SELF EVALUATION REPORT TO LSC ON THE PROGRESS OF THE VIRGINIA LEGAL AID DELIVERY SYSTEM IN CREATING A COMPREHENSIVE, INTEGRATED AND CLIENT-CENTERED DELIVERY SYSTEM

This report is provided by the Legal Services Corporation of Virginia (LSCV), the state and IOLTA funder for Virginia legal aid programs. As the single largest funder of legal aid programs in Virginia, LSCV has coordinated the statewide planning effort since 1996. It attempts to provide a realistic assessment of the progress we have made in creating a more comprehensive, integrated and client-centered delivery system by telling LSC what we have done and what still needs to be done to accomplish the aforesaid goal. In doing so, we will use LSC's suggested points of departure as outlined in program letter 2000-7.

Since the submission of our last significant report in 2000, the Virginia Statewide Planning Assembly has met regularly, 6 times in 2000, 5 times in 2001 and 4 times in 2002. These are day long meetings held in a geographically central part of Virginia. It most recently met in December, 2002. In between meetings of the full Assembly, various planning team subcommittees continue to meet and report back to the full Assembly. Clearly, planning has become habitual in Virginia accompanied by the recognition that creating a comprehensive, integrated and client-centered delivery system isn't a discreet event, but a process involving proposals, discussions, debate, adoption, implementation, assessment, fine-tuning, re-working, reassessment and so on. We have a significant amount of positive progress to report as we continue to implement the planning goals outlined in our previous reports to LSC. Most notably, we are pleased to report significant new funding for the delivery system. During our last legislative session, we were successful in increasing our filing fee funding by 50%. This will be described in our funding section below.

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

1. Important Issues Impacting Low Income People in Virginia and the Legal Services Community's Response

The most important issue impacting low income people in Virginia is quite simply "access", access to legal advice including how to represent themselves "pro se", and access to extended legal representation. In FY 2000-01, legal aid programs in Virginia turned away almost as many applicants for service as were accepted. While overall funding for civil legal services to low income people continues to be the greatest barrier to access, the state planning assembly identified restrictions on federal funding as another significant barrier that needed to be addressed if we were to ever achieve full access to the legal system for our clients.

The four most important substantive issues impacting our client community are domestic, consumer, housing and income maintenance legal problems.

We are successfully responding to the need to increase funding and other resources like pro-bono assistance. Other parts of this report describe our efforts and successes at increasing funding for legal aid programs over the past few years and the ever-growing participation of the private bar by assisting with fundraising and directly representing our clients. Also outlined in detail are our efforts and successes in working with the private bar and the Courts on issues affecting pro se litigants, culminating most recently with the release of a report by the Supreme Court of Virginia entitled "Enhancing Access to Justice: Self-Represented Litigants in the Virginia Court System"; the development of statewide core priorities so that the important issues impacting our clients are addressed from a statewide perspective thus increasing consistency and equality of representation; and the integration of LSC and non-LSC funded legal aid programs through a statewide, toll-free, legal aid intake number, a statewide web-based case management system, a comprehensive statewide website and the developed capacity for each of the LSC service areas to provide a full range of legal services to the client community. In addition to being the focus of our core priorities, the aforementioned substantive issues impacting our clients are addressed in a comprehensive way by our statewide support center working with legal aid programs on issues of training, research and publication, support, co-counseling, and most importantly, legislative representation of our clients. Ever since federal funding ceased in 1996, the Virginia justice community has worked hard to maintain and increase funding for its statewide support center. Most recently, the statewide planning assembly has created a statewide litigation task force to be coordinated by the statewide support center to identify significant issues impacting our client community in a systematic and negative way that can be addressed with a comprehensive statewide response and to explore creative ways of addressing the inequities in the legal system faced by our clients.

2. <u>The Components of Virginia's Delivery System</u>

The Virginia delivery system provides a full range of legal services to clients. There are six service regions within which can be found six LSC funded programs, six non-LSC funded programs primarily funded by LSCV, a statewide non-LSC funded support center and

a statewide, non-LSC funded justice center devoted to representation of migrant farmworkers and other immigrants.

The components of the system are:

- *Intake, Advice and Referral:* There are six service regions, which by the end of this year should have fully implemented centralized intake systems based in the six LSC programs that all participate in a statewide, centralized, web-based case management system, a statewide, centralized, toll-free phone number (1-888-leglaid) for easy client access and a statewide comprehensive website providing consistent information statewide to clients and pro-bono attorneys. The centralized telephone system network (CTS) is managed from a geographically centralized telephone router that recognizes the area codes and exchanges of the callers and connects them to the nearest regional intake point. All of the regional intake systems can coordinate outreach visits to clients, coordinate with other service providers and determine the availability of and level of services for each contact. During hours when offices are closed, clients calling the statewide toll-free number are guided through significant answers to legal questions in all major substantive areas of law. This service is now offered in English and our translators are putting the final touches on translations in Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese. Those clients for whom only brief advice is needed or available, are provided with service either in the initial contact or with a relatively quick call-back. The brief advice function is provided by a combination of staff and pro-bono volunteers. Referrals are regularly made to non-LSC funded legal aid programs in the six regions as well as other independent providers of services that are appropriate for the individual client. Upon implementation of the statewide, web-based case management system by LSC funded programs, LSCV announced special technology grants to non-LSC funded grantees to participate in the same centralized system. There are now statewide minimum standards in place for our regional intake systems that include minimum deadlines for applicant notification of eligibility, provision of advice and brief service and notification to client of acceptance for extended representation. Statewide consistency has been achieved in determining income eligibility as well as in the use of core priorities for case acceptance while minor local deviations are allowed on rational bases.
- *Extended Representation:* All six regions have adopted the core priorities developed in the planning process, though some

have broadened them where possible. Clients accepted for services beyond brief advice are provided those services by legal aid staff, pro-bono volunteers, law school clinics and other referral agencies. Coordinated by the statewide support center, a new statewide litigation task force peopled by experienced litigators from both the LSC and non-LSC funded programs in the delivery system will begin meeting in 2003 to develop strategies to address issues that impact Virginia's low-income population.

