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August 29, 2002

Althea Hayward
Program Analyst
Office of Program Performance
Legal Services Corporation
750 1st Street, N.E., 10th Floor
Washington D.C. 20002-4250

re: Response to Program Letter 2000-7

Dear Ms. Hayward:

Enclosed please find a copy of the Legal Aid Bureau, Inc.'s response to Program Letter 2000-7, "Development of a Comprehensive, Integrated, and Client-centered Legal Services Delivery System in Maryland." I have also sent a copy by e-mail.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Rhonda Lipkin
Deputy Director

Enc.

cc: Warren S. Oliveri, Jr., President, Legal Aid Bureau Board of Directors
Robert J. Rhudy, Executive Director, Maryland Legal Services Corporation

LEGAL AID BUREAU, INC.
LSC RECIPIENT NO. 321016

Development of a comprehensive, integrated and client-centered legal services delivery system in Maryland.

Response to Program Letter 2000-7

I. To what extent has a comprehensive, integrated and client-centered legal services delivery system been achieved in Maryland?

1.) What are the important issues that impact upon low income people within Maryland? How is Maryland responding to these issues?

The important issues that impact upon low income people within Maryland are lack of safe, affordable and decent housing, loss and unavailability of jobs for persons without college, and, in some cases, high school educations, access to adequate education, access to health care, appropriate in-home care and healthy living environments in out-of-home settings, consumer scams, lack of a child support administration responsive to the needs of both custodial and non-custodial parents, effective reintegration of ex-offenders into the mainstream economy and the impact of welfare reform, including the implementation of welfare-to-work requirements, improper sanctioning of welfare recipients and problems with humane delivery of client services

2.) What are the components of the delivery system?

The primary component of the delivery system is the Legal Aid Bureau, Inc., the only statewide general legal services program. LAB serves every county in the state with as broad an array of civil legal services as possible within its financial and regulatory means. There are five or six other legal services programs that provide some services in most counties throughout the state. They include: Public Justice Center (focuses primarily on impact issues in the areas of employment, education, health, access to justice), ACLU (focuses primarily on issues involving civil liberties and discrimination), Women's Law Center (statewide Family Law Hotline and Pro Se Domestic Forms Hotline, lobbying and other advocacy primarily related to family and women's issues), Baltimore Neighborhoods, Inc. (almost statewide housing advice hotline), House of Ruth (domestic violence issues, primarily in the Baltimore and Washington, D.C. metropolitan areas) and Maryland Volunteer Lawyer Services (MVLS) (pro bono placement services in most counties).

Twenty-eight organizations (including those listed above) are funded by Maryland Legal Services Corporation (MLSC), the state IOLTA program, and provide general or

specialized legal services in some or all jurisdictions of the state. Issues covered include homelessness, services to persons with disabilities, domestic violence, housing, home ownership, AIDS issues, and victim's rights. Approximately 24 other organizations, not funded by LSC or MLSC, provide specialized legal services in Maryland to children and parents in neglect and abuse proceedings, domestic violence victims, prisoners, persons housed in state facilities for the mentally ill and developmentally disabled, senior citizens, immigrants and others. There are five established pro bono organizations – one almost statewide (MVLS) and four which are county-based and supported by the local bar associations. A number of the other staffed legal services programs have established their own in-house pro bono referral networks. Maryland has two law schools with active clinical programs in a wide variety of civil practice areas – from welfare law to traditional domestic practice to representation of persons with AIDS in civil rights and other matters.

Since 1999, LAB has been a partner within the Maryland Legal Assistance Network (MLAN) which provides a coordinated approach to the delivery of services by Maryland's legal services providers. MLAN, acting under the auspices of MLSC but with its own independent director, has four major areas of focus: development and implementation of a coordinated statewide centralized intake process, a law information website for low-income and middle-income persons (People's Law Library, www.peoples-law.org), a research, document and substantive information website for legal services practitioners and pro bono attorneys (www.MDJustice.org) and exploration and implementation of successful methods of providing "unbundled" legal services, especially focusing on development of standards and best practices for the ever-increasing use of pro se services.

LAB and four partner organizations, MVLS, the Women's Law Center, the House of Ruth, and Baltimore Neighborhoods, Inc., are the initial participants in MLAN's centralized intake system. From January 1999 to the present, LAB has worked closely with MLAN in the planning and design of a statewide centralized intake (CI) system. LAB hosted four of the 12 planning meetings convened by the MLAN project, in which providers established operational goals and parameters. The proposed MLAN design links the five organizations whose intake comprises nearly 77% of the case intake for the state via a wide area network and linked telephone system to better coordinate a "distributed hotline intake" system. The plan calls for these five largest providers to work as partners in the development and implementation of the system. Each of the five MLSC grantees serve as the primary telephone provider in their areas of expertise: Baltimore Neighborhoods - landlord-tenant; Family Law Hotline (operated by the Women's Law Center - family law; House of Ruth - domestic violence; MVLS -conflicts; and Legal Aid Bureau – all areas. These sites will have linked telephone systems that will allow a caller to be switched directly among the five. The grantees were chosen because they already do hotline and/or telephone intake statewide. Initially, the target clients are people in the Baltimore metropolitan area (LAB's Baltimore City, Cherry Hill and Towson offices will be included), who are eligible for services under the MLSC financial guidelines.

Other providers will have dial up access to MLAN system resources via the MDJustice.org web site. Simultaneously, MLAN is working on developing web-enabled contact and referral/eligibility databases to support the "distributed legal hotline" model that has evolved. Resources under development include a searchable substantive law database.

In the late spring and early summer of 1999, LAB took the lead at a series of "partner" meetings to refine the emerging model and to examine areas of concern for resolution. One key next step identified in the meetings was to gather the necessary information on the available technology and costs to better determine the parameters of the plan. Due to LAB's leadership role in the state, its statewide presence, its more sophisticated technological infrastructure and the need to create a foundation for future Bureau growth after this Phase One intake centralization effort, Bureau staff and MLAN took the lead in gathering and evaluating the options available to the state.

Over the second 6 months of 1999, LAB and MLAN staff collaborated closely in examining the in-state technological infrastructure so that the new system can build upon the existing system. There also was a review of LAB's case flow and intake staffing issues to determine how LAB can expand its centralization of intake internally and coordinate with the partner organizations. Among the information gathered was the extent and scope of the calls coming into the legal services provider system and the relative percentage of cases closed after brief advice and/or referral, the existing technological infrastructure in the state, and the various options for a wide area network.

The rough design and general cost parameters were presented at the January 2000 MLAN Oversight Committee meeting for authorization to proceed with the development of an RFP for telephone and the Wide Area Network (WAN) components. An outside firm was hired to develop the WAN and database designs with estimates on equipment costs. MLAN will not be able to cover the costs of all of the needed software, hardware and troubleshooting expertise. LAB anticipates significant costs and has begun the process of determining how it will meet the need to fully implement the centralizing of LAB's intake and to facilitate future telephone and data integration within and among LAB's 13 offices. LAB has upgraded the telephone systems in most offices and has been working with MLAN staff and an independent communications engineer to ensure that systems will be compatible with the telephone equipment now being considered for the MLAN process.

LAB is working with specialty providers to tackle how to best implement intake in certain substantive topics shared by multiple providers. One of the first areas identified was landlord/tenant. Family law and landlord-tenant matters comprise over 73,484 cases of the 98,332 case handled statewide[3] and are therefore also the most critical topics to focus upon for coordinating intake and case protocols, cross-training and coordination of community education. LAB has held meetings about these issues with Baltimore Neighborhoods, Inc., Public Justice Center, Women's Law Center, and House of Ruth, the other major providers in these areas. With MLAN, LAB will be working on updating

and developing the materials for advocates as well as clients via the People's Law Library, a public access web site.

Pursuant to an agreement with the Women's Law Center and MLAN, LAB and the Women's Law Center share responsibility for the Family Hotline Services. Since January 2001 the Women's Law Center will maintain services two days per week, with LAB providing the assistance for the remaining three. Since December 2000, LAB has been a point of contact for school discipline non-disability cases for the Schoolhouse Legal Services Project, now run by Maryland Disability Law Center, in partnership with LAB and MVLS.

