

Wisconsin Access to Justice Commission

COMMITTEES

Adopted July 27, 2010

1) Public Awareness and Justice Education Committee

The Committee's goal is to increase public support for meeting the civil legal needs of low income Wisconsin residents. The committee will:

- enhance awareness of the critical role that access to legal assistance plays in preserving a just and civil society;
- develop and implement effective means of gathering and distributing information about current and emerging access to justice issues facing Wisconsin as well as opportunities for expanding access to justice;
- use the information it obtains to educate the public, as well as people who work in the legal system, policymakers, client/civic groups, and news organizations regarding opportunities for progress on access to justice issues in Wisconsin;
- organize or sponsor public events, hearings and conferences, develop the Commission's website and communications, and develop other tactics to meet Commission goals; and
- collaborate with appropriate groups in other organizations, including the State Bar, Wisconsin Court System, WisTAF, and others.

2) Delivery of Legal Services Committee

The Delivery of Legal Services Committee evaluates ideas for continuous improvement in Wisconsin's legal services delivery system. The committee will:

- review recommendations for improvements to strengthen, expand, and coordinate the people, tools and systems that deliver legal assistance to low income Wisconsin residents;
- develop tools for measuring the effectiveness of various strategies for expanding the delivery of legal services in Wisconsin;
- review and assess the possibilities for expanding pro bono service (e.g. by private, government, retired and inactive licensed attorneys);
- identify improvements that should be made or successes that should be replicated to address the needs of people who face non-financial access to justice barriers (e.g. due to issues related to their rural location, language, disability or institutionalization);
- identify opportunities for improving communication or coordination of efforts between different areas of the delivery system;

- review and make recommendations regarding new or evolving tools that may address critical barriers to access to legal assistance (e.g. non-lawyer advocates, online forms and other self-help services);
- identify obstacles to accessing legal representation and recommend appropriate solutions (e.g. limited scope representation, technology and non-lawyer advocates); and
- collaborate with existing efforts and other stakeholders on efforts improve the delivery system

3) Courts & Administrative Tribunals Committee

The Courts Committee will identify and recommend changes to procedures in Wisconsin municipal, federal, state and tribal courts as well administrative tribunals that will expand access to justice. The committee will:

- collaborate with other organizations and stakeholders in the courts, tribes, agencies, bar associations and others that have a shared interest in improving the administration of justice;
- review and coordinate information about services and needs, obstacles and solutions in each and all four justice systems;
- review and recommend changes or adaptations to court rules and policies (e.g., proposing changes to Supreme Court Rules and administrative processes, bench-books, and court procedures for judicial staff); and
- research and recommend ways for judicial officers to educate or assist self-represented litigants while fulfilling their other responsibilities under applicable ethical codes.

4) Research and Resource Development Committee

The committee's goal is augment the Commission's work by developing research and recommendations on systemic access to justice issues as well as long-term funding strategies. The committee will:

- examine long-term, public and private funding as well as other resource options for legal aid, including possible uses of cy pres funds and alternative payment arrangements;
- examine long-term, public and private funding as well as other resource options for access to justice services;
- analyze proposals for a civil right to counsel or similar suggestions for addressing the need for legal representation in civil legal matters;
- continue development of the cost-benefit case for expanded civil legal assistance to low income Wisconsin residents;

- examine both Wisconsin law and practice as well as resources from other state and national organizations to glean best practices for more open, equitable and accessible justice system in Wisconsin;
- conduct its work in collaboration with other committees or working groups within the Commission and among its stakeholders; and
- develop a long-term financial plan for an independent Commission.