- *Pro Bono:* Some regions have stronger pro-bono participation than others and have more extensive and specialized pro-bono service units. Efforts are on-going in conjunction with the Virginia State Bar and the Virginia Bar Association to enhance pro-bono contributions in rural and other areas. The Virginia State Bar pro-bono coordinator works closely with local and regional office pro-bono coordinators as well as many independent service providers throughout the state to increase pro-bono contributions. This pro-bono coordinators network is statewide and enhances the referral resources of both the legal aid programs and the independent service providers. Last year, volunteer lawyers closed 5,160 cases for the six regional programs in which they contributed 14,603 hours with an estimated value of over $2 million.
- *Pro Se Assistance:* The legal aid community in Virginia has worked very closely over the last two years with the Supreme Court of Virginia which has responsibility for overseeing the administrative and substantive aspects of the court system in Virginia. The director of LSCV was an original member of Supreme Court Justice Lacy's 5 member pro se litigation study team and helped formulate the Court's approach to the issue. A larger statewide Pro Se Litigation Planning Committee was then created with Justice Lacy continuing as Chair. Included on the larger Committee were directors and members of legal aid boards. This fall, the Court released an extensive report, *Enhancing Access to Justice: Self-Represented Litigants in the Virginia Court System*. Among many other findings, the report calls for increased legal aid funding, simplification of court forms, enhanced links between court clerks and legal aid offices and the provision of more legal information and enhanced services for pro se litigants. The report recognizes the significant contribution already provided by legal aid programs in providing pro se assistance including attorneys for the day stationed in courts and our extensive pro bono and staff driven hotlines. With a grant from LSC, Virginia's six regional programs are now engaged in creating the most comprehensive legal information website for low-income Virginians ever. The

website will direct users to specific service application information and provide legal information to pro se litigants as well as guidance and support for pro bono volunteers. During the past year, LSCV helped coordinate the technology grant application of one of the six regional programs with the Supreme Court of Virginia to establish an "ICAN" self-help center in selected northern Virginia courts. While the grant application was unsuccessful, our goal is to provide pro se litigants with on-line assistance in filling out and filing court forms.

- *Community Legal Education:* All six of Virginia's regions provide regular and frequent community education seminars and clinics.
- *State Support:* State support has always been an integral component of the Virginia delivery system. Even with the loss of federal funding in 1996, Virginia moved quickly to replace the lost federal funds of our support center, the Virginia Poverty Law Center (VPLC). With increases from state and IOLTA and additional fundraising efforts since then, the statewide support center continues to hold its own and provide important services to our clients and to the field offices and staff. It is the delivery system's leader and coordinator on substantive issues affecting our clients in the state legislature. In addition to advocating, staff attorneys for the support center are frequently called upon by legislators for advice and consultation and are recognized experts on poverty issues. The center also coordinates the work of statewide substantive law task forces peopled by representatives of all six service regions and devoted to identifying emerging issues affecting our clients. Most recently, the statewide planning assembly adopted the creation of a statewide litigation task force that will be peopled with regional litigation directors who will focus on potential impact litigation deserving of a statewide focus. The support center also conducts extensive training of the delivery system's advocates and private bar volunteers throughout the year, culminating with an annual statewide three day conference that provides continuing legal education for staff, pro bono attorneys, and military legal assistance attorneys, and fosters statewide community bonds between the system's staff, clients, board members, judges and legislators who attend and other providers. The support center works closely with and coordinates many statewide stakeholder groups for the elderly, victims of domestic violence, housing and consumer law.
- *Independent Service Providers:* There are many independent service providers to our client community throughout Virginia that interact with legal aid programs on a daily basis including

domestic violence shelters, low-income housing and tax advocates, homeless shelters and religious organizations. We provide mutual referrals and plan and advocate together as we struggle to meet the needs of our clients.

3. Mechanisms to Assess the Performance of Virginia's Delivery System

In 1996, the LSCV Board of Directors formed a Quality Monitoring Study Committee charged to explore methods of assessing the quality of services provided by LSCV grantees. This Committee was succeeded by a Grantee Evaluation Committee that developed with input from field programs and statewide Bars a desk review evaluation system. New Grant Applications and Report forms were created and a Desk Review instrument derived directly from the grant application and report forms was created to assess most aspects of grantees' performances. The Desk Review assesses strategies used by programs in serving clients within each component of the delivery system from intake to case closure. Also assessed are grantees' technological capacities and compliance with LSCV set minimum standards, program management and finances, funding diversity, board activities and case outcomes. Standard protocols are used by LSCV in performing the desk review, grantees' responses to the judgments made in the desk review and in negotiating an agreement with the grantee regarding issues to be addressed in year subsequent to the desk review. When resources allow, LSCV will add an on-site monitoring review methodology to address serious issues raised by a desk review that are not satisfactorily addressed by the grantee in its response to the desk review. In 2003, LSCV will add a diversity assessment section to the desk review. The standards used by LSCV in assessing grantee performance include the ABA Standards for Civil Legal Services Providers, LSCV's Minimum Technology Standards, nationwide and statewide benchmarks for client case service, program expenditures and funding, core priorities and case acceptance policies and intake and client eligibility standards. Annually, LSCV merges all statistical data from the delivery system to create a statewide report on the delivery system for its legislature and other interested parties. In addition, LSCV creates a Program Resource Guide of over 400 pages that describes every reportable aspect of the delivery system in Virginia. Copies of LSCV's desk review protocols and criteria, as well as copies of the grant application, report and desk review forms are available upon request.

