MINNESOTA STATE PLANNING SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

Submitted September 12, 2001
On Behalf of The Minnesota Legal Services Coalition (Coalition)
Anishinabe Legal Services (Anishinabe)
Central Minnesota Legal Services (CMLS)
Judicare of Anoka County (JAC)
Legal Aid Service of Northeastern Minnesota (LASNEM)
Legal Services of Northwest Minnesota (LSNM)
Mid-Minnesota Legal Assistance (MMLA)
Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services (SMRLS)
AND
The MSBA Legal Assistance to the Disadvantaged (LAD) Committee

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A. Achieving a Comprehensive, Integrated and Client-Centered Legal Services Delivery System in Minnesota

As was noted in presentations to the LSC Board during its June 2000 Minnesota visit and in LSC's *Building State Justice Communities*, state planning in Minnesota goes back to 1980. The six LSC-funded programs in the state received a special planning grant to identify areas for coordination and cooperation. The providers worked with the newly created Legal Assistance to the Disadvantaged (LAD) Committee of the Minnesota State Bar Association (MSBA) to create the Minnesota Legal Services Coalition State Support Center (Center) and the position of Director of Volunteer Legal Services, now the Access to Justice Director (ATJ), at the MSBA.

The Minnesota Legal Services Coalition (Coalition), comprising the seven regional programs serving all 87 Minnesota counties, continues to work with the LAD Committee and other stakeholders to ensure that Minnesota's programs continuously assess and improve services for low-income Minnesotans. Coalition program directors, Center staff, the ATJ Director, Legal Services Advocacy Project (LSAP) staff, and representatives of other providers including volunteer attorney programs meet at least six times each year to ensure ongoing coordination and cooperation. From the outset, the Coalition leaders and their boards agreed that working collectively, while preserving local input and control, would best serve client needs.

In 1995, in response to the pending cuts in LSC funding, the Minnesota Legislature requested the Minnesota Supreme Court to create a joint committee including representatives from the Supreme Court, the MSBA, the Coalition, and other providers to prepare recommendations for state funding changes or other alternatives to maintain an adequate level of funding for civil legal assistance. The Supreme Court established the Joint Legal Services Access & Funding Committee, directing it to make recommendations to the Court and the Legislature by December 31, 1995. The Court appointed a liaison from the Court and 29 Committee members representing the legislature, the federal and state judiciary, lawyers in private and public practice, legal services program staff, and the public, including the client community.

The Joint Committee developed a number of principles, including:

- The legal services programs should continue to strive to offer low-income people a level playing field, access to all forums, and a full range of legal services in areas of critical need.

- Legal services should be structured to ensure that populations with special needs, such as American Indians, migrant and seasonal workers, people with disabilities, and financially distressed family farmers, continue to have

access to legal services.

- Adequate state support services, such as training, community legal education materials and mechanisms for information sharing, should continue to be available to all legal services providers, including volunteer attorney programs.

The Committee report concluded that, "While the Coalition programs and others are already **a national model of coordination and cooperation**, the programs should continue to search for areas in which they can achieve additional efficiencies and improve client services through increased coordination and cooperation."

Reflecting the Joint Committee's principles, the goal of the Coalition is to provide a full range of high-quality legal services to poor persons in civil cases in a manner which enables clients to (1) assert and enforce their legal rights; (2) obtain effective access to the courts, administrative agencies and other forums which constitute our system of justice; (3) obtain the basic necessities of life; and (4) assure equal opportunity.

The Coalition also has worked together to define statewide objectives, although each individual program's objectives may vary slightly based on locally-defined needs and funders' requirements. Statewide objectives include:

- Providing a full range of legal services including individual case work, complex litigation, community education and advocacy and legislative representation, so that persons with individual or common legal problems may be benefited most cost-effectively;

- Increasing the capacity to provide high-quality legal services for persons unable to afford counsel in a manner which will benefit as many poor persons as possible;

- Concentrating resources in case areas which reflect clients' greatest needs and in areas which require special expertise and knowledge;

- Taking affirmative steps to ensure that disadvantaged persons who historically have had disproportionately less access to the legal system (such as disabled individuals, minority-race persons, persons in sparsely populated areas, and seniors) have effective access to legal services;

- Establishing a statewide framework to encourage cooperation and coordination among providers of low-income legal services and to enable programs to respond most effectively and comprehensively to emerging areas of client need;

- Working with local attorneys, state and local bar associations and the Minnesota Justice Foundation in administering volunteer attorney programs to increase access to legal assistance, particularly in areas of traditional private practice, and to enable local attorneys and law students to participate and be recognized for their services to low-income people;

- Encouraging the development of effective alternatives (such as training staff of battered women's shelters to assist women in obtaining Orders for Protection) to address the legal needs of disadvantaged Minnesotans and to encourage and enable persons to help themselves;

- Implementing quality control and legal work management systems and providing necessary training, support and facilities to staff, and judicare and volunteer attorneys to ensure professional development, high-quality and cost-effective services; and

- Providing salaries, fringe benefits, reimbursement for expenses and other compensation at levels sufficient to retain experienced staff, and judicare and volunteer attorneys.

1) What are the important issues that impact upon low income people in Minnesota? How is Minnesota responding to these issues?

Low-income people in Minnesota face **important and emerging issues**.

- Minnesota's minority population grew 72 percent between 1980 and 1990, the fourth highest rate of increase in the country. Preliminary 2000 Census figures show that minorities now represent 12 percent of the state's population, more than double that in 1990. Minnesota's black growth rate is first among the 47 states whose figures have been reported. The Asian growth rate is the fourth fastest. More Hmong live in St. Paul than any other United States city, according to new figures from Census 2000. The surging minority population accounted for over half the state's overall growth.

- 43.7 percent of the nonwhites in Minneapolis and St. Paul live in poverty, the highest percentage of people of color in poverty in the 25 largest metropolitan areas in the country.

- Many minority-race individuals face discrimination in employment, housing, health care, family law, public assistance and education.

- Legal immigrants in Minnesota make up an increasing percentage of the state's population. For the past 16 years, more than 40 percent of the immigrant arrivals have been refugees from Southeast Asia, Russia and, more recently, East Africa. Minnesota has the second largest Hmong population, the seventh largest Cambodian population and the eleventh

largest Vietnamese population in the United States. The Chicano-Latino population in Minnesota grew from about 54,000 in 1990 to about 143,000 in 2000, not including migrant farm workers. Half of the Somalians who have immigrated to the United States since the early 1990s live in Minnesota; this is the largest group in the country. The Somali population is estimated at close to 50,000.

- Housing vacancy rates in Minnesota are among the lowest in the country. There are also significant barriers to fair housing in the Twin Cities area, according to a new report, *Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing*, prepared by the Legal Services Advocacy Project in collaboration with the Institute on Race and Poverty, the Urban Coalition and the Wilder Research Center. The report identifies private sector practices and public sector policies that need to be changed to eliminate the barriers; it also identifies constructive strategies to address the barriers.

- Welfare-to-work issues pose many challenges. These include issues with the government programs such as sanctions for alleged non-compliance and time limits as well as barriers facing low-income clients in the workforce. These legal barriers are holding people back from receiving the education and training, transportation, childcare and other services they need to find and maintain a living wage job. There are also an increasing number of employment discrimination issues.

- Legal issues relating to state and tribal court jurisdiction are increasing.

- To earn a living, American family farmers must have quite a bit of knowledge about their legal rights and obligations in a complex scheme of federal farm programs. With the USDA reorganization and passage of the 1996 Farm Bill, everything farmers once knew about credit changed. The eligibility criteria for loans tightened, so fewer farmers are eligible for credit. The average farmer cannot navigate through that maze on his or her own. Family farmers have substantial unmet legal and advocacy needs either to preserve their livelihood on family farms or to facilitate a transition to non-farm living.

Minnesota programs use several strategies to address these and other critical issues. For example, programs use community education to ensure that vulnerable clients are aware of their legal rights and obligations; negotiation and litigation where appropriate; and legislative and administrative rule-making representation where appropriate. Measuring success depends on the strategy used. Success at the legislature can be measured by the number of favorable laws passed or harmful laws defeated. Community education may be measured by the increase in requests for service by affected populations in some instances and reports from community organizations about problems avoided in others. Litigation results often speak for themselves. With both litigation and policy

changes, constant monitoring is needed to ensure enforcement and to watch for unintended consequences.

Much of what is being done specifically with respect to immigrant communities is addressed in section A.4.

For Coalition programs, welfare-to-work issues are a high priority. With national foundation funding, LSAP has done significant policy analysis on welfare-to-work issues. Recently released reports include *Mixed Messages and Missed Opportunities: Welfare Sanction Policy in Minnesota* and *MFIP at the Midpoint: Challenges and Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency*. These reports form the basis for action plans for work with DHS and county welfare departments and for individual client service throughout the state. Legal aid staff serve on local committees throughout the state that are working to ensure that clients receive all necessary services and benefits as they move off of MFIP and as time limits are reached. Recent litigation by MMLA resulted in a settlement providing for language access for DHS programs.

Local programs are testing ways to identify and eliminate all the civil legal barriers facing families trying to leave welfare. In light of clients approaching the five-year limit on receipt of TANF benefits, MMLA took the lead in developing a new intake form to identify any sanctions that have been imposed on clients to make sure exemption and waiver issues are properly identified and followed up. This form was distributed to all advocates for use statewide. LSAP and the State Support Center regularly convene a statewide Income Security Working Group. The Coalition programs continue to successfully use a single statewide toll-free number for clients that is printed on DHS notices and forms.

Programs are increasingly handling employment-related matters. An Unemployment chapter was added to the Volunteer Attorney Desk Manual. Volunteer Lawyers Network is testing an employment law screening project similar to its statewide bankruptcy screening efforts. LSAP was successful in the 2001 Legislature in obtaining an exception so that domestic abuse victims can more easily get unemployment benefits.

