

Justice for All Grants Announcement

We are pleased to announce that grants will be awarded to seven states under the Justice for All project, which is supported by the Public Welfare Foundation and housed at the National Center for State Courts. The grants will support each state awardee in forming partnerships with all relevant stakeholders in the civil justice community and beyond to develop state assessments and strategic action plans in order to implement Resolution 5 on *Meaningful Access to Justice for All* passed by the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators.

That resolution 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. It also calls on courts, Access to Justice commissions and similar entities, civil legal aid organizations, the bar and other essential partners to work together in each state to develop strategic plans with “realistic and measurable outcomes” to reach the goal of 100 percent meaningful access.

In furtherance of the resolution, the Justice for All project seeks to enhance the commitment of the states to reimagine how to work across organizational boundaries and optimize all available resources to advance access to justice for all.

“Given the large number of people who are struggling economically, the increase of self-represented people in our state courts, and severe funding deficiencies, the Public Welfare Foundation thought it was very important to put resources behind the clarion call of the chief justices and the state court administrators,” said Mary McClymont, president of the Foundation. “We wanted to help catalyze new ways of thinking and working among civil justice actors in each state. The goal is to build a coordinated and integrated continuum of services with the user in mind —people with essential civil legal needs, especially those who cannot afford lawyers. The grants will help states bring together all civil justice stakeholders to determine the most effective ways to deliver those services.”

The seven state awardees are: Alaska, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and New York. In addition to the initial strategic action planning grants of up to \$100,000 each, these states will be eligible to apply for funding in the next year to begin implementation of their plans.

A total of 25 states applied for the planning grants. The Justice for All Advisory Committee, which oversees the effort, hopes the states that did not receive grants in this round will continue on their journey toward implementing the resolution.

“We are thrilled that so many states — half of the country — demonstrated their commitment to fulfill the promise of the resolution by applying for the grants,” noted Chief Justice Ralph Gants of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court and co-chair of the Advisory Committee. “We hope that all of these states, even those that we were unable to award grants, will find ways to build on the momentum they have made to identify, coordinate, and utilize the available resources to help those unable to afford counsel address their legal problems.”

With continuing Public Welfare Foundation support, the project will offer any interested states that submitted applications ongoing help with their strategic planning — including the newly developed guidance materials that describe key components of a fully integrated system, targeted technical assistance with national consultants, instructional webinars, and shared learning opportunities. A full list of ways states can receive assistance will be made available soon. Information about resources will be accessible through the JFA website: www.ncsc.org/jfap.

Hon. Laurie Zelon, associate justice of the California Court of Appeal, who co-chairs the Advisory Committee, cited the importance of “cutting across boundaries and expanding the pool of typical participants from the bench, the bar, and civil legal aid organizations, to include human services organizations, community leaders, and other less traditional partners to address the particular needs of the civil justice system in each state.” She added, “We all will be able to learn lessons based on the different experiences of the seven states and we hope that all the participating states can learn what makes sense for them individually as well as learn collectively from each other.”

Justice for All Advisory Committee

Hon. Ralph Gants, Co-Chair
Chief Justice
Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court

Hon. Laurie Zelon, Co-Chair
Associate Justice
California Court of Appeal

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State Court Administrator
Utah Administrative Office of the Courts

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D.C. Access to Justice Comm’n

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President, Nat’l Ass’n for Court Management
Director, Ohio Supreme Court Office of Court Services

William Hubbard
Partner
Nelson, Mullins, Riley & Scarborough, LLP

Jim Sandman
President
Legal Services Corporation

Jo-Ann Wallace
President & CEO
National Legal Aid & Defender’s Ass’n

Project Staff

Thomas Clarke, Project Director
Vice President of Research and Technology, NCSC

Shelley Spacek Miller, Project Manager
Court Research Associate, NCSC

Katherine Altoneder, Senior Advisor
Executive Director, SRLN

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