LAB has developed a statewide support unit that is currently comprised of a Director of Advocacy, an Assistant Director of Advocacy for Economic Stability and Public Benefits, and an Assistant Director of Advocacy for Housing and Community Development who are available to provide support to other LAB staff and other legal services providers full-time and six senior staff attorneys and four senior paralegals who continue to carry individual caseloads but also provide support to staff statewide strengthen the quality of Bureau legal work and to conduct statewide advocacy.

The Director of Advocacy is actively engaged in ensuring that LAB staff provides representation of the highest quality possible to its clients. Among many other responsibilities for overall management of LAB and its legal work, she supervises all LAB appeals to state and federal appellate courts, actively assists in its impact litigation, and works with staff and others outside LAB to develop and implement trainings necessary for both substantive law knowledge and development of advocacy skills. She works with pro bono providers and law firms to develop avenues for pro bono assistance in areas of need – from drafting of Qualified Domestic Relations Orders to pension valuation to transactional law matters.

The Assistant Directors of Advocacy are focused on expanding LAB's capacity to assist low-income Marylanders in the areas housing preservation, community economic development, public benefits and employment. They currently have the following goals: at the end of a year, communities served by Bureau offices will regard LAB as a source of assistance for the full range of challenges they face as communities and community groups will look to LAB to assist them in advocating for community-based needs, and to assist all LAB offices to develop a mastery of the full range of public benefit programs and employment issues they are expected to handle so that staff are equipped to spot and, with the help of the statewide attorneys, address systemic issues. In addition, they will help housing advocates in LAB's offices navigate complex and changing federal housing policies and work with LAB and other advocacy groups to develop strategies to try to stem the dangerous decrease in the availability of affordable housing across the State. The attorneys will provide assistance to Bureau staff on impact advocacy efforts and will be expected to take a leadership role in mentoring and training on public benefits issues, including federal and state programs. The attorneys will work closely with advocates in all of LAB's offices, including its senior attorneys and paralegals, by providing

leadership on impact advocacy efforts, mentoring and training, as well as educating staff and the client community about relevant developments in the law. Impact advocacy includes co-counseling complex litigation and assisting with appeals, permissible legislative work, community education, community economic development initiatives and collaborative work with community organizations and other legal services providers.

The senior attorneys and paralegals provide informal and formal training to other staff; serve as a resource in specialized areas of law or skills to other staff, clients and community groups, including providing substantive law updates, and monitoring status of regulations and legislation; and participate as a consultant or co-counsel on major litigation. There are currently senior attorneys and paralegals in all primary areas of LAB practice – child advocacy, consumer, domestic, housing and public benefits law – as well as a senior attorney focusing on meeting LAB staff skills training needs.

3.) Has this system created mechanisms to assess its performance in relationship to commonly-accepted external guides or some other set of objective criteria? What is the protocol for undertaking system performance review and when was a review last undertaken?

No formal mechanisms have been created to assess the performance of the system. However, an evaluation of the legal services delivery system in Maryland was commissioned in 1999 by MCCJ and conducted by consultant John Tull. Some recommendations from the study, the final report of which was issued in June 2000, were included in the November 2000 update to the 1998 state plan report. Tull's recommendations for improving the configuration and operation of the legal services system included increasing the flow of information among providers, establishing formal collaborative arrangements as appropriate in areas such as technology, support and training, and creating a framework for more ongoing planning and system-wide decision-making regarding broad issues affecting the entire system, particularly with regard to substantive matters not being addressed. Regular meetings of providers have occurred, encouraging system-wide planning and addressing substantive areas not being addressed, and MLAN's development has encouraged collaborative arrangements in the areas of technology, web-based support for advocates and intake. As described elsewhere in this report, LAB has continued to expand its collaborative work with a wide variety of other providers. A number of the substantive areas for which Tull recommended expansion of resources have begun to be addressed, including contested child custody community economic development and housing preservation and development. Other areas such as prison and jail litigation and representation of undocumented persons are not within LAB's ability to address. LAB has focused increased resources on representation of immigrants who are within LSC's approved legal statuses. In addition, MLSC, which funds more than half of the legal services programs, requires comprehensive semi-annual and annual reports from each grantee. It also requires its grantees to adhere to the ABA Standards for Providers of Civil Legal Services to the Poor. Its annual report provides a comprehensive summary on the status of the system. The MLAN project is subject to

ongoing review by an oversight committee chaired by Maryland's Chief Judge Robert Bell.

4.) Does Maryland's system work to ensure the availability of equitable legal assistance capacities to clients – regardless of who the clients are, where they reside or the languages they speak? How does the system ensure that clients have equitable access to necessary assistance including self-help, legal education, advice, brief services, and representation in all relevant forums? Please describe what steps Maryland anticipates taking to ensure equitable access in the coming years.

The Legal Ad Bureau, Inc. has sought, within the bounds permitted an LSC grantee, to ensure the availability of equitable legal assistance capacities to clients throughout the state, regardless of who they are, where they reside or the languages they speak. Location of offices in regional hubs or commercial centers has furthered the access of clients when there is no viable public transportation. In instances where either the distance is too great or the person is physically unable to come to the office, staff travels to interview sites or client homes. All LAB offices are physically accessible for the elderly and disabled. Staff in offices with high concentrations of limited English proficient persons has foreign language capability. LAB translates legal education materials into other languages and does outreach at events attracting non-English speaking persons and to social services workers and others serving those populations. In addition, LAB participates with MLAN in a partnership that permits instant access to "Language Line," a translation service. LAB has been sensitive to ethnic and cultural identification between clients and staff. Significant efforts are made to assure that there is diverse staff. In geographical areas where a particular ethnic or cultural background is increasing or prominent, extra efforts are made to recruit staff of similar ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Access is available by telephone. All offices have access to and training in the use of TTYs and the Maryland Relay service for the hearing impaired. LAB uses "800" numbers in its multi-county service offices and for its statewide nursing home, housing preservation, migrant and Senior Hotline programs.

Due to LSC restrictions, it is unable to assist prisoners meaningfully and unable to assist most immigrants at all. Fortunately, in Maryland, the state has a court-mandated obligation to provide for some legal services to prisoners, but primarily only those having to do with the conditions of confinement. So far as LAB is aware, none of the other legal services programs in the state (except MVLS in so far as it is using LAB's subgrant) restrict their services by immigration status. However, only a few programs – CASA de Maryland, Public Justice Center, Catholic Services Immigration Project and a recently developed University of Maryland School of Law project focus resources on recent immigrants/low-English capability persons. None of these programs are able to provide the full range of legal services that LAB offers. LAB's substantive practice accords high priority to language-based barriers to benefits, services and the legal system. Its advocacy has, and continues to include, challenges to access barriers to administrative

agencies, including local Departments of Social Services and the Department of Labor Licensing Review (which includes the unemployment compensation program) and the courts. In response to requests from legislators, Bureau advocates have testified on behalf of legislation to reduce linguistic barriers to access to government agencies.

All LAB offices are staffed sufficiently to ensure that a full range of legal services is available to individual applicants and to the community. Of course, funding limitations require restrictions as to the range of cases and, depending on staffing, occasionally require some restrictions on intake of new cases. In each county, the local court has provided by Administrative Office of the Court mandate, some sort of assisted pro se domestic program. LAB contracts with the courts in four jurisdictions – Baltimore City, Anne Arundel County, Cecil County and Somerset County – to provide those services. In other counties, they are provided by a variety of means – the court itself, the local bar foundation, pro bono organizations and others. All legal education materials are distributed statewide, and each office is required to do some community outreach and education. LAB has a statewide Senior Hotline for every citizen of Maryland sixty years or older to receive information, advice and referrals. It also has contracts to provide Title III-B services to seniors in all but three of the state's twenty-four jurisdictions. LAB applied for and obtained the HUD-funded OTAG (Outreach and Training Grant) for the state of Maryland, which provides funding to educate individuals living in housing with expiring subsidies throughout the state about their opportunities to preserve affordable and decent housing for low-income tenants. In order to try to provide equitable access within the limited resources provided by the HUD funding, LAB has trained staff in local offices to assist in providing these services, which are critical to preserving the already limited stock of affordable housing.

