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CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES FOR LOW INCOME CALIFORNIANS RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSALS

I. POVERTY IN CALIFORNIA

Two factors distinguish the population of California: size and diversity. California is home to more than thirty-two million people, the largest population of any state.¹ Californians are tremendously diverse, with members of numerous racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds represented. Statewide, people of color constitute 47% of the population². One indicator of California's overall diversity is the number of languages spoken by Californians. In 1993, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that the people of California communicated in 224 different languages, more than any other state.³ In Los Angeles alone official documents must be printed in seven threshold languages. Contributing to the state's rich ethnic and racial diversity are the more than 200,000 immigrants who arrive each year from countries around the world⁴. California has the largest foreign-born population in the country, in 1997 eight million people, 24.9% of the population were foreign born.⁵

In 1990 13.9% of Californians were living below the poverty line. By 1994, the percentage of persons living below the poverty line in California had increased to 17.9%, 3.4 percentage points higher than the rest of the country.⁶ The poor in California, like the rest of the population, are a diverse group of people with a complicated range of problems and needs. The plight of the poor in California cannot be completely understood unless presented from the perspective of various constituent groups, all of whom possess both common and unique problems and concerns.

California's economic difficulties, such as lower income, higher costs of living and the affordable housing gap, tend to hit ethnic and racial minorities the hardest of all. Poverty is most persistent in African-American and Hispanic populations. In 1990 nationally, the poverty level of Whites was 10.7%, while for African-Americans it was 12.6% and Hispanics were at 28.1%.⁷ 1991, the median California income for the population as a whole was \$37,400. Most of the state's minority groups showed median incomes far below

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State of California, Department of Finance, *Historical Population Estimates*, Sacramento, California 1997.

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State of California, Department of Finance, *Race Ethnic Population Estimates*, Sacramento, California, 1998

³ S.F. Examiner J. Flinn, "Californians Talk in Most Tongues of All", April 28, 1993

⁴ Bureau of the Census, Economics and Statistics Division, *American Almanac, 1996-1997*, page 13

⁵ Sacramento Bee, "Foreign-born Residents", David Westphal, April 9, 1998

⁶ Ibid. page 474

⁷ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. *1990 Poverty Tables*, Washington D. C. 1990

that level, with African-Americans at \$26,400, and Hispanics at \$32,600.⁸

Women and their children increasingly comprise the majority of the poor in California and throughout the country. Women face barriers to equality regardless of race, ethnicity, age, ability, or socioeconomic status. However, discrimination in health care, employment, education, family law and other areas is greatly exacerbated for poor women particularly women of color, women with disabilities, immigrant women and older women.

Women are also frequently marginalized economically and socially by domestic violence. It is estimated that 50% of homeless women in California left home to escape beatings. Battered women typically lack the resources to address their legal needs. Legal assistance is necessary to obtain restraining orders, to have violators held in contempt and to obtain necessary economic support and social services.

The number of children in poverty has climbed dramatically in California over the last two decades. California has nearly one million children under six who live in poverty.⁹ At a time when the number of California children in poverty is growing, children and their families face decreasing benefits and services and increasing restrictions on the programs that serve them. Poor children comprise 23.4% of California's children as compared to 19% of American children as a whole¹⁰. California's child poverty rate was the 9th highest in the nation in 1996.¹¹

Another important group with a substantial problem of poverty is the elderly population, which makes up 7.6% of the poor population in California. The total number of Californians over the age of 60 with an income at or below 125% of the poverty level is just under 530,000 people.¹² In these times of government budget-cutting, their existence has become increasingly precarious.

Census figures show that 7.4% of Californians between 16 and 64 and 34% of Californians 65 and older have a disability¹³. While the majority of working age disabled citizens are employed, unemployment rates among the state's disabled are far higher than in the population as a whole. The instance of poverty among disabled Californians is thus disproportionately high.

Because of the language barrier, unfamiliar US law and court systems, and few financial resources, immigrants face what appear to be insurmountable obstacles in asserting their legal rights. A recent survey indicates that a majority of immigrant families had a non-immigration legal problem in the past year. Legal

⁸ *California Almanac, 6th Edition* ed. James Fay. Pacific Data Resources: 1993

⁹ Los Angeles Times, "Poverty Rates Among States Children" Virginia Ellis, July 10, 1998

¹⁰ State of California, Department of Finance, *State and Metropolitan Handbook*, Sacramento, California 1997.

¹¹ The California Budget Project, "Declining Grant Levels Push Families Deeper Into Poverty", Sacramento, California July 28, 1998

¹² Bureau of the Census, *Summary Social, Economic and Housing: California*. June 1992, Table 3

¹³ *Ibid.* Table 8

assistance is particularly important in dealing with family problems, and discrimination in employment, housing and public services.

It is estimated that at least 250,000 Californians are homeless at any given time, and that as many as 850,000 of the state's residents will experience an episode of homelessness during the course of any year.¹⁴ Homeless people both in shelters and on the streets are frequent crime victims and live in constant fear for the safety of their possessions and even their lives. An area of concern, particularly in Los Angeles, is the growing urban female homeless population.

Growing numbers of our clients are the working poor. Having a job does not mean people are paid enough to get out of poverty. Sixty-three percent (63%) of poor families work during the year, but nonetheless remain in poverty.¹⁵ As welfare to work programs expand, it is even more critical we focus attention on the poor who work. Poor people continue to move into jobs that pay poverty-level wages. Many of these jobs offer no health insurance benefits. California is one of six states where one of every five people has no medical insurance¹⁶. Clients will need assistance understanding and exercising their employment rights.

The legal needs of Californians living in poverty are both extensive and diverse. It is the case already that only a very small portion of these needs can be met, given the limited resources available to legal services programs. Only 26% of the legal needs of poor Californians were met in 1993¹⁷, and this was prior to the drastic cuts in LSC funding and the IOLTA reductions.

It is not possible in the space allotted to detail the dramatic policy changes which we believe will increase individual legal needs and opportunities for affirmative advocacy on behalf of our clients. Legal needs are arising in areas including welfare to work efforts, ensuring equal and quality educational opportunities, creating affordable quality childcare, access to health care, and affordable housing. Suffice to say that the old aid programs are dead and new programs are being designed and implemented in every county of the state. The need for a continuum of services in each locality has never been more apparent as the need for community education, individual services including appropriate representation, affirmative litigation, and administrative, legislative and policy advocacy increase in every substantive area.

II. CALIFORNIA PLANNING PROCESS

A. State Planning Process Components: We base our planning process on the coordinated efforts of the following organizations¹⁸:

¹⁴ California Homeless and Housing Coalition, *California Issues*, 1994

¹⁵ Children Now, *State of Our Children, 1996 California Report*, Oakland, California, 1997

¹⁶ New York Times, *Americans Lacking Health Insurance*, September 26, 1998

¹⁷

And Justice For All: Fulfilling the Promise of Access to Civil Justice in California. Office of Legal Services and the Access to Justice Working Group. September 1996.

- The Access to Justice Commission that includes representatives of the Bar, Judiciary, Labor, Business, Religious and Academic communities
- Trust Fund Staff and Commission Members
- The State Bar of California and the State Bar Legal Services Section¹⁹
- State support organizations including Western Center on Law and Poverty and Public Interest Clearinghouse
- Organizations of legal services programs: the Legal Aid Association of California, the LSC Project Directors Association, Women in Legal Services and the California Clients Council.

B. Broad-based Local and Regional Planning: Given the size and complexity of California and the diversity of our population, significant portions of the planning process and many recommendations are regional in nature. Local programs are integrated into local and regional coalitions and collaborative efforts in a variety of substantive areas. In addition, federally funded and IOLTA funded legal services programs are engaged in collaborative efforts at the local and regional level. Detailing of all these processes would require more space than we have available, but examples are detailed in Section VI on Innovative Service Delivery and Regional Collaboration.

LSC- funded Legal Services Programs divided the state into five distinct regions for planning purposes.

- Bay Area: San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Assistance(SFNLAF), Legal Aid Society of Alameda County (LASAC), Volunteer Legal Services Corporation-Alameda (VLSC), Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County (LASSMC), Community Legal Services (CLS), Legal Aid of the North Bay (LANB), Contra Costa Legal Services Foundation (CCLSF)
- Northern California: Legal Services of Northern California (LSNC), Redwood Legal Assistance (RLA)
- Central Valley/Central Coast/Agricultural: California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA), Legal Services for the Central Coast (LSCC), Channel Counties Legal Services Association (CCLSA), Central California Legal Services (CCLS), Greater Bakersfield Legal Services(GBLS)

All these entities have been involved in the California Planning process since 1995, with the exception of the Access to Justice Commission which was established in 1997. A statewide meeting was held September 10 and 11, 1998 with representatives of the regions and organizations. See Appendix II for the attendance list.

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It is a major impediment to our efforts, particularly in the area of developing pro bono resources, that the State Bar of California currently has no functioning Legal Services Office or Section due to the impasse between the Governor and the legislature. We are hopeful that this situation will be resolved as soon as possible. It is a tribute to the volunteers who are continuing the work of the Access to Justice Commission and the State Bar Leadership who continue to be committed to support for legal services. The chair of the Access Commission and both the current and incoming State Bar presidents participated in the state planning process, including attending the September 10, 1998 statewide meeting.