Significant fair housing work is being undertaken throughout the state. Efforts include vindication of civil rights of many protected-class people through a significant increase in professional fair housing legal advocacy and growth in media, community-based organizations' and government attention to fair housing issues encouraged by legal services. Current special focus work includes challenging minimum income tenant screening practices, discrimination against section 8 recipients, municipal redevelopment practices, and reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities, especially as these problems hurt families of color. Significant advocacy is also ongoing with respect to availability of affordable housing. Housing discrimination and

affordable housing strategic thinking and planning are key topics at statewide Housing Task Force meetings and on the e-mail list. Trainings have also been done for volunteer attorneys. Staff attorneys work closely with the nonprofit Housing Preservation Law Project where appropriate to save affordable housing.

During the June 2000 visit, the LSC Board heard from a tribal court judge and others about the challenges of serving Minnesota's Indian population. Every time a new decision comes down with respect to tribal jurisdiction, it leads to a multitude of new questions. Anishinabe plays an important role in advocating for the rights of affected individuals as the law evolves. Other Minnesota programs are also increasing their representation of Indians.

The three Coalition programs whose service areas include significant family farming developed the Minnesota Family Farm Law Project (MFFLP) in the mid-1980s in collaboration with the Farmers' Legal Action Group (FLAG). As the LSC Board heard during its June 2000 visit, MFFLP staff, backed up by contract and judicare attorneys and Minnesota Department of Agriculture farm advocates, provide significant community education and individual representation. FLAG uses a combination of education, backup support to local legal aid staff and private lawyers, impact litigation, and administrative and legislative technical assistance. FLAG, a national organization headquartered in St. Paul, receives state and IOLTA funding to support its Minnesota work. Together MFFLP and FLAG respond to the evolving needs of family farm clients.

2) What are the components of Minnesota's delivery system?

The overall delivery system consists of the following major components.

- The **Coalition programs** include staff, volunteer attorney and judicare components covering all 87 Minnesota counties. The programs provide individual and group representation, brief advice, community legal education and pro se support, and they engage in community collaborations to ensure the widest possible access to high quality legal services.

- The Coalition's jointly-funded **State Support Center** coordinates training and support functions. The Center publishes a twice-monthly newsletter for legal services staff and approximately 2,500 volunteer lawyers. It conducts numerous CLE-accredited trainings each year, and coordinates regular statewide task force meetings and email lists in the areas of family, juvenile, housing, government benefits (including Social Security), consumer, immigration and seniors law. The Center coordinates the production and statewide distribution of community education and self-help materials in English and other languages. The Center also coordinates extensive statewide technology efforts seeking to enhance the ability of the programs

to work together efficiently to better serve clients. The Center's services are available to all LSC- and state-funded programs.

- The **Legal Services Advocacy Project** (LSAP), housed within a non-LSC-funded Coalition program, provides statewide legislative and administrative policy representation on behalf of eligible clients. LSAP also does policy research and reports. LSAP staff helped to create and are key participants in statewide coalitions of community organizations that collaborate on a comprehensive approach to welfare-to-work and economic security, affordable housing, and other issues critical to low-income clients.

- Approximately 21 **other programs** in Minnesota provide legal assistance to low-income persons in civil cases. Most provide services in single counties or to special populations, including immigrant and refugee communities and Indians. These programs help to meet many critical legal needs, for example for immigrants. They also leverage significant resources, including pro bono service, that would not be available to Coalition programs. The Coalition programs actively cooperate and collaborate with these organizations and have worked to eliminate any duplication of services.

- The **Loan Repayment Assistance Program - Minnesota** has existed for 10 years to assist low-salaried, high-debt-load attorneys working for public interest organizations repay their student loans. Originally founded by law students, LRAP-MN has performed a critical service in support of legal aid and other public interest law organizations in Minnesota. The LRAP-MN board includes representatives of the private bar, all the Minnesota law schools, law students, legal aid programs and others. The single statewide LRAP program means that this resource is available to employees of all Minnesota providers irrespective of where they went to law school.

- The **Minnesota Justice Foundation** coordinates *pro bono* services by students at all four Minnesota law schools. MJF provides free law clerks to volunteer lawyers, student interns to legal aid providers and other public interest agencies, and free student assistance for staff and volunteer lawyers statewide. MJF's role is expanding as Minnesota's law schools implement policies and programs to provide as many law students as possible with public service opportunities during law school. In its first two years, the Law School Public Service Program has already dramatically expanded public service opportunities for law students and volunteer assistance for legal aid providers and their clients. Within three to five years the law schools are expected to pay for most of the expanded services out of their operating budgets. MJF and the LAD Committee recently began a new program to involve law faculty called Legal Scholarship for Minnesota Communities.

- The MSBA's **Access to Justice** program provides critical coordination and

support for pro bono, resource development and statewide communication. The MSBA seized the opportunity to serve as the first statewide pilot project for www.probono.net and built civil law and law student practice areas. Minnesota lawyers have also had access to the national asylum and death penalty practice areas. The Minnesota-specific areas are in the process of being incorporated into the statewide client and advocate lawhelp portals, funded in part by LSC. The MSBA provides critical support for initiatives like the 2001 campaign to increase state legislative funding and to enhance IOLTA interest rates. The MSBA also staffs a Pro Se Implementation Committee, which is a collaborative effort between the organized bar and the courts. Legal aid staff are active members of this committee. The MSBA will be collaborating on the client lawhelp portal.

- The **organized bar and individual lawyers** are important to the success of Minnesota's integrated delivery system. As noted above, virtually all providers rely on volunteer or judicare lawyers to help meet client needs. Individual lawyers and their employers also contribute significant dollars as well as time to providers throughout the state. The organized bar provides critical support for pro bono and for enhancing legal services funding.

- The **Courts** are an important part of the partnership in Minnesota. Increasingly, self-represented people are seeking legal information at the courthouse and attempting to handle matters on their own. Legal aid providers are working closely with the courts, including seeking cooperation from the courts on the lawhelp/mn client portal.

3) Has this system created mechanisms to assess its performance in relationship to commonly-accepted external guides such as the ABA Standards for Providers of Civil Legal Services to the Poor, the LSC Performance Criteria or some other set of objective criteria? What is the protocol for undertaking system performance review and when was a review last undertaken?

Coalition programs identify projected outcomes and past results in their LSC applications. In addition, many local funders of Coalition programs, including United Ways, monitor programs regularly for effectiveness measured against outcome objectives defined by the funders and their grantees.

Beyond these individual program reviews, and to assure that each component of the system is integrated and operates with the highest quality, the Coalition is developing a statewide peer review system. The Coalition appreciates the initial technical assistance support from LSC in doing the research and developing the plan. The initial research is now complete. The report and a three-year work plan were submitted to LSC. Preliminary meetings have been held with local foundations and a proposal will be written this fall to the one that expressed serious interest as part of its Organizational Effectiveness Initiative. The lead

consultant who will coordinate the reviews has been identified, and he will be meeting by conference call in September with the Coalition Directors, the ATJ Director and Support Center staff.

The Coalition programs have identified their goal as raising the level of integration and cooperation among programs to that of a "virtual statewide law firm." As reflected in the peer review report to LSC, the Coalition expects to use materials from several states that have experience in comprehensive program evaluation.

All Minnesota programs have and use the ABA Standards for Civil Providers and for Pro Bono. The Coalition also expects to use the Legal Practice Standards developed and implemented by SMRLS. The SMRLS standards have been shared with other Coalition programs and will be reviewed as the possible basis for statewide standards during the peer review process. LASNEM and LSNM are already considering adoption of the SMRLS standards. The starting point for the statewide systemic peer review process will be questions similar to those in Program Letter 2000-7 and the Coalition's goals and objectives as described above.

Creative projects are testing new methods of improving client outcomes. One SMRLS project in a rural county provides any civil legal services that domestic abuse victims need to move from welfare to work and break the abuse cycle (without which they could not successfully return to work). This is a highly resource-intensive project that couldn't have been done without McKnight Foundation funding. In the first year, 16 of the 18 clients served have not returned to abusive relationships and are successfully meeting their welfare-to-work requirements. This success level is far beyond what project staff had hoped. There is a similar welfare-to-work project in St. Paul. The challenge will be to continue and replicate this successful model with limited ongoing resources.

The IOLTA board and Legal Services Advisory Committee of the Supreme Court (that allocates state funding and attorney registration fee revenue for legal services) are exploring collaborating on a quality review process to complement the Coalition's peer review process. As part of this effort, these two boards are looking at ways to get case statistics, outcome measurements, revenue and expense information, and staffing information for all programs similar to what the Coalition programs provide. The LAD Committee is very interested in having better information about all programs statewide to assist with the planning process. The IOLTA/LSAC effort is in early stages of exploration and should help with quality improvement beyond the core programs. The Coalition and MSBA will collaborate in this effort.

4) Does Minnesota's statewide 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 your system ensure that clients have equitable access to necessary assistance including self-help, legal education, advice, brief service, and representation in all relevant forums? Please describe what steps you anticipate taking to ensure equitable access in the coming years.

Since 1982, Minnesota programs have operated on the principle that there must be equitable access to legal assistance statewide. That is a major reason that the Coalition programs have collaborated on state legislative funding (85% of which is distributed on a poverty population basis to the Coalition programs); submitted a single statewide proposal since the inception of the IOLTA program; received statewide grants from The McKnight Foundation for nine years of funding for systemic work on domestic abuse and child support issues; received five years of funding from The Bush Foundation for statewide technology initiatives (see below); and much more.

The programs agree that all programs to the maximum extent feasible must provide all forms of service. Some services that cannot be done by LSC grantees, like legislative and administrative representation and some group representation, are provided at the statewide level by LSAP, its parent program MMLA, and in collaboration with private attorneys. When the 2000 Census results are final, the funding formula will be changed to reflect the new poverty population distribution. In the past, the formula has been adjusted for undercounts in the Indian and migrant communities. Once the Census figures are available and have been reviewed, consideration will again be given to appropriate formula adjustments.