LAB has some grants, which restrict services to certain jurisdictions. In order to attract local funding, LAB commits local funds to local communities and seeks to use those funds to expand the services available in the jurisdiction. Where those grants fund priority services, the same activities are funded with other sources of funding in other jurisdictions. Where grants restrict assistance to certain practice areas that are not in the highest level of priority, those services will be available only in the geographical areas that may be served by the grants. LAB will seek grants for specific priority services, such as representation in domestic violence proceedings, when they are not available through other local providers. One of its grants focuses on the barriers to employment for chronically under or unemployed non-custodial parents created by child support problems. LAB regularly meets with other providers and community-based organizations to coordinate advocacy strategies, share information, distribute informational materials and provide outreach and training to those organizations and the clients they serve.

While not applying a mechanistic formula and allowing for the differences in different areas, such as population density and transportation, LAB seeks to distribute its general source funding, primarily from LSC and MLSC, on an equitable basis by eligible population in each area served by its thirteen offices.

LAB anticipates continuing to work closely with MLSC and other providers in all of the ways mentioned above and any others, which will work to ensure equitable access in the coming years.

5.) How does the legal service delivery system employ technology to provide increased access and enhanced services to clients throughout Maryland? What technological innovations are currently underway and how will they support the integrated statewide delivery system?

LAB aggressively takes advantage of new and emerging technologies to be more effective and efficient in all facets of operation and service provision to provide increased access and enhanced services to clients throughout Maryland. Each staff member has a desktop computer with email and internet access. Staff doing outreach and client intake outside of offices has access to laptop computers and, in the near future, Personal Digital Assistants (commonly referred to by one of the brand names, "Palm Pilots"). LAB, in cooperation with MLAN, has subscriptions for Westlaw for all legal staff. LAB has been a primary force in MLAN's development of the law information website for low-income and middle-income persons (People's Law Library, www.peoples-law.org), and research, document and substantive information website for legal services practitioners and pro bono attorneys (www.MDJustice.org).

From 1997 to date, LAB has used a modified version of Kemp's Clients for Windows in the intake process, allowing immediate, direct input of intake information, conflict checks, and referrals to other providers and generation of letters and information sheets to clients. Since early last fall, the entire database has been available in all LAB offices statewide through LAB's wide area network.
By this fall, LAB will move its database and all case and practice management functions to Practice Manager, a program which will provide a much more extensive support for LAB cases and on a wide array of matters. Intake will continue to be done directly into the case management system, and generation of written materials will flow much more easily from the intake process. Because the new system is CITRIX-based, staff will be able to access the system through an encrypted, passworded website from any computer with internet access at home or at outreach locations, allowing for more efficient intake from these locations and reducing the possibility of generating conflicts of interest. As described above, email is used actively to alert intake staff in one office of an intake done in another office.

In addition, with MLAN, LAB will implement this fall and winter a telephone automated call distribution system and database program which will provide for initial screening of any applicant by any one of the five MLAN partners and immediate referral of eligible individuals, both by telephone and of the collected data, to the most appropriate partner or within LAB for further assistance. For individuals ineligible for any of the partners' services, the intake person will make use of the extensive referral database contained in the new software to make the most appropriate referral. It will also permit the

aggregating of data by certain demographic statistics and subject matter and permit queries of all callers on a limited number of selected topics for which legal services providers are seeking identification of recurrent problems.

The telephone system is being purchased from NEC with the assistance of Steve Green, a consultant to many legal services programs, and the intake and referral database is being developed by Telelawyer, also utilized by a significant number of legal services programs. The new telephone system will also allow, with the use of auxiliary equipment, switching phone calls to external sites, such as home offices or outreach locations. It will permit recorded messages to provide information and referrals to be given to waiting callers and to advise callers of waiting times, and will report aggregated data on call volume and frequency to enhance efficient staffing. LAB is also seeking to enhance its conference calling facilities significantly and to obtain videoconferencing technology to reduce significantly the amount of time spent by staff members in driving to meetings, trainings and other activities that could be obtained via technology. It is also seeking to take advantage of the new web-based legal services training tools being developed by other organizations.

MLSC has attempted to raise the technology level of all of its grantees by providing specific grants for technology purchase and training. At the time that LAB purchased Kemp's Clients for Windows, MLSC decided to purchase a different case management system for others of its grantees, thus preventing easier transfer of data. However, as LAB moves to the Practice Manager environment, it intends to encourage other organizations to do so as well, to reduce administrative costs for all and to ease transfer of information. The Public Justice Center has already expressed interest in participating in this system.

LAB invites other organizations to participate in its substantive law task forces and, with the Public Justice Center, has convened meetings of legal services providers and established a listserv to enhance communications. LAB staff assists in developing and presenting the annual statewide legal services conference. All of these activities, as well as collaboration with other organizations on specific issues as they arise, keep LAB staff well-informed about the work and resources of other legal services providers, which, in turn, enhances its ability to make the best possible referrals to others and to utilize its own resources in the most efficient ways possible.

6.) How has the legal service delivery system expanded its resources to provide critical legal services to low income clients including hard to reach groups such as migrant farmworkers, Native Americans, the elderly, those with physical or mental disabilities, those confined to institutions, immigrants and the rural poor?

This topic was discussed at some length in answering question 4, above. In addition, LAB receives the LSC grants for migrant farmworker legal services for Maryland and Delaware. For that population it provides nighttime visits by staff to labor camps and other migrant housing three to four nights per week in the summer. It provides messages in Spanish and Creole, the primary languages spoken by migrant farmworkers in Maryland, on its main telephone line and on its Salisbury telephone line, where the project is based. Maryland does not have a significant Native American population. There are no recognized tribes in the State and therefore LAB has not sought and does not receive LSC funding for Native Americans.

The elderly are provided significant access through the Senior Hotline and local Title III-B programs, as well as LAB's statewide Nursing Home and Assisted Living Program. The latter program was expanded in 1999, through specialized grant funding, to include services to persons seeking or in assisted living facilities in response to the number of assisted living residents in the state.

There are specialized legal services programs serving persons with disabilities and those confined to institutions; however, LAB staff also provides significant amount of service to individuals with disabilities, especially because the statewide program, Maryland Disability Law Center, provides limited amounts of individual representation. Many of the children served through LAB's representation of children in the foster care system (CINA children) are disabled, and LAB staff seeks to obtain all appropriate services for them. Many disability-related issues also arise in LAB's public benefits and housing practices, and one of the factors used by LAB staff in determining case acceptance, is the ability of the individual to obtain the desired result on his or her own. This requires consideration of any disabilities that might require that one individual, over another, be provided with representation. It also has caused LAB to focus on legal remedies for persons who are discriminated against because of disabilities, particularly in housing.

Service of the rural poor has been a significant priority of LAB since it began expanding its number of offices in the late 1970s. The distribution of the offices ensures access within one to one and one half hours to every location in the state, and to every court within forty-five minutes. Staff serving rural offices have tended to be locally-based and have stayed in those offices many years, permitting development of significant understanding of local needs and community dynamics. To achieve greater coordination of advocacy efforts, the offices serving the upper and lower eastern shore have started meeting together regularly. The meetings discuss trends each office is seeing in their jurisdictions, unmet or emerging needs and strategies for addressing those needs, and outreach opportunities. The offices will be expanding the lower shore office's development of public service announcements and other short cable-ready videos about legal problems as a way of enhancing outreach to rural areas.

LAB has started to work closely with advocates in the Washington, DC area to address the unmet legal needs of a wide variety of Asian immigrants. Bureau staff has met on several occasions with staff of the Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center

(APALRC) to arrange efficient ways to provide services to non-English speaking Asians. The Executive Director of APAMLRC was a speaker at LAB's most recent statewide conference and participated on a panel with Bureau advocates at the 2002 statewide legal services conference about strategies to reach hard-to-reach client populations.

7.) What steps have been implemented within the legal service delivery system and among client communities to identify and nurture new leaders? Do the existing leaders reflect the diversity within the state and within client communities that the delivery system serves? Do the state's equal justice leaders reflect the gender, race, ethnic and economic concerns of important but sometimes overlooked groups within the state? Does the leadership provide opportunities for innovation and experimentation; does it support creative solutions to meet changing needs; are new ideas welcomed; are clients nurtured as leaders? Has the leadership been given sufficient authority and resources to implement needed changes?