- Los Angeles and Orange Counties: San Fernando Neighborhood Legal Services (NLS), Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA), Legal Aid Society of Orange County (LASOC), Legal Aid Foundation of Long Beach (LAFLB) and Legal Services Program for Pasadena and San Gabriel-Pomona Valley (LSP)
- Southern California: Inland Counties Legal Services (ICLS) Legal Aid Society of San Diego (LASSD)

Each region includes numerous IOLTA-funded programs (See Appendix I). LSC-funded programs cannot and should not be viewed in isolation from their community partners:

Statewide programs participated in the regional planning. California Indian Legal Services (CILS) is participating in the Bay Area Planning Process as well as collaborating throughout their service area. California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA) is part of Central Valley/Central Coast/Agricultural Planning Process as well as collaborating throughout service their area.

C. Core Principles

- California is continuing to work toward our goal of creating and maintaining a comprehensive and integrated system for the provision of civil legal assistance to all low income persons with legal needs. Provision of access to justice is a fundamental and essential right in a democratic society. It is the responsibility of government to ensure that all of its people enjoy this right. Access to justice requires legal representation where necessary.²⁰
- All planning must be based on, and grow out of, a fundamental understanding of the needs and vision of the low income communities we serve.
- Provision of legal services requires a stable and adequate resource base at the national, state and local level. We recognize development and allocation of these resources as a societal responsibility.
- It is essential that every local community have access to a full continuum of services including education; early intervention, brief advice and referral; self help resources; representation where needed, both to defend and bring affirmative actions; administrative, legislative and policy advocacy; community economic development; and representation of community organizations. The majority of funding available from all major sources is for brief service work. We must be diligent so that funding does not drive us to create a system with only brief service available. We need to continue to develop resources and encourage funders to provide resources for litigation, community development, and legislative and policy advocacy on the state and local level.
- In addition to securing new funding sources, innovative delivery systems must be developed and replicated. Responsiveness to the needs of clients and effective delivery should be the main design criteria and access and effectiveness for clients should be constantly evaluated.

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- Legal services program priorities and delivery design must be rooted in the communities they serve. Given the size and complexity of California, the diversity of our population, and the existence of a network of 110 IOLTA-funded legal services providers and hundreds of community partners, planning and coordination of service delivery will occur primarily at the local and regional level.
- While our planning is rooted on the local and regional level, certain functions must be performed at the state level. State advocacy, coordination, communication, training and technical assistance can be provided most effectively at the state level. Devolution and development of new policy in the areas of health, public benefits and housing make it imperative that staff, volunteer attorneys and other advocates have access to statewide substantive law advocacy and planning forums, as well as training, updates and manuals on developments in federal, state and local law.

III. ACCESS TO JUSTICE

A. Access to Justice Commission

- While recognizing the importance of all of the work of the Access Commission, the statewide legal services planning process identified three critical aspects of our statewide priorities that are also priorities of the Access Commission:
 - Developing adequate and stable state funding sources
 - Including and educating the larger community and lawmakers about the nature of the need for legal services and the societal obligation to provide access to civil justice for low income people.
 - Coordinating and communicating with the Judiciary on local planning, accessibility, law simplification, pro per access and other issues
- Five committees reflect the current Access Commission priorities - Funding, Courts, Pro Bono, Community Outreach and Long-Range Planning. Efforts by the Commission to obtain additional funding for legal services are included in Section V- Resource Development and efforts to increase pro bono resources are included in Section VIII - Pro Bono Service Delivery.
- The Commission Community Outreach Committee chaired by Jose Villareal, Santa Clara County Public Defender, is engaged in planning to reach out beyond the legal profession to identify, educate and enroll stakeholders from the general public in the effort to achieve equal access. The Community Forums now being planned around the state are the first step in this outreach process. Forums are planned for Fresno and Oakland in the next few months. Broad planning groups are being convened by Access Commission members in both areas.
- The Long Range Planning Committee, led by Justice Earl Johnson, is designing and seeking resources for a pilot project to provide full access to the civil justice system in two geographic areas using different delivery models. The goals of the project are to first to establish the actual need and the resources required to provide 100% access and second, to envision and test innovative delivery

models.

- The Courts Committee of the Access Commission, chaired by Judge Paul Boland, is of particular relevance to the state efforts to achieve access to justice. The Committee is pursuing several projects designed to improve the judicial system and increase access. Projects include a peer consulting project, designed to have judges from around the country working with California judges and court administrators to develop access projects. Increased pro bono assistance in the federal courts is the topic of another project, co-chaired by Judge Terry Hatter, Chief of the Central District. The Committee is also developing cooperative efforts with the state's Judicial Council as detailed below.
- The statewide court system, working collaboratively with the Access Commission and local Bar Leaders, has made great strides in coordinating the stakeholders committed to increasing access for low income people. For several years there has been a Bench-Bar Coalition representing the Judicial Council, the voluntary statewide association of judges, an association of local bars, the State Bar, and others to address issues of mutual concern. These include the expansion of self-help centers, the need for increased pro bono assistance, and improved funding for legal services. This group has liaison representatives to the Access to Justice Commission to ensure communication and coordination.

B. Coordinated efforts to expand client access to the courts

- The California Commission on Access to Justice is taking the lead role in bringing the stakeholders to the table to identify the highest priority needs and their solutions. The Commission recently wrote to the Chief Justice, asking that the Judicial Council consider a multi-levelled project that will focus on:
 - Revising court forms and adding instructional pages;
 - Reviewing in forma pauperis rules and procedures around the state;
 - Educating judges about the need for legal services; the problems faced by pro per clients and successful models of self-help centers and other access projects.
- The California court system has been extremely successful in expanding their resources for pro per litigants on family law matters. AB1058, passed in 1996, established family court facilitators in each of the 58 counties and brought in over \$8 million per year to subsidize their cost. This same bill funded family court commissioners in each county, at a cost of \$29 million per year, so as to have expert judicial officers available to handle family law matters and expedite the process for clients. The Judicial Council has also funded pilot self-help centers working in other legal areas, and this seed money has resulted in investments by local boards of supervisors, local foundations, and others.
- The California court system is also the first to launch a major strategic planning effort, called the "Community-Focused Court Planning Project," designed in part to improve access to the courts and to involve the community in identifying and addressing barriers.

C. Coordinated efforts to expand Community Legal Education

- The infrastructure is in place to share community education materials which are culturally and

linguistically relevant. The Public Interest Clearinghouse and the State Bar established the Resource Exchange in 1997 to allow for the exchange and dissemination of such materials, both in written and electronic form. The main repository of information is a Website (www.pic.org) which has been used extensively by program staff and community partners. The site was accessed over 900 times in August 1998. On-line content includes extensive training and community legal education materials in a variety of substantive areas. Audio-visual materials are also available. Materials can also be made available in hard copy to programs requesting them. The goals of the technology portion of our plan, namely to bring all legal services programs and our community partners on-line, will make this resource even more valuable. (See Technology- Section X) Over the last year, we have seen an explosion of other on-line legal resource. A related goal of our state planning process is to have all California-based state and national support centers develop the capacity to distribute their materials on-line, including sample community education materials.

- The Legal Services Section is just finishing an analysis of the county law libraries as a first step toward helping them move toward more user-friendly organization of their materials for the lay persons. California law librarians have recently offered to work with them towards the mutual goal of helping pro per clients.
- The State Bar has long been involved in disseminating legal information pamphlets to poor clients through legal services programs. The Bar has also published a booklet jointly with the State PTA, entitled "Kids and the Law," which is helping parents and others across the state to understand the legal rights of their children and provide guidance on how to resolve legal issues.
- Throughout the state, local programs have trained staff at social service agencies to help them deal with legal issues facing the client community. This is an area that has great potential for expansion to other communities as it has been tremendously successful. Examples of local projects are detailed in Section VI- Innovative Service Delivery and Regional Collaboration.

D. Coordinated efforts to develop effective pro se programs

- There are many existing systems across the state to help pro pers. They include hotlines set up by local legal services programs, the family court facilitators, and other self-help centers. Examples of local and regional plans to expand assistance to pro per litigants is detailed in Section VI on Innovative Service Delivery and Regional Collaboration.
- An important focus of legal services planning teams described above is the development of effective pro per programs in California. Each local and regional planning team is committed to actively participating in the county processes.
- There is also a statewide technological effort, described in Section X- Technology, to develop the capacity for pro se litigants to access expert systems at court and community locations.
- While there is much need for pro per assistance, since the percentage of self-represented litigants is astonishingly high, all partners in the California Planning process, including the Access Commission remain committed to increasing the actual representation of poor clients. We can not develop a

system where the focus of resources is devoted to programs helping people represent themselves when it is often extremely unlikely for them to prevail against represented parties. In its report, And Justice for All, the Access to Justice Working Group made a finding that access to justice requires access to lawyers, and stated:

Recognizing they can never provide equal access to justice, as an interim measure, programs that assist litigants in representing themselves in court proceedings should be studied, developed, and improved until adequate legal representation can be provided to all who need it.²¹

IV. MEETING SPECIAL NEEDS AND ELIMINATING BARRIERS

- Low-income people, the clients of legal services, have many faces. They come from urban and suburban areas as well as remote rural towns. They may be new to the country or native Californians; they may be intact families, or single parents or adults, or they may have been driven from a comfortable life by an abusive spouse. The situations and realities in which our clients dwell almost always require some specialized legal knowledge. But there are some groups of people whose problems tend to be more complex, or their situations more likely to be complicated by other factors. These groups of clients are likely to live or work in circumstances that isolate them from the general population, and often require specialized delivery systems to address their legal needs.
- When developing delivery models, California must pay special attention to a variety of special needs at the state and local level. Special needs include language capacity, cultural sensitivity, people with special physical and mental challenges, senior citizens, children and youth, politically unpopular clients such as general relief recipients, the institutionalized, and the homeless. We also must insure that funding restrictions and our delivery structure do not exclude certain types of clients, such as those clients without access to telephones, clients who cannot read and write, and certain classes of immigrants and prisoners not eligible for services by LSC- funded programs.
- California Indian tribes and their low-income members and California's migrant farm worker communities have unique legal needs that require specialized knowledge and expertise on the part of their advocates. We are very proud of the California programs that serve these clients and the strength of support in our state for these programs and clients. Funds should continue to be awarded in California to statewide entities with demonstrated ability to serve those populations.
- California planning will continue to place special emphasis on development of mechanisms to share resources between programs in the urban areas and programs serving clients in the outlying and rural areas.

V. RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

A. Principles: The major barrier to access to the civil justice system for low income people in California is the lack of resources available to provide legal services ranging from individual representation to legislative and policy advocacy. We plan to work as a state on the following:

- Maintain support in California to preserve the federal mandate for legal services and support for the Legal Services Corporation.
- Maintain support in California to preserve our IOLTA program and increase its yield. Since it is a mandatory legislative program, funding eligible legal services programs according to a mandated formula, we cannot suggest new allocations or priorities.
- Develop new resources for legal services delivery in California.
- Facilitate the duplication of model statewide collaborations, such as the Healthcare Ombudsman program, and model local and regional collaborative efforts, such as the San Diego campaign.

B. Evaluation of statewide resource development efforts

- California has in place the infrastructure to analyze, develop and activate potential sources of funding for the statewide delivery system. A key player in that structure is the California Commission on Access to Justice, and its Funding Committee, chaired by a former State Bar President. As described elsewhere, the Access Commission is composed of representatives from a wide range of stakeholders, and many of those have important contacts and abilities to help make funding possibilities a reality. The Access Commission works with many other groups both inside and outside the legal profession who are poised to help establish new funding streams and improve statewide pro bono efforts.
- The Legal Aid Association of California, (LAAC) the organization of all IOLTA funded programs in California has set funding as one of its major priorities for the coming years in response to the results of the 1998 State Planning process and consensus reached at the September 10, 1998 meeting. The LAAC Committee will work closely with the Access Commission and the Trust Fund Commission.
- One recent success of the bench-bar partnership is the system of family court facilitators. AB1058 funded a family law facilitator in each of the 58 counties, and the funding from this effort totaled over \$8 million in 1997-98 alone. Other grants from either local Boards of Supervisors or from the Administrative Office of the Courts have funded additional self-help centers helping people with other legal matters. In addition, each county is now engaged in community-focused court planning with improved access as one of the major goals. This effort could ensure new resources at the court to help set up joint clinics with local legal services programs or other cooperative efforts -- and proves what can be accomplished through collaborative efforts involving different sectors of the community.
- Despite this recent success, the Access Commission is aware that finding new sources of funding has been particularly difficult in California because of its complexity, size and current climate of political divisiveness in the state Capitol. In fact, the legal services community in California has had a coordinated campaign to develop resources for the delivery system since at least the late 1970's. An early success of that effort was California's IOLTA program, which was a coordinated effort of the

legal services community and the State Bar through its Legal Services Section. Several attempts have been made to supplement that funding on a statewide basis, so as to ensure additional funding for all programs, especially those in the rural areas which have less access to funding from private firms and corporations. The Assembly Judiciary Committee held a hearing at the State Bar's Annual Meeting in 1994 to determine possible statewide sources of funding for legal services. The report of that hearing is a composite of the ideas of many around the state concerned about this issue. Other than the new family law facilitators and self-help centers described above, these efforts have been largely unsuccessful, due in large part to the political climate in the state. There has not been a governor supportive of legal services funding since 1980, and the threat of veto or actual veto by the governor of funding bills for legal services (not to mention the funding of the State Bar and its Office of Legal Services) has made statewide efforts extremely difficult.

- Other factors contribute to the challenges making it difficult to add a statewide source of funding. For example, California filing fees are already among the highest in the country and even supportive local bars have opposed proposed legislation to dedicate a small increase in fees to legal services. That option is also totally impossible for the next few years because of a massive change in the way the trial courts are funded, and an agreement not to raise filing fees for the foreseeable future was a part of the negotiated agreement.
- Likewise, attempts to get general fund monies or punitive damage awards have faltered. There was one successful legislative effort in 1993 which codified the ability of judges to dedicate cy pres funds to legal services programs. (It is impossible to determine the amount of money this brought in, since cy pres funds were already being donated to legal services programs and the legislation simply strengthened that option.)
- The State Bar Foundation has dedicated funds to local legal services - as much as \$160,000 in one year alone. It encourages through its grants, innovative and collaborative regional legal services delivery models and legal education to low and moderate income clients. This amount varies from year to year, State funds are in addition to foundations at local bars which fund legal services program, such as the Bar Foundations in Los Angeles, Santa Clara and San Francisco have.
- A successful activity has been the yield increase efforts of the IOLTA Commission, which has brought in over \$10 million in additional IOLTA funds due to negotiations for higher rates or lower charges by banks and by massive efforts to locate missing accounts.

C. Current development priorities:

- Despite the historical difficulty of establishing funding sources, and in the face of the current inability of the State Bar to provide financial or staffing support for the Access Commission, the Commission's Funding Committee is moving forward on a volunteer basis to identify and prioritize funding options, which were drawn from the report of the Access to Justice Working Group, entitled And Justice for All: Fulfilling the Promise of Access to Civil Justice in California (1996). The efforts of this group may be successful where similar past efforts have been unsuccessful because of the broad-based nature of the Commission and the involvement of the League of Women Voters, labor and the business community, academia and the judiciary.

- The first tier options that are being considered do not require legislation — ideas being analyzed include a statewide alternative workplace giving project that would provide an easy way for law firm attorneys and other staff and employees of corporations involved in any way with the legal system to dedicate their funds to a project dedicated to improving the legal system. Other ideas being examined include law firm charitable giving and a planned giving program coordinated statewide so as to minimize the difficulties for local programs, but make it possible to capture such gifts for the delivery system as a whole.
- Second tier options being considered for the near term, when legislation might be successful, include fees from litigation other than initial filing fees (such as a modest fee when a suit is completed). General fund monies for legal services delivery are the ultimate but longer-term goal, as described in the Access report.
- Before the recent cutbacks at the State Bar, the Bar funded the Office of Legal Services served in many ways as a state support center, and the annual budget was over \$1 million. Other states routinely asked for information from California to convince their State Bars that they should do as much as California did. We hope those days will return in the not-too-distant future, but all indications are that a future Office of Legal Services will be reduced in size, assuming it is ever able to be resurrected.
- There has been a dues check-off in place with the State Bar, but there is great resentment over the high fees the Bar charges, so attorneys are not willing to add funds to their dues bill

D. Local and Regional Resource Development Strategies

- Local bar checkoffs have been extremely successful in some areas, raising significant amounts of money.
- Coordinated campaigns have occurred in San Francisco, San Diego and Alameda County, and each region is looking at potential joint development efforts. See Section VI- Regional Collaboration.
- There is a tradition of bringing together fund-raisers working in legal services programs throughout the state for mutual support and training to increase local capacity.

VI. INNOVATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

While lack of funds is the major obstacle, it is critical that we use those resources available in the most effective and efficient manner.

A. Statewide Consensus and Recommendations

- We are making every effort to integrate whichever Alameda County provider is awarded future funding in state planning efforts. As a state, we strongly recommend that LSC make an expedited decision on funding for Alameda County and make reasonable start-up funds available, so that an effective, viable program can be in place to serve clients as soon as possible.

- The current restrictions on LSC-funded programs limit low income clients' opportunity for effective representation and remedies. Clients' options are limited because the restrictions do not allow highly capable and experienced attorneys in LSC-funded programs to undertake certain types of advocacy on their behalf. In particular, the restrictions on filing class action lawsuits, representation before legislative bodies, and obtaining attorney fees limit the advocacy options available to clients of LSC funded programs. In addition, certain clients can not be served at all by LSC funded programs under the restrictions.
- Devolution to the state and local level and dramatic shifts in policy and laws affecting our clients require new substantive priorities and delivery mechanisms on the state, regional, and local levels. In response, programs in California have responded to these changes with development of new substantive expertise, new delivery systems and increased collaboration. This has occurred within the context of diminished resources.
- We plan to increase our efforts to collaborate to increase effective client engagement and involvement in program governance and service delivery. We will hold a conference in 1999 on Client Engagement and Involvement, expanding on and using the experience and expertise of the California Clients Council, The Legal Aid Association of California, and California Rural Legal Assistance.
- Law school clinics, volunteer programs and other resources must be better integrated into our delivery system. Public Interest Law Foundations are an important resource to enable law students to work in legal service programs. We need to explore ways to expand use these primarily urban resources in areas of the state without such resources.
- Programs are collaborating in substantive areas across regional lines. A model is the Health Care Ombudsman Program. Five LSC funded field programs, San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Services Foundation, Central California Legal Services, San Mateo Legal Aid and San Fernando Valley Neighborhood Legal Services with the Western Center on Law and Poverty and National Health Law Center received a \$5 million grant from the California Endowment to set up Consumer Health Education and Advocacy Centers in six California counties.

The Regional sections that follow are by necessity only highlights of the innovative and responsive work undertaken by California Legal Services programs.