4. Availability of Equitable Legal Assistance for Clients

A significant part of the planning engaged in by the Virginia delivery system community over the past several years has focused on making services more accessible to clients by reducing barriers to service and treating clients more consistently according to statewide standards developed by sub-planning teams focused on such issues as barrier reduction, intake, eligibility and referral, case acceptance policies and core priorities and service area reconfiguration. As early as LSCV's 1996 Delivery System Study Committee Report, the Virginia Delivery System has worked to establish equitable access for low-income clients to legal services. A relatively well-funded statewide support center has been maintained to address legislative issues that impact our clients. A statewide migrant worker program funded by LSCV was created to address the growing legal problems affecting migrant workers in Virginia. While the legislature forced a cessation of LSCV funding of the migrant program in 2001, it still continues its work with other funding, though it still has not found a permanent replacement for the lost LSCV funds. LSCV encouraged each new LSC service region to develop a capacity to deliver a full range of services with non-LSC funds. Currently 4 of the 6 LSC service regions have non-LSC funded programs funded primarily by LSCV that serve as significant referral sources for LSC funded programs. The two remaining service regions have implemented a contract for services methodology with the private bar to address services for clients whose needs cannot be met by an LSC funded program.

Currently, most of the delivery system is accessible to clients whose primary language is not English. All programs either have or are attempting to hire Spanish speaking staff. Our northern Virginia program employs Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese speaking staff. Our centralized phone intake system is currently being translated into Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese and all offices have access to Language Line.

While we do allow for regional exceptions due to identified client needs and availability of resources, all six regions have implemented consistent, statewide core priorities and eligibility standards. Each region and every program provides self-help assistance and advice, brief services and every method of extended representation in all available forums according to our core priorities and case acceptance policies and financial eligibility standards. All programs and regions provide legal education and advice through self-help clinics in all major substantive areas of law and all six Virginia service regions are participating in the

comprehensive statewide website. Statewide listserves in a variety of legal subject matters allow all Virginia delivery system attorneys and paralegals to operate as one law firm, sharing information, suggestions and strategies as advocates post questions and challenges. In the coming years, the Virginia Planning Assembly will continue to address existing inequities in client service. We will continue to identify underserved client groups that need special focus including the elderly, disabled, prisoners and immigrants and look for ways to improve services to those groups. We will work to enhance our internet presence to make our education and advice services universally available on line to clients and users of the court system. Finally, we are currently addressing our statewide client referral process to ensure that clients will ultimately receive the same services no matter which Virginia program serves them.

5. Technology as an Enhancement Tool for Increased Access For Clients Throughout the State; Technology Initiatives

LSCV has promoted, funded and coordinated technology enhancement in Virginia for many years. Beginning in 1997, LSCV and the state planning assembly set minimum technology standards for the Virginia delivery system. Each LSCV funded participant in the delivery system is required to report annually on the state of its technology and judgments about the program's technology implementation are included in LSCV's program performance evaluations. Minimum technology standards include creation and maintenance of program websites, desktop internet and e-mail access for every advocate, advocate access to internet legal research through programs' participation in the LSCV administered Lexis contract, minimum hardware standards, document and legal forms assembly, software usage and case management systems. LSCV obtained a general revenue appropriation from the state legislature specifically to fund technological enhancements. With the assistance of an LSC Technology Innovation grant, Virginia's delivery system has established and is now using a statewide, web-based case management system that creates a central location on an Application Service Provider (ASP) and increased portability for client files. On the ASP, a program's database is constantly up to date for access by the entire program, and is accessible from any location with a phone line. The same LSC grant funded the statewide centralized telephone intake system now in use. Clients all over Virginia can now dial the same toll-free number to seek legal assistance, 1-888-leglaid. A phone router located at a geographically central location in the state recognizes the caller

area code and local exchange and routs the call to the closest office for intake. When clients call the statewide number after hours, they are provided access to a plethora of legal information in all major substantive areas of law. Translations of this information into Spanish, Korean, and Vietnamese will soon be added to the system. A separate LSC grant has funded the creation of a comprehensive statewide website that will provide low-income Virginians with the single largest repository of legal information in Virginia. The website will also have a pro bono attorney component that provides forms and educational materials for private attorneys volunteering in our delivery system. The website should be accessible to clients in the next few months and will contain links to the courts other service providers. Virginia's statewide support center already maintains a website with significant amounts of legal information for clients and a brief and legal forms bank for attorneys. The content for these websites is developed by a special statewide committee and the support center's task force members. Also in effective operation are a series of substantive law listserves created by the Virginia Poverty Law Center. As mentioned elsewhere, the listserves allow advocates across the state to strategize and share information as one law firm on a daily basis. The Virginia Planning Assembly will continue to initiate improvements in its technological capacities. Already planned and waiting for specific funding are the following improvements: computerized linkage between branch offices in service areas, application for client services on our statewide website and internet applications of ICAN technology to provide pro se assistance with completion and filing of court forms. All of the existing and contemplated technological improvements are geared to improving the integration of our delivery system by providing the same services to clients all over the state and the same accessibility to those services. The improvements are also calculated to bring our advocates closer together. Where the annual statewide training conference used to be the occasion for interaction between our widely dispersed attorneys and staff members, we now have daily interaction between attorneys on the coast with attorneys in the southwest mountains by e-mail and web conferencing. Common legal problems are identified sooner and solutions obtained in a way that impacts greater numbers of clients.