In Maryland, the population is approximately 28% African American, 62% Caucasian, 4% Hispanic or Latino, 4% Asian and 2% other racial or ethnic group. LAB's current staff is approximately 48% (118) African American, 45% (110) Caucasian and 7% (18) other minorities (Asian American and Hispanic). Legal advocacy staff (attorneys and legal assistants) is approximately 40% (72) African American, 50% (91) Caucasian and 10% (18) other minorities (Hispanic and Asian-American). 17% (41) of the staff is male; 83% (205) is female. Legal advocacy staff is approximately 14% (25) male and 86% (156) female.

LAB continually seeks to hire, retain and promote committed, experienced and diverse staff and has implemented many strategies designed to do so, such as increasing salaries and other benefits, working with donors, the University of Maryland School of Law and others to improve student loan forgiveness programs, providing pleasant, technologically-current and modern work environments and increasing training opportunities. Recently, the University of Maryland School of Law awarded loan forgiveness grants to five current LAB attorneys. Recruitment efforts include annual participation in regional and public interest job affairs at all of the law schools in Maryland, Washington, D.C. and Northern Virginia, as well as at NYU. Openings are advertised on the LAB website (www.mdlab.org), in all national and local legal services websites with job boards, and regularly in the state legal news daily as well as the appropriate local newspaper and the state's primary newspaper directed to the African American community. Top management attends appropriate law school functions, staff speaks regularly in law school classes and LAB has a very active paid law clerk program, which allows lower income students to work at LAB. Many of LAB's current staff, particularly African American attorneys, worked at LAB during law school. Staff turnover has been reduced

significantly in the past five years. In addition, LAB has attracted a significant number of experienced attorneys, many of them prior LAB staff, to LAB. Seven of the thirteen chief (managing) attorneys are prior LAB staff who returned to LAB in the past six years. Its average staff attorney has eight years of legal experience; the average chief or supervising attorney has seventeen years of experience.

LAB regularly looks for opportunities for training that address diversity. Half-days of both of its biannual all staff/board conferences were dedicated to training in this area. Individual staff has been encouraged to participate in individual diversity-related trainings as appropriate.

From the first contact with an attorney applicant, LAB's top management encourages him or her to look for opportunities that could lead to leadership positions in the future. Staff is continually made aware of the importance of diverse leadership. LAB regularly provides training to staff for skills, substantive law, management and leadership development to enable staff to acquire the necessary skills to assume managerial and leadership positions. Currently, of the eight top central managers, three are African American men, one is an African American woman, two are white women and two are white men. Traditionally, as with many legal services programs, it has been difficult to attract and retain diverse legal managers, primarily due to low salaries. At this time, attorney supervisors are 60% Caucasian, 31% African American, and 9% other minorities (one Hispanic and one Asian). Women comprise 58% of legal supervisors. LAB continues to strive towards increasing minority participation at all management levels.

The chief judge of the Maryland Court of Appeals is Robert Bell, an African-American man of great stature in the legal and civil rights communities in Maryland. Judge Bell has set a tone for the Bar and for the Courts of inclusion of and outreach to minorities and low-income persons throughout the judicial system. He has established commissions to investigate the role of race in the judicial system and to seek greater understanding of why the judicial system is often viewed in a negative light, especially by minorities and low-income persons. In addition, the current governor, Parris Glendening, has made a concerted effort to expand the representation of women and minorities in judicial positions throughout the state. Bob Gonzales, a member of LAB's board of directors, and the Maryland State Bar Association's first non-white president, established during his presidency a program to encourage the development of new and more diverse leaders of the bar. An African-American woman on LAB's staff just finished her two year participation in this program, and LAB has nominated additional staff members to join the program.

LAB's greatest successes in nurturing leadership within its client communities have come as a result of its community economic development and housing preservation work and its representation of tenant councils. For years, the only site of significant community economic development work in LAB was its Cherry Hill office located in a small African-American community in south Baltimore. For over twenty years it nurtured leadership in and represented organizations and individuals in the community in areas

ranging from prevention of school closings to development of millions of dollars of home ownership property. Since the implementation of the OTAG Housing Preservation Program, LAB has assisted in developing a number of tenant groups, some of which chose to seek non-profit corporate status and others that chose to remain unincorporated groups. This year, LAB took over forty tenants to the National Association of HUD Tenants (NAHT) annual conference, and two of its members were elected to the NAHT board.

Over the past few years, many more of LAB's offices and programs have actively engaged in assisting community groups to develop leadership around issues of concern to their communities, especially in the housing arena. In just a few examples, LAB currently works with Haitian immigrants on the Lower Eastern Shore in developing their community center, rural black tenants on the Upper Eastern Shore in tackling the isolation of their public housing community, and many Black and elderly tenants in Annapolis seeking to ensure that replacement public housing for theirs that is being demolished is of the highest quality and meets their needs. LAB has a specially funded program to assist non-custodial parents in Baltimore City to reduce child support arrearages owed to the state and deal with other child support problems to allow them to obtain and maintain work and to enhance contact with their children. From the beginning, its direction has been largely determined by recommendations of its advisory board which is comprised of representatives of the organizations which directly serve its clients and can represent the views of clients.

LAB's client board members have always taken an active role in the governance and support of LAB. They come from urban, suburban and rural areas. A majority of its client board members go to the NLADA conference each year and have attended LAB's two biannual all staff/board conferences. All client board members provide important client-based input into board decisions and feedback to the staff on programmatic activities.

LAB has an additional source of leadership and assistance in its Equal Justice Council, which has a significantly active Young Leaders division. These new leaders, primarily from the state's largest and most prestigious law firms, have been encouraged in developing their commitment to supporting the work of LAB and legal services to the poor. They have shown great imagination and innovation in increasing resources and showcasing the work of LAB.

8.) What does the Legal Aid Bureau envision will be the next steps to achieve a client-centered integrated and comprehensive delivery system within the state? How will clients be actively involved in the determination of these next steps?

On one front, LAB will be working closely with the Courts, MLSC and other legal services providers and supporters to seek state funding to replace funding lost due to

reduction in IOLTA revenues and to expand the funding available for additional services. Client support will be critical to achieving statewide support for these initiatives.

On the programmatic front, LAB anticipates continuing and increasing its efforts to do more community-based legal work and to assist in the development of client leadership in those communities. LAB has in place a small statewide support unit, supported by grant funding, which is providing training, guidance and hands-on assistance to offices and task forces on statewide issues. Its current focus is on housing and community economic development initiatives, as well as efforts to improve the economic stability of low-income individuals and families. Its work is often done in collaboration with that of other providers and community groups. LAB anticipates that the work of the statewide unit will continue and, if funding permits, increase in the future. As LAB moves forward in developing its statewide strategic plan, it is committed to obtaining significant client input. LAB is also committed to its efforts to reduce barriers to services and the legal system for non-English speakers through continued collaboration with other providers and strategic advocacy.

In governance, LAB will continue to seek active participation by client board members in all appropriate aspects of LAB's work.

9.) What has been the greatest obstacle to achieving a statewide, integrated, client-centered delivery system and how was that obstacle overcome, or , alternatively, how does Maryland plan to overcome that obstacle?

Maryland had one of the few – and the largest - statewide delivery systems prior to the onset of consolidations under LSC direction over the past few years. As in any system, it remains a challenge to be integrated with other organizations and to be client-centered. The biggest obstacles are money and time. Insufficient financial resources limit the scope of a comprehensive statewide delivery system and create some amount of competition among legal services providers for limited funds. Competition for funds may compromise some degree of integration. Time is the other major obstacle as it is difficult to take the always-limited time of leaders of organizations to meet on issues not specific to client problems. No organization, including LAB, has been able to afford significant amounts of time of its staff for focusing on the "system" itself and on LSC's requirements of filing numerous reports and applications and responding to a steady stream of audits and reviews.

Overcoming these obstacles will require determined continued attempts to raise funds, to reach agreements on the distribution of the limited funds available, and to obtain client input on programmatic issues. Working closely with other legal services organizations on specific issues important to clients (as discussed below) has reduced many barriers.

10.) Has any benefit-to-cost analysis been made in terms of creating a comprehensive, integrated and client-centered legal services delivery system in Maryland? If yes, what does the analysis show?

Over the past three years, LAB's expansion of its centralized intake and pro se assistance programs has produced significant increases in the numbers of eligible persons provided with information, referrals, advice and brief services in civil matters. In 1999, LAB opened 37,000 cases; in 2001 that number had risen to more than 51,000 cases. In addition, investments in technology, staff retention (through increased salaries and benefits) and training have increased the efficiency and effectiveness of practice. Even accounting for increased funding during those years, the "cost per case" has been reduced by at least $25 per case from 1999 to 2001. There are no comparable figures available for all legal services providers in Maryland.

