and offers a unique approach to dealing with problems of the client community.

NLSP is not aware of initiatives that have been explored and then rejected since October, 1998.