6. Expansion of Resources to Provide Critical Legal Services to Low-Income Clients and Hard-To-Reach Groups

A. Resources: The community's most successful and recent response to the issue of overall funding for legal aid has been the

lobbying necessary to pass a 50% increase in Virginia's filing fee for legal aid in February, 2002. Also effective has been the formation of a statewide funding planning team that continues to meet regularly and report to the statewide planning assembly with recommendations. The funding planning team established numerous goals approved by the statewide assembly including 1) enhancing the capacity of programs to raise increased amounts of funds by a) identifying the full range of existing funding sources in Virginia and elsewhere. This has been done and continues to be updated on an annual basis at our statewide training conference during which a funding workshop is held; and b) promoting inter-program sharing of information and collaboration on fund raising methods. This is ongoing with every program providing a representative on the statewide funding team; 2) reinvigorating support from the Bench and the Bar for legal aid funding by a) calling for an update to the legal needs study completed over ten years ago and asking the State Bar to do a comprehensive pro bono survey to be followed by a report on the unfunded civil legal needs of low income clients and b) asking the Supreme Court to actively advocate for increased legal aid funding; 3) exploring the potential of the Community Reinvestment Act as a means of generating financial support from local banks by a) encouraging local programs to approach local banks for direct donations in addition to their support for the IOLTA program; 4) maintaining and enhancing legislative support by a) continuing to educate legislators on a statewide (LSCV) and local basis about legal aid in their districts; b) maintaining a high level of quality services in local communities and c) seeking funding for new initiatives.

The funding planning team has developed a statewide funding action plan that addresses 22 sources of funding:

1. Increase IOLTA funding: With the almost continual drop in interest rates over the last several years, this has been almost impossible. However, because of LSCV efforts, declines in IOLTA funding in Virginia have been much less dramatic than in many other states. As a result of ongoing communication and negotiation with LSCV, the five largest banks have maintained artificially high interest rates on IOLTA accounts when compared to the market rate. Service fees on IOLTA accounts have dropped dramatically over the past five years and attorney recruitment efforts have resulted in a steady increase in the number of IOLTA accounts. LSCV can now report that bank negotiations have reduced overall bank service charges from a high of about 40% in the mid-nineties to only 5% of gross interest in October of 2002. LSCV will begin a

major effort to recruit new IOLTA accounts in January of 2003.

2. Increase LSCV State Funding: Virginia legal aid programs were among the first in the country to receive both state general revenue and filing fee appropriations on a recurring basis. In the past two years, the Virginia legislature has developed a significant Republican majority for the first time in its history and LSCV sought out the assistance of some key Republican lobbyists to help develop a legal aid message for the new majority. With the additional assistance of a consultant, LSCV created legislative marketing materials that emphasized two issues that were important to Republican and Democratic legislators alike: 1) Outcomes achieved for clients, both quantitative and qualitative; and 2) The return on the investment in legal aid. LSCV collects case outcome data from all legal aid programs in Virginia including the substantive outcome of the case, the dollar benefits generated for the client and the number of people positively affected by the case. This information appealed to legislators, many of whom originally served as local county and city officials and were used to making funding decisions based on outcomes reporting by local government grantees. LSCV's marketing materials stress the actual dollar benefits generated by its work and relate them directly to the economic health of local communities and the state. For example, we show that for every dollar the state invests in legal aid funding, it experiences a return of several dollars. Overall, we create a picture of legal aid's contribution to economic health and the creation of jobs. Again, this information impressed legislators enough to increase LSCV's state filing fee funding during the 2002 legislative session by 50%. The other key to LSCV's legislative success is the effective statewide key contacts network coordinated by LSCV and locally by individual program directors. This network includes local program directors, clients and board members, local elected officials, prominent attorneys and business people, members of the clergy and other service organizations, as well as statewide and local bar associations. With LSCV lobbyists and individual program directors in-person lobbying efforts, the combined network provides an effective statewide action group that has the ability to impact legislative actions on funding and on substantive issues that affect our clients.

3. Increase funding from Foundations: Efforts are ongoing to develop a statewide approach to collaborating on increased foundation grant requests even while individual foundation

grants to LSC and LSCV funded programs continues to increase.

4. Increase United Way Funding: Local directors are strongly encouraged to meet regularly with their United Way executive director and to have local board members attend United Way meetings and seek appointment to local United Way Boards. As a result, United Way funding for legal aid programs has increased incrementally over the past few years.

5. Increase funding from Local Governments: We strongly encourage local program directors and board members to meet with city/county officials. The Planning Assembly and LSCV now require every program to seek funding from every local government in its service area and this source of funding also continues to improve in Virginia.

6. Increase funding from religious organizations, Title III, LSC, other federal sources, law schools, bar associations, donations, etc: Programs are sharing information in our regular funding workshops about methods of increasing these sources.

7. Statewide Annual Campaign and Bar Dues Check-Off: The funding planning team decided that the Bar Dues Check-Off presented the best current opportunity for increased funding. LSCV has made a formal proposal to the Virginia State Bar Access to Legal Services Committee to add a bar dues check-off option to its annual bar dues statement to all active and associate attorney members. The Access Committee is in the midst of deliberations and preparing recommendations to the State Bar.

8. Cy Pres Awards: Virginia's legal aid programs have been the beneficiaries of cy pres awards for the past two years. A member of the LSCV Board maintains a national consumer law practice. Two major class actions in which he has participated as a plaintiff's attorney have resulted in cy pres awards to Virginia legal aid programs. Based on this attorney's advocacy efforts, one award helped pay for lexis computer research for all of Virginia's legal aid programs. The most recent cy pres award to three Virginia legal aid programs followed a Request for Proposal process administered by LSCV. The cy pres awards were made to several programs to pursue special consumer related projects such as protecting consumers from predatory mobile home dealers.

While the above list is not exhaustive of all 22 action items in our funding plan, it illustrates the importance that we place on increasing funding as the most significant way to address the important issue of access to the legal system for low income clients. In terms of concrete results, overall funding for Virginia's legal aid delivery system has steadily increased even in the face of cuts from various sources from year to year. Since statewide planning began in 1996, funding for the legal aid delivery system in Virginia has grown from approximately $14 million (before the implementation of over $2 million in LSC funding cuts) to over $17 million projected for FY 02-03. This steady increase is the result of concerted efforts on a statewide basis to improve local, state, federal and other sources of funding.