11.) What resources, technical assistance and support would help Maryland meet its goals?

Funding needs to be increased. This year, the state's IOLTA funding has been cut significantly due to lower interest rates. A number of programs received substantial cuts; next year will bring more cuts unless other sources of funding are increased. Specifically, financial support for a training coordinator and related costs for all organizations would help increase the quality of practice for all organizations. Technological improvements, such as video conferencing, would improve efficiency significantly and would allow greater participation by staff and clients in rural areas of the state in LAB meetings and activities. More and more comprehensive loan forgiveness programs would allow more new attorneys to enter into and stay in public interest law jobs. Additional resources in the areas of consumer, employment, education and housing law are needed. As a whole, the system needs organizations to provide comprehensive assistance to LSC-ineligible non-citizens and prisoners.

II. To what extent have intended outcomes or a comprehensive, integrated client-centered legal service delivery system been achieved including but not limited to service effectiveness/quality; efficiency; equity in terms of client access; greater involvement by members of the private bar in the legal lives of clients, and client-community empowerment?

1.) In terms of the issues impacting upon low-income persons within your state, what strategies have you designed to address these issues and how do you plan to measure your future success in addressing your objectives?

The strategies have been and are being developed through cooperative work between the Legal Aid Bureau, Inc. and many of the other legal services providers and, in some instances, between other providers alone.

Lack of safe, affordable housing: LAB applied for and obtained two federal HUD-funded grants through the OTAG program to assist residents of low-income housing threatened with the loss of subsidies to understand their rights, organize to improve conditions and take whatever action the community wishes to retain the housing subsidies or move on to other housing. There are over two hundred properties statewide that are currently affected with the potential loss of thousands of units of low-income housing. LAB is working with many tenant groups, the National Association of HUD Tenants and many other groups nationally on these issues. LAB is also involved with other tenants and community groups seeking to maintain or to expand the availability of low-income housing in connection with such programs as HOPE VI. LAB has undertaken an intensive effort, through the housing preservation (OTAG) program described above, to educate tenants about their rights, help them form tenant associations when they so desire and advocate for preservation or creation of affordable housing. These efforts have focused on housing in Baltimore City, Prince George's and Anne Arundel Counties (including Annapolis), but are continuing to expand statewide, particularly Montgomery and Baltimore Counties. The statewide support unit is working with offices on the eastern shore and in mid-western and western Maryland on issues raised by neglect of isolated public housing communities, proposed low-income housing tax credit developments and problems with local housing authorities.

Employment: In addition to the child support project described above, over the past year, LAB expanded its case acceptance priorities to include employment and has begun handling certain types of employment cases most in demand by the client community, including lack of payment of wages and overtime, Family Medical Leave Act violations and preservation of employment when threatened by ADA or public policy violations or breach of contract. LAB has always provided representation in unemployment insurance benefits cases. In addition, LAB provides advice and referrals on other employment law issues such as denial of employment-related benefits; correction of social security records; licensing issues; access to job training programs; child care subsidies; removal of other barriers to work; EITC and other tax assistance; independent contractor mischaracterizations; and child support arrearages owed to state that exceed individual's ability to pay.

LAB is working closely with the few other organizations in the area which provide legal assistance to low-income workers, including CASA de Maryland (focusing on Latino workers) and the Washington, D.C. – based Employment Justice Project. Both CASA and EJC staff regularly attend employment task forces which LAB recently started and all three are working to develop coordinated approaches to employment issues, particularly problems that are widespread. LAB has also participated in advancing the rights of low-income workers through the filing of an amicus brief in an appeal handled by the Public Justice Center regarding whether an employee who leaves a job for a better one should be eligible for unemployment if the employee unexpectedly loses the second job and as one of several amici in a brief filed by the Public Justice Center urging that employers should not be allowed to fire workers because the employee has consulted with a lawyer.

As LAB expands its employment practice, it will be working with PJC, CASA and EJC to identify and pursue systemic employment-related problems, target employers who routinely exploit low-income workers and provide widespread education about workers' legal rights.

Access to health care, appropriate in-home care and healthy living environments in out-of-home settings: Since the early 1990's, LAB has had a statewide Nursing Home Program which provides legal assistance to nursing home residents and their families in areas ranging from accessing Medical Assistance payment to the quality of life in the nursing home to nursing home discharges. In 1999, LAB obtained a grant from the Weinberg Foundation and others to add assisted living facilities to the work of the program. LAB had participated actively in the development of new regulations in Maryland governing assisted living facilities. The funding has allowed for education of small assisted living home providers as to the requirements of the law and for assistance to assisted living home residents with payment issues and with problems arising in those homes. Over the past year, LAB has been actively involved with AARP Litigation Foundation in challenging Maryland's implementation of Maryland's Medicaid waiver program for older adults which is intended to assist individuals to remain in community settings by funding assisted living arrangements and in-home health care. Unfortunately, the process has become mired in bureaucracy, and less than half of the now 3,000+ eligible spots in the program were filled due to significant delays in processing both provider and recipient applications. LAB is working with the state to overhaul the program to make sure that eligibility determinations are timely made and services are truly made available.

Education: While certain education matters, especially special education, have been priorities for LAB, LAB has not had the resources to devote substantial time to education issues outside of its CINA practice. Last year it clarified its education priorities to emphasize access to education through school enrollment and school closures, education access for homeless individuals, and involuntary removal (including successive short-term suspension, long-term suspension, expulsion) cases. The migrant program hopes to

devote more resources to migrant education matters. Bureau offices will be providing at least advice and referrals for special education issues, other restrictions or denial of education, ESOL/language barriers to education, involuntary school transfer, harassment/discrimination prohibited by law, and school transportation. Advocates in LAB's CINA practice regularly address special education needs and provide in-house expertise on such issues for LAB's non-CINA advocates. In addition, over the past year, LAB worked with a community group to forestall the closure of a neighborhood elementary school and to negotiate extension of the elementary school grades through eighth grade, as desired by the parents of the community. It helped to resuscitate, with MDLC and MVLS, the "schoolhouse" program to provide advice and representation in school discipline cases. Together, MDLC and LAB developed a widely-distributed brochure describing student's rights and responsibilities in school discipline matters and listing referrals to the three organizations for additional assistance. It is preparing "template" pleadings and other court papers for offices to use when local school systems refuse to enroll children who are not living with their parents and is sharing those papers with other organizations, including MDLC. In the past, LAB has received invitations from legislators to testify on education matters. Two years ago it testified on enrollment barriers; last year it testified on a bill which provides significant protections for children from unnecessary physical restraints in schools or other institutions.

Predatory Consumer Practices: All Bureau offices have active bankruptcy practices. Periodically, offices challenge the enforceability of certain debts in a bankruptcy proceeding (primarily mortgages) because they were procured improperly -- generally exploiting a consumer's lack of English proficiency, disability, literacy or other vulnerability. Bureau offices have started to increase the number of non-bankruptcy consumer cases which challenge improper debt collection practices or involve another form of consumer exploitation. Bureau staff co-counsel with other providers (particularly those who can seek and collect attorneys fees) on those cases, including private lawyers and St. Ambrose Legal Services. LAB is working with the Pro Bono Resource Council to provide training to lawyers on the eastern shore on consumer matters to encourage those lawyers to take consumer cases, or at least co-counsel with LAB more regularly.

Child Support: LAB has received a grant for the past two years to address the needs of non-custodial parents whose child support obligations pose a barrier to employment and economic stability. The project seeks to improve the economic stability of individual clients through representation, concentrating on reduction of arrearages owed to the state or improper practices of the child support administration or the courts which have resulted in the accumulation of excessive arrearages, educating service providers and non-custodial parents about child support rights and responsibilities, addressing systemic problems through impact litigation and encouraging improvements in statewide child support policy. The project has represented hundreds of clients whose legal needs otherwise go unaddressed and for whom there are few social services available, including fathers who are taking care of children but saddled with debt owed to the state. It has forced the child support administration to change a variety of its practices. Litigation has

successfully challenged the failure to provide a work restricted license to a person in a job training program, failure to modify child support when the non-custodial parent is reunified with the parent's children, improper arrearage calculations, and improper application of "ability to pay" criteria in determining whether an individual should be held in contempt for failure to pay arrearages. The project recently won an appeal to the Maryland Court of Special Appeals which established that the criteria for determining whether an individual has voluntarily waived the right to counsel is the same for a civil contempt proceeding as a criminal proceeding. It has filed litigation challenging the department's failure to apply meaningful criteria to determine whether it should forgive state-owed arrearages and is developing several other challenges to deficiencies in the child support system.

