

President's Message

Strengthening Access to Justice

The cover of this Annual Report shows the pediment of the U.S. Supreme Court building and its pledge of "Equal Justice Under Law." Our nation is committed to the rule of law.

Congress, in establishing the Legal Services Corporation, entrusted LSC with the mission of providing equal access to justice. Over the years, millions of low-income Americans have counted on LSC-funded programs to provide them with high-quality civil legal services. LSC is the bedrock on which our national system of access to civil justice stands—and its foundation for the future.

I often tell people that being LSC President is the best job in American law. I mean it. I can think of no more important objective of our legal system than to provide meaningful access to justice. And I can think of no better position from which to address that objective than the one I now have.

We have a long way to go before "equal justice under law" is a reality for all Americans, but I am determined to do all I can to deliver on our national commitment. My goals as LSC President are to increase funding for civil legal services; to maximize the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of LSC and of the legal aid programs that receive LSC grants; to promote innovation and entrepreneurship within LSC and among the programs it funds; and to enhance collaborations with judges, state Access to Justice Commissions, the organized bar, private attorneys, foundations, law schools, IOLTA programs, and others involved in serving the needs of low-income Americans.

Collaboration across the access to justice community is particularly important in an era of reduced resources and increased demand for civil legal services. By coordinating with and reaching out to others, I hope to increase the efficiency of service delivery to clients, avoid unnecessary duplication of effort, and streamline LSC's dealings with the programs it funds.

I am honored to have been selected by the LSC Board of Directors to serve as LSC's chief executive. I also appreciate the warm welcome I have received at the LSC-funded programs I have visited and at the regional meetings and national conferences I have attended.

At a time when many low-income Americans are struggling



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with foreclosures, evictions, unemployment, and other pressing civil legal issues, it is important that we recognize and celebrate the attorneys, paralegals, and support staff who respond to requests for legal assistance every day in every state. The 136 programs in the LSC network are filled with dedicated public servants who make a difference in the lives of low-income Americans. I look forward to working alongside them as we bring legal services to a new level of excellence.

James J. Sandman
President

Legal Services Corporation

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