

Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i
STATE PLANNING REPORT

Submitted to:
Legal Services Corporation

The Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i (LASH) is the only provider of statewide civil legal services to the poor in Hawai'i. Founded in 1950 by community leaders such as Judge Betty Vitousek and Justice Samuel King, Sr., LASH currently operates nine offices statewide. LASH has been the exclusive grantee of the federal legal services funding available for general civil assistance since the beginning of that funding in the mid-1960's. LASH continues its commitment to serve Hawai'i's indigent families and individuals -- those with low and moderate incomes -- with their critical, civil legal needs in areas of family law, consumer issues, health care, income maintenance, and housing.

Due to a dramatic decrease of over 40% in state and Legal Services Corporation (LSC) funding support over the past four years, LASH has been actively engaged in a comprehensive effort to restructure its delivery system and diversify its funding base.

This extensive planning effort has included a wide variety of partners depending upon the nature of the issue being discussed. For example, the coordinated implementation of the statewide hotline intake system involved virtually all of the smaller specialty legal services programs while LASH's diversification of funding has primarily involved planning and implementation by LASH staff. The individual sections of this report will describe participants and partners in each planning and implementation effort.

1. INTAKE AND THE PROVISION OF ADVICE AND BRIEF SERVICES

Among the first major modifications in its delivery system was the creation of our statewide hotline intake system known as the Information System for Legal Aid Network Statewide (ISLANS). A planning group comprised of virtually all of the legal service providers in Hawai`i was formed during 1995 to design and deliver a statewide hotline intake system that acted also as a central referral mechanism for other providers, similar to the CARPLS hotline system in Chicago.

ISLANS is the first tier in the delivery of LASH's pro se services. It has successfully integrated with LASH brief and full service components, providing clients with a "seamless" referral to more services, and providing LASH staff with appropriate referrals. While headway has been made to similarly dovetail with other ISLANS members¹, there is room for more integration.

In its third year of operation, statistics show that 29% of hotline callers receive a referral to an ISLANS member for more services. This percentage of referrals is consistent with LASH's past experience: roughly 15% of applicants find direct representation while 85% are served through counsel and advice or brief services. The fact that referrals to a legal service provider have increased to 29% of callers reflects the broad ISLANS referral base.

¹ Members include: Domestic Violence Clearinghouse and Legal Hotline, Elder Law Program, Hawai`i Lawyers Care, Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation, Life Foundation, Legal Aid Society of Hawai`i, Na Loio No Na Kanaka, Neighborhood Justice Center, Protection and Advocacy.

While this is a healthy number of referrals, it does not show the stage of integration between the hotline and the member. The stages of integration can be broken down as follows:

A. **Standard referral:** ISLANS identifies the types of cases a member will accept and suggests to callers that they contact that provider. ISLANS does not know whether the applicant will receive services.

Tools: Case acceptance criteria: essentially a list of case types each provider will accept. Members can be general or specific; for example, whether or not they handle divorces can be a “Yes” or “Yes if severe abuse and separated from spouse.” All ISLANS members have been integrated to this level.

B. **Specific referral:** ISLANS contacts a service provider to ask them to review a specific case. If the provider is interested in the case, a representative from the agency will call the client back. Otherwise, ISLANS will call the client back to finish the call with counsel and advice.

Tools: Case acceptance criteria.

C. **Seamless referral:** ISLANS faxes docket to ISLANS member and simply tells the caller they will be receiving a call back from the agency. Client makes no further effort; s/he waits for a call.

Tools: Case acceptance criteria; Checklists: Checklists provide two functions: (1) screen clients for services; (2) information gathering for staff. Checklists are essential to

ensure that the service provider has all the information necessary to assist a client further.

At the high-end of integration is LASH, which guarantees a call back to any caller referred by ISLANS. Domestic Violence Clearinghouse and Legal Hotline (DVCLH) and the University of Hawai`i Elder Law Program (UHELP) have been integrated to the second level. At the low end of integration are providers like the mediation centers and Hawai`i Lawyers Care (HLC).