Welfare Reform: LAB is working with PJC and the Homeless Persons Representation Project to expand outreach to clients across the state about their rights regarding continuation of benefits beyond the 5 year cut-off and regarding their ability to challenge other welfare sanctions. LAB is supporting PJC's efforts to identify and pursue cases in which a welfare recipient may have an ADA claim to extended services. Bureau staff are involved in several committees and advisory groups convened by the Department of Human Resources to consider state options under TANF and the food stamps program as well as expansions and other changes to the unemployment compensation system. LAB's work in this area is spearheaded by one of its newly hired statewide Deputy Directors of Advocacy, whose prior legal aid, Maryland and federal experiences have enabled him to bring Bureau staff to a variety of for a in which welfare policy is being shaped. LAB expects to continue and expand its involvement in these policy areas, consistent with the restrictions of its funding sources, particularly in light of federal welfare reauthorization legislation.

2.) Has the legal services delivery system expanded access and services through coordination with providers throughout the state? Can this be quantified?

The legal services delivery system has expanded access and services through coordination with providers throughout the state over the past five years. One large expansion has been through the pro se domestic programs developed by MLSC, the courts and the law schools in the mid-1990s and now administered in a variety of methods. According to court data, over 35,000 persons are being assisted annually. In Baltimore City and Anne Arundel Counties alone, LAB assists over 10,000 persons per year with pro se domestic services. The true genesis of the programs was in a cooperative effort of many providers, the courts, the law schools and others in the early 1990s when the pro se forms were created and granted official status by the courts. Today, pro se providers meet regularly, with MLAN staff, to share information and techniques and to tackle such issues as ethical issues raised in pro se settings and how to improve the experience and results for pro se litigants.

Another significant area of expansion of access and services has been the MLAN project. In 1998 MLSC undertook activities to develop a new "Maryland Legal Assistance Network" (MLAN) to more effectively integrate and coordinate existing legal services resources through the use of improved computer and telecommunications technologies. MLAN is being created with the assistance of a $1,000,000 grant to MLSC from the Open Society Institute as a national legal services demonstration project, under the direction of a 21-member oversight committee established and chaired by Maryland Chief Judge Robert M. Bell. Building on existing legal services resources, the program includes (a) establishing a centralized telephone legal services intake, advice, and referral Center to provide brief services and coordination assistance statewide; (b) developing and promoting the use of an internet-based "People's Law Library" to provide legal information and assistance to low and moderate income people in a wide range of civil legal matters, and a "Maryland Justice" website to support increased services by state legal aid and pro bono attorneys; and (c) supporting the provision of increased pro bono and affordable assisted pro se legal assistance. MLAN's centralized telephone intake system will help persons with civil legal problems who are not eligible for MLSC-funded services determine whether they need an attorney and refer them to local lawyer referral programs or other appropriate sources for further assistance. MLSC allocated additional dollars each year of the project to expand the ability of the five partner organizations to contribute to the centralized telephone legal services system. Over the past year, LAB has worked closely with the Women's Law Center to expand the family law hotline from two days per week to five days per week. Over the past eighteen months, an additional 2,000 individuals have been assisted through this expansion.

Over the past two years, an additional 4,000+ seniors (sixty and over) have been served through the Senior Hotline, a joint project of the Legal Aid Bureau, MLAN, the Maryland State Bar Association, the Maryland Office on Aging and the local Area Agencies on Aging, funded in large part by a grant from HHS.

More than two hundred and fifty non-custodial parents seeking to reenter the workforce have received direct assistance through the LAB project, which is administered with significant input from community organizations serving these parents. In addition, many more parents have benefited from community education through outreach and through written materials, and many are benefiting from improvements in the functioning of the child support system brought about directly in response to court cases, appeals and administrative advocacy done by LAB staff on behalf of those clients. The project's staff has provided outreach and educational sessions to parents leaving prison, in coordination with legal services providers who address the needs of prisoners and ex-offenders.

LAB continues its aggressive outreach to migrant farmworkers by conducting in-person outreach to all of the farm labor camps in the state. Staff of the migrant program has attended "mass registrations" in Maryland and Delaware, as well as other Latino fairs in Maryland, at which it provides information about the migrant program and other Bureau

services. It has recently assisted dozens of tenants in farmworker housing and has developed a strong presence in that farmworker community.

As described above, LAB has expanded the assistance it provides tenants in Maryland through its OTAG project and the activities of the statewide support unit.

3.) Has the quality of services provided by the legal services delivery system improved? How?

Joint projects tend to enhance accountability as the partners must keep each other (as well as funders) informed of their progress and results. The increase in appellate advocacy by staff by filing briefs not only for their own clients but as amicus for other organizations strengthens the appellate capabilities throughout the state. Quality is also enhanced as each organization contributes the special skills and resources it has to the joint effort. Where LAB has been called upon by legislators to testify on bills of interest to its clients, its effectiveness has been significantly enhanced by its work in coalitions on pertinent issues and by the information it can share with those organizations. Other developments enhancing quality include increased efforts by all organizations to share training and training resources. MVLS, MDLC and LAB regularly invite staff of other legal services providers to training they offer. LAB has increased its statewide support, which enhances the work of LAB and other organizations, by hiring two Assistant Directors of Advocacy, one for Housing and Community Development and one for Economic Stability and Public Benefits.

4.) Since 1998, has there been improvement in the relative equity of client access throughout the state for all low income clients regardless of who they are, where in the state they reside, what languages they speak, their race/gender/national origin, or the existence of other access barriers? How is this equity achieved?

There has been improvement in the relative equity of client access. This equity is being achieved through the mechanisms described in Section I, including increased multi-lingual staff, use of the Language Line and other interpreters, translation of written materials into other language and greater outreach in communities with access barriers. In addition there has been greater coordination with other organizations serving traditionally underserved clients and coalition work, spearheaded by CASA de Maryland and PJC to improve state laws, rules and regulations to enhance access to the courts and all state services. LAB has also strengthened the abilities of its offices serving rural areas through such means as increased staffing, by obtaining special grants to provide services such as domestic violence representation where there are no other providers and by allocating expanded resources to those areas. For example, in its two Eastern Shore offices, LAB increased its total intake from 2000 to 2001 from less than 1,000 cases to over 1,300 cases, a figure they are on course to reach in 2002 as well. In addition, LAB has embarked upon joint planning and work sharing by the offices on the Eastern Shore

to most effectively use staff to serve the entire Eastern Shore. LAB also moved the Upper Eastern Shore office in 1999 to the town in the four county area with the largest number of low-income persons and more accessible to the Lower Shore office to permit more joint work. The number of walk-in clients in that office has increased markedly - from 3 in 2000 to 14 in 2001 to 30 in the first half of 2002.

Due to LSC restrictions, there still remains a disturbing gap in the services provided to undocumented persons and prisoners, although organizations like CASA, PJC and Catholic Charities have addressed some of those needs.

5.) Since 1998, has there been improvement in the relative equity in terms of the availability of the full range of civil equal justice delivery capacities throughout the state? What mechanisms have been developed to ensure such relative equity is achieved and maintained? Since 1998, has there been improvement in the relative equity in the development and distribution of civil equal justice resources throughout the state? Are there areas of the state that suffer from a disproportionate lack of resources (funding as well as in-kind/pro bono)? If so, is there a strategy to overcome such inequities?

