

Justice for All

Project Announcement

We are pleased to announce the **Justice for All (JFA) project, supported by the Public Welfare Foundation and housed at the National Center for State Courts.** The project will support efforts by the states to include all relevant stakeholders in the civil justice community in a partnership to better understand, adopt, and move toward implementation of the **Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA)** resolution on *Meaningful Access to Justice for All*. The project seeks to enhance states' commitment to reimagining how to work across organizational boundaries and optimize all available resources to advance access to justice for all.

The rising number of people in poverty, the increase of self-represented litigants in our state courts, and severe funding deficiencies take our civil justice system further than ever from fulfilling the promise of equal access to justice. Faced with these challenges, leaders in the bench and bar have developed an array of exciting innovations to help those who face civil legal problems. To date, however, these innovations usually have been offered piecemeal by different sectors in the states, rather than in an integrated approach that combines services across sectors to make the best use of resources for each person with an essential civil legal need.

In July 2015, CCJ and COSCA unanimously passed Resolution 5, *Reaffirming the Commitment to Meaningful Access to Justice for All*, which:

- Envisions state systems in which everyone has access to effective assistance for their essential civil legal needs through a comprehensive approach that provides a continuum of meaningful and appropriate services.
- Calls for courts, Access to Justice Commissions or other such entities, and other essential partners, including civil legal aid organizations and the bar, to work together and develop in each state a strategic plan with realistic and measurable outcomes to reach the goal of effective assistance for all; and
- Urges the National Center for State Courts and other national organizations to develop tools and provide assistance to states in achieving the goal.

In brief, **the project will** develop a state assessment/inventory and strategic action plan template and guidance materials to assist states in their planning; award grants to targeted states using an RFP process, for assistance with state assessment/strategic action planning; and provide funding for technical assistance to address specific state access needs. The project Advisory Committee will provide project oversight and approval of grants and technical assistance. All states are encouraged to mobilize their partners in the access to justice community to begin the journey to implement the Resolution. More information about the project is forthcoming, with a likely RFP target date of May 2016.

Hon. Ralph Gants
Co-Chair
Justice for All Advisory Committee

Hon. Laurie Zelon
Co-Chair
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The project Advisory Committee and its Expert Working Group (listed below) are comprised of individuals with perspectives from all components of the system. Thanks to DLA Piper, which has offered to provide certain research and technical assistance for this project on a pro bono basis. Additional philanthropic support is encouraged. Contact Shelley Spacek Miller, J.D., sspacek@ncsc.org or 757-259-1538, for project inquiries.

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