B. Bay Area

1. Bay Area-wide Collaboration of LSC-funded Programs: The currently funded Bay Area programs and the applicants in Alameda County are engaged in discussion toward increased collaboration which includes examination of program configuration²². They are focusing on numerous projects throughout the Bay Area. Some of these projects will be initiated in the sub-regional groupings, as no

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Legal Aid of the North Bay and Contra Costa Legal Services are engaged in final merger negotiations. Any merged program would continue the collaborative effort of each current entity.

one program with limited resources can move in numerous areas at once.

- Contra Costa Legal Services, San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Assistance, San Mateo Legal Aid, Community Legal Services, Legal Aid of the North Bay, California Indian Legal Services, and California Rural Legal Assistance have agreed to pool significant financial and human resources and jointly raise funds for the purpose of creating a pilot Intake project that will supplement (and perhaps someday supplant) current Intake systems. In addition to the programs mentioned above, both bidders in Alameda County (Legal Aid Society of Alameda County and the Volunteer Legal Services Corporation) have committed to participation in the project if they receive the grant. Participating programs will jointly hire a project manager to accomplish the following objectives:
 - A joint study and evaluation of current intake and brief service mechanisms and systems used by Bay Area legal services providers.
 - Review and coordinate pro se and other self-help mechanisms.
 - Review and analyze substantive law differences among the service areas.²³
 - Review and evaluate past Bay Area and other coordinated Intake practices.
 - Coordinate needs assessment and project design with other Bay Area non-LSC providers and community partners.²⁴
 - Develop specifications for a pilot project including both substantive legal, evaluative and technical considerations.
 - Inventory staff, financial, administrative and technical resources that can be utilized to develop the pilot project.
 - Identify other sources of funding and resources.
 - Work with partners to design the pilot project which will cover a portion of the Bay Area and limited substantive areas.
 - Develop evaluation criteria for the project.

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. CalWorks, the California implementation of the federal Personal Work Opportunity and Responsibility Act, gave each county wide discretion in developing local policies and procedures. Thus, there is now more variation in Welfare Law than under the old AFDC system, and county-to-county differences have always existed with General Assistance housing and health related issues.

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The area to be covered is very large, with a diverse client population. There are 38 IOLTA funded programs providing services in the Bay Area and many more community-based organizations that work collaboratively with legal services organizations. It is critical that this system not displace the growing community based collaborations.

- The Statewide Technical Solutions Group is in the process of evaluating the expert system JNANA to determine if it can be used to facilitate the pilot Intake project.
- South Bay and East Bay Area Programs (Contra Costa Legal Services, San Mateo Legal Aid, and Community Legal Services), both bidders in Alameda County (Legal Aid Society of Alameda County and the Volunteer Legal Services Corporation) and East Bay Community Law Center and the Santa Clara County Pro Bono Project are committed to developing a coordinated technology training and development position and hiring a staff person to assist programs with development, needs assessment, architecture, installation and training.
- South Bay and East Bay Area Programs (Contra Costa Legal Services, San Mateo Legal Aid, and Community Legal Services), both bidders in Alameda County (Legal Aid Society of Alameda County and the Volunteer Legal Services Corporation) East Bay Community Law Center, and the Santa Clara County Pro Bono Project, are committed to exploring coordination of administrative functions, the first priority will be a study of payroll systems to create administrative and financial economies of scale.
- California Indian Legal Services (CILS) will work with other Bay Area groups since its clients reside in all the Bay Area counties. Also each group includes organizations that have relied on case management and other software developed by CILS, and CILS has pledged to help each of the Bay Area groups as they look to develop new systems for efficiently delivering effective legal services.

2. Bay Area- San Francisco

- San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Assistance Foundation (SFNLAF), due to the large number of legal services providers in San Francisco, has done most of its coordination of delivery on a local level and plans to continue collaborating primarily with San Francisco-based programs. Advocates in a number of substantive areas are exploring centralized intake possibilities, and the Bar Association of San Francisco Volunteer Legal Services Program (BASFVLSP) is engaged in a two year technological upgrade process to develop the necessary infrastructure for joint centralized intake.
- The Cooperative Restraining Order Clinic is a collaborative project of legal and nonlegal service providers. Formed in the 1970s, it is one of the oldest cooperative efforts in the state. It provides a continuum of services for battered women and is model of holistic service delivery. SFNLAF, the Bar Association of San Francisco Volunteer Legal Services Program, Woman, Inc., New College, Nihonmachi Legal Outreach and La Casa de Las Madres received a \$300,000 grant from the California Department of Health Services and are working to increase resources.
- The Eviction Defense Collaborative is the entry point in San Francisco for low income tenants facing eviction. It is designed to provide emergency services and placement with the appropriate legal entity. It is a joint project of SFNLAF, the Bar Association of San Francisco Volunteer Legal Services Program, the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, Asian Law Caucus and Legal Assistance to the Elderly. It was formed in the spring of 1996 as the result of San Francisco meetings to plan for the LSC funding cuts and increased restrictions.
- BASFVLSP and SFNLAF are engaged in regular meetings to develop joint case-handling methods

involving pro bono volunteers and staff experts. The most notable progress has been in the area of Homeless Advocacy Project. Joint efforts on family law and other public assistance areas are also being explored.

- SFNLAF provided leadership and demonstrated serious commitment to clients statewide when it agreed to provide interim services in Alameda County. During the interim period, SFNLAF seeks to work cooperatively with the county bar, clients' organizations and others to promote the formation of a community-based permanent provider which will undertake ongoing responsibility for the provision of LSC- funded legal services in Alameda County at the earliest feasible date.

3. Bay Area- East Bay

- The Community Projects Committee of the Alameda County Bar Association has been meeting on a regular basis. The Committee has taken a strong position that in 1999 an Alameda County-based provider should receive LSC funds in Alameda County. A 1998 needs assessment and service provision survey was conducted to inform planning by the interim provider. The information was also utilized by the Volunteer Legal Services Corporation for their 1999 LSC funding application with the understanding that a more extensive assessment would be completed if they were awarded the grant. The Committee represents the majority of providers in Alameda County and serves as a communication and coordination body. It also works on joint projects such as client information flyers for use by all providers and the broader community. The Committee now also includes representatives of Contra Costa Legal Services Foundation and Community Legal Services- San Jose.
- Several East Bay and South Bay programs (including LASAC, VLSC, CCLSF, CLS and East Bay Community Law Center) are also involved in a collaborative effort in the following areas. Some of these areas overlap with the Bay Area Collaborative Projects and will complement the Bay Area Planning efforts.
 - Joint Needs Assessment
 - Study and Development of a Joint Intake Pilot Project
 - Hiring a joint Technology Coordinator
 - Exploring joint administrative and financial systems including administration of payroll.

4. Bay Area- South Bay

- Since 1997, leaders of the Santa Clara County Bar Association and members of local legal services providers have created a Campaign for Legal Services — a Legal Services Consortium Fund-raising. The purpose of the Campaign is to raise money for all the legal services programs and to increase pro bono activity. The Bar Association is also setting up a Legal Services Section to bring together pro bono coordinators from the large firms, local bar leaders and members of the local legal services providers to increase access to legal services.
- Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County (LASSMC) and San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Services Foundation are engaged in discussions about the potential for merging several administrative functions.
- Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County cooperates extensively with organizations in its service area

to maximize services available to clients. In the area of domestic violence they train volunteers for the Women's Shelter and the Advisory Council on Women and accept referrals. A joint funding proposal to the Department of Justice has been submitted by LASSMC, the Center for Domestic violence prevention and San Juana Inez. By training community workers on basic legal issues more survivors of domestic abuse have access to information about their rights when they first make contact with the shelter and must make critical legal decisions.

- A joint Managed Care Ombudsman project is underway with LASSMC, the Center for Independence of the Disabled, Self Help for the Elderly and Nuestro Canto de Salud.
- The East Palo Alto Community Law Project and La Raza Centro Legal have cooperative arrangements with LASSMC for handling landlord tenant cases.
- Community Legal Services (CLS) has created a number of innovative programs to collaborate with the local community. They coordinate an Annual College of Legal Rights. This program provides a twenty-four hour help and fax-back line in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. They have also provided resource manuals and legal information to neighborhood coordinators of the Parks and Recreation Department, block captains in targeted neighborhoods and limited English-speaking clients. CLS has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with three providers of domestic violence services, the Family Court and the Pro Bono Project to coordinate Intake and a full range of services for victims of domestic violence. CLS provides a Newsletter on Legal issues to 400 community agencies and collaborates with numerous Santa Clara County groups on housing law and public benefits.

5. Bay Area- North Bay

- Representative of their collaborative efforts, Legal Aid of the North Bay organized a four- county collaborative (Marin, Napa, Sonoma, Contra Costa) to centralize intake and coordinate domestic violence cases. Funding is pending.

C. Northern California

- The Northern California LSC- funded programs, Legal Services of Northern California (LSNC), and Redwood Legal Assistance (RLA) are engaged in discussions of merger and plan to complete a merger by April, 1999.
- LSNC makes many contributions to statewide advocacy. LSNC Regional Counsel, Brian Lawlor, maintains the primary statewide legal research Website for the benefit of all programs in the state. It is an entry point to legal, government, media, public policy and legal services program resources.
- LSNC has developed a model Welfare to Work program. Components include service to individual clients and an expanded practice representing community-based organizations. They sponsored a statewide conference on the issue and have participated in panels at numerous statewide meetings sharing their experience. The following are two examples:
 - The Sacramento Office works with the Sacramento Valley Organizing Community, an

ecumenical organization of forty churches with the goal of empowering residents of low income communities. Work has included creation of job cooperatives, opening one-stop family centers, negotiation of job commitments from local industry, creation of micro-lending opportunities, expansion of naturalization classes, opening child care centers, expanding health care opportunities, improving educational opportunities and assisting clients develop corporation and partnership agreements.