Other than those items set out above, there has not been any significant change in terms of the relative equity of availability of civil equal justice delivery capacities or resources throughout the state. Because LAB has been a statewide program since well before 1998, there has long been relative equity in terms of the availability of the full range of services and capacities. In 1999 and 2000, LAB reopened offices in Howard County and Montgomery County, both of which had been closed due to the LSC cuts of 1995. Although both of these counties had been served from LAB's Prince George's County office, these reopenings increased accessibility to services to residents of those counties and, along with increase in staffing since that time, have increased the numbers of clients served from those counties. LAB has strengthened its ability to meet specific regional needs by increasing funding on a local level. In 1998, it received funding from only two local jurisdictions; that has been increased to five local jurisdictions. Its United Way funding has been increased to come from an additional three campaigns. LAB in 2001 regained its contracts to represent children in three of the jurisdictions it lost in 1997 and one it had never had, and in 2001 added three additional jurisdictions to its contract to represent alleged disabled persons in adult public guardianship proceedings. These latter contracts did not represent new monies in absolute terms; they were shifted from prior vendors to LAB.

LAB is unaware of any other significant new funding or capacities since 1998 outside of LAB itself. There has been some increase in the receipt of Violence Against Women Act funding, including a grant in 2001 to LAB to provide services in Cecil County. Most of

the VAWA and state domestic violence funding goes to shelter providers who also provide legal services to domestic violence victims.

There is a disproportionate lack of pro bono resources outside of Baltimore City and the DC suburbs. Efforts to involve the private bar in rural areas include the plans, described above, to provide training to lawyers on the eastern shore on consumer representation. MVLS utilizing pro bono attorneys in the court-funded pro se services it provides in various jurisdictions. LAB has also entered into a partnership with one of the largest Maryland law firms, Venable Baetjer and Howard, through which the firm has agreed to provide support to LAB's growing transactional practice.

6.) Does this legal services delivery system operate efficiently? Are there areas of duplication?

Because there is only one general legal services program, the system generally works without a significant amount of duplication. Any "duplication" really consists of additional resources being provided in areas where the demand is great or when LAB would have a conflict in representing the applicant. Pro bono programs generally can provide an outlet for placement of cases that might present conflicts although in more rural areas there are often few attorneys available for pro bono representation. Additionally, coalition work often requires more than one legal services provider to address a certain type of problem; usually, however, the roles differ.

7.) Has the system expanded the way it involves private lawyers in the delivery of essential services to low-income persons? Does the system effectively and efficiently use the private bar to delivery essential services to low income people?

Because there are four individual county pro bono programs run by the local bar associations and a fifth (MVLS) which seeks to cover the remaining jurisdictions, LAB does not generally recruit attorneys directly, instead referring applicants to the pro bono programs for case placement. It does seek direct assistance from law firms for larger projects such as community economic development or on specific complex issues such as pensions and Qualified Domestic Relations Orders.

Maryland expanded its pro bono capacity significantly in the early 1990s. The Bar Association and the courts established a Pro Bono Resource Center to assist individual programs with recruitment and retention of pro bono attorneys. Since then, there has been some decrease in participation. In response, this spring the Maryland Court of Appeals adopted rules intending to expand pro bono services to increase access to justice for poor persons throughout the State. The new rules provide for the creation of a state commission and county pro bono planning boards to determine legal need and increase appropriate pro bono services, and require Maryland attorneys to annually report on their pro bono activities. It is hoped that these developments will expand the number of pro

bono attorneys available statewide. This effort was substantially assisted by PBRC and legal services providers, including LAB. It is expected that legal services providers will have a central role in implementing the new rule.

III. Are the best organizational and human resource management configurations and approaches being used?

1.) For calendar year 2001, what is the current configuration of programs (LSC and non-LSC) that deliver services to low income clients – i.e., what are the components (Size, areas of responsibility, governance) of the delivery system? What are the funding sources and levels for each of these components of the delivery system?[1]

In FY2002 (ending June 30, 2002), Maryland Legal Services Corporation gave operating grants totaling $6,343,556 to twenty-eight legal services providers, including $260,000 in challenge grant funds. In FY03, due to IOLTA revenue reduction, the total service grants were reduced to $6,088,325.

The FY2003 MLSC grant recipients are (FY2002 amounts are in parentheses):

Allegany Law Foundation, Inc., - $28,759 ($31,954). The Allegany Law Foundation is continuing the civil legal services project formerly operated by the County's Community Action Agency. The Foundation serves low-income clients through the efforts of a small in-house staff and a panel of attorneys handling cases on a pro bono or reduced fee basis.

Alternative Directions, Inc. - $128,588 ($142,842). Alternative Directions provides free legal assistance, primarily with family and domestic legal issues, to persons in prison or recently released from incarceration. The program also provides monthly workshops to prisoners on legal rights and responsibilities.

Associated Catholic Charities (ACC) - $27,000 ($30,000). Associated Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services Project provides client screening, counseling and legal representation for low-income persons in the Baltimore metropolitan area in a wide array of immigration matters.

Baltimore Neighborhoods, Inc. (BNI) - $74,163 ($74,163BNI was awarded a grant to continue operation of its statewide landlord/tenant counseling hotline.

Bar Foundation of Harford County, Maryland, Inc. - $33,160 ($36,845). The Bar Foundation of Harford County operates a pro bono legal services program, providing intake and referral services to low-income persons with civil legal problems.

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[1] The data in this section is from information provided by the Maryland Legal Services Corporation's website and its Executive Director, Bob Rhudy.

CASA of Maryland, Inc. - $57,376 ($63,751; $10,000 Challenge Grant). CASA received continued MLSC funding for its Employment Rights Project which assists Latin Americans and other day laborers in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties with employment related legal issues. Has expanded into Baltimore City.

Catholic Charities, Inc. - $89,528 ($99,476). Catholic Charities/Archdiocese of Washington Immigration Legal Services provides legal assistance and representation to low-income persons with immigration problems from its offices in Silver Spring and Washington D.C. The project's MLSC grant enables it to serve Maryland's immigrant population residing primarily in Prince George's and Montgomery counties.

Community Law Center, Inc. (CLC) - $47,295 ($59,119). CLC provides legal counsel and representation to nonprofit organizations that represent issues of low-income people and are unable to afford private counsel. MLSC's grant also supports CLC's pro bono project.

Domestic Violence Center of Howard County - $24,130 ($24,130). Howard County's Domestic Violence Center received funding from MLSC to continue to support its legal services project which serves low-income domestic violence victims in Howard County.

Health Education Resource Organization (H.E.R.O.) - $48,722 ($54,136). H.E.R.O. is a Baltimore-based nonprofit agency which helps persons with HIV infection and AIDS cope with the health, social, economic and emotional problems caused by their illness. MLSC's grant enables the organization to provide legal services to this client population.

Heartly House, Inc. - $39,092 ($39,092). Heartly House is a private, nonprofit agency serving victims of domestic violence, rape and sexual assault in Frederick County. MLSC's grant enables the organization to provide legal services to low-income victims of domestic violence.

Homeless Persons Representation Project (HPRP) - $130,890 ($145,433). HPRP provides staff and pro bono assistance in a range of housing and other legal matters to clients in homeless shelters in Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Howard, and Montgomery counties.

House of Ruth - $242,254 ($242,254). House of Ruth's Domestic Violence Legal Clinic provides legal assistance to low-income victims of domestic violence from offices in Baltimore City and Prince George's County. The Clinic also provides technical assistance and training to spouse abuse centers and interested community organizations statewide.

Law Foundation of Prince George's County - $111,834 ($124,260). The Law Foundation of Prince George's County provides civil legal assistance to low-income persons of Prince George's County through a panel of volunteer attorneys.

Legal Aid Bureau, Inc. (LAB) - $3,245,200; $250,000 Challenge Grant ($3,245,200; $250,000 Challenge Grant). Established in l9ll, LAB is Maryland's primary provider of civil legal services to low-income persons. MLSC funds are used to fund attorney and

paralegal positions providing general civil legal assistance to low-income persons throughout Maryland.

Maryland Civil Liberties Union Foundation (MCLUF) - $36,965 ($46,206). MCLUF received MLSC funding to provide legal representation to low-income persons statewide in matters involving racial discrimination, police abuse, fair housing and jail conditions.

Maryland Disability Law Center (MDLC) - $475,537 ($528,375). MDLC provides free representation for disabled children and adults statewide with legal problems related to their disabilities, and will continue its collaboration with Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education to provide representation to disabled children seeking to be educated in the least restrictive environment. MDLC, in conjunction with MVLS and LAB, also administers the School House Legal Services project, which had previously been housed at Advocates for Children and Youth, Inc.