It has been the intent of ISLANS to integrate, as much as possible, referrals between service providers. Now that it has a stable statewide presence and has broadened its base to include social service agencies, ISLANS would like to better integrate the agencies to which it makes the most referrals.

ISLANS was created with two goals: to increase access to free legal assistance to Hawai`i's neediest families and to be a clearinghouse for their legal problems -- to match clients with the legal service provider able to help them most. It has succeeded on both counts:

- ISLANS has increased the number of people receiving advice from LASH by over 60%;
- It increased its own numbers by 64% in its second year;
- 29% of all people calling receive a referral to an ISLANS member based on a case acceptance criteria developed between each organization and the hotline.

For the past three years, LASH has operated the ISLANS hotline. Initial funding from the Hawai`i Justice Foundation (HJF) allowed the development of a centralized hotline serving the island of O`ahu. In 1998, ISLANS expanded to the islands of Hawai`i (the Big Island) and Maui

to include non-legal referral agencies. Extensive materials have been developed to ensure the quality of legal advice is consistent between advocates. By mixing paid contract staff with AmeriCorps workers, law students, and Master of Social Work (MSW) students, ISLANS operates with over 20 advocates on a budget which would normally support six.

Materials developed for hotline advocates have been copied by over ten mainland legal service providers. ISLANS management staff have sat on panels and given presentations to representatives of several hundred legal service providers at the last three Management Information Exchange (MIE) and National Legal Aid and Defenders Associations (NLADA) conferences.

ISLANS has already shown a great increase in the number of people receiving counsel and advice. In its first year of operation, 7,199 were served. In 1997 that number increased to 10,469 -- an average of 871 each month. Current data for 1998 shows those numbers increasing by 8%.

ISLANS is an easily expanded system. Materials have been developed to provide advice in the areas of highest demand by our callers, and over 100 self-help materials have been developed to supplement advice given. Every quarter, new hotline advocates are routed into the hotline through an intensive training.

Currently, ISLANS operates with 40 intake shifts each week. With continued funding from HJF, we hope to increase in 1999 to 50 shifts each week using both volunteer and contract staff. Each

advocate assists an average of five people per shift. Increasing by ten shifts per week will increase the number of people served by 2,500.

Of the 1,629 clients served by ISLANS in April and May 1998, LASH, the largest provider of legal services, received 216 referrals (13%). HLC, the second largest provider, received 100 (6%). All total, there were 474 referrals made to ISLANS members by the hotline, equal to roughly 29% of the calls.

ISLANS provides counsel and advice to all eligible callers. If a caller is not eligible, the hotline advocate makes a referral to another agency, and no statistic is recorded. For every statistic reported, the individual has been entered into a client data base, given full counsel and advice on their legal problem, possibly referred to another agency, mailed brochures on the topic they are calling about, or sent self-help forms (court forms, sample letters to debtors, etc.) to assist them in proceeding pro se.

LASH provided legal assistance to 14,127 individuals in 1997. As mentioned above, each individual for which a statistic is recorded has gone through client intake and received at least counsel and advice regarding their legal problem. Of the number assisted by LASH in 1997, 10,469 received counsel and advice only, while the remainder received some sort of direct service: a clinic, third party contact by LASH, or representation.

- The ISLANS manager oversees the continued operation of ISLANS; sets up the seminar

training and on-the-job training for the staff; monitors and evaluates the performance of hotline advocates; and coordinates services and referrals between ISLANS members.

Lael Weyenberg continues to act as manager of the hotline. She has been with LASH for nearly three years, first as co-manager of the hotline. During her time as hotline manager, she has developed materials used by hotline advocates, coordinated inter-agency trainings, and organized outreach clinics at over 30 sites. She has conducted trainings on centralized hotlines in a legal services setting at two MIE and one NLADA conference, and is a member of the National Association of Legal Hotlines.