The State Support Center housed within SMRLS and a statewide Community Legal Education Project housed within MMLA provide extensive community legal education booklets and fact sheets in English and other languages. These materials are available on paper and they will all be available on the new client web portal, which is being designed to allow for navigation in languages other than English and for persons with disabilities. Programs have taken advantage of the NLADA arrangement with Language Line for those instances where staff members are unable to handle calls in a particular language. Increasingly, programs have hired bilingual staff and provided language training for other staff. For example, LSNM sent one staff person to intensive language school in Central America and held Spanish classes for their entire Moorhead office staff. Efforts are being made to attract recent law graduates from immigrant communities. Legal aid offices also employ recent immigrants as paralegals and outreach workers.

Both funding for translation and accuracy of translated materials are major challenges. Recently, MMLA settled a lawsuit with the Minnesota Department of Human Services on linguistic access for clients to DHS programs and services. Depending on the population in particular counties, DHS will be

making notices and other critical information available in the following languages: Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, Serbo-Croatian, and Oromiffa (spoken in Ethiopia). The Coalition programs are committed to striving toward similar accessibility, depending on populations in their service areas. The Center is working on a timeline for translating materials into languages besides Spanish. Many statewide materials are already available in Spanish.

Recognized nationally at the LSC 2000 Migrant Conference, SMRLS has been the LSC migrant farmworker Minnesota and North Dakota grantee for many years. During the growing season the offices in St. Paul and Fargo are supplemented with staff who circuit-ride. Special calendars and other publications in Spanish are widely circulated to call attention to the availability of legal services. Where other programs provide occasional representation to this population, the SMRLS staff always stands ready to assist.

Since SMRLS hired a Hmong attorney to work on VAWA issues in St. Paul last year, the number of Hmong clients served has tripled. SMRLS has Somali volunteers working in its Mankato office; one was a judge in Somalia for many years. They are involved in extensive outreach activities to the growing Somali community in south central Minnesota. MMLA also has Somali, Pakistani, Ethiopian, Hispanic and Hmong staff. LSNM does outreach to Spanish-speaking populations, and uses a bilingual staff social worker to serve domestic violence victims, and do violence prevention work with Hispanic teens. SMRLS has a weekly radio show in Spanish. The LSC Board's June 2000 visit to the SMRLS Immigration and Citizenship Project, housed at the United Cambodian Center, helped strengthen this community-based collaboration. This project served over 1,000 persons from 60 countries in the past year. Coalition programs work closely with the Minnesota Hmong and Hispanic and other minority bar associations. The MSBA convenes a regular Minority Bar Summit.

LSC-funded programs cannot assist some immigrant clients. Minnesota is fortunate to have the Immigrant Law Center of MN (ILCM), MN Advocates for Human Rights, Centro Legal, and a number of volunteer attorneys through other programs that bring considerable additional resources. Because of local program decisions and immigrant settlement patterns, historically there have been more immigration services in the SMRLS service area. MMLA has staff in Minneapolis and Willmar to handle immigration cases and to work with MMLA staff on the immigration overlay with other types of cases.

ICLM and Centro Legal paralegals are co-located at LSNM's Moorhead office as part of the Northwest Immigration Project. LSNM has bilingual intake staff and Spanish-speaking Judicare attorneys, and a contract immigration attorney. Volunteer Lawyers Network and the ILCM received two ABA mini-grants to pilot a volunteer attorney clinic at a neighborhood center where the client

population is largely immigrants. A group being convened by the State Support Center and the MSBA is in the process of providing immigration materials for the probono.net civil law library. This will serve as a resource to staff who do not regularly deal with immigration issues and immigrant clients and should improve the ability of volunteer attorneys to respond statewide.

ILCM recently received funding for a statewide needs assessment and strategic planning project around immigration legal services and other legal needs of immigrants. Project staff met with the Coalition directors in May and are now seeking local input around the state. Coalition and other programs work closely with the MSBA Immigration Section. The MSBA New Lawyers Section has co-sponsored several recent CLE programs to encourage more volunteer lawyers to handle immigration-related cases. Services to immigrant and refugee communities remain a significant challenge. Strategies are being developed for resource development and statewide services. Initial contacts have been made with local foundations that expressed interest in a statewide approach once the ILCM study is complete.

The statewide Minnesota Disability Law Center, a component of MMLA, is the designated protection and advocacy program for Minnesota. MDLC has advocates located throughout the state, co-located with local Coalition offices wherever feasible. MDLC provides extensive training and community legal education, advocates on behalf of clients at the Legislature and before administrative agencies, and collaborates with client-based community organizations throughout the state. MDLC is active in the National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems and is a partner in the new web portal project. While Minnesota programs do much work with people who are institutionalized, MDLC's efforts have made Minnesota a national leader in deinstitutionalizing and providing community services for persons with mental retardation and mental illness.

With Foundation funds, the St. Cloud office of CMLS has demonstrated through a rural pilot project that domestic violence victims are far more likely to access legal services when they are offered at the local shelter than when victims need to call or visit the legal aid office. Other rural programs are now using this model as well.

The LSC Native American grantee, Anishinabe Legal Services, recently supplemented its LSC funds with VAWA and McKnight funding to open offices on the two more remote reservations it serves. Coalition programs and specialized programs like the Indian Child Welfare Law Center make special efforts to reach out. LASNEM, with Blandin Foundation support, has significantly increased the number of American Indians served. Outreach efforts include maintaining regular office hours in remote communities on the Leech Lake Reservation and extensive community education efforts. An enrolled member of the Leech Lake Band serves as an outreach paralegal in

Grand Rapids. IOLTA funding was obtained and is administered by MMLA to help pay the salary for a staff attorney who serves the Indian population living on the Mille Lacs Reservation. MMLA also carries on a special outreach project to Indians living in Minneapolis. SMRLS serves the American Indian population in and around St. Paul through its American Indian Center office.

The Coalition programs work closely with the Minnesota American Indian Bar Association, and Anishinabe serves as a statewide resource. The advocates described above now communicate informally when planning trainings or about handling specific cases. With the goal of further identifying the needs of Indian people on a statewide basis and then crafting a strategy to better address those needs, the Coalition is considering beginning an Indian Law Task Force and/or starting a specific email list. Indian Law materials will also be posted in the new advocate web library.

The Coalition programs receive some special funding to serve seniors. This funding is terribly inadequate and services are provided by Coalition programs far beyond the resources provided through the Area Agencies on Aging. MAO Senior Support Services supplements these services in the metro area. The programs work closely with the Minnesota Board on Aging, especially the Legal Services Developer and the Senior Linkage Line, and Area Agencies on Aging. Regular Seniors Task Force meetings and an email list provide the opportunity to share materials and case advice and strategies.

While statewide grants are extremely helpful, it remains a challenge to maintain high levels of all services in resource-poorer areas of the state and to be sure that smaller programs are not taxed beyond their ability to contribute. Bigger programs tend to carry the burden of funding advocacy, for example at the Legislature. And the bigger programs also often manage statewide initiatives. Experienced staff throughout the state take seriously their responsibility to provide mentoring and training and to write and edit the statewide community legal education booklets. Co-location of MDLC and immigration staff in some rural offices is helpful.

The advent of the probono.net civil law practice area has better equipped rural volunteer attorneys to more easily take on family and housing law cases in particular. In the past several years, Minnesota programs have been successful in matching urban volunteer attorney resources with client needs throughout the state. Volunteer Lawyers Network in Minneapolis does phone bankruptcy screening and advice for clients statewide and full representation for bankruptcy cases venued in the Twin Cities (the majority of Minnesota cases). The MSBA's Law Firm Pro Bono Roundtable has expanded its case acceptance in the past four years through the use of email to circulate case requests from anywhere in the state to large metro area firms. The use of the probono.net New Matters feature has expanded this further and now includes many solo and small firm practitioners as well. In the coming year, the LAD Committee will be

looking at how to enhance rural pro bono as part of its emphasis on reinvigoration of pro bono.

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

Implementation of the Coalition's Statewide Technology Plan, with funding from The Bush Foundation and LSC among others, represents a major step toward achieving the Coalition's goal of becoming a virtual statewide law firm that uses technology to increase access and enhance services to clients. The plan sets forth a three-stage process continuing through 2009. Phase I of the implementation, is largely complete. An LSC technical assistance grant enabled the state to begin planning for implementation of Phase II, which is now underway.

Initiatives completed under Phase I of the Plan include the following:

- Bringing every office up to a baseline level of technological capacity; providing every staff member with desktop Internet access and an individual e-mail account;

- Developing a private website information geared toward legal services staff, such as staff announcements, special training materials, etc;

- Developing a public website to create a legal services presence online, providing office and program information, legal education information, and other information for clients and advocates;

- Creating e-mail lists and web forums for Task Forces and Coalition programs;

- Developing technology planning, education and support to enable all staff and management to use technology as an effective tool to improve service to clients; and

- Providing all advocates with on-line legal research capacity, including online subscription to Westlaw research, online updates of recent developments in poverty law, and links on the statewide website to free online research resources.

The Phase I evaluation found that users are happy with the overall implementation of the technology plan to date and believe that it has significantly improved their program's capacity and their own individual capacity to serve clients. Many users consider the implementation of the plan to

have made a profound difference in the way they do their jobs which ultimately significantly benefits clients. Many users commented on the effectiveness of the new technology in promoting closer relationships among providers.

Phase II of the Statewide Technology Plan, supported in part by an LSC grant, a new three-year $800,000 grant from The Bush Foundation, smaller grants to individual programs, and seed money from The McKnight Foundation, includes several major efforts. These include:

- Streamlining the intake and legal work management processes with the stated goal of adoption of a single legal work management system. Pilot projects are currently underway.

- Developing and launching a statewide legal portal for clients and advocates. The client portal will include basic legal information in English and other languages for low- and moderate-income individuals, pro se support materials (including forms in cooperation with the courts), information about legal services offices as well as other legal providers for low- and moderate-income individuals, and referral information to other community resources. The advocate portal will meld the current Coalition web site with probono.net/mn.

- The Coalition and a wide range of collaborators are working toward creating a special online area for victims of domestic abuse, including an online form preparation tool as well as an extensive educational resource library that would include referrals to legal resources, shelters, and court information.

Technology is improving client service, mentoring of less-experienced staff, and legal outcomes for clients. Two examples highlight these points.