Maryland Public Interest Law Project (MPILP) - $28,000 ($35,000). MPILP, located at the University of Maryland Law School, encourages law students to enter public interest law practice and offers law students from the University of Maryland and the University of Baltimore paid internships at public interest organizations of their choice. MLSC's grant provides MPILP with funding for ten summer internships at MLSC-funded legal services programs.

Maryland Volunteer Lawyers' Service (MVLS) - $234,015 ($235,015). MVLS is a statewide program that places low-income persons with civil legal problems with volunteer or reduced-fee attorneys. In addition to funding for its direct referral program, MLSC also funds a litigation expense fund administered by MVLS for other pro bono programs throughout the state.

Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence, Inc. - $26,125 ($26,125). The Mid-Shore Council received continued MLSC funding for its reduced-fee legal services program to provide representation for low-income victims of domestic violence in Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot Counties.

Montgomery County Bar Foundation - $104,580 ($116,200). The Montgomery County Bar Foundation operates a pro bono program in which attorneys are recruited to take pro bono cases in their area of expertise. The program also conducts community outreach to Montgomery County's Hispanic population.

Pro Bono Resource Center (PBRC) - $137,972 ($137,972). PBRC (formerly the People's Pro Bono Action Center) is a statewide pro bono support center created in 1990 by the Maryland State Bar Association to coordinate pro bono training and activities and maximize volunteer attorney services provided to low-income Maryland residents. The Center provides support for pro bono programs throughout the State.

Public Justice Center, Inc. (PJC) - $117,189 ($146,486). PJC provides legal representation to the underrepresented, particularly children, the mentally ill, and victims of discrimination through the services of both an in-house staff and pro bono attorneys. It

has an appellate advocacy project which assists other providers with appellate issues and briefs and actively participates as an amicus or counsel for amici on issues before Maryland's appellate courts that are important to the clients it serves and issues it addresses. The Center also operates the Tenant Advocacy Project, providing low-income tenants representation in rent court by qualified lay advocates.

St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center, Inc. - $97,888 ($122,360). St. Ambrose Legal Services Program, a project of St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center, Inc. provides free legal assistance to low-income homeowners who are in danger of losing their homes because of fraudulent mortgage schemes, tax or judicial liens, or have been victimized by home improvement fraud. Services are provided by in-house staff and a panel of volunteer attorneys.

Stephanie Roper Foundation, Inc. - $82,800 ($92,000). MLSC provided continued funding to this statewide victim's rights organization. The project disseminates information on victim's rights to all Marylanders and provides specialized legal services to indigent crime victims.

University of Maryland School of Law - $63,475 ($79,344). The University of Maryland Clinical Law Office was awarded an MLSC grant to continue its "HIV Legal Representation Project," in which law students provide legal services to persons with AIDS and HIV infection at the University of Maryland Hospital.

Women's Center of Southern Maryland (WCSM) - $39,318 ($39,318). St. Mary's Women's Center will continue to provide legal services to low-income clients of St. Mary's and Calvert Counties. Services provided are primarily in the area of domestic relations, with particular emphasis on cases involving domestic violence.

Women's Law Center, Inc. - $66,500 ($66,500). The Women's Law Center was established in 1971 to meet the special legal needs of women. MLSC's grant will enable the Center to continue its statewide Family Law Hotline. In collaboration with the Legal Aid Bureau, WLC has expanded its hotline services from two to five days per week. It is staffed with experienced family law practitioners and LAB staff attorneys.

In 1999, MLSC initiated a model child custody representation project with the assistance of funding from the Maryland Judiciary to expand services through the Legal Aid Bureau and the private bar in Anne Arundel, Montgomery, and Prince George's Counties. For FY2003, MLSC continued the $250,000 grant made available through the Administrative Office of the Courts to continue the staff attorney component of the **Child Custody Project** undertaken by the Legal Aid Bureau, as well as granting $129,000 for the reduced-fee component of the project to the Law Foundation of Prince George's County, the Montgomery County Bar Foundation and the YWCA of Annapolis & Anne Arundel County.

There are other legal services programs in Maryland which are not funded by MLSC and for which no information on funding levels or numbers of persons served are available.

They include county-based domestic violence advocacy programs (funded primarily by VAWA and VOCA grants), small bar association-supported pro bono programs, the non-LAB administered elder law programs in three jurisdictions (funded by Title III-B grants), county and state government consumer protection programs, county and state human resources commissions and anti-discrimination programs, veterans and disabled persons advocacy organizations and law school clinics serving a limited number of persons with a wide range of civil legal problems.

The State of Maryland funds legal assistance in a small class of civil matters that have been deemed entitlements by statute, case law, or court rule. These include (a) legal representation to parents and children in termination of parental rights cases; (b) representation of parents and children in child in need of assistance (CINA) child abuse and neglect matters; (c) representation of mentally ill and retarded persons in state institutions in periodic review of services and related matters; (d) representation of persons who are the subject of adult guardianship proceedings; and (e) assisted pro se and some extended legal assistance to persons in prison challenging prison conditions, medical care, and other institutional matters. These services are primarily provided under state contracts administered by the Maryland Departments of Human Resources, Health and Mental Hygiene, and Public Safety and Correctional Services with nonprofit legal services programs, for-profit corporations, and private law firms. Total state funding for these services was approximately $9,873,500 in FY 2001, providing legal assistance in approximately 12,000 cases annually.

Between July 1, 2000 - June 30, 2001, MLSC-funded legal services programs provided legal assistance to low-income clients in every jurisdiction in Maryland. Legal Aid Bureau continues to be MLSC's principal grantee with twelve offices; and five organizations—Legal Aid Bureau, House of Ruth, Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service, Women's Law Center, and Baltimore Neighborhoods—provided nearly 70% of the reported 108,345 services in FY 2001.

County/City of Origin	# Cases
Anne Arundel County	11,754
Baltimore City	37,073
Baltimore County	8,843
Central Maryland	6,871
Eastern Shore	5,613
Montgomery County	7,387
Prince George's County	16,336
Southern Maryland	3,963
Western Maryland	7,620

Other	2,885
	108,345

Types of Cases:

Family/Domestic	40%
Housing	22%
Juvenile/CINA	6%
Consumer	6%
Other (employment, education, wills, torts, etc.)	20%
Income Maintenance	3%
Individual Rights	3%

Under the leadership of Chief Judge Bell, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) services are expanding in our State to help prevent and resolve conflicts short of litigation. In September 2001, the Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office (MACRO), funded by the Judiciary, was established to promote the expansion of mediation and other ADR services in the courts, community mediation centers, schools, government, and business. MLSC works with MACRO to help assure the use of ADR in resolving conflicts of low-income persons.

2.) Since October 1998, what other configurations and/or approaches have been seriously explored? Were any adopted? Were any rejected? Are any changes contemplated in the coming year?

Since 1998, there have not been any other configurations or approaches seriously explored. However, there have been significant advances in collaborative work arrangements, space sharing and project development, many of which have been discussed above. In 1999, the Public Justice Center began renting space at market rent in the Legal Aid Bureau's Baltimore City building. Besides providing excellent space at market rate to another non-profit legal services program, it has also provided easy access of staff to one another in ways that has promoted collaborative legal work. It will also permit sharing costs of the new case management system and, in the future, permit easier transfer of appropriate data between the organizations.

The collaborative project development has focused primarily on the MLAN projects, especially the centralized intake system. That project will allow the five partner organizations to share the cost and responsibilities of intake telephone systems, intake

software and intake services. It will prevent client "bounce" and will also increase the reliability of referrals to all of the other non-profit legal services programs in the state.

3.) Is there any identifiable duplication in capacities or services in the state? How many duplicative systems – accounting systems, human resources management systems, case management systems, etc. – currently exist? Does the service delivery system now in use minimize or eliminate duplications that existed prior to October 1, 1998?

Each legal services program has its own system for accounting, human resources and case management. MLSC has facilitated development and acquiring some of those systems for smaller programs but, so far as LAB is aware, each program has its own. LAB would be unable to share systems with ease with any other program due to LSC restrictions, confidentiality and prevention of conflicts.

4.) Since October 1998, what innovative service delivery systems/mechanisms/initiatives been adopted in the state? Have any been explored and then rejected?

The significant developments in innovative service delivery systems/mechanisms/ initiatives adopted in Maryland have been set forth in detail above with the most dramatic being the MLAN efforts.

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