- The Motherlode Office is a member of the Placer CalWORKS Committee, which coordinated services among various providers and the Placer County Bar Association to facilitate the welfare to work process and assist individual clients address work barrier issues.
- Redwood Legal Assistance has consistently collaborated with all local bar associations, other agencies and legal services programs. RLA is awaiting funding for a significant new effort, a four county collaborative involving all providers of domestic violence services to increase available services and more effectively coordinate services in response to the needs articulated by local advisory councils in all four counties.

D. Central Valley/Central Coast/ Agricultural

- The programs in the Central Valley, Central Coast and adjacent agricultural areas (California Rural Legal Assistance, Channel Counties Legal Services Association, Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance, Central California Legal Services, and Legal Aid of the Central Coast) are actively developing increased collaboration proposals, including:
 - Seeking funding to establish a pilot joint intake project which will utilize a toll-free 800 line staffed by advocates from each office in a particular substantive area such as issues related to farm worker housing.
 - Jointly working to obtain regional connections for high speed low-cost access to the Internet, video conferencing capabilities and other connectivity between legal services and community partners. The State Planning process partners will sponsor the region's development of a rural connectivity and communication project application to the Telecommunication and Information Infrastructure Assistance Program 1999 Grants program.
 - The programs are developing regional technology training and support proposals.
 - All programs in the region participated for the first time this year in the CRLA Annual Conference which includes substantive, management and technology training. Programs also are involved in substantive task forces coordinated by CRLA.
- California Rural Legal Assistance has long been a national leader in collaborative efforts and service delivery innovation. In addition, their contribution to related technology development has been considerable. Examples of collaborative innovative projects include:
 - Advocates from local offices worked with the Regional Office of the Equal Opportunity Commission to develop a statewide project to advise farm worker women on their right to be

free of sexual harassment.

- Several offices participated in the campaign designed to provide information and referrals to farm worker families eligible for naturalization. The citizenship work is being done in collaboration with legal and nonlegal organizations.
- The Indigenous Farm worker Project has provided meaningful access to justice for the first time to members of the Mixteco community by training and identifying interpreters and integrating them into statewide educational campaigns. An important partner in this project is Frente Indigena Oaxaquena Binanacional, a community-based organization made up of representatives of the Mixtec-Zapotec communities.
- CRLA coordinated with Migrant Legal Action Program early this year to provide a regional education training to rural advocates in Central Valley on migrant education and bilingual education issues.
- CRLA's Madera office hosted a Welfare to Work symposium involving several counties looking in particular at welfare to work challenges in rural areas.
- Channel Counties Legal Services Association (CCLSA) is committed to enhancing its services to clients by engaging in statewide and regional planning for better and more effective delivery of services.
 - CCLSA has worked closely with the local courts to establish the model Ventura County Pro Per Center and is involved in the design of programs to provide additional services to pro per clients.
 - Regionally, CCLSA has discussed with its regional neighbors, the possibility of a unified hotline system, possibly using a rotating system of responsibility for response, with bilingual capability, as well as other ideas.
 - CCLSA attorneys have worked and continue to work very closely with the Ventura County Bar Association in developing and maintaining the Volunteer Lawyers Program which provides pro bono services to indigent clients through a network of more than 100 attorneys.
 - CCLSA attorneys also work closely with CRLA migrant attorney staff in its Oxnard office to develop strategies for handling legal problems of farm workers and the low income community, particularly regarding housing issues. This has included co-counseling of cases as well as non-litigation activities.
 - CCLSA Santa Barbara attorney staff is working with the Santa Barbara County courts to develop alternative dispute resolution opportunities for litigants.
- Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance (GBLA) is involved in numerous county-based efforts:
 - GBLA is the lead agency for Kern County for the Central Valley Citizenship Project, a ten

county regional consortium consisting of a broad range of participants including community organizations, schools and churches. It is funded by the Emma Lazarus Fund.

- Based on a history of collaborative work, GBLA is a leading member of a newly formed collaborative consisting of all major domestic violence shelters in Kern County as well as the Kern County Superior Court's newly created Family Law Center. The Collaborative, with GBLA as the lead agency, is seeking funding from the Office of Justice to create a Domestic Violence Law Center.
- GBLA is also an active member of the Kern County Collaborative, an arm of the Kern County Network for Children; a partnership of schools, county agencies, nonprofit groups, businesses and grass roots community groups. The Collaborative's main objective is development of an integrated delivery of health and social service systems.
- Central California Legal Services (CCLS) has always engaged in cooperative efforts believing that they increase the capacity of the partner organizations and the array of services available to low income clients. CCLS works closely with the other IOLTA funded provider in the County, Centro La Familia, on joint projects. They also work on job creation and other community issues with a number of locally based organizations and churches. Innovative Projects include
 - A project to disenroll clients from a managed care plan that did not meet their needs.
 - Advocacy for job creation including the development of a job creating shopping center in West Fresno. CCLS works with Churches and community-based organizations on this project.
 - CCLS jointly sponsored citizenship applications fairs with El Concilio Immigration Project and participates in the Central Valley citizenship project.
- Legal Aid of the Central Coast (LACC) has long collaborated with other organizations:
 - LACC is a member of the Human Care Alliance of Santa Cruz County which is a collaborative effort by social service organizations to share information on services, training and management issues.
 - LACC shares office space with two community partners, Senior Citizen's Legal Services and the Community Action Board.
 - Recently LACC obtained funding in collaboration with three other local providers for a project to serve victims of domestic violence in remote areas using innovative video-conferencing equipment.

E. Los Angeles- Orange County

- The five LSC funded programs - San Fernando Neighborhood Legal Services (NLS), Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA), Legal Aid Society of Orange County (LASOC), Legal Aid

Foundation of Long Beach (LAFLB) and Legal Services Program for Pasadena and San Gabriel-Pomona Valley (LSP)- have led the region in their collaborative approach to computerized legal research. After completing a needs assessment, they have executed collaboration agreements with each other and negotiated very favorable contracts with Lexis and Westlaw. Their work is the model for negotiation of a statewide agreement.

- The three largest Los Angeles Programs (NLS, LAFLA and LASOC) are developing a joint Internet Service Provider project that will allow them to create one common security firewall, thereby saving thousands of dollars in installation and ongoing telecommunications costs. They have retained a consultant jointly and are working with an established Internet Service Provider.
- The Los Angeles County Bar is the focus of several committees dedicated to access to justice and coordination of legal services work, including an Access to Justice Committee and a California Immigrant Welfare Collaborative to assist elderly and disabled immigrants permanently residing under the color of law who are in danger of losing county SSI benefits.
- Substantive specialists in Los Angeles area programs have led existing task forces which meet on a regular basis. Programs are also currently involved in numerous cross-program substantive projects. LAFLA and NLS in collaboration with the Los Angeles County Department of Social Services and with the participation of a number of community-based organizations and coalitions, sponsored a conference on Welfare to Work and Families.
- Los Angeles has tens of thousands of legal immigrants. LAFLA, Protection and Advocacy, The Coalition for Humane Immigrants Rights, Asian Pacific American Legal Center, Legal Aid Foundation of Long Beach, Western Center on Law and Poverty, Proyecto Pastoral and UCLA Law Schools public interest program set up weekly community clinics to advise clients on their rights.
- Legal Aid Society of Orange County coordinates extensively with the other providers in their service area.
 - The development of the hotline has increased local collaboration. For example, LASOC refers over 600 clients annually for in-depth pro bono services to the Public Law Center which organizes the pro bono work for the Orange County Bar Association and to Public Counsel in Los Angeles.
 - To ensure that appropriate referrals are made, both the Public Law Center and the Mediation Center of Orange County provide LASOC monthly with service menus to inform the staff on the LASOC Hotline of the number of available referrals by subject-area matter.
 - LASOC utilizes volunteers, work study students and part-time employees from local law schools extensively, including students from the University of Southern California, Loyola, Southwestern, Whittier, Chapman, and Western State.
- The Legal Services Program for Pasadena and San Gabriel-Pomona Valley (LSP) links with community based organizations and the local bar associations in the greater San Gabriel Valley to work closely in collaborative efforts.

- LSP's social services linkages include such agencies as the Combined Agencies of Pomona, the California Local Area Service Partnership, community services provider informational fairs, and collaborative community legal education presentations.
- LSP provides training to the private bar on family law increasing private bar involvement in pro bono work.
- LSP is working with the local bar on collaborative community legal education initiatives
- The Executive Director of LSP is a member of the Los Angeles County Bar Association Access to Justice Committee.
- Legal Aid Foundation of Long Beach (LAFLB) has greatly expanded the service it provides for the low income community by its work with community based organizations and social service agencies.
 - They send a monthly newsletter on substantive issues such as food stamps and SSI to over 250 organizations.
 - They trained the staff members of five community organizations to assist clients in eviction cases and are a partner in the Healthy Start Program, which offers a number of services through the public school system.
 - They are working with other agencies to provide a broad range of services to the homeless in a city run Drop-in Center.
 - LAFLB has played a long standing leadership role in the area of domestic violence and was instrumental in founding the Long Beach Area Domestic Violence Council.
- San Fernando Valley Neighborhood Legal Services (NLS) has been a leader in the legal services community efforts to work more closely with community based organizations, coalitions, the local Bar and Judiciary.
 - They are engaged in a number of innovative Welfare to Work projects including collaborating with the Child Care Resource Center to train residents of a public housing complex to be child care providers for welfare recipients and participation in the Welfare to Work committee of the Valley Industry and Commerce Association.
 - They have developed a model training program for community board members and those wishing to form community based organizations, which was utilized at a statewide training program for client-eligible Board members of legal services programs.
 - Another focus has been collaboration with the local courts. NLS is involved in several efforts to improve access to the courts for clients with family law problems and those that represent themselves pro per. The NLS Director sits on a countywide task force, organized by the Board of Supervisors, to develop an effective program to aid those representing themselves in

family court.

- Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA) has extensively retooled its service delivery while remaining faithful to its mission of improving the lives of their clients. Given the size and complexity of LAFLA, we can only highlight examples of their innovation and collaboration.
- LAFLA's Campaign for Children is a Board-Staff Initiative to focus strategic resources on advocacy for children. In an unprecedented collaborative effort with other legal services and public interest organizations, LAFLA is recruiting and training pro bono attorneys to represent hundreds of disabled children in Los Angeles County who are at risk of losing their Supplemental Social Security Benefits as a result of recent changes in eligibility standards. In conjunction with other Los Angeles programs a program coordinator was hired by LAFLA to coordinate resources and training for the volunteer attorneys.
- A number of Initiatives are being undertaken in response to the momentous changes in Welfare. For example, advocates in LAFLA's Community Economic Development Unit are helping nonprofit organizations set up affordable child care facilities in low income neighborhoods. Advocates conduct monthly meetings, often attended by more than a hundred groups, regarding CALWORKS and General Relief
- LAFLA has actively worked to develop creative approaches to serving battered women including training volunteers and working with shelters, legal services programs and other community organizations. They assist clients directly at the courthouses and through their offices. LAFLA is initiating a pilot project to more effectively reach the Asian community on these issues.
- LAFLA has a program wide approach to job development, involving advocates across substantive areas working both with individual clients and community-based organizations.

F. Southern California- (other than Los Angeles-Orange)

- The other Southern California Programs, (Legal Aid Society of San Diego and Inland Counties Legal Services) which cover extensive geographic areas, are coordinating intake with other legal services programs and community organizations in their service areas. Together, they are planning a joint training program for administrative law judges in the region on poverty law issues. They also are investigating the feasibility of collaborative staff training programs.
- Legal Aid Society of San Diego County (LASD) closely collaborates with other community based organizations, the local pro bono program, San Diego Volunteer Lawyer's Program (SDVLP), the Bar, Judiciary and the broader community to promote access for low income people in the county. Examples of their innovative collaborative work includes:
 - LASD and SDVLP have undertaken a three-year collaborative resource development campaign. The Development Committee, chaired by Larry Lucchino, President and CEO of the San Diego Padres Baseball Club has yielded over \$900,000 in contributions with a lead contribution of \$100,000 by the Padres.

- LASD and SDVLP established a collaborative family law and domestic violence clinic covering all four county jurisdictions. Every eligible client in the county will have access to legal advice from volunteer attorneys, supervised law students, or staff attorneys as they proceed to represent themselves.
- LASD provides important consumer information on issues related to Welfare to Work such as transportation, buying a used car, and trade schools. The information is provided to clients through various community organizations and government agencies using in-person presentations and videotapes.
- Inland Counties Legal Services (ICLS) in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, a 27,000 square mile service area, is addressing client access issues through:
 - Participation by Aurelia Wick, an experienced ICLS managing attorney, on the local Courts Advisory Committee.
 - A Telecommunications Project, with the help of consultant Steve Green, which involves procuring telecommunications switching and voice processing equipment to construct a wide area data network, using T1 lines to provide data and voice communications for a program-wide telephone intake system with toll-free access so clients can reach advocates handling their type of problem. This is in the RFP process.
 - ICLS coordinates with the remotely situated Needles court for on-site intake services. In 1999, ICLS plans to expand services to that desert area through the use of remote video-conferencing equipment.
 - Support of local pro bono programs with LSC PAI funds. ICLS coordinates with the Public Service Law Corporation of the Riverside County Bar Association, the Inland Empire Latino Lawyers Association, the West End Legal Aid Clinic and the Legal Aid Society of San Bernardino, and provides extensive training and assistance, which includes contracted services from the Western Center on Law and Poverty for training on LSC regulation compliance. ICLS also coordinates with local agencies and groups, including the Offices on Aging, deaf service centers, local homeless shelters, the Baptist Church in Palm Desert, battered women's shelters, senior citizen's centers and courts and organizations in outlying areas to provide on-site services.

G. Statewide Programs

- California Rural Legal Assistance: see Section above on Central Valley/Central Coast/Agricultural programs.
- California Indian Legal Services (CILS): Their collaborative efforts with Bay Area legal services programs are outlined in the Bay Area section. CILS has consistently played a key role in statewide technology development and is a leading member of the statewide Technology Solutions Group. Most of CILS's cooperative efforts correctly involve various

Native American Organizations and Tribes throughout the State. CILS has strong ties to Tribes and organizations that refer cases to CILS. These cooperating organizations are trained regularly on the types of cases CILS handles and their eligibility guidelines.

VII. INTAKE

- A majority of programs have transformed their Intake systems so resources are used to provide legal services, not to assess and then turn clients away. There are many ways to accomplish this goal and we hold it critical that Intake and delivery of brief services and advice not consume legal services resources, including federal Legal Services Corporation funds to the exclusion of representation, community education, impact litigation and broader advocacy. We judge that it is critical that these new delivery models be carefully evaluated and that clients be involved in the design and evaluation processes.
- To ensure that local or toll-free 800 service is available to every potential legal services client in California, Public Interest Clearinghouse working with Southern California consultant, Steve Green, will form a working group to examine the feasibility of establishing a statewide integrated 800 service. The LSC programs throughout the state will examine the feasibility of developing a joint project to obtain wholesale 800 services. Such service would utilize the existing Bellcore designation provided to Legal Aid Society of Orange County and would obtain wholesale 800 service for LSC programs subscribing to the project.
- While we recognize that in some instances, clients are best served on a statewide basis, such as services to migrants and Native Americans, we do not recommend consolidation of general Intake on a statewide basis and are pursuing collaboration on a regional basis.
- There are a wide variety of intake systems and structures in programs statewide; California's most technologically advanced intake system is at Legal Aid Society of Orange County. LASOC estimated that the legal problem is resolved for more than 50% of those callers who receive only initial advice, counseling and referral. Using the sophisticated geomapping evaluation system pioneered in California public interest programs by LASOC, we plan to develop a statewide system for evaluating access and intake issues.
- Extensive discussion about intake systems among program directors and staff has led to plans to implement "best practices" elements in intake systems. The LSC Project Directors Association met in Orange County on July 27, 1998, where the sole agenda item for the statewide portion of the meeting was a demonstration of and discussion of the LASOC Intake system.
- While we have strong consensus that statewide Intake is not feasible in California, every regional planning group is looking at coordinated and/or centralized Intake systems. As programs increasingly collaborate in a variety of areas, they may find it desirable to move to a more centralized regional intake system. On the other hand, programs may conclude that the more centralized a system, the less flexible and the more a barrier to access it is. Only regional experimentation can test this.
- All programs have invested resources to move toward more efficient and effective intake systems,

including more sophisticated telephone and computer systems. Many programs use computer systems in the intake process which assist in eligibility and conflict determinations; computers also are used to provide reports to track client and case data. We are collaboratively evaluating and developing certain of these systems, as described more fully in the Technology Section.

- Intake systems vary as a function of several factors; size may be the most significant but other factors include geographic considerations, variety in client population, experience of staff and whether the program has branch offices. As we try to ensure that Intake is integrated for clients with opportunities for referral or telephone advice, the value in many areas of localized intake is even clearer. A locally-based paralegal or Intake worker with a knowledge of community resources is hard to replace even with the most sophisticated centralized intake and referral system in many areas.
- Every program makes significant efforts to ensure access, including toll-free telephone access, language capability access through off-site community centers, courthouse and other clinics, and access for disabled and homebound clients.
- Every program includes some form of telephone intake; for most programs, telephone intake is the primary method of screening clients.
- All programs have some form of "tiered" system in which callers are screened, provided with information, referrals, brief advice and, if appropriate, considered for more extended representation.
- All programs' intake systems have protocols for defining and responding to emergency cases, as well as mechanisms for sorting general advice cases from those that result in more extended representation.
- Many programs are moving to a system where they sort calls into separate areas of substantive law and use telephone systems to provide basic legal information and/or refer callers to specialized "hotlines" so that callers are provided with substantive legal information at the earliest possible stage of contact with the program.
- Decisions about extended representation are usually made at case review meetings where standards for decisions on extended services are applied; case review meetings are also used to spot trends, discuss problem areas, and improve intake procedures.
- Most intake systems involve paralegals, law students, and/or volunteers in the initial screening process, supervised by attorneys. Programs put an emphasis on adequate training of intake staff (eligibility issues, program priorities, issue spotting, handling stress, appropriate referrals) and appropriate level of supervision by staff attorneys.
- Programs have client education and pro per assistance information available to clients in the office waiting area, at clinics, and mailed to callers.