- The half-time attorney review and closes all dockets opened on a client. She reviews the dockets for accuracy in legal information, as well as statistical information (making sure problem types are recorded, etc.). She also supervises hotline shifts and creates the advocate schedule. An eight-year attorney and U.H. Law School graduate, Leslie Maharaj holds this position. She has been with ISLANS since its inception, first as a contract attorney, then as the half-time attorney. She has been with ISLANS longer than any other staff member.
- The volunteer coordinator is responsible for ensuring a steady flow of law students each year which stabilizes the low cost staffing for ISLANS. She is responsible for creating a new curriculum for law students this year in order to attract more to volunteer for the hotline. She is also responsible for creating the B/MSW program. The coordinator assists with the students' training, assigns and edits the students' writing requirements,

and provides reports to the schools as required. The coordinator also finds and places lay volunteers with ISLANS to do the clerical work, such as filing, computer work, answering overflow calls, taking messages, and implementing the new monitoring and evaluation program.

- ISLANS employs seven part-time contract employees. They are the nuts and bolts of the ISLANS system. They not only provide legal advice to ISLANS callers, but also supervise intake shifts and help train new hotline advocates. Their experiences are varied. Four are attorneys, two have masters in English literature, and one owns a clothing store. It is this core group of hotline staff which ensure the consistent quality of legal advice to all callers. Their varied backgrounds make ISLANS an exciting place to work.
- Law students continue to be the best source of volunteer help. The new B/MSW program promises to be another funnel for excellent ISLANS advocates. The two BSW's who started last spring are quick learners and instill a renewed sensitivity among ISLANS staff towards our clients. What ISLANS has learned in utilizing volunteers is that there needs to be some kind of incentive to pull volunteers into a structured commitment like hotline shifts. Law and B/MSW students fulfill their practicum requirements, receive training in Hawai'i civil legal law, and gain valuable client contact through their work on the ISLANS hotline. ISLANS can provide services to so many people only with the assistance of "volunteers" like these.

2. COORDINATED EFFORTS AND A CAPACITY TO UTILIZE NEW AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGY TO ASSURE COMPATIBILITY, PROMOTE EFFICIENCY, IMPROVE QUALITY, AND EXPAND SERVICE TO CLIENTS

Improving technological capacity and support was the second major modification undertaken by LASH in 1995 to substantially improve the effectiveness and efficiency of client services. As of the beginning of 1995, LASH only had one 286 computer in eight of our nine offices. The remaining office, located in Honolulu, had approximately eight 286 or 386 machines. All CSR data was transferred to our central data processing computer manually by clerks. None of the computers were networked, and there was no access to e-mail for external communication.

As a first step, LASH created a statewide “hi-tech” committee comprised of representatives from most of our offices. The purpose of this group was to plan for a comprehensive system of modern, integrated technology, to oversee implementation decisions, and to recommend appropriate budgeting allocations. As part of the statewide implementation of our ISLANS system, LASH also worked with other legal services providers to modernize their internal computer capacity and to provide for improved inter-program communication.

Our statewide hi-tech committee has continued, over the past three years, to meet at least quarterly to chart the program’s direction. Their effort has been very successful and includes, at present, the following particulars:

- Every case handler and secretary (approximately 60 staff) in all LASH offices have

desktop 486 or Pentium computers. All staff have been trained in their operation.

- Computers in all offices are networked, and each office has at least one computer (and often more) that is accessible to all staff with e-mail and Internet connectivity. Within the next six months, the program should expand this capacity to all staff members working from their own desktop computers.
- LASH purchased and modified, as needed, the Neighborhood Legal Services software package for our case service report data. This software package supports case reporting, intake, and timekeeping throughout LASH.
- To support our technological achievements, LASH has contracted with the staff of a local Hawaiian trust program known as Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center (QLCC). The staff from QLCC provide guidance to our hi-tech committee and make repairs when required. Training on computer utilization is available through an ongoing QLCC training program.
- The hi-tech committee is responsible for annually recommending new purchases of computers and software and the project budget required by LASH to keep our program capacity up to date.
- Most of our extensive pro se material will be available within the next six months on our

own LASH web page. LASH developed a web page as part of our plan to improve communication between legal services program participating in the ISLANS intake system described earlier in this report. More detail on the projected expansion of the web page is contained in the next section of this report describing the program's pro se activities.

- As mentioned in the previous section, the statewide ISLANS intake hotline system employs a central staff to provide counsel and advice/brief services throughout the state, and the integrated CSR software permits statewide immediate conflict checks.