- An attorney in a small rural office recently faced a court hearing in which he needed to prepare pleadings for a matter in which he had little expertise. He was able to put a request on the email list and receive materials from the most experienced practitioners in the state (from other programs) within an hour. Similarly, as the probono.net (and new advocate portal) library grows, the best materials are more widely available to produce higher quality work in less time.

- A staff attorney from Judicare of Anoka County was representing a client in a child support case appealed to the Minnesota Court of Appeals by the adverse party, who wanted to reduce his child support in a joint custody arrangement. The attorneys for both parties submitted briefs and prepared for oral argument. The day before oral argument, the attorney utilized the program's subscription to Westlaw research and discovered a favorable, not-yet-published case decided one week earlier. At oral argument she was able to cite that case, which proved determinative, and the client prevailed.

Access to the online research enhanced the quality of legal services that the client received. The contract for computerized research services was a result of the collaboration between the programs. Without this collaboration, the cost of the online research services would have been prohibitive.

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?**

Please see extensive discussions at A.4, B.2 and B.4.above.

7) **What steps have been implemented within the legal services delivery system and among client communities to identify and nurture new leaders? Do the existing leaders reflect the diversity within Minnesota and within client communities that your delivery system serves? Do Minnesota's equal justice leaders reflect the gender, race, ethnic and economic concerns of important but sometimes overlooked groups within your 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?**

With development of new leadership in mind, the 2001 Legal Services Annual Statewide Conference, Taking Our Work to the Next Level, focuses on skills. During this two-day retreat, in addition to trial and negotiation skills, the program includes sessions on Advancing Your Career in Legal Services, What Managers/Supervisors Need to Know About Employment Law, Client-Centered Management: Producing Effective Results for Clients, and Community Outreach and Collaborative Partnerships. As part of this Conference, the Coalition intends to begin to offer new statewide recognition for years of service (probably 5 or 10 years plus) and for special team projects during the past year. Minnesota also hopes to host an MIE legal work supervision conference in the next year.

Project directors have encouraged legal aid staff to be active in the MSBA, for example, serving on the Board of Governors, LAD and Pro Se Committees, and on Section Councils. Legal aid staff attorneys have twice served as chair of the MSBA Family Law Section. The SMRLS Deputy Executive Director served last year as co-chair of the MSBA's Professionalism Committee. Annually, the MSBA presents the Bernard P. Becker Awards to two legal services staff people and one law student volunteer for demonstrated commitment to provision of zealous and skilled legal representation for low-income and disadvantaged clients. Legal aid staff are encouraged to serve on Supreme Court Task Forces; recently an MMLA supervising attorney was reporter for a Supreme Court

group that overhauled all juvenile court rules and procedures.

While current leadership is not as reflective of Minnesota's diversity as the programs might wish, it is generally reflective of the senior bar. Over half of the Coalition's supervising and managing attorneys and two project directors are women. The SMRLS Deputy Executive Director is an African-American woman. The majority of the non-Coalition program project directors are women. Members of the communities they serve (Indian, Latino) lead specialized programs. Having a number of smaller programs provides many leadership development opportunities and more diversity. As discussed above, significant efforts are being made to hire staff from communities of color including recent immigrant communities. The hope is to nurture new leaders from among this group. Several programs bring in diversity consultants to assist with internal leadership and diversity development work. Programs reach out regularly to minority bar associations and minority law student organizations when they are recruiting for lawyer positions and to client community organizations when recruiting for other staff openings.

Another longer-term step in creating future legal aid lawyers and leaders is the Minnesota Justice Foundation's Law School Public Service Program (LSPSP) described in section A.2. The LSPSP exposes the majority of law students to client community needs and involves them in direct client service. Innovative projects to involve law students are encouraged and attract applicants for positions after graduation. Current leaders appreciate that involving students takes time, but it is a good investment. Minnesota has a high number of NAPIL fellows and most stay with legal aid in Minnesota when their fellowships end. A major law firm recently endowed an MJF staff position at the University of Minnesota Law School. The LAD Committee and MJF are actively seeking other ways to sustain this program.

Two recent Annual Statewide Conferences focused on client and community involvement and leadership development. These were entitled Building Stronger Community Partnerships (1998) and Working Together to Protect Our Families (2000). The latter was a collaboration in which the close to 500 participants included approximately 200 from domestic abuse advocacy and child protection programs. The State Bar Foundation supported scholarships for advocates from domestic abuse programs with budgets too small to pay for the conference. Most of the scholarships went to rural programs and volunteer advocates, many of whom were from communities of color. A group, led by the State Support Center with recently-renewed McKnight Foundation funding, continues to work together to pursue strategies identified at the conference for improving communication/collaboration within and among those systems.

Programs make efforts to ensure that the client and other community involvement is significant. Eligible clients serve on all LSC and state-funded legal services boards of directors. Clients or non-attorney community members

serve as president, treasurer and secretary of the SMRLS board; treasurer of the MMLA board; chair of the LASNEM board; secretary of Anoka Judicare; treasurer of the CMLS board; and vice-chair and treasurer of the Anishinabe board. Clients also serve on the Supreme Court's Lawyer Trust Account Board and Legal Services Advisory Committee (state funding distribution). Client and community groups were actively involved in designing and implementing the MSBA's campaign to increase state legal aid funding in 2001. Their presence as planners, witnesses at hearings, and key communicators made a significant impact on legislators.

8) What do you envision will be your next steps to achieve a client-centered integrated and comprehensive delivery system within your state or territory? How will clients be actively involved in the determination of these next steps?

Minnesota was fortunate to have two staff people selected to attend LSC's "Client Centered Conference" held in Harrisburg. Upon their return, they made a preliminary report to the project directors. As a first step in increased client involvement, the directors began to discuss the best ways to involve clients as participants in annual legal services statewide conferences.

Client involvement in an organized way has been more of a challenge in recent years since the demise of the Minnesota Clients Council. The MCC used to send a representative to all Coalition directors meetings. The Directors have been discussing the best ways to reincorporate formal client input in statewide Coalition meetings, visioning and planning efforts. Locally clients and community group representatives actively participate in program needs assessments and priority setting through surveys and/or focus groups.

The LAD Committee is considering asking the MSBA to appoint some representatives from the client community as adjunct committee members. This issue will be addressed in more detail in the coming year at Project Directors and LAD meetings.

Legal aid staff are increasingly involved with local community organizations including collaborative projects, in-service cross-trainings, and board service by legal aid staff. These relationships ensure significant client community input. For a recent statewide project, a feasibility study for the Internet-based order for protection process, focus groups including clients were held all over the state.

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 Minnesota plan to overcome that obstacle?

The principal obstacle, even in comparatively resource-rich Minnesota, remains lack of resources to provide appropriate access to all eligible clients who need

services and to others who may not be eligible but cannot afford to hire a private lawyer. Remarkable partnership efforts led to: (1) An attorney registration fee increase to support legal services, which now adds close to $1 million per year to the pool available to providers. This was the first of its kind in the nation. (2) An increase from the legislature to the base funding for legal services of an additional $600,000 per year beginning in 1997 and another $1.25 million per year beginning in 2002 for a total state appropriation of $7.734 million per year. [An example of the materials used in the 2001 effort is attached as Appendix B.] (3) Recent successes with significant increases in interest rates and reductions in service charges and transaction fees on many IOLTA accounts by major banks. Minnesota is still far short of the resources necessary to provide full access.

The Coalition programs are hopeful that progress will be made in the coming year to enhance the statewide Minnesota Legal Aid Foundation Fund that already has over $1 million in hand or pledged. The MSBA committed to hiring a fund development consultant this year to explore the best ways to build this endowment fund further. The MSBA is committed to continuing staff support to build on the 2001 legislative success and go back for further increases in 2003. An extensive database will be built capturing all the contacts from the 2001 campaign. See attached Appendix B for one package developed for the 2001 campaign.

One major obstacle, overcome in Minnesota many years ago by the Coalition programs, is the suspicion and mistrust of individual programs when each program competed separately for funding. Cooperation and collaboration on non-fund raising issues came naturally once the decision was made by the Coalition programs to approach collectively major funding sources such as the legislature, IOLTA and major foundations rather than individually compete for limited funding.

The LAD Committee and the Coalition programs are working together to overcome some dissatisfaction among smaller programs about statewide funding. Those programs reap the benefits of work done largely by the Coalition programs and the MSBA (for example, legislative funding, the attorney registration fee, and the new Foundation Fund) but are raising questions about the allocation. Under the 1981 statute, state funding is distributed 85% on a poverty population basis to the Coalition programs and 15% through a competitive grant process to other programs serving eligible clients. The attorney registration fee is similarly allocated.

Newer lawyers are being paid relatively low salaries and have high student loans. Lack of resources makes it hard for programs to hire and retain good people. The LRAP board, Coalition programs, the law schools and the LAD Committee are working to expand LRAP-MN (see section A.2). They are pleased that Minnesota's newest law school, with encouragement from a Coalition project director, has pledged to provide loan repayment assistance for

its graduates in public service careers. Another school is considering establishing an endowment for loan repayment assistance. Programs are working closely with LRAP-MN and the law schools to expand this resource.

The Coalition programs and some of the smaller programs have recently raised salaries and revamped benefit packages to allow for more flexible benefits including retirement accounts. The Coalition programs have also begun to explore moving toward a uniform compensation package by sharing compensation and personnel policies with each other. This will be followed by discussions at upcoming meetings.

As noted above, the Coalition programs are working hard on how to best utilize technology on a statewide basis to enhance the client-centered delivery system. There are significant details that need to be discussed and agreed upon before the well-defined vision of a virtual statewide law firm becomes reality. As the Coalition programs begin testing with the ultimate goal of implementing a single legal work management system statewide, the programs are confident that this initiative will dramatically improve client service and intra and inter-program efficiency.