B. Hard to Reach Groups: The harder to reach populations include the elderly, disabled, migrant worker and immigrant populations and people for whom English is not a first language. Virginia has always been very successful in obtaining funding under the Older Americans Act and working closely with our area agencies on aging in serving the elderly. In Virginia, an Elderly Consortium consisting of legal aid and support center advocates, AAA and AARP advocates, as well as state and social service providers, meet regularly and act together to seek improvements for the elderly in the legal system and at the state legislature and Congress. Last year, approximately 20% of the cases closed by our delivery system were handled on behalf of elderly clients. The Virginia delivery system has also had a long history of focusing advocacy on behalf of the disabled and will continue to look for funding to expand that advocacy. The 1996 LSCV Virginia Delivery System Study Report recommended funding a statewide migrant farmworker and immigrant advocacy program with state and IOLTA funds independent of the LSC funded migrant farmworker program. In response to that, the Virginia Justice Center for Farm and Immigrant Workers was created and funded by LSCV in 1997. Working in conjunction with the LSC funded program, the Justice Center significantly expanded advocacy for farm and immigrant workers to areas of the state previously neglected by our delivery system. A legislative rider on LSCV's appropriation in 2002 required LSCV to stop funding the Justice Center. This was a direct result ironically of the Justice Center's success in combating extreme examples of worker exploitation. During the 2001 session, political forces combined to stop the funding of the Center. As of next year, the program must replace its state and IOLTA funding and is currently engaged in a fundraising effort to do so. The Justice Center also operates a Just Children Project that provides an extremely underserved

population with representation and advocacy. Fortunately, the legislative prohibition on funding the Justice Center only applies to its migrant farmworker component. Virginia's low-income linguistic minorities are a rapidly growing segment of the client community. Those service areas experiencing the greatest growth in these populations have bilingual staff and interpreter services such as Language Line to augment the in-house capacity. In the near future, we hope to have bilingual staff in every service area in Virginia. As the planning assembly focuses on issues of staff and board diversity, recruiting and retaining bilingual staff will become a priority.

7. Leadership in the Virginia Delivery System; Identification and Nurturing of New Leaders

   Leaders in the Virginia delivery system are overwhelmingly white males whose careers have been devoted to poverty law. Our six LSC service areas contain 11 field programs, only two of which are directed by persons of color. Only one program at this time has a Board President who is not white. The 10 field programs serve every city and county in Virginia through 34 branch offices. Only a few of those offices are managed by people of color. Only one program is directed by a woman. LSCV's Board has 21 directors, 4 of which are people of color. Of those 4, three are client eligible, one is an attorney. Only 5 of the directors are women. LSCV's Executive Director is a white male. Similar board and executive director characteristics exist throughout most of the delivery system. The client community in Virginia however, is overwhelmingly female and almost half of our clients served are people of an ethnicity or race other than white. The Court system leadership is overwhelmingly white in makeup as is the leadership of the Virginia State Bar and other statewide bars involved in the delivery system. Virginia has not done a good job of recruiting non-white managers or of promoting people of color into management positions. While specific examples of recruiting and nurturing can be cited, the current leadership in the delivery system does not reflect the Virginia client community. The Virginia delivery system has long supported a State Clients' Council. Programs send their client board representatives to national and state conferences that offer leadership and community action skills training. With some exceptions, new leadership within the client community has not generally been nurtured by the delivery system. Most of the client community active within the delivery system have been so for many years.

The Virginia Planning Assembly resolved at its December, 2002 meeting to address both the diversity issue and the client community issue. In addressing the diversity issue, LSCV has recently completed a diversity assessment of the delivery system in Virginia and is currently analyzing that data. LSCV will present the data to the planning assembly in February, 2003 along with a draft plan to survey all delivery system staff regarding attitudes toward work environments and opportunities for professional development. After completing this survey, LSCV and the Planning Assembly will develop an action plan that responds to the diversity assessment and survey with the intent of increasing recruitment and retention of diverse staff and boards in Virginia, as well as nurturing new leadership and more involvement of the client community. The Planning Assembly has invited leaders of the State Clients' Council to its next meeting to specifically address how to create greater involvement of the client community in delivery system leadership.

8. Next Steps to Achieve a Client-Centered, Integrated and Comprehensive Delivery System

As noted above, the Virginia Planning Assembly will be looking at new ways to involve clients in the work of legal aid programs and will receive the input of the Virginia State Client's Council in doing so. Best practices models for client involvement and client participation in needs assessments in some of our programs will be highlighted and other programs will be encouraged to emulate or adapt those practices. The Virginia State Client's Council will be encouraged to recruit new members. The Planning Assembly has recognized that a client-centered system is not just about how much clients are themselves involved, rather how the system is responding to the legal needs of clients. As we update and modify our statewide case priorities, we will seek additional methods of determining what those needs are and LSCV will employ its program evaluation system to attempt to determine whether or not the system is determining the need, responding to the need and achieving commensurate outcomes. Indeed, a key aspect of the evaluation methodology is relating a program's assessment of need and setting of priorities to the outcomes achieved for clients.