- The program has begun a computer donation program and has recently secured five Pentium computers from a local bank and anticipates more during the next year from private law firms.

- LASH has negotiated with Lexis-Nexis for free utilization of that service up to a maximum of ten hours per month.

III. COORDINATED EFFORT TO EXPAND CLIENT ACCESS TO THE COURTS, ENHANCE SELF-HELP OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOW-INCOME PERSONS, AND PROVIDE PREVENTIVE LEGAL EDUCATION AND ADVICE.

Over the past four years, a series of events and reports have outlined the landscape of the poverty population and identified key problems faced by low-income families relative to obtaining justice. These events and reports consistently spotlight two main problems for Hawai'i's low-

income families: (1) access to justice is largely denied; and (2) the number of families needing legal assistance is increasing given the current economic situation and changes in welfare reform laws.

In 1991, the *Spangenberg Report* on legal needs in Hawai'i cited that only 9.6% of Hawai'i's low-income families and 23.6% of moderate-income families receive legal assistance for their civil legal problems. Last year, the Hawai'i Justice Foundation (HJF) issued a report on poverty which attempted to define poverty and capture the true statistics on numbers of families within this category. Showing that prior aggregate data was grossly underestimated, the report suggested that this number will only continue to rise, given the current economic slump and the impacts of recent welfare law changes.

Concurrently, while the number of low-income families -- and their need for legal services -- continues to increase, state and federal funding for legal services has seen a dramatic cutback over the last four years. Four years ago, 95% of LASH's budget was funded through state and federal monies. Since that time, LASH has seen a 38% reduction in federal monies and a 40% cut in state monies. Last year, LASH lost an additional \$120,000 which resulted in the loss of nine positions statewide. It is clear that neither pro bono assistance nor paid legal services staff can handle the increased need for services, much less provide adequate counsel for everyone currently forced to go through the system pro se. Recognizing that legal service providers and pro bono attorneys can realistically only afford to assist those most vulnerable, most in need, or most in danger, the courts and the community have a responsibility to ensure access to our

judicial system for the many others for whom pro se is the only option.

For the past two years, LASH has taken the lead in researching models for a self-help center, gathering materials on existing centers, and participating in conferences on the mainland and in Hawai`i that focus on development of this concept. The result of this research and networking is LASH's Center for Equal Justice (CEJ). See below for more.

LASH is also involved in a partnership with the Judiciary and private attorneys to simplify court forms. So far, LASH has worked closely with Family Court and District Court judges, as well as private attorneys, to draft simplified court forms for the Uncontested Divorce Packet for individuals with or without children. At District Court, LASH has also drafted improved garnishment court forms and an eviction defense form, both of which have been approved by the civil judges.

Above and beyond the leadership role LASH has taken in developing the concept and components of the CEJ, LASH is uniquely sensitive to the general legal needs of the low-income community in Hawai`i. Through the ISLANS hotline, LASH is afforded a "pulse" on the needs of the poverty community, which helps to direct the goals that the CEJ should address. LASH's involvement in these issues and expertise in developing systems that address access and service issues qualify LASH to implement the Center.

No other agency provides this scope of service. However, because the scope of the CEJ is large,

other agencies may provide services similar to some of the CEJ's components. For example, Hawai'i Lawyers Care (HLC) also delivers clinics, which is one component of LASH's clinical program. Currently we are requesting HLC to collaborate in the delivery of clinics.

In developing and operating the CEJ, LASH has worked closely with Family and District Courts. Next year, LASH will approach DVCLH, the Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA), and Neighborhood Justice Center to partner with the CEJ and staff a booth or table on a regular basis to answer questions or provide services. We will continue our efforts with HLC to partner on clinics and pro bono referrals. Lastly, LASH is in the process of working with the Hawai'i State Bar Association (HSBA) on recorded scripts and web site links.