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

As noted above, the 1995 Joint Legal Services Access & Funding Committee carefully analyzed the delivery system at that time and determined that Minnesota's system indeed was comprehensive, integrated and client-centered. The Committee also made a number of recommendations about how the system could be even better. Otherwise, no specific cost-benefit analysis has been done. The MSBA collected and presented to the Legislature information about the results that legal aid obtains for clients. For example, legal aid secures about $4 million each year in new child support orders, primarily on behalf of families on public assistance, and thousands of disabled Minnesotans obtain over $5 million each year in new federal disability benefits with Legal Aid's help. Funders such as The Bush and McKnight Foundations have evaluated the Coalition's statewide collaborative approach and responded favorably. They believe that our system is comprehensive, integrated and client-centered. One of our project directors has had very preliminary conversations with faculty at the Harvard Civil Rights Project about whether they and some law students might be interested in undertaking such an analysis for Minnesota.

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

The Coalition programs urge LSC to look at ways to support loan repayment assistance, offset rapidly rising health insurance costs, and fund retirement

plans. While programs and the Bar are attempting to address these on the state level, and while these are essentially resource issues, there may be creative solutions at the national level through group purchasing or federal support beyond the basic field grants. Minnesota programs also face a significant challenge in finding adequate and affordable translation services for community legal education and other client materials including the new lawhelp/mn web site. Perhaps there are ways to address this from a national perspective as well.

B. The extent to which Minnesota has achieved its intended outcomes of a comprehensive, integrated client-centered legal service delivery system, 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?

For a full discussion of strategies designed to address identified client needs, see section A.1.

The Coalition programs continually communicate and assess existing and emerging client issues through Director meetings, task forces that meet regularly and include legal services staff and other advocates, web site and e-group activity, statewide trainings and conferences. Through these vehicles, they often employ multi-faceted approaches. Ongoing strategies include multi-year statewide projects funded with both private and public money; statewide task force efforts; legislative action; technological approaches; creating community coalitions, collaborations, and partnerships; presenting community education sessions and disseminating materials; and co-counseling with legal services and private attorneys and other justice community advocates.

The nature of "success measurement" depends upon the strategies used. Advanced Coalition technology allows statistical and numerical measurement of a continuum of case-related factors and matters. Outcome standards are frequently utilized, and often required by grantors. Increases in funding or grant money can be quantified. Surveys, interviews and input on advisory boards and projects measure client satisfaction. Elimination or decrease of problem areas are determinable. LSAP studies how legal and policy changes affect clients. Their staff includes a Ph.D-candidate policy analyst. For an overall analysis of whether the Coalition objectives and client issues have been addressed, Minnesota's legal services programs are implementing a peer review process which will assess all facets of service delivery.

2) Has the legal services delivery system expanded access and services

through coordination with providers throughout the state? Can this be quantified?

The Coalition has articulated various goals and projects to enhance services and access. See A.1 for further details. Much of the information can be quantified. Additional cases accepted and clients served can be shown using computerized case management reports. Through The Bush Foundation technology project, Minnesota programs are considering legal work management systems with one goal being improving and standardizing quantification efforts. The Center and MMLA's statewide community education project track the numbers of informational materials distributed. Increased numbers of people using pro se systems, pro bono attorneys, and program referrals could be calculated. Statistical information is kept for various private funders about the extent of statewide project impact, such as The McKnight Foundation family law effort designed to expand services to poor women and children, particularly victims of domestic violence. Access to information through technology can be measured to some extent with website hits and requests for information, and additional numbers of attorneys registering for probono.net. Services expanded by co-locating staff in other program offices, like the Northwest Immigration Project, can be shown through both clients served and broadened program priorities.

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

Minnesota continually strives to improve the quality, quantity, and appropriateness of services provided. Statewide training, resources, and technology have significantly improved the ability of practitioners to handle cases and educate or empower clients. The Coalition web site and probono.net provide training materials, research opportunities, and support for volunteer and Judicare attorneys. Staff and other justice community advocates can work together on major projects or communicate to broaden the expertise and experience available to solve problems or meet client needs.

Cooperative applications for funding and impact projects have expanded the alternatives available to meet client needs.

For clients with limited English proficiency, hiring bilingual staff has improved the quality of services delivered. SMRLS, for example, has 21 bilingual staff members. The Courts recognize the value of these staff people – they request their interpreting services when the courts cannot find other interpreters (which is far too often).

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?

Minnesota has the luxury of a head start in statewide planning and building a justice community, having begun serious cooperative efforts in 1980. The Supreme Court's Joint Committee articulated client "access to all forums, and a full range of legal services in areas of critical need" as a principle in 1995. A longstanding Coalition objective is "taking affirmative steps to ensure that disadvantaged persons who historically have had disproportionately less access to the legal system (such as disabled individuals, minority-race persons, persons in sparsely populated areas, and seniors) have effective access to legal services." Joint fundraising for special client needs, and disbursement of other money based on poverty population, are great access equalizers. While the Minnesota programs strive for continual improvement in the relative equity of client access throughout the state, progress has been ongoing for many years, and not just since 1998. All programs routinely partner with each other, related service providers, bar associations, the Minnesota Justice Foundation, the law schools, courts and private attorneys to increase access.

The Coalition programs continually assess client needs, and the nature of clients they serve. Because of the growth of immigrant, refugee, and non-English speaking clients, for instance, programs have been expanded since 1998 to meet their emerging needs. Offices have implemented Language Line, hired bilingual staff, and expanded special projects for Hmong, Somalian, Chicano-Latino, and other populations. The Coalition has created materials in more languages, and addressed the needs of new clients through joint projects, legislative activity, and partnerships with non-LSC programs. In the past three years, programs have utilized justice communities to better serve seniors and children. In rural and urban Minnesota, advocates worked together to establish a network, support system, and statewide organization for grandparents raising grandchildren, and other kinship caregivers. Child protection, domestic violence, and legal services staff continue to work together after identifying and beginning to address significant service barriers at last year's "Protecting our Families" legal services-sponsored joint statewide conference, attended by about 500 advocates.

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?

Again, with the opportunity for coordinated statewide service delivery and planning for over a decade and a half, Minnesota maintains a full range of

delivery capacities throughout the state. Equitable funding by poverty population is perhaps the most significant factor in achieving and maintaining program parity. Equity has perhaps increased since 1998 in expanded statewide training, technology development, joint foundation funding, and statewide pro bono projects.

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

The LAD Committee believes that Minnesota's delivery system works efficiently with relatively little duplication. A cornerstone of this system is the statewide Coalition meetings and communication among the Coalition programs and with others, in part through the LAD Committee. Since 1982, project directors and others have made a significant investment of time and other resources to work together to ensure the best results for clients. There are at least six to eight full-day meetings each year for business and visioning. An active e-mail list and special conference phone calls provide for regular communication and decision-making between meetings. Individual directors/programs take on responsibilities for the common good. For example, LSNM has agreed to manage the peer review process; MMLA works closely with the LRAP program and handles statewide budgets, statistics and production for the annual IOLTA proposal; SMRLS houses and handles administration for the State Support Center. One goal of the new web portals is to cut down on duplicative community education materials and practice forms; individual program web sites will all be housed within lawhelp/mn as well. Lawhelp will also cut down on duplicative efforts of the MSBA, the Coalition and First Call for Help that now all maintain separate legal referral data bases.

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 deliver essential services to low income people?

Minnesota has played a leadership role with respect to pro bono for many years. The MSBA and Arrowhead Lawyers Care were honored on separate occasions with the Harrison Tweed Award. Two Minnesotans have been named NAPBCO Coordinators of the Year, and numerous private lawyers have been recognized. Minnesota had the highest percentage of eligible firms originally participating in the ABA's Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge and the firms continue this high level of participation.

The LAD Committee and local programs are pleased with the implementation of probono.net/mn and the response from volunteers. The MSBA has completely moved its loose-leaf Volunteer Attorney Desk Manual to the web site and is beginning to reduce the number of paper subscriptions to the Coalition's twice-monthly newsletter. The 3M pro bono project with SMRLS is regarded as a

model in the corporate community. Private lawyers play key roles in brief advice clinics at community and pro se service centers, full representation of individual clients, appellate representation, class action representation, legal training of clients and legal services attorneys, and public policy work either independently or in collaboration with a non-LSC provider.

Minnesota programs have made very effective and conscious use of a combined staff-judicare model in several different settings: a 22-county rural area, a single very isolated rural county, and a first ring suburb with a long history of judicare involvement. Over the years, reliance on staff components has increased, particularly for public benefit cases. Judicare components continue to be effective for family, housing, consumer, unemployment and similar matters. Programs also use contract attorneys for some farm law representation and to fill other gaps in rural areas. Their expertise in property, tax and business law is often utilized to address those issues in staff cases. They may work with staff attorneys as co-counsel and provide or receive legal support on case development. The first point of contact with clients is generally trained intake staff, to ensure eligibility, needs assessment, and responsiveness to critical legal matters. Legal staff routinely screen applicants for public benefit entitlement or poverty law issues before a client is referred to Judicare. Quality is ensured by private attorney participation in Coalition training programs, access to poverty law materials on probono.net/mn and through local programs, staff mentoring, and program monitoring of case status. Client satisfaction surveys continue to be very favorable. Judicare panel members and contract attorneys contribute significant pro bono time beyond the hours for which they receive minimal compensation.

Minnesota Lawyer, a major legal publication read by most practicing lawyers in the state, produced a special section in August of 2000 called "For the Public Good." A copy is attached as Appendix C. In addition to including the contact information for the civil legal services pro bono programs, there were a number of feature stories about specifics such as rural pro bono, bankruptcy projects and others. The response to this publication was very good. *Minnesota Lawyer* provided reprints for use in recruitment.

Despite Minnesota's success with pro bono, the LAD Committee and Coalition programs believe more can and should be done. Having been unsuccessful in persuading Minnesota's Supreme Court to adopt required reporting of pro bono, the LAD Committee needs to take a new approach. The Committee's primary project in the coming year is to begin exploring ways to continue to build pro bono statewide.

C. 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?

As described at the beginning of this report, the Minnesota Legal Services Coalition comprises five basic field regional LSC-funded programs (one housing the Minnesota and North Dakota Migrant program and the State Support Center), an LSC-funded Indian program serving people residing on the three largest Minnesota reservations, and a non-LSC-funded program serving 20 central Minnesota counties and housing the statewide Legal Services Advocacy Project and Minnesota Disability Law Center. These programs form the core of the delivery system.