9. Greatest Obstacle to Achieving a Statewide, Integrated, Client-Centered Delivery System

There have been many obstacles. The greatest are probably those that still exist and will always exist to a greater or lesser degree depending on the political environment. Back in the mid to late

nineties, the greatest obstacle to achieving an integrated delivery system was probably the system itself. While Virginia civil legal services deliverers have a long and commendable history of interaction and cooperation and coordination by LSCV and the statewide support center, making the decisions to merge numerous service areas and in fact to accomplish those mergers was extremely difficult. The system we had been operating under in Virginia had a strong center in LSCV, but also had strong and independent locally run programs. The system worked well because LSCV's work in increasing funding was significantly enhanced by the strong, institutional identities built by local programs over the years. Merging service areas required some very independent local Boards to agree on a myriad of issues that were threatening to the strong identities that had been created. Indeed, one program refused to cooperate in any fashion and litigation and turmoil ensued. As the dust settles, there are still many consequences of reconfiguration that must be addressed, some more philosophical, but most very practical. The practical issues of serving clients with merged boards and staffs are ongoing and require a great deal of patience and demand much of boards and staff. All of it would be a lot easier were more resources available to address the issues. Because we are determined in Virginia to have a system that meets the full range of clients' legal needs, how resources shall be allocated is just as difficult a problem as getting the resources to allocate. Indicative of LSCV's and the six regions commitment to achieving an equitable and integrated system is the recent decision to hold programs harmless at their current levels of funding where implementation of the 2000 census would divert funds to regions with greater fundraising capacities. Coincident with the dramatic changes we have implemented in our delivery system, a new political environment has emerged in Virginia. During the most difficult times of reconfiguration, we were also defending against political attacks in the state legislature with attempts to restrict the work of our system occurring two years in a row. The last attack led to LSCV's abandonment of our migrant farmworker program. While we achieved new funding this past year with an increase in our filing fee appropriation, our state and IOLTA funding are always at risk. This year, we will face an attempt to divert some of our IOLTA funding away from legal aid programs. While the old cliché, "if it's not one thing, it's another" seems particularly apt in Virginia, we will defend this latest attack like we have the others, as an integrated delivery system with key local advocates committed to preserving the entire statewide system. This strength of community appears to have transferred unharmed from the old delivery system into the new one and will continue to be the main

defense against negative forces. In terms of overcoming the obstacles before us, Virginia's Planning Assembly will continue to meet, identify problems, propose solutions, and seek the input and support of our friends in the statewide bars and courts.

10. Benefit to Cost Analysis of Creating a Comprehensive, Integrated, and Client-Centered Delivery System

No actual analysis comparing the costs and benefits of the old system to the new has been done. One questions how such an analysis could be done. Yes, we can compare our overall funding from 1995 to our overall funding today. Yes, we can compare our case service statistics from then to today. But, so many variables are at play in describing those changes, that it would be a guessing game to attribute causes to effects. In 1995, overall funding for the Virginia delivery system was approximately $13 million. In 1996, our federal funding fell by almost $2 million. In 2003, our overall funding will be almost $17 million or an effective increase of almost $6 million. This is extraordinary when one considers the constant attacks on our work and our clients and highlights our effectiveness as a community working for the good of the system. There is perhaps no stronger indicator of integration and comprehensiveness. On the other hand, this extraordinary ability to build new resources has not necessarily translated to more services for clients. Case closings have in fact gone down over the same years. While this is partly a function of the change in LSC's case counting guidelines, it also points to the fact that the cost of doing business has outstripped our increases in resources. The cost of doing business has increased so dramatically because achieving integration of a statewide delivery system committed to providing a full range of services is expensive. Where individual programs could often provide services less expensively than others because of geographical location and other factors, merged programs have more often than not, required significant expenditures to treat employees equally with compensation and benefits. The start-up and ongoing costs of technology enhancements has been astronomical. Integrating the often differing case management and accounting systems of 13 separate programs has been expensive. Five years of intensive statewide planning has been expensive and time consuming taking many advocates away from their normal duties. Whether the benefits outweigh the costs remains to be seen after further analysis.

11. Resources, Technical Assistance, and Support Necessary to Meet Our Goals

Obviously, more funding would be very helpful in meeting our goals. An analysis of the significant increases in our funding over the past seven years would reveal tremendous work on both the statewide and local levels. But, it is never enough to keep up with the demand. While we will continue to devote ourselves to increasing resources, more technical assistance and support from the federal level would be greatly appreciated. Best practices models and experienced people on a national level to help implement efficient intake and brief advice systems and streamlined accounting and data collection systems would be greatly appreciated. More technical and technology enhancement assistance grants would also help a lot. While the Virginia delivery system has been fortunate to receive a technology grant, one of the greatest fears of the Planning Assembly has been the ability to continue to fund those improvements once the technology grant is expended. Finally, we hope that LSC maintains realistic expectations of the timetables within which these significant changes can be implemented, fine-tuned and analyzed for effectiveness.

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

1. Issues Impacting Low-Income Clients and Strategies Designed to Address them; Plan to Measure Success In Addressing Issues

We described in an earlier part of this report the most important issues affecting our clients in Virginia. The traditional substantive areas of poverty law provide the bulk of the issues that affect our clients. Technology and changes to our delivery system have not changed this. While we continue to maintain strong statewide substantive task forces in all of these areas, we have taken the additional step of requiring rather than encouraging participation by advocates from every service area to ensure a comprehensive analysis of the problems facing our clients and as many advocates' minds as possible working on strategies and solutions. In addition, under the auspices of the statewide support center, we have created a new litigation task force. This group will have representatives from every service area in Virginia. They will be experienced litigators focused on identifying potential litigation issues that arise in individual programs that if pursued from a statewide perspective could produce positive impacts for Virginia low-income clients. This litigation group will not duplicate the work of the substantive

task forces. It will be peopled by litigators with varying substantive specialties looking for ways to solve clients' legal problems in a more global way. Another avenue adopted in Virginia to address the issues facing clients is the provision of legal representation by non-LSC programs. Several years ago, LSCV required its grantees to present concrete plans as to how LSCV funds could be better used in the six LSC service areas to provide a full range of services to clients. Those plans have now been or are in the process of being implemented. Four LSC service areas have LSCV funded programs that provide an essential referral source for clients whose needs cannot be met by the LSC program. The other two service areas have LSC funded programs with a methodology in place to refer appropriate clients to private attorneys on a contract basis so that the identified needs of the clients can be met. LSCV has required its grantees that share service areas with LSC programs to develop methods for seamless integration with their service area partners and equitable treatment of clients.

