

**CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUSTICES  
CONFERENCE OF STATE COURT ADMINISTRATORS**

**RESOLUTION 4**

**In Support of the Statement of Best Practices for State Funding of Civil Legal Aid  
Prepared by the ABA Resource Center for Access to Justice Initiatives**

WHEREAS, the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators have consistently advocated for adequate resources to fund civil legal aid programs; and

WHEREAS, Census Bureau data show that nearly one in five Americans—61.8 million people—are eligible for legal aid services, a 21% increase since 2007; and

WHEREAS, the civil legal problems of low-income people involve essential human needs, such as protection from domestic abuse, safe and habitable housing, access to necessary health care, and parental rights; and

WHEREAS, the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators in 2012 published a comprehensive policy paper<sup>1</sup> making clear that millions of people in America face legal crises without the benefit of legal counsel, thereby either giving up their legal rights or seeking judicial relief without assistance of counsel; and

WHEREAS, in 2002, 2009, 2011, and 2012, the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators, by resolution, reaffirmed the importance of the federal Legal Services Corporation and, as recently as 2012, called upon all members of Congress “to fulfill our nation’s promise of ‘Equal Justice Under Law’, by restoring funding for the federal Legal Services Corporation to the level necessary to provide critically needed services to low-income and vulnerable Americans”; and

WHEREAS, federal funding of the Legal Services Corporation has declined from \$420 million in FY 2010 to \$375 million for the current fiscal year—a reduction of more than 10 percent; and

WHEREAS, it is advisable to pursue strategies to improve state and federal government funding of civil legal aid; and

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<sup>1</sup> “The Importance of Funding for the Legal Services Corporation from the Perspective of the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators.”

WHEREAS, the American Bar Association's Resource Center for Access to Justice Initiatives, a project of the Standing Committee on Legal Aid and Indigent Defendants, has carefully studied successful legal aid funding efforts in the states; and

WHEREAS, the ABA Resource Center has gathered a series of best practices to guide bench and bar leaders in their pursuit of increased funding of civil legal aid;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators encourage their members to consider the ABA Resource Center for Access to Justice Initiatives' "Supreme Court Leadership on State Legislative Funding for Civil Legal Aid" (Updated July 15, 2015) as a worthy guide for their own endeavors to obtain increased funding for civil legal services to disadvantaged populations.

Adopted as proposed by the CCJ/COSCA Government Affairs Committee and the CCJ/COSCA Access, Fairness, and Public Trust Committee at the 2015 Annual Meeting.