A board of directors composed of lawyers, eligible clients and others who reside in the community and are committed to justice governs each Coalition program. Local bar associations and the MSBA appoint a majority of lawyer board members. Client organizations or advisory groups often recommend client members. These locally controlled boards oversee program finances, policies and operations and adopt legal work priorities. Non-Coalition programs have similar board structures; to receive state funding the programs must have at least one eligible client board member.

The Coalition programs' collective budgets in 2000 were $21 million. The sources were:

State Appropriation	26.78%
Other Federal	16.73%
LSC	16.18%
United Way/Foundations	12.82%
IOLTA	9.20%
Private	8.33%
Attorney Registration Fee	3.80%
Fees/Interest (fees to non-LSC program only)	2.77%

The Coalition programs are described below. Information is current to April 2001. Brief descriptions of other civil providers with which the Coalition collaborates are attached as Appendix A.

Minnesota Legal Services Coalition Programs:

Anishinabe Legal Services (Anishinabe) serves low-income persons who reside on the Leech Lake, Red Lake and White Earth Reservations in northern Minnesota. Some services are also provided to persons residing near those reservations. An estimated 18,917 people are eligible for Anishinabe's services,

which is an increase of approximately 30 percent over 1994. The median income in five of the seven counties within Anishinabe's service area is at least $5,000 below the statewide median. Most clients live in remote, rural locations; many do not have telephones or transportation. Their unique legal needs include federal Indian law, Indian Child Welfare Act issues, tribal law/tribal courts, education, U.S. Indian Health and Bureau of Indians Affairs matters, Social Security, housing, discrimination, and elder issues. First priority is given to cases that involve both poverty law and Indian law. Staff practice before state, federal and tribal courts, and administrative agencies.

The main office is in Cass Lake on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation. With federal VAWA funds, Anishinabe opened a branch office on the White Earth Reservation in 1999. With funds from The McKnight Foundation, Anishinabe opened a branch office on the Red Lake Reservation in 2000. Although the two branch offices were opened with funds from time-limited grants, their presence is important enough to justify subsidizing their operation with funds previously reserved for the Cass Lake office. The remoteness of these offices, however, increases the difficulty of recruiting staff, requiring additional financial incentives.

Anishinabe employs 4.6 lawyers, two paralegals and three support staff. There is no specific volunteer attorney program because very few private attorneys are located on the reservations but Anishinabe uses the MSBA's Pro Bono Roundtable when appropriate. Anishinabe's service area overlaps those of LSNM and LASNEM, and the three programs refer clients to each other for representation in cases that fall outside particular program case-acceptance priorities. Anishinabe's leadership in federal Indian law resulted recently in several favorable reported decisions of statewide impact; in addition, staff conducted a day-long CLE regarding Indian law for area attorneys and other Legal Services staff. In 2000, Anishinabe closed 1,082 cases, a substantial increase from 1999 that reflects the stability of the current staff and a renewed focus on direct client services and family law.

Anishinabe receives 34 percent of its financial support from LSC, compared to 62 percent in 1995. Because of the nature of its service area, Anishinabe does not receive any United Way funding.

Judicare of Anoka County (JAC) serves low-income residents of Anoka County. An estimated 16,900 people are eligible for services. JAC is a combined staff and Judicare program established in 1975 through a joint effort with the Anoka County (21st District) Bar Association. The MSBA requires membership in one of 21 local district bar associations. Anoka is the only single county bar association other than Hennepin (Minneapolis) and Ramsey (St. Paul). The unusual strength of this local bar is reflected in the long-standing structure of and support for JAC.

JAC employs two lawyers, two paralegals and two administrative/support staff. The staff administers the program (including client intake, eligibility screening and referral) and provides representation to clients in more traditional poverty law cases. The program closed 1,252 cases in 2000.

A panel of private attorneys represents Judicare clients after program staff determines eligibility. If clients have no preference for an attorney, the staff selects one based upon expertise, location and availability. JAC has approximately 60 attorneys currently on its panel handling about five cases each per year. As part of the agreement to represent program clients, the attorneys provide some *pro bono* services. In 2000, panel attorneys provided over 600 hours of *pro bono* services in referred cases. The 21st District Bar Association asks that each member annually contribute five hours of uncompensated time or $200 to JAC.

JAC receives19 percent of its financial support from LSC.

Legal Aid Service of Northeastern Minnesota (LASNEM) serves low-income residents of an 11-county area in northern and central Minnesota. An estimated 58,869 people are eligible for services. LASNEM focuses on breaking down artificial barriers to equality, opportunity and fair play, and promoting the concept that everyone deserves a fair chance. Fully staffed offices are maintained in Duluth, Brainerd, Grand Rapids, Virginia and Pine City. Outreach offices area also maintained in Aitkin, Hibbing, Ely, Walker, Inger, Orr, Squaw Lake and Ball Club. A full range of services is provided using a mixed staff, Judicare, and *pro bono* delivery system.

A panel of Judicare attorneys delivers services in Koochiching County, the most geographically isolated county in LASNEM's service area, and *pro bono* services are provided by the Arrowhead Lawyers Care Volunteer Attorney Program through a subgrant agreement. More than 90 percent of the attorneys in the region participate in the volunteer attorney program .

LASNEM's staff consists of 19.6 attorneys, 4.5 paralegals and 18 administrative and support staff. LASNEM closed 7,328 cases in 2000 and provided community education sessions throughout the region attended by 2,288 persons. The cases typically involved problems with housing, government benefits, income preservation, and family and consumer matters. In its attempt to reach the maximum number of clients, LASNEM works with other agencies to avoid duplication of services using a continuum of care service delivery approach.

LASNEM received 20 percent of its financial support from LSC in 2000.

Legal Services of Northwest Minnesota (LSNM) serves low-income residents of 22 counties covering approximately 25,000 square miles in northwest Minnesota. An estimated 79,700 people are eligible for services. The

population density overall is about 15 persons per square mile. Only three cities exceed 10,000 in population. The median household income is substantially lower than the state average. Twelve counties are among the 20 poorest in the state.

Offices located in Moorhead, Bemidji and Alexandria provide services. The Moorhead office provides program administration. The program uses a combined staff and judicare system. Judicare panel lawyers are reimbursed by LSNM at $45 per hour with maximum fees set for certain types of cases. In 2000, LSNM closed 4,900 cases. The judicare lawyers handled approximately 36 percent of the cases; the remaining 64 percent were handled by the three staffed offices. LSNM has established a children's unit, Kids Legal Aid Work (KidsLAW), which focuses on issues having particular impact on children. In 1999, LSNM created a domestic violence legal team to work with victims, their families, domestic violence programs, and other service providers in a holistic approach to help clients eliminate domestic violence from their lives.

LSNM has 7 lawyers (down from 11 in 2000), 2 paralegals, a bilingual outreach worker, 3 administrative and 8 support staff. Volunteers, law clerks and legal assistant interns are also used extensively. Staff provides administrative support, including client intake, eligibility screening and referral. Staff handle individual representation primarily in public housing, government benefits and family law cases, and provide training, support and research for panel lawyers. LSNM also provides community education through both staff and judicare lawyers.

Approximately 170 lawyers in the LSNM service area accepted referrals from the LSNM judicare program in 2000, averaging 10.4 cases per lawyer. Over $1,231,000 in lawyer time was donated by LSNM judicare panel members last year. LSNM received 28 percent of its financial support from LSC in 2000.

Mid-Minnesota Legal Assistance (MMLA) provides legal advice and representation to low-income clients in 20 counties in central Minnesota, through offices in Minneapolis (3), St. Cloud, Cambridge and Willmar. An estimated 206,900 people are eligible for services. Efforts to increase access for especially disadvantaged clients have been made by securing funding for senior citizens projects, the Community Legal Education Project, the Minnesota Disability Law Center, the Housing Discrimination Law Project, and the Family Farm Law Project. One component of MMLA, the Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis, was founded in 1913. MMLA delivered services for Central Minnesota Legal Services (CMLS), the LSC grantee, on a reimbursement contract basis until July 1, 1996. MMLA ended the arrangement because the 1996 Congressional appropriation was interpreted by LSC to require that Congressional restrictions on LSC funds be imposed on **all** the funds of any program which received LSC funds, even on a sub-contract basis. Since over 83 percent of MMLA's funds were non-LSC, and since MMLA's other funders did not share Congress's support of the restrictions, MMLA's board declined to let a

minority stakeholder control all of MMLA's activities. This decision was also part of ongoing planning within Minnesota to ensure that clients statewide had access to some unrestricted services through MMLA's statewide projects.

Following termination of the MMLA/CMLS contract, CMLS hired additional staff to deliver services within the LSC restrictions. (See below.) The programs closely coordinate intake and priorities to prevent client confusion or service disruption resulting from the change. The shift has gone smoothly. MMLA employs 64.5 lawyers, 27.4 paralegals and 37.5 administrative/support staff. MMLA closed 10,176 cases in 2000.

The statewide Legal Services Advocacy Project, which provides legislative and administrative representation, is part of MMLA.

MMLA enjoys strong support from local bar associations, law firms and client groups. The local lawyer volunteer program in Hennepin County, Volunteer Lawyers Network (VLN), has had a referral relationship with the Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis for over 27 years.

Central Minnesota Legal Services (CMLS) provides civil legal services within LSC restrictions to low-income persons in the 20-county area also served by MMLA. The two programs coordinate intake to avoid client confusion or delays in delivery of service. CMLS emphasizes services to families in crisis. CMLS employs 10 lawyers, 3 paralegals and 7 administrative/support staff and closed 1,062 cases in 2000. CMLS staffs the volunteer programs in St. Cloud, Willmar and Cambridge. Over 500 lawyers participate in volunteer attorney programs administered by MMLA's and CMLS's local offices and the VLN program. CMLS also provides financial support through subgrants to VLN and to the MSBA's volunteer efforts.