The Center achieves the above-stated objectives by offering users a variety of options that cater to different skill levels and needs in order to assist people in resolving their issues on their own. Operating the CEJ on a daily basis over the next year will require LASH to provide, develop, and update the following components of the Center:

- **simplified court forms:** LASH will continue to work hand-in-hand with Family and District Courts to simplify existing court forms and create user-friendly court forms in areas where none exist;
- **a range of written, self-help materials:** These materials (1) outline rights and legal remedies; (2) offer detailed step-by-step instructions on how to begin and proceed

through the process; and (3) offer instructions on how to fill out and file necessary court documents. (These materials are in the form of informational brochures, self-help packets, and court forms with instructions. While many materials have been created, many require updates, revisions, or addendums.);

- **a toll-free, automated, menu-drive telephone system:** “Recorded scripts” will provide free 24-hour access to telephone scripts and information on rights and procedures of issue-specific legal matters;
- **multi-lingual translation services:** These will be offered through multi-lingual recorded telephone scripts, brochures and manuals, and a volunteer multi-lingual staff;
- **typewriters, computer word-processing, and Internet technology:** Access to technology will allow users to complete forms and documents that are available on the Judiciary’s website. For more experienced users, Internet technology can be used to download and access former pleadings, files, and information available via web sites or bulletin boards. Additionally, once information is made available on the Internet, users can download court forms and instructions from their home or from the library;
- **hard-copy research** and reference legal materials (e.g., *Hawai`i Revised Statutes*) that allow capable users to research their legal options;

- **a referral list of attorneys for unbundled legal services** (one-time, finite legal services for a fee): For example, people wanting an uncontested divorce who have property or retirement issues could use an attorney to help with the retirement paperwork only, which is often too complicated for most users to do alone. This service works in tandem with clinics LASH is currently developing. Clinics cannot be designed to assist every problem type. However, with a viable unbundled referrals program, certain cases that would not be eligible for the clinic could seek limited services and then meet eligibility to finish through the clinic. As in other models, the list of unbundled services would outline the fee structure, qualification, and areas of expertise of each attorney;
- **an information, referral, and coordination desk:** This central desk acts as the hub of the Center and the courts. Staffed by either a volunteer advocate, legal services staff, court-paid personnel, or a paid assistant, this “traffic cop” assists, answers questions, routes, and schedules the user to appropriate services offered by the CEJ. This Center also has one person (either the manager or the assistant) who acts as a direct liaison to the courts and trains volunteer advocates in court procedure. S/He has an established one-on-one relationship and contact number with a specific person in each court, whom s/he can call for immediate information on court procedure or problems;
- **a booth/table** where other legal service providers, pro bono attorneys, and/or agencies (e.g., CSEA or DVCLH) are scheduled to come in on a regular basis to provide information or outreach services to users;

- **schedules of self-help clinics** on particular legal issues for those who need step-by-step oral instruction on how to proceed through a court process.

The CEJ anticipates being a national and local model for delivery of self-help services. Our goal over the next year is to expand the CEJ to become a “Center Without Walls” -- using technology and community links to make the services of the Center accessible to those on neighbor islands, rural populations, and within communities. In mid-1999 the CEJ plans on expansion in two ways: (1) export the Center and its components to the neighbor islands, and (2) increase accessibility of the Center to more users via technology, awareness, and collaboration with other providers.

To achieve the objective of a “Center Without Walls,” LASH plans to link the Center to places in the community which are already popular for information distribution. In mid-1999 LASH will look into linking our services to libraries, community centers, Internet cafes and Kinko’s service centers, and possibly shopping centers. This means meeting with staff or service personnel in those areas and educating them on our services, providing some of our materials to them for distribution, and possibly offering them computers or hooking up with their existing equipment so that users can access our services via the Internet.

In preparation for expanding the Center to the neighbor islands, LASH has already started to update all brochures for statewide use and to create forms that can be used in any Circuit. In the

third quarter of 1999 LASH will select one or two neighbor islands in which to expand the Center and its components. We are currently planning to target Maui and the island of Hawai'i. In these areas, community service providers will be identified and contacted to see if they are interested in meeting to become educated on the components of the CEJ, and possibly to host some of our materials at their sites. LASH offices in those areas will also host small CEJ's. LASH staff will begin to work with these neighbor island courts for advocacy on pro se efforts.