VIII. PRO BONO SERVICE DELIVERY INNOVATIONS AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

A. Maximizing private attorney involvement

California has always done a very good job of encouraging volunteerism by attorneys and supporting that activity with significant support from the State Bar and local Bars. Beginning in the late 1970's, the State Bar had professional staff working with local programs to develop pro bono. That effort included a wealth of support. Although the lack of funding at the State Bar has caused the temporary shut down of the Office of Legal Services, pro bono support will be a priority of a revitalized State Bar, although at a greatly reduced level. As a state we are committed to ensuring that the activities described below will be able to continue. A careful prioritization process will need to be done collaboratively with representatives of legal services programs and local bar associations, to determine the highest priority activities for the State Bar, the Legal Services Section, the Access Commission, local bars, LAAC and local services programs, and the judiciary.

- The State Bar Office of Legal Services, in the past, sponsored statewide training events for pro bono coordinators and volunteers. They also developed resources such as the *Pro Bono Primer* and a regular newsletter, *Pro Bono California*. A clearinghouse of pro bono materials is available through a project jointly run by the State Bar and the Public Interest Clearinghouse, much of which is available online.
- Statewide recognition of pro bono, through the State Bar President's Pro Bono Service Awards are given out in each of the 9 State Bar Districts and are competitive and high-profile. The Chief Justice speaks at each annual pro bono award ceremony at the Bar's annual meeting; recognition is available for any attorney fulfilling the 50 hours of pro bono.
- State Bar's Legal Services Section has a committee focused on pro bono. Recently that committee has pursued an urban/rural project.
- The California Commission on Access to Justice has a Pro Bono Committee chaired by the Presiding Judge of Riverside County Ronald Taylor, which is pursuing ways to improve pro bono through a corporate project, law school project, and federal court pro bono effort co-chaired by the Chief Judge in the Central District who sits on the Commission.
- Major bench-bar coordinated efforts have gone forward over the past three years to increase judicial support for pro bono. A resolution was adopted by the Judicial Council urging all judges to encourage pro bono - a similar resolution was later adopted by the Council of Chief Justices. The Chief Justice wrote to all lawyers and judges encouraging them to participate in this effort and the letter to the 1800 judicial officers included a reference guide with ideas and contacts to help establish access/pro bono projects.
- A new judicial award was approved earlier this year that will be given to the one judge who has done the most that year to improve access to the courts, including pro bono support. The first award will be given by the Chief Justice next February; this project is sponsored by the Bench-Bar Pro Bono Project which is a joint effort of the State Bar, the Judicial Council, and the California Judges Association.
- With the expansion of family court facilitators and other self-help centers, the Legal Services Section, the Access Commission, and the legal services community are working with these self-help centers to coordinate outreach to volunteers. There is a fear that volunteers may take the easier route of helping

pro per litigants, while their expertise is really needed more for full representation of clients who would not fare well representing themselves.

- For several years, the entire legal services community and bar leaders have been engaged in an effort to break down barriers that existed between legal services advocates and pro bono programs; since all legal services programs also use pro bono attorneys, the old distinction was no longer appropriate, if it ever was. Joint quarterly meetings are now held with both pro bono and legal services attorneys, and the annual conference is a joint conference. Discussions of strategic use of pro bono resources are held at these events. The recent SSI for Children's project was an example — a statewide effort involved the State Bar, state support centers like the National Center for Youth Law, and local pro bono programs and legal services offices. A statewide hotline was set up, using volunteers from local programs to do basic information and referral; where appropriate, callers were referred to the legal services program in their geographical area, where volunteers were trained to provide representation.
- The State Bar worked with local bars and legal services programs to make CLE available for volunteers. CLE has always served as an excellent recruitment tool, especially since it became mandatory in California. Cooperative arrangements were made with the major CLE providers; although some of them are facing financial difficulties and are cutting back on their free/discounted services, such outreach continues to be an important activity.
- The Pro Bono Committee of the Access to Justice Commission is working on a number of projects including development of a new collaborative effort with the judiciary following the Chief Justice's letter to all lawyers and judges encouraging pro bono and the model Resolution adopted by the Judicial Council; continuing work with the new community-focused court planning teams in targeted counties to encourage pro bono and make clinic sites available for volunteers or other needs identified at the local level; and continuing work to coordinate with self-help centers who are also encouraging pro bono.

IX. STATEWIDE TRAINING AND COORDINATION

- Local programs recognize the essential nature of support and training to the quality of their delivery system. Our community recognizes that access to high quality training and support was seriously lessened after the loss of funding to State and National Support Centers and the concurrent drop in California IOLTA funds. Many programs continue voluntarily to pay on a fee for services basis. Services are available on a significantly reduced level in many instances. We continue to be committed to the preservation and expansion of our existing capacity for training and support that we have so carefully built in California.
- Support and Training Resources and Priorities:
 - The Western Center on Law and Poverty provides coordination in the form of task forces, communication about developments in the law, preparation and updating of poverty law manuals, statewide training, and availability of specialized and experienced staff for advice and co-counsel.
 - National Support Centers provide support to California programs funded by the California

IOLTA program in substantive areas determined to be local priorities, including communications about developments in the law, preparation and updating of poverty law manuals, and availability of specialized and experienced staff for advice and co-counsel. Local programs are also encouraged to purchase services from the National Clearinghouse for Legal Services, the national poverty law library and journal.

- A network of state-based IOLTA funded support Centers also provides substantive training and support to local programs. The Benchmark Institute which formerly was part of the Regional Training Center provides a core skills curriculum utilizing IOLTA funds and fees to cover costs. Benchmark Institute has been assisting with the development of annual retreats and has conducted strategic planning sessions that they update each year using a model based on current private sector analysis.
- State and National Support Centers are increasing their communication and coordination capacity utilizing technology. Field programs emphasized the importance of the development of increased support capacity including communication proficiency during the statewide discussion. Technological development is a key component. Standards will be developed by the LAAC Support Center Section in conjunction with legal service support and field programs. Minimum requirements discussed include the capacity to communicate effectively electronically using e-mail and discussion tools, the capacity to post information to a public Website and the capacity to participate in the planned statewide Extranet.
- Legal Assistance Association of California (LAAC) and Public Interest Clearinghouse provide training for projects. LAAC and the State Bar Office of Legal Services and Legal Services Section in the past sponsored an annual two day conference that included workshops on substantive law issues and delivery issues. The 1999 Conference will be sponsored by LAAC and the Public Interest Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse also provides meetings and training sessions for project directors on such issues as Technology and New Intake Methods and maintains the Resource Exchange Website.
- Local Program Task Forces: At the local level many programs have county or regional task forces that provide training and updates in substantive law areas. California Rural Legal Assistance has statewide task forces in health, education, employment and housing. Legal Services of Northern California hosts task forces on housing, health and welfare. The Los Angeles LSC programs have substantive area meetings with IOLTA funded programs in housing, health and family law issues. In San Jose, IOLTA and LSC providers hold monthly task force sessions in housing and in public benefits. In San Francisco, IOLTA and LSC providers have task forces on eviction defense and public benefits issues.
- California programs participate in national training and coordination. The NLADA Substantive Law Training is traditionally held in California. Many California programs are involved with Management Information Exchange. The Center for Law and Social Policy often provides extensive substantive support.
- Statewide Technology Coordination: We have formed two collaborative technology groups. The Technical Solutions Group (TSG) is a fee for service membership group, including LSC-

funded programs and several IOLTA funded programs. These are the groups leading in the use of technology. The Collaborative Solutions Working Group (CSWG) includes all 114 IOLTA funded programs. Both groups are coordinated by the Public Interest Clearinghouse. CSWG provides limited training and technical assistance and is seeking additional resources for this purpose.

X. TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

Many programs are experimenting with new delivery systems to increase their efficiency and are looking at profoundly different ways to reach the growing number of people in need of legal services. State planning is reaching into all areas of client service delivery, including legal problem avoidance, pro se services, and enhanced advocacy abilities for full representation services. For example, some programs are training community partners to educate people on their legal rights, and others have designed hotline intake systems that, with one phone call, allow clients to receive either legal advice from a lawyer or a referral to other appropriate services. Others are considering the efficiency and savings that could be realized with bulk purchase of online legal database access for research or with automated, customizable case management systems.

It is critical that these individual efforts and planning for innovation do not remain isolated achievements or become duplicated efforts. Collaboration on the research, planning, training and support needed for implementation will ensure that the best technology solutions will be available to all programs. If we collaborate to increase our efficiency and access to resources, we can begin to compensate for declining federal and state funding for legal assistance for the poor, and shore up the infrastructure to meet the rapidly growing need for legal services.

While legal services programs have always worked extensively with other community-based organizations, we anticipate that the increased use of telecommunications technologies will also support the continued growth of legal services/private bar/community partnerships which have seen a dramatic increase in the past three years. Legal services programs and the clients they represent are involved in many collaborative projects including community economic development projects, welfare-to-work initiatives, naturalization clinics and federal empowerment zone programs. Certain legal services advocates are moving from primarily representing individuals to serving as counsel to community organizations and client initiatives. These partners will benefit from the increase in legal services capacity and from Internet access resulting from this project.