While the Virginia delivery system has always provided brief advice and services to clients through staff and pro bono driven projects with the intent of providing assistance to clients that must represent themselves in court, the Virginia court system has only recently undertaken a response to the ever growing need for pro se assistance by low-income clients. With the participation of legal aid representatives, the Virginia Supreme Court created a pro se litigation study committee to study and report on the magnitude of the problem and solutions. This resulted in the recent issuance of a report titled *Enhancing Access to Justice: Self-Represented Litigants in the Virginia Court System* described in section A2 above. A joint strategy between the Virginia delivery system and the Supreme Court was developed to address the pro se problem by using technology to expand access to legal information and assistance with filling out and filing appropriate court forms. The Court and a legal aid program jointly applied for an LSC Technical Assistance grant to install ICAN kiosks in pilot Virginia Courts to be staffed by legal aid and volunteer attorneys and staff. The grant team also intended to expand the ICAN methodology to its comprehensive statewide website to assist clients in filling out and filing forms from remote locations. While the grant application was unsuccessful, the Court and the Planning Assembly still intend to pursue its goals of expanding services to pro se litigants.

The delivery system's new comprehensive statewide website will eventually provide the vehicle for accomplishing the second part of the grant application proposal. Already, it will contain more

comprehensive legal information for low-income clients in one location than any other outlet. The next step will be to create interactive features which will allow clients to apply for services on-line and to receive direct assistance in filling out and filing court forms. The website will ultimately be bilingual as well.

The delivery system will continue to provide the community education clinics for which local programs have long been recognized. These are now being provided by both LSC and non-LSC programs and provide clients with a full range of information and strategies for addressing their individual and community wide problems.

In northern Virginia, a steady growth in the immigrant population has created new identifiable legal needs for a population of day immigrant workers often exploited in the construction industry. Two of our non-LSC funded programs have joined with the local government to provide representation to hundreds of immigrant workers with no previous access to the legal system.
The delivery system will measure the success of these strategies in several ways. First, LSCV's program evaluation system will look at outcomes achieved for clients, both financial and substantive and relate those outcomes to the System's goals and strategies. Success will also be measured by numbers of clients served, expansion of pro bono participation and implementation of the goals of the pro se litigation planning committee.

2. Expanded Access and Services through Coordination with Other Service Providers

Virginia's legal aid programs have always operated with a great deal of coordination with regular meetings of program directors, task forces and LSCV and support center sponsored activities. The Planning Assembly has sought out the input of other providers around the state including independent legal services providers such as bar foundations and associations and social service providers and the elderly community. These efforts have led to increased cooperation and joint efforts. For example, several programs have joined with local domestic violence shelters to apply for funding and coordinate services. Similarly, other programs have joined with local area agencies on aging in providing services under joint agreements. On a statewide basis, the statewide support center has coordinated a consortium of legal and social service providers to the elderly to identify legal needs and to present consolidated fronts at the state legislature on substantive policy issues. This format has also been followed in

the areas of domestic relations, consumer law and housing. Support center and other legal aid advocates coordinate the efforts of many different providers and non-profit advocacy groups in presenting a comprehensive approach to advocating on behalf of low-income clients on the issues of housing, income maintenance, domestic relations and consumer related matters.

LSCV has historically and continues in its role as coordinator of the delivery system and is the delivery system's direct link to the organized bars and court system. The majority of LSCV's Board is appointed by the Virginia State Bar and includes among its representatives the director of the State Bar, a Young Lawyers Conference representative, public members such as a representative of the Virginia Bankers Association and the Chair of the Access to Legal Services Committee of the State Bar. The Access to Legal Services Committee staffer participates in the Planning Assembly's meetings and reports progress to the Committee. LSCV oversees with the Planning Assembly Chair the implementation of Planning Assembly goals. As goals and strategies are developed, LSCV includes them in its program performance evaluation system.

Because program reconfiguration has so recently been accomplished, expansion of services has not been quantified. Anecdotal examples such as the above descriptions of additional non-LSC funded offices devoted to serving individuals and groups who might not otherwise receive services is an indication that access to services has been expanded significantly. We are hopeful that the coming year will bring smoother integration of services between LSC and non-LSC funded programs to the extent that LSCV can perform service area evaluations that will allow some quantification of this expansion. Apart from actual services to clients, enhanced coordination of the delivery system has led to a number of quantifiable improvements including but not limited to: an increase in the statewide filing fee appropriation, creation of a statewide delivery system website, implementation of a statewide, centralized telephone intake system, creation of a statewide, centralized, web-based case management system, a statewide contract providing universal access to Lexis legal research services, the creation of a statewide litigation advocacy task force, the joint collaboration between the delivery system and the Courts in addressing the pro se litigation problem, the completion of a program diversity assessment, and the development of promotional materials describing the outcomes of the delivery system's work.

3. Improvements in the Quality of Legal Services

The quality of legal services provided to low-income clients in Virginia has improved over the past several years. The number of advocates representing clients has increased steadily. Training for advocates provided by the statewide support center provides extensive education on changes in existing law, unique and creative approaches to litigation, identification of new issues and discussions of ways to address them, and is participated in by leading private and government attorneys, social service providers and national experts. Access to on-line legal research, training in that research, and listserves have significantly improved the support system on which advocates can rely in preparing cases and representing clients. As a result of the expansion of services through non-LSC funded programs, many clients now receive more extensive and thorough representation than they otherwise would have in the old delivery system both in court, administrative and legislative forums. We expect even more qualitative improvements as a result of the new statewide litigation task force's work.