Over the next three years, LASH plans on improving accessibility to the CEJ's services. Technological links -- namely the Internet and videotapes -- which are accessible to more people, will be prioritized for development. For example, LASH plans on updating and finalizing our web page which will host many of the CEJ's services. The web site will include:

- ▶ information about LASH and the services we provide;
- ▶ general legal information and reference guide;
- ▶ links to national legal research sources and data centers;
- ▶ links to other service providers (both local and nationwide);
- ▶ menus for support trainings;
- ▶ access to brochures, recorded scripts, and court forms;
- ▶ links to the Judiciary and its services;
- ▶ information about LASH's Affordable Lawyers Program (for the "gap group") with actual application forms;
- ▶ LASH clinic schedules and calendars; and
- ▶ referrals to private attorneys who provide unbundled and/or affordable legal services.

LASH will look into the possibility, cost, and effectiveness of interactive pages to handle questions from clients or service providers. LASH will also prioritize the creation of a video library on common legal issues. LASH plans on looking into a partnership with Olelo (a local community cable network) to air self-help videos at regularly scheduled times and to create clinics or portions of clinics that are taught via videotape.

The CEJ provides services that cover: intake (taking an application for clients), information and referral (recorded scripts, informational brochures, and clinics), counsel and advice (immediate information about how to proceed in a matter and options via staff, volunteers, the hotline, etc.), brief services (self-help packets, instructional clinics, and acting on the client's behalf by making a phone call or writing a letter), and referral for full representation and limited casework (via the court navigator project, referrals to LASH staff or unbundled legal services, and pro bono referrals).

The effectiveness of the CEJ is measured by what it provides, the frequency with which those materials are used, the numbers that use them, and the results of its services in a client's life. It is also measured by the response from the courts.

The Center for Equal Justice will provide users with simplified court forms for uncontested divorce processes, informational brochures on common issues (paternity, child support, domestic abuse, temporary restraining orders, divorce, custody, and responding to court papers), and

access to self-help clinics in family matters such as uncontested divorce, how to prepare for a contested case hearing, and child support.

While it is difficult to project the numbers of materials distributed and the number of users who will access the Center for Equal Justice, models offer an example of what to expect.² In the first five months of service, the Self-Service Center in Maricopa saw slightly under 3,500 users, despite no advertising or publicity. The second six months of service saw 8,000 users. In the second year of operation, the Center accommodated 57,000 users. The jump in numbers is attributed to publicity and the need in the community. The numbers do not include those who access the recorded scripts or Internet. Our limited statistics over the past two years indicate a large local demand for brochures and self-help packets. For example, this year we have distributed an average of 971 brochures or self-help packets per month via the hotline and walk-ins. This has increased from just 67 per month in 1997.³

Another measurement of success for the Center for Equal Justice will be to assess the helpfulness of the Center in empowering families to resolve their legal issues. Through client surveys and clinical follow-up evaluations, the Center hopes to evaluate the usefulness of the brochures, packets, clinics, and services. The manager will be in charge of data collection and aggregation.

² It is important to note, however, that the model by which we are basing figures, the Self-Help Center in Maricopa, Arizona, operates on a budget twice that expected for LASH's CEJ.

³ Prior to 1997, data was not formally collected. However, no brochures were distributed on the ISLANS hotline prior to 1997 because none were in revised or updated format. The only brochures distributed in 1996 were done through one-on-one client services or via walk-ins.

The goal of the Center will be to achieve the following:

- 80% of the users will rate the Center as helpful in resolving or exploring their legal issue;
- 80% of those who use the simplified court forms with instructional packets rate them as easy-to-understand;
- 70% of those who attend clinics achieve their legal result;
- for unbundled legal services, success would be rated by at least ten attorneys who are willing to participate in the referral system.

This year, for example, many of these goals were met. Eighty percent (80%) of clients polled through mail-in surveys regarding clinical or brochure services rated the services as helpful in resolving their legal issue. In our divorce workshops, two offices boast a 75% completion rate. (The bankruptcy workshop statistics are still not final, as most are still in the process of completion.) No statistics are available for the unbundled legal services program, as it is not in place yet.