- A. California/Nevada Collaborative Solutions Working Group (CSWG)** is the name for the overall technology project we are developing whose members include all IOLTA funded programs in California and Nevada Legal Services.
- B. The Technology Solutions Group (TSG)** is the fee for service group exploring new solutions. TSG is integrated with and contributes to the larger collaborative project (CSWG). The Clearinghouse is seeking funding for the project on behalf of all the member programs. The purpose of the Technical Solutions Group (TSG) is to immediately begin to develop new solutions, collaboratively moving to the next generation of technology and negotiating better rates for technology services, hardware and software. Led by a technology and management representative designated from each program, we anticipate every program to contribute twenty hours of time to the project over the first year. The

Members of the TSG are:

Asian Pacific American Legal Center	Legal Aid Society San Diego
BASF Volunteer Legal Services	Legal Aid Society San Mateo
California Indian Legal Services	Legal Services of Northern California
California Rural Legal Assistance	Legal Services Program for Pasadena and San Gabriel-Pomona Valley
Central California Legal Services	Nevada Legal Services
Channel Counties Legal Services Association	Legal Aid of the North Bay
Community Legal Services (San Jose)	Pro Bono Project of Santa Clara County
Inland Counties Legal Services	Redwood Legal Assistance
Legal Aid Foundation Long Beach	San Fernando Valley Neighborhood Legal Services
Legal Aid Foundation Los Angeles	SF Neighborhood Legal Assis. Foundation
Legal Aid Society Orange County	

C. Current Statewide Priorities to be Implemented by the Collaborative Solutions Working Group, the Technical Solutions Group and Regional Collaboratives:

- **Statewide Collaboration, Connectivity and Communication:** Work to accomplish goal of bringing every IOLTA program on-line-- work to accomplish goal of every program having an e-mail account in short term. In the longer term we intend to share resources more broadly, develop group ware capabilities, increased substantive information on the Internet and increased state substantive discussions occurring on-line via e-mail and list servs.
- **Legal Services Extranet:** We plan to build a legal services extranet for California and Nevada programs to expand Internet-based collaboration between the legal services, community partners, and the private bar and to share resources more effectively with rural areas. This secured extranet would be used for communication and dissemination of any information deemed sensitive or confidential. As an example, rural programs will be able to work collaboratively and co-counsel with volunteers from urban law schools and private firms on cases, projects and training, thereby increasing their effectiveness in representing their clients.
- **Client Self Representation:** We are also exploring the possibility of direct client uses of Internet and extranet resources in ways that enable them to represent themselves. We plan to coordinate closely with the efforts of local courts, and with national and local efforts to expand client access to legal resources. The national Technology Advisory Group (TAG) is analyzing these new possibilities, and we will integrate TAG's thinking as the project progresses. Richard Granat, one of our principal consultants, is a national expert on these efforts having created the Maryland People's Law Library (www.peoples-law.com/) a leading example of self help representation using technology.
- **Development of Minimum Technology Standards:** Working with the National Technology Advisory Group (TAG) we have drafted initial Minimum Technology Standards. They have been reviewed and adopted as the State Standards for use. The TSG will support efforts to keep them updated on a regular basis. They are available on the Technology Resources portion of the Clearinghouse Website.

- **Web-based Legal Research:** We plan to negotiate a cost effective contract for all providers and further develop substantive state Websites and on-line discussion. Online services are rapidly moving their databases to the web, accessible thru browsers as well as thru their traditional direct connections. Programs have been limited in the ways in which they have been able to use these services, due to the tremendous costs. The collaborative's goal will be to negotiate representing many of the region's programs, and thus "cut" a better deal or deals than we've been able to do individually. In addition, the collaborative will structure legal resources for the whole community. We are building on initial contacts in Los Angeles with Lexus and Westlaw and expect to be able to offer similar, more affordable contracts statewide by the end of 1998.
- **Web-enabled Case Management Systems:** We are collaboratively assessing and if necessary developing systems with the capacity to securely manage data among multi-office programs and systems with the capacity to share information securely with co-counsel including volunteer attorneys, paralegals, law clerks and clients themselves. We held a well attended "best practices" Demonstration Day September 9, 1998 including practice management, extranet and application server technologies. By developing more of these hands-on sessions, we meet the identified need of programs and technical managers share decision making, better define requirements and develop needed resources. The potential for web-enabled systems was both confirmed and the complexity underlined. We are in the process of defining next steps in conjunction with other states and national efforts.
- **JNANA Expert System:** We are assessing, JNANA, a web-enabled expert authoring and collaborative practice system. Negotiations to obtain a free license for use by California and Nevada programs through the Public Interest Clearinghouse are underway. Our work is coordinated with The Access to Justice Courts Committee. Using technological tools based on Expert Systems, such as those developed by JNANA, could dramatically increase access by enabling legal services lawyers to author interactive materials which can be widely disseminated on-line in conjunction with Court Initiatives and other community efforts. Pilot court and regional intake systems are being targeted for development in this next period.
- **Develop Technical Assistance and Statewide Training Resources:** New technology solutions are of no benefit unless they are thoughtfully integrated into current office practices and unless the people who must use and maintain them are trained and supported. Our project staff, planning group members and volunteers will work together to ensure that a comprehensive array of training and support options are offered as the implementation of new technologies progresses. We held programs in April and September and will hold a training in the spring of 1999. We will assist the regional collaboratives to develop regional capacity for training and technical assistance. As a provider of support and training services to California and Nevada programs, our experience is that the geographic expanse and diversity of our states offers both opportunities and challenges. A wide range of options is required.

The next years will see dramatic enhancement of our potential to provide training and information to this diverse community through the effective use of technology. We cannot anticipate what our delivery structure will be in a few years, but at this time we plan to provide information and training to programs and clients in the following ways:

- Training of trainers to establish peer mentors in each region.
 - Peer mentoring on installation and management of new technologies
 - Technical assistance experts as volunteers
 - Negotiated vendor training contracts for onsite training
 - Traveling road shows by PIC technology trainer.
 - Training sessions at meetings and conferences.
 - Telephone conference call-based dissemination of information.
 - Fax and e-mail communications.
 - Facilitated e-mail lists and online discussion groups.
 - Web-based FAQs and other training documents.
 - Expansion of ClientNet for linking client board members to information resources on our Website.
 - Teleconference training using school, law firm or corporation networks.
- **Year 2000 Compliance:** Serve as a conduit for sharing information and solutions including establishment of a threaded discussion group as programs plan for various aspects of this challenge.
 - **Bulk Purchasing and Coordinated In-kind Donations:** As members of the working group develop standard platforms and beta-test new products, we will negotiate bulk purchase agreements using our status as a single enterprise, similar to what other 500 attorney law firms can achieve. We will investigate Internet access deals and communication services through cable companies and Internet and telephone service providers. The American Bar Association's equipment donation project, CompuMentor, and numerous organizations throughout the state are coordinating in-kind donations of equipment. We will investigate these resources and search out additional sources (e.g., corporate donations).
 - **Create Stable Funding for Statewide Technology Collaboration and Support:** The Clearinghouse is seeking outside funding and corporate sponsors to augment program seed money for the project.

XI. PROGRAM CONFIGURATION

Given the effectiveness of the current configuration of providers, we see lack of resources, rather than configuration or absence of mergers, as the primary challenge to providing access to justice to Californians on a statewide and regional basis. The six smallest LSC-funded programs in California existing in 1995 have merged or are engaged in current negotiations. By the end of 1999, we project that there will be no LSC-funded program with total income under \$550,000 in California. Given the size and complexity of California and the diversity of our population, any consideration of configuration or discussion of changing or altering current program boundaries must be made on a local and regional basis. Section C-4 above discussing regional and local collaboration refers to several planning processes which include discussion of configuration issues.

Consideration of merger must include considerations of the following factors:

- **Effect on Clients:** Will a merged program more effectively serve clients and will a merger increase the ease and efficiency of client access? Do future benefits outweigh potential disruptions in services

to clients? Will services to clients with special needs be enhanced or diminished by the merger?

- **Community Relations:** Will services to diverse ethnic and cultural groups be enhanced or diminished by the merger? Will client and community participation be enhanced or diminished? Will local collaboration with other legal services programs be enhanced or diminished by the merger?
- **Relations with the Bar and Judiciary:** Will local bar support be enhanced or diminished by the merger? How will relations with the local courts and Judiciary be affected?
- **Financial Considerations:** Will local financial support be enhanced or diminished by the merger? What are the time and money costs to the programs?
- **Effect on the Program:** How will the strength of the program board be affected? Will a merger increase the cultural and ethnic diversity of program leadership and management? How will the capacity of program staff be affected?

California programs have significant experience with merger and consolidation and know the costs are considerable, e.g., see the Management Information Exchange Journal. In some instances the long term benefits warrant the costs. Decisions should be carefully considered in the context of local and regional planning by local Boards of Directors in close communication with their clients and local partners.

The following mergers are being actively pursued at this time:

- Northern California: Redwood Legal Assistance and Legal Services of Northern California plan to merge by April 1, 1999. The Redwood Board voted on September 12, 1998 to merge with Legal Services of Northern California conditioned on an acceptable merger agreement being adopted by both entities. LSNC's Board will vote on October 20, 1998.
- Legal Aid of the North Bay and Contra Costa Legal Services Foundation are in the final stages of merger discussions.

The following mergers have occurred since 1995:

- Legal Aid of Napa and Legal Aid of Marin formed Legal Aid of the North Bay
- Legal Aid of Santa Cruz and Legal Aid of Monterey formed Central Coast Legal Services
- Tulare Kings County Legal Aid merged with Central California Legal Services

XII. CONCLUSION

California is continuing to work toward our goal of creating and maintaining a comprehensive and integrated system for the provision of civil legal assistance to all low income persons with legal needs to secure equal justice for all. There can be no meaningful access to justice without adequate legal representation.

Low income people in California and the California legal services community have faced tremendous

challenges over the last five years. We have responded to these challenges by innovating, by working collaboratively, and by maintaining our core commitment to access to a comprehensive range of services for all Californians. This report is a snapshot of an ongoing statewide and regional process involving legal services clients, advocates, local Board of Directors, local community partners, the Bar, and the Judiciary. The report highlights our accomplishments and the progress our commitment to justice demands of us.