

STATE PLANNING CONFIGURATION STANDARDS

Final Task Force Report – Board Approved

LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

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I. PREFACE

This document-- Legal Services Corporation State Planning Configuration Standards -- presents in one place a comprehensive compilation of the standards LSC recipients and Designated State Planning Bodies (DSPB's)¹ should consider and that the Legal Services Corporation will use in considering the configuration of a state's legal services delivery system.²

Determination of the most appropriate configuration of programs in a given state is a part of the broader state planning process and cannot be divorced from consideration of the overall goals of the state delivery system, the state's past performance, current status, and progress towards and plans for achieving those goals. The Legal Services Corporation expects its grantees in each state and territory to work with one another and with a broad spectrum of other equal justice stakeholders³ to develop comprehensive, integrated statewide civil legal services delivery systems which are responsive to the most compelling needs of eligible clients and client communities, ensure the highest and most strategic use of all available resources, maximize the opportunity for clients throughout the state to receive timely, effective and appropriate legal services in the present and in the future, and operate efficiently and effectively.⁴

¹ A "Designated State Planning Body" is an entity that has been established and charged with responsibility for coordinating state legal services delivery planning. Such planning entities are generally composed of an array of civil equal justice delivery stakeholders, including but not limited to representatives from the state bar association, state IOLTA funding entity, staffed legal services programs (LSC and non-LSC), the pro bono community, client organizations, clients and others with an interest and commitment to effective delivery of civil legal services to poor and vulnerable people in the state.

² For LSC's policies regarding internal review of configuration recommendations, see *Legal Services Corporation Reconfiguration Review Process, September 21, 2001*.

³ State planning processes, including the participants, will vary from state to state, and LSC does not require the same process or participation in each state. However, LSC continues to encourage broad civil equal justice stakeholder participation at the state level and expects its grantees to do the same.

⁴ For a fuller articulation of these goals, see LSC Program Letters 98-1, 98-6, and 2000-7, and *Strategic Directions 2000-2005*, adopted by the LSC Board of Directors on January 28, 2000.

While LSC will continue to utilize a variety of approaches, LSC views service area configuration as a key structural component of a comprehensive set

capacity of the system to meet the civil legal needs of low-income people throughout the state without altering service areas or historical relationships. In other states, the very development and implementation of such initiatives may require reconfiguration of organizational relationships and service areas.

decisions under 45 C.F.R. 1620, promote relative equity in the availability of the full range of client service capacities necessary to meet the full continuum of client legal needs regardless of where in the state clients live?

b. Area of Inquiry--Does the configuration of programs within the state enhance opportunities to attract attorneys and paralegals who can provide expertise, skills, cultural relevancy and cultural competencies necessary to address the most pressing legal needs of clients?

c. Area of Inquiry--Does the configuration of programs promote the likelihood that all providers will have relatively equal access to the resources, expertise, information and experience necessary to provide high quality legal services consistent with state and national standards of provider performance?

d. Area of Inquiry--Does the configuration of programs facilitate the efficient statewide coordination of legal work and provide an efficient means of establishing and maintaining a statewide capacity to provide training, monitor developments, disseminate relevant information and provide expert assistance necessary for the delivery of high quality assistance?

e. Area of Inquiry--Does the configuration of programs within the state facilitate the ability of legal services providers to coordinate their efforts to expand client access to the courts, enhance self-help opportunities for low-income persons, and provide effective, culturally relevant, systematic and comprehensive outreach and preventive legal education and advice to the client-eligible population in the state?

f. Area of Inquiry-- Does the configuration of programs within the state take into account the location and configuration of governmental, judicial, human services and other relevant regional delivery planning areas in the state?

g. Area of Inquiry--Does the configuration of programs within the state facilitate the ability of legal services providers and other civil equal justice partners to coordinate their research and their efforts to stay abreast of developments in the delivery of legal services?

h. Area of Inquiry--Does the configuration of programs within the state facilitate efforts to secure new funding for, and where appropriate allocate current funding to new projects and experimental models for serving clients or strengthening system capacities?

- a. Area of Inquiry--** Does the configuration of programs within the state enhance the likelihood of achieving the intended goals and objectives of a comprehensive, integrated and client-centered legal services delivery system including, but not limited to service effectiveness/quality; full range of legal services to address most pressing legal needs of eligible clients; efficiency; equity and ease in terms of client access; greater involvement by members of the private bar in the legal lives of clients; and client-community empowerment?
- b. Area of Inquiry--** Does the configuration of programs within the state facilitate efficient, ongoing assessment of demographic trends, changes in laws and public programs affecting low-income persons?
- c. Area of Inquiry--** Does the configuration of programs within the state operate to ensure that there is a regular review of system capacities and resources throughout the state and adjustments in their deployment to respond to new and emerging client needs, legal trends and other changes affecting the delivery of legal services to the poor?
- d. Area of Inquiry--** Does the configuration of programs within the state operate to ensure within available resources that all components of the delivery system have sufficient resources and support to adjust to changes in client needs, staff or funding?
- e. Area of Inquiry--** Does the configuration of providers within the state promote the system's ability and capacity to develop, nurture, promote, recruit and retain strong and effective staff and leaders who are diverse and culturally competent?