While exact data is not available on the numbers of persons proceeding through Family Court processes pro se, Family Court estimates that 50% of all uncontested divorces are done with at least one unrepresented party. The success of the CEJ will also be measured through the lens of the court administrators who see pro se filings and the judges who preside over them. The Center hopes to see a change in the type of pro se litigant, so that judges and administrators spend less time answering routine process questions and the pro se litigants are not as much of a burden on the court system.

Initially, the CEJ will serve all of O`ahu. In the second quarter of 1999, however, services will be expanded to Maui and Hawai`i on a step-by-step basis: First, brochures and materials will be designed for Maui and Hawai`i court users. Space will be reserved at the LASH offices on those islands for a smaller version of the CEJ. Community service providers who can act as links to the CEJ will be identified. In the third and fourth quarters of 1999, we will begin working with judges on these islands to educate them on issues facing pro se litigants and possible solutions to those problems. We will also begin to acquire computers to place at off-sites to help link those in more rural areas to the Internet services available from the CEJ.

The success of the Center for Equal Justice depends on quality staff and volunteers to deliver the project. One full-time manager is in charge of developing the materials, overseeing and implementing the components, overseeing day-to-day operations, writing grants for future funding of the Center, working with the courts, writing reports, and evaluating the success of the Center. Gabrielle Hammond will act in this capacity. She has been working at LASH for over three years. Through her experience in developing the ISLANS hotline, she is familiar with needs of pro se users, material development, and working with the Judiciary and staff to create simplified court forms. She has experience in managing and directing the Access to Justice Project, another program in LASH, which she has run as the development arm of the CEJ. In addition, she spends one-quarter of her time overseeing clinical development, delivery, and follow-up. She created the evaluation and follow-up component of the clinical models, and has worked to restructure the clinics statewide to meet the needs of clients.

A full-time assistant manager is in charge of day-to-day operations, material development, training and supervising the volunteers, and assisting the manager with the other duties. Legal support on material development will come from LASH legal staff, and other pro bono attorneys willing to participate. Carrie Shoda is acting in this capacity. She has worked at LASH for two years exclusively on the Access to Justice Project. She has worked on the hotline, trained and managed volunteers, and is solely responsible for updating, revising, and creating new scripts and brochures in partnership with our legal staff.

A part-time volunteer coordinator is responsible for recruiting volunteers from all levels (clerical, paralegal, administrative, and legal). Leslie Hubert, who is our volunteer coordinator, is acting in this capacity. Leslie took over the volunteer program from Gabrielle Hammond last year, and has implemented a centralized system of training, using, and managing volunteers. She works closely with the private bar, community colleges, law schools, various UH departments, and welfare-to-work programs to ensure that quality volunteers assist with the delivery, development, and operations of the Center. She is also responsible for working with the manager to train the volunteers in issue spotting, court process and rules, and legal options.

Volunteers are critical to the success of the Center. They assist with all levels of operation: assisting clients to diagnose their legal issues, performing clerical duties, disseminating and organizing materials, and referring users to correct forms and packets.

IV. COORDINATION OF LEGAL WORK IN A CAPACITY TO PROVIDE TRAINING, INFORMATION, AND EXPERT ASSISTANCE NECESSARY FOR THE DELIVERY

OF HIGH QUALITY ASSISTANCE.

The importance of coordinated training and support in a statewide program with nine offices on six of the primary islands cannot be overstated.

To counter the natural isolation that is a factor in an island geography, LASH has implemented a series of initiatives to improve the staff's capacity to advocate.

All new paralegals and attorneys are required to participate in an orientation program which is delivered by the program's executive director. The agenda of this orientation covers: the history of LASH and federal legal services funding; program policies and procedures, including the restrictions of grantors; the vision and mission of LASH in serving the poverty community; and the expectations the program has of all staff.

Through the program management team, a periodic training program has been developed. For example, in May/June of this year, the program sponsored internal trainings on consumer issues, housing, public benefits/health care, and family law. Each training event was between one and two days long. Advocates from other legal services programs were also invited, and many attended. In June LASH also organized a training on children's issues with the staff of the National Center on Youth Law. This training was held on three different islands (O'ahu, Maui, and the Big Island) and attracted over 120 participants.