CMLS, with McKnight Foundation funds, is engaged in pilot projects testing methods of enhancing services to domestic abuse victims in very rural counties and providing assisted pro se services in Hennepin County. CMLS staff, who are among the most experienced family law practitioners in the state, are responsible for the training materials and forms for the family law folder of the www.probono.net/mn/civil library. They are also developing the tenants' remedies forms and materials.

Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services (SMRLS), established in 1909 as the Legal Aid Bureau of Associated Charities in St. Paul, employs 63 lawyers, 25 paralegals, and 38 support and administrative staff. SMRLS closed 10,105 cases in 2000. SMRLS provides representation to low-income residents of 33 counties in southern Minnesota and to migrant farm workers throughout Minnesota and North Dakota, through offices in St. Paul, Mankato, Winona, Albert Lea, Worthington, Prior Lake and Fargo N.D. An estimated 242,400

people are eligible for services.

Each office has senior citizen and active volunteer attorney projects. Outreach offices are located at the American Indian/East Side office and the Cambodian Legal Services project. SMRLS coordinates closely with the Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota (ILCM). SMRLS recently opened an outreach office in Rochester to serve a growing immigrant and refugee population in fair housing, welfare, and immigration matters. SMRLS continues to work closely with the Legal Assistance of Olmsted, Dakota and Washington County programs on family law and domestic abuse issues. SMRLS also uses several circuit-riding and "growing season" offices throughout Minnesota.

SMRLS works collaboratively with other legal services providers on projects including a Citizenship Project with the ILCM; the Minnesota Family Farm Law Project; the United Cambodian Association; and Ain Dah Yung (to serve American Indian juveniles). Since 1994, SMRLS's Education Law Project has assisted children of color who are having problems in school. In 1999, SMRLS established a pilot project with the Ramsey County Public Defender to work collaboratively with juveniles who are experiencing truancy or delinquency problems and who are in danger of leaving school.

SMRLS has a Homeless Outreach Prevention Education project and a project designed to educate and encourage landlords to rent housing to low-income persons who have less than perfect rental histories. Removing legal obstacles and helping people make the transition from welfare to work required by the new welfare reform laws continues to be a major program-wide focus. With a HUD grant, SMRLS implemented a fair housing program throughout its service area in 1999.

With the financial support of The McKnight Foundation and the Department of Justice, SMRLS works in collaboration with Minnesota's other Coalition programs in preventing domestic violence and addressing systemic issues on a statewide basis. The Minnesota Legal Services Coalition State Support Center is part of SMRLS.

Other innovative SMRLS programs include the SMRLS/3M Corporate Pro Bono Program and the SMRLS Futures Planning, Diversity and Priority Setting processes, all of which have received national recognition. In 1997, SMRLS became one of the first legal aid providers in the country to adopt comprehensive written general practice standards and substantive area legal work expectations to guide its case handlers in carrying out SMRLS's mission.

SMRLS and ILCM are the largest immigration law practitioners in the state. Because of LSC restrictions, five former SMRLS staff persons joined the ILCM in 1996 to handle cases on which SMRLS could no longer assist. Using IOLTA and foundation funding, SMRLS and ILCM help refugees become citizens and

take cases generated as a result of immigration and welfare reform. SMRLS continues to handle cases for immigrants who remain eligible under LSC restrictions. ILCM handles restricted cases such as those involving asylum and deportation matters.

SMRLS has strong working relationships with local bar associations, lawyers and client groups. Nearly 300 volunteer attorneys donated case representation time in 2000 through SMRLS's volunteer attorney programs. SMRLS receives about 22 percent of its financial support from the LSC.

Coalition Program Cooperation with Other Programs

As noted above, there are 21 other civil legal services programs that provide legal assistance to low-income persons in civil cases. Most provide services in single counties or to special populations, including immigrant and refugee communities and Indians. These programs help to meet many critical legal needs, for example for immigrants. They also leverage significant resources, including pro bono service, that would not be available to Coalition programs. The Coalition programs actively cooperate and collaborate with these organizations and have worked to eliminate any duplication of services. These programs are described in Appendix A.

In 2000, the collective budgets of these programs were approximately $4.35 million for civil legal services projects. The sources were approximately as follows:

State Appropriation	22.58%
LSC	0%
Other Federal	1.70%
United Way/Foundations	37.93%
IOLTA	12.88%
Local	5.57%
Other	19.13%

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; and

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?

Minnesota's programs are always seeking ways to minimize duplication of

effort. As part of these efforts, the individual programs have evaluated their current staff composition and other options to see if they best serve their client population. For example, both Anoka Judicare and Anishinabe explored contracting with a nearby larger program for specific services such as accounting or case reporting and determined that this would not result in cost savings to their programs. Anoka has one position that combines the duties of preparing statistical reports, Judicare bookkeeping and legal secretarial duties. The cost of contracting for some of the duties would not eliminate a position, as the program still needs a legal secretary available during all office hours. Likewise, Anishinabe has one person who serves as financial administrator, fills in as receptionist and is the program's network administrator and general computer guru.

Several years ago, LSNM and the two major independent volunteer attorney programs coordinated their purchase of Kemp's Caseworks (aided by the MSBA's Access to Justice Director and a grant from the State Bar Foundation). They were able to get a reduced price for the package and to do training together. LSNM's administrator has provided in-state backup for all three programs. More recently SMRLS also began using Kemp's, aided by LSNM's experience. These current practices, which work quite well, are likely to be improved if a single legal work management system is adopted after the pilot project currently underway.

The Coalition programs have had an inter-program referral policy for 20 years that works smoothly. With email and/or fax, information is transferred quickly so that clients do not have to repeat intake. Anishinabe, when it refers basic field matters to LSNM and LASNEM, makes sure that the client has to go through only one intake. MMLA, CMLS and Volunteer Lawyers Network meet regularly to ensure the smoothest possible intake process for clients in Hennepin County (Minneapolis), and the Hennepin County Bar Association has a standing legal services coordinating committee that deals with access to all legal aid, volunteer attorney, and pro se initiatives. Providers in the Twin Cities work closely with the three law school clinical programs to do intake for cases handled by the clinics. If a single legal work management system is implemented, data will be transferred even more easily between Coalition programs. Law students will be able to do phone intake from metro locations and enter data directly into rural office systems.

As noted above, Coalition programs have begun conversations about moving toward a single compensation package. The programs have talked about collaborating on a job fair once a year when several are filling positions at the same time. This might be modeled on the successful MJF summer intern interview process.

A very successful project has been using group purchasing for Westlaw. The negotiated rates are available to all state-funded legal services providers. This

has been a great boon not only to Coalition programs but also to several of the smaller programs that could not afford paper libraries.

SMRLS continues to explore ways to better collaborate with the three small county legal aid programs in Dakota, Olmsted and Washington Counties. The directors of those programs participate in Coalition meetings. SMRLS local office staffs communicate regularly with county program staff and priorities are worked out clearly to avoid duplication. Generally, county programs emphasize family law and some private landlord-tenant. They also run the volunteer attorney programs in their counties and receive local funding that would not be available to SMRLS.

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

Many innovative service delivery mechanisms are being tested and adopted. A few examples follow.

CMLS received funding in 2000 from The McKnight Foundation for a collaborative pilot project with the Hennepin County District Court Self-Help Center, Hennepin County Bar Association Attorney Referral Service and the Volunteer Lawyers Network. CMLS staff provide coverage for weekly hours at the Courthouse to give advice to pro se litigants. For this project, income guidelines were set initially at 200% of the poverty level. Virtually all those requesting advice fall within those guidelines. ARS and VLN lawyers provide coverage at other times but do not provide any family law information. Family law is the area of greatest demand. Initial evaluations by court staff indicate greatest satisfaction with the CMLS model. The MSBA's Pro Se Implementation Committee is looking at how to implement similar programs in other parts of the state.

In a SMRLS McKnight-funded rural pilot project, a senior staff attorney is testing providing all legal services necessary to remove barriers for domestic abuse victims trying to move from welfare to work and trying to leave abusive relationships. The preliminary results are very favorable. Of 18 clients helped by the staff attorney with a wide variety of legal matters (supplemented by volunteer attorneys for legal matters outside legal aid's expertise), 16 were no longer in abusive relationships and were working towards self-sufficiency. A similar holistic project is underway in St. Paul. This type of service is extremely intensive and expensive; it is, however, what the clients need. The programs will be exploring how to implement this kind of effort more widely.

Several programs have implemented education and youth law projects over the past few years. Based in part on the Washington State Team Child model, these projects involve collaboration with public defenders, the public schools,

community groups, and the MJF Street Law Project. All aim to ensure that children remain in school and that the children and their families receive the affirmative assistance needed to succeed. SMRLS recently added a social worker-educator to its project.

A LASNEM foundation-funded videoconferencing pilot project will provide service in remote reservation towns utilizing staff and volunteer attorneys and MJF students in the Twin Cities beginning in late summer of 2001. Programs will follow this closely to see how to use this model in other places.

Recently managers of a LASNEM office in Pine City and an MMLA office in Cambridge that serve adjacent counties have discussed shared staffing, handling of emergency cases, referral of cases when clients move into the other program's service area and filling in for each other during staff absences. For several years, Judicare of Anoka County and Legal Assistance of Washington County have had similar arrangements, especially for conflict case coverage. The ILCM has co-located staff in the Legal Services of NW Minnesota Moorhead office and the Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis Downtown office (part of MMLA). Access to these immigration resources has greatly enriched services both to ILCM's immigration clients and to the immigrant clients of LSNM and MMLA. These are simply three recent examples of the collaborative ways in which Minnesota is creating a seamless system for clients while preserving the values of locally-based programs.

Coalition programs have evaluated several times, most recently in the past six months, whether to establish a seniors hotline program. The consensus was that this would duplicate the Senior LinkAge Line®, a free telephone information and assistance service operated by the Minnesota Board on Aging. The Linkage Line makes it easy for older adults and their families to find community services, including legal services. With a single toll-free call, Information and Assistance Specialists connect callers to local services and are available to make sure that the services or resources actually meet the caller's needs.

