

Letter From The Chairman

New Leadership, New Era

As the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation, I am pleased to introduce this 2010 Annual Report. 2010 was a remarkable, and challenging, year for the Corporation, as our new Board was fully confirmed, sworn in, and confronted with the reality of burgeoning requests for civil legal assistance in an environment where non-federal funding was declining or flat.

The Corporation's mission—equal access to justice—has never been more critical. This fundamental value is not a lofty abstraction. Over the last three years, as the nation's recovers from the economic downturn, LSC programs have seen dramatic spikes in cases related to the economy: mortgage foreclosure cases up 128 percent; unemployment compensation cases up 80 percent; domestic violence cases up 9 percent. LSC-funded cases involved households with 2.3 million people, and LSC estimates that 63 million Americans are now eligible for our services—an increase of 17 percent since 2008. The magnitude of the task we face cannot be overstated.

At its meetings, the LSC Board has focused on the needs of clients and the resource constraints that affect the delivery of legal assistance. In Milwaukee, the Board convened an Executive Directors Roundtable to hear directly about priorities in the field, and in Tucson received presentations from our three Arizona programs on the delivery of legal services in urban, rural and Native American communities. In Louisville, panel discussions provided overviews on legal services in Appalachia and on the impact of the Gulf of Mexico oil drilling disaster.

One of our Board's first significant undertakings was to conduct a nationwide search to recruit a new LSC President. Our Search Committee recommended James J. Sandman for the position, and he took office as President and chief executive in early 2011. Jim is a former managing partner at the law firm of Arnold & Porter LLP and served as General Counsel to the District of Columbia Public Schools. An extraordinary leader, Jim Sandman brings managerial excellence to LSC and a lifelong passion for expanding access to justice. The Board was greatly aided in conducting this search by a distinguished advisory group.



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The Board also is particularly grateful to Victor M. Fortuno, LSC's long-time General Counsel who served for a year as interim president following Helaine M. Barnett's retirement. Vic was responsible for our Board's smooth transition into office.

During the year, the Board created a Special Task Force on Fiscal Oversight and affirmed its commitment to be vigilant stewards of the appropriations that are entrusted to us. In November, we also launched an initiative to help veterans and military families. LSC's technology grant program funded StatesideLegal.org, the first national website focused on legal problems of veterans and military families, and awarded grants to make it easier for veterans and the public to obtain legal information.

We also benefited greatly from our firsthand contact with LSC's network throughout the country. Together, these LSC-funded programs address the civil legal needs of victims of domestic violence, veterans returning from abroad, disabled individuals, families facing foreclosure and other low-income Americans.

Every day, the lawyers and staff at these programs work hard to ensure that clients are treated with fairness in the resolution of their legal problems and that low-income Americans have a place to turn for help in managing their civil legal needs. We thank these dedicated individuals and their programs for the invaluable service they are performing on behalf of the nation.

John G. Levi
Chairman, Board of Directors
Legal Services Corporation

July 15, 2011