The program also sponsors a one-day training each year on administrative/health benefits.

Sessions are held on four of our six primary islands and attracts a great deal of interest and attendance from other agencies. Approximately 200 people are trained each year through this island rotational event.

Depending on program finances, once a year the entire staff attends a program-wide retreat to discuss new trends in the law, engage in task force meetings, and debate program direction. Also once a year the management team holds a retreat to train in management theory and agree on a consensus vision for LASH.

In coordination with the HSBA, LASH has begun a series of monthly “Brown Bag” seminars on various areas of poverty law. Although open to bar members, staff of various social services agencies have been our primary focus in these events.

The program has traditionally employed a director of litigation to coordinate legal work throughout LASH. Unfortunately, funding decreases have recently required the elimination of this position. In order to continue this critical coordination, LASH has recently created a Litigation Working Group of six attorneys strategically placed in various offices. The purposes of this working group are: to keep abreast of changes in the law, provide co-counseling to program advocates and private lawyers representing low-income clients, deliver trial practice training, and improve the program’s capacity to retrieve legal information from a central brief bank.

V. COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION WITH, AND A HIGH DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT BY THE PRIVATE BAR.

There is a separate pro bono program called Hawai'i Lawyers Care (HLC) whose mission is to mobilize the private bar to provide pro bono representation. The existence of this program and its clear mandate to implement private attorney involvement in our state has, by necessity, made this a limited area of activity by LASH.

LASH is quite successful in contracting with private attorneys to staff our ISLANDS intake hotline. In addition, the program has actively recruited volunteer attorneys to staff some of the functions of the program and has a very active summer law student program that attracts approximately 12 to 15 students each summer.

LASH has also drafted and submitted to the HSBA a proposal to implement an emeritus lawyer program. This program, modeled after similar projects in California and Virginia, could permit retired attorneys to practice in legal services programs in Hawai'i in return for a waiver of bar dues.

Finally, LASH is considering a PAI contract with HLC that will pay them a specific sum for each contested family case they can place with a pro bono attorney.

VI. DIVERSIFIED FUNDING AND COORDINATION OF RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

This has become a critical component of LASH's state planning since approximately 40% of our

traditional funding base has disappeared over the past four years.

LASH organized a coalition of legal services providers in Hawai'i in 1994 to advocate for a filing fee surcharge bill. Although the effort was unsuccessful for the first two years, it was finally passed in 1996. This fund creates about \$300,000 in additional revenues for legal services to the poor. This past legislative session, our coalition group successfully extended the bill until the year 2002.

LASH has implemented a \$3.9 million capital campaign to purchase three offices in Honolulu, Maui, and the Big Island. To date, the legislature has allocated \$300,000 for this purpose. The original intent of the capital campaign was to purchase a building in Honolulu large enough for most of the other legal services providers on O'ahu to occupy with LASH. However, this vision had to be abandoned when the legislative appropriation did not meet the cost of any building large enough to accommodate other programs.

Over the past four years LASH has expanded its funding base from just four grantors to over thirty. Some examples of this diversification of our funding includes:

- a statewide SSI advocacy contract with the State of Hawai'i;
- an economic development project funded by Maui County and the Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center;
- a domestic violence program funded by the federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA);

- a fair housing counseling project funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD);
- an HIV/AIDS clinic funded by the Life Foundation;
- a statewide hotline for seniors funded by the Administration on Aging (AOA);
- a variety of local foundation grants which fund most of our brief services delivery;
- a contract with Maui and Hawai`i Counties to provide guardian ad litem representation;
- domestic violence grants from Maui and Kaua`i Counties to represent victims of domestic violence who are referred by the Prosecutors' offices; and
- a grant from HUD to assist tenants of subsidized housing whose owners are attempting to opt out.

This effort has resulted in LASH maintaining an annual program budget in the range of \$3 million despite the loss of 40% of our traditional funding base from the state and federal governments. Our aggressive drive for diversification of our funding base is carried out by interested persons throughout the program but is primarily organized by our program's Deputy Director, Mervina Cash-Kaeo.