The Coalition programs and others serving immigrants and refugees are eagerly awaiting the outcome of the ILCM needs assessment and evaluation of services for immigrants statewide. Once that study is complete, resources will be sought to expand services in the most effective ways.

The Coalition programs are beginning discussions about how the Legal Services Advocacy Project, State Support Center and Community Legal Education Project can work even more closely together. As a first step beyond existing collaboration and cooperation, the three groups plus the MSBA have begun regular communication about the most efficient and effective ways to build and maintain the new lawhelp/mn web portals.

In February of 2000 the Coalition programs released a video entitled *Justice for*

All. The programs all contributed to making of the video with SMRLS taking the lead on staffing for the project. Two versions were produced. One is for fundraising and the other for community outreach (including some judges who could not participate in a fundraising effort). Senator Paul Wellstone and Congressman Jim Ramstad were happy to participate along with a number of former MSBA presidents. The majority of the 11 minute tape focuses on clients who agreed to have their stories told. LSC was given a copy of this tape previously.

A major statewide initiative undertaken since 1998 is the Minnesota Legal Aid Foundation Fund. Volunteers for the SMRLS Campaign for Legal Aid began exploring cy pres and other windfall possibilities with federal and state judges and litigators who handle major cases. They also began to look into planned giving strategies. Feedback from large firms and the bench clearly indicated a preference for a statewide approach. So Campaign members undertook the preliminary development with the Minnesota Foundation and worked with all of the Coalition programs to establish the statewide fund. The first major gift ($250,000) came from the firm handling the tobacco settlement in Minnesota. An anonymous gift of $750,000 over three years resulted from another settlement. Several smaller gifts have also been received. None would have been made to a single provider. The revenue from this Fund will be available to the Coalition programs as well as other civil legal services providers including volunteer attorney programs. As discussed above, the MSBA continues in 2001-02 to provide staff support and funds to hire a fund development consultant to make plans for the next steps.

Appendix A
Programs with which the Coalition Cooperates/Collaborates

Catholic Charities Law Center, provides sliding fee and some free legal services, primarily in family law cases, to clients in the metro area who are ineligible for Legal Aid or where Legal Aid has insufficient resources. Staff and a panel of volunteer lawyers handle cases.

Centro Legal provides civil representation to the low-income Latino communities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, and occasionally outside the Twin Cities if staff is available. As most clients are mono-lingual in Spanish, all staff are bilingual in Spanish. Principal areas of expertise include immigration, family law and the intersection between the two. Services are tailored to meet the legal needs of the working poor and are available either free or at very low cost based on a sliding-fee schedule. Centro's Proyecto Ayuda serves victims of domestic abuse. The Legal Protection for Children program provides free legal services to abused or neglected Hispanic children. Originally spun off by SMRLS in 1981, Centro coordinates with SMRLS, MMLA, VLN, the Immigrant Law Center, and Minnesota Advocates for Human. SMRLS in Ramsey County and the Legal Aid Society and CMLS in Minneapolis have the

primary responsibility to provide legal assistance in low-income critical need cases. Centro supplements these services.

Children's Law Center advocates for the rights and interests of children in the judicial, child welfare, health care and education systems. CLC uses a multi-disciplinary approach. Besides providing legal representation of children in defined projects, largely with volunteer attorneys, CLC develops technical assistance and training for child advocates and engages in public policy advocacy.

Chrysalis Legal Assistance for Women provides information, advice and lawyer referrals to women in the greater metropolitan area, primarily in family law. Volunteer lawyers provide the information and advice. The only full representation is through referrals to lawyers some of whom may offer reduced fees. There are no financial eligibility guidelines for clients, who are asked to make a small contribution to the program.

Citizenship and Immigration Services, housed at the United Cambodian Center in St. Paul, provides civil legal services and community legal education for non-Latino immigrant and refugee families. SMRLS subcontracts with UCAM and several SMRLS attorneys and paralegals and Immigrant Law Center staff have offices at the UCAM.

The **Farmers' Legal Action Group** in St. Paul provides free legal services statewide to financially distressed family farmers including staffing a toll-free phone advice line, publishing a quarterly substantive newsletter, and providing training and legal backup for legal aid staff, farm advocates, and many lawyers who provide volunteer and reduced fee services to financially distressed family farmers. FLAG works closely with Minnesota Family Farm Law Project staff and contract/judicare attorneys who provide services to clients through or in conjunction with Coalition program offices, principally in Moorhead, St. Cloud and Mankato. FLAG's publications are critically important to legal aid staff and volunteer attorneys working with clients on complex farm law issues.

The Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota specializes in legal services for refugees and immigrants previously provided by SMRLS but restricted under recent federal legislation. ILCM staff all have extensive experience in immigration and poverty law and are fully bilingual in Spanish. ILCM assists eligible clients who request assistance with citizenship, regardless of nationality. This is done on individually and through organized meetings and intakes conducted in the community. Law student volunteers assist clients to prepare the citizenship application. ILCM works with other agencies such as the Wilder Foundation and Neighborhood House to give presentations on the naturalization process to community leaders and agency staffs. ILCM works with the Coalition programs and others to ensure appropriate referrals and in collaboration with Centro Legal on all facets of immigration and naturalization.

ILCM and SMRLS conduct a joint citizenship project.

The **Indian Child Welfare Law Center** in Minneapolis, incorporated in 1993, focuses on preservation of Indian families by representing extended family members in proceedings governed by the Indian Child Welfare Act, Heritage Preservation Act and Indian Family Preservation Act. Legal advocacy is coordinated with Indian family services. The Center coordinates with public defender offices and other civil legal services providers as appropriate.

The **Indian Legal Assistance Program** in Duluth primarily provides criminal and juvenile representation to Indians residing in the Duluth area as well as on the Fond du Lac and Nett Lake Reservations. The program also offers very limited civil representation and coordinates with LASNEM's Duluth office.

Legal Assistance to Minnesota Prisoners (LAMP) in Minneapolis provides civil legal services to inmates at Minnesota prisons. Coalition programs generally do not provide legal assistance to persons incarcerated in these institutions. LAMP is run by the State Public Defender's Office and involves law students in a clinical program.

Legal Rights Center, Inc. (LRC) in Minneapolis is an alternative criminal and juvenile defense program serving Hennepin County. There is close cooperation between LRC and CMLS and the Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis.

MAO Senior Services provides free or sliding-fee legal services to persons over 55 years of age primarily in Hennepin, Ramsey and Anoka Counties. MAO handles cases generally not within Coalition program priorities (like low-income estate planning). Staff participate in the Coalition's Statewide Seniors Task Force and coordinate with Coalition programs in the metro area.

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights runs a statewide refugee and asylum project using volunteer lawyers to assist indigent asylum seekers who have fled persecution. The program coordinates with other immigration law services providers. With a small annual project budget, the Project provided more than $1,880,000 worth of legal services to more than 900 Minnesota residents through its panel of 350 trained volunteer lawyers.

The **Minnesota AIDS Project Legal Program** provides legal information, advice and representation to persons with HIV-related legal issues by using volunteer lawyers coordinated by a full-time lawyer. The program coordinates with programs throughout Minnesota. A second lawyer through a two-year National Association of Public Interest Law (NAPIL) fellowship staffs a Family Legacy project.

The **Minnesota Justice Foundation** coordinates *pro bono* services by students at all three Minnesota law schools. MJF is described in the opening section of

this report.

Community groups originally developed **Neighborhood Justice Center, Inc. (NJC)** in St. Paul with the assistance of SMRLS. NJC primarily provides representation to indigent persons in criminal and juvenile matters in Ramsey County.

The **University of Minnesota Law School, William Mitchell College of Law** and **Hamline University Law School** conduct clinical law programs that result in some services to low-income persons in civil matters. Intake for the clinics is done through metro Coalition programs. While there are full time faculty clinicians, several senior legal aid staff also teach in the clinics.

Volunteer Attorney Program and Northland Mediation Service (VAP-Duluth) provides civil legal services to residents of St. Louis, Cook, Lake, Itasca and Carleton Counties. Created by LASNEM in cooperation with the Eleventh District Bar Association, the program is now separately incorporated. LASNEM provided $22,500 to VAP-Duluth in 2000. A referral system exists between the two programs. There are three non-lawyer staff people. The goal of the program is to provide legal services to those people who cannot be represented by staff in LASNEM offices in Duluth, Virginia and Grand Rapids. VAP clients are either those with whom LASNEM has direct conflicts or clients LASNEM cannot serve. Representation includes advice, brief service, representation before a court or administrative body, preparation of legal documents, and negotiation of settlements. VAP-Duluth also runs Northland Mediation Service, KIDS First, and a pro se divorce program in the Duluth area. VAP-Duluth and LASNEM have developed partnerships through the Violence Against Women Act Project, the McKnight funded video-conferencing initiative which will use VAP-Duluth attorneys to provide services to rural and reservation communities, and the joint development of an assisted *pro se* dissolution of marriage clinic.

Volunteer Lawyers Network (VLN) administers a volunteer program in Hennepin County. While VLN primarily serves Hennepin County clients, they also facilitate Hennepin County lawyers (half of the lawyers in the state) serving client needs statewide. VLN received a $15,400 LSC subgrant in 2000 from CMLS. MMLA, CMLS and VLN have a long-standing history of coordination and referrals. MMLA and CMLS staff provide substantive law training to VLN volunteers. VLN volunteers use MMLA and CMLS materials and manuals. The MMLA Executive Director and an MMLA staff attorney sit on the VLN Board to enhance communication and cooperation. Regular meetings between MMLA and CMLS managers and VLN staff resolve any questions regarding priorities and referrals. MMLA office space is used as a VLN clinic location. MMLA and CMLS staff consult with VLN volunteers on cases. A CMLS staff attorney is on VLN's Family Law Committee. MMLA, CMLS and VLN have developed a coordinated intake system to handle private landlord-tenant cases

more efficiently and with less danger of clients being lost in the process of referral between agencies. MMLA, VLN and CMLS conduct coordinated priority-setting processes to assure maximum efficiency in service delivery.

APPENDIX B
Materials for 2001 Legislative Effort

APPENDIX C
Minnesota Lawyer "For the Public Good"
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