LSCV has long been concerned with the quality of services provided in the Virginia delivery system. Indeed, it first established a Quality Monitoring Study Committee back in 1994. Since then, LSCV has adopted Program Performance Standards for the delivery system and implemented a Program Evaluation System predicated on those standards. A standing Grantee Evaluation Committee of the LSCV Boards oversees improvements in this system. Client board members have participated on both Committees.

Since the private bar has assumed increased burdens in representing clients in the delivery system over the past several years, quality and proper oversight have been major concerns in the provision of those services. All service areas and programs within them have increased training for pro bono volunteers and created substantial written materials for their use.

4. Improvement in the Relative Equity of Client Access Throughout Virginia

The relative equity of client access to services throughout the state has improved since 1998 and will continue to improve as additional strategies of the Planning Assembly are implemented. Improvements include the centralized telephone intake system and statewide website, expansion of non-English services on the

centralized telephone intake system and in offices with Language Line, an interpreter service that works in 148 languages, adoption of statewide eligibility standards, core priorities and inter-program referral mechanisms while maintaining a degree of local flexibility (the planning assembly at its December 2002 meeting charged a task force with reviewing our access and intake standards implemented earlier in the planning process as well as our program to program referrals to analyze their effectiveness in equitably serving clients), allocation of most funds by census based formulas, significant enhancement of local, private, and other government funding in all service areas, pursuit of new statewide funding sources that will be allocated according to percentage of poverty population, and accessibility to all offices for handicapped clients as well as the availability of home and institutional visits to the populations unable to access physical offices. The Planning Assembly's goals for enhancing diversity of staff and board should also contribute to improvements in relative equity of client access. Once LSCV's diversity assessment is analyzed, strategies will be developed to increase staff and board diversity and to provide diversity and cultural competency training through the statewide support center. Finally, the much enhanced working relationship between the Courts and the legal aid community is expected to contribute significantly to increased client access through more active engagement of the increasing pro se problem and increased referrals from the Courts to legal aid programs.

5. Improvements in the Availability of a Full Range of Civil Equal Justice Delivery Capacities throughout Virginia

The availability of a full range of civil equal justice delivery capacities has significantly improved over the past several years. The Virginia delivery system was substantially reconfigured beginning in the mid-nineties with the creation of a non-LSC funded field program, statewide migrant farmworker program and the full replacement of lost LSC funding for the statewide support center. In the late nineties, 12 program service areas were further reconfigured into six. Within these six service areas, LSCV ensured the provision of a full range of services for clients by funding programs that were not federally funded, but contractually agreed to provide services in partnership with LSC funded programs to avoid duplication of services. Other improvements noted in B4 above contribute to the improvement of equal justice capacities in the Virginia delivery system. LSCV ensures continued collaboration between LSC and non-LSC funded partners in the delivery system through its contractual and evaluation processes. The aforesaid applies to the relative equity

of funding distribution. As noted elsewhere in this report, approximately 75% of the delivery system's funding is allocated according to the poverty population census. Since 1998, programs that previously obtained almost no other funding other than LSC and LSCV grants, now seek and receive local government, private foundation, private, and other federal and state government funding. While some areas of the state have significantly more resources available on a local level, traditionally rural and less fortunate programs have done a magnificent job in obtaining new sources of funding. Because of its concern for potentially greater inequities, LSCV has consistently applied a hold harmless approach to census based funding so that some areas do not suffer extraordinary decreases in funding while others experience increases. This follows from a perspective that recognizes that changes in census counts do not dramatically affect the numbers of clients that need access to services.

While the relative equity of availability of pro bono resources has improved over the past several years, there is still and probably always will be more work to do in this area. Since 1998, pro bono projects have been established in service areas where none had previously existed because of the tenacious efforts of local program leaders and local and statewide bar leaders. Virginia pro bono efforts have received national and statewide awards. The percentage of cases closed by the delivery system attributable to pro bono attorneys approach 25% and the value of these pro bono contributions to the delivery system has risen to $2 million per year. But, the significant amount of rural service area in the delivery system creates unique problems in increasing pro bono contributions and requires unique solutions. In partnership with the Virginia Bar Association, several of our rural programs attempted to implement the Bar Associations very successful pro bono hotline concept that had been successfully instituted in most of the major urban areas in Virginia. While a couple of these attempts were not very successful, the Bar has not given up and continues to work with local program leaders to improve pro bono capacities. An example of a success in pro bono enhancement is the expansion of the central Virginia pro bono hotline to new areas because of reconfiguration. That hotline now serves three previously separate service areas and improves equity of availability of services to clients by using the much larger pool of volunteers in Richmond to serve clients far outside the Richmond area. The Planning Assembly will continue to explore ways to achieve these new equities in other parts of the delivery system in partnership with the statewide bars and courts.

6. Efficiency of the Virginia Delivery System

The Virginia delivery system has always prided itself on its level of efficiency in expending funds and providing services. With reconfiguration came an increased concern about avoiding duplication of services in areas with both LSC and non-LSC funded programs. Because LSCV contractually required service area partners to submit service integration plans, most service areas accomplished a high degree of understanding about division of services, priorities, intake and pro bono services. This was further enhanced by the adoption of statewide case priorities and eligibility standards. More efficiencies can be achieved through continued planning, self-evaluation and LSCV evaluation of the system's service areas. Some duplication continues to exist in administrative staffing due mainly to most programs' commitment during the reconfiguration process to avoid staff lay-offs. These issues are being addressed for example through staff retraining for other suitable work descriptions. While reconfiguration and its coincident issues have been more difficult for some service areas than others, the delivery system is very efficient. An example of an area of improvement in terms of efficiency in the delivery system is the statewide web-based case management system. Prior to its implementation, 13 LSC funded programs in Virginia operated separate and often totally different case management systems requiring significant manipulations of data to conform to various funding source reporting requirements. This kind of activity should be significantly reduced with the entire delivery system working in the same case management system, while access to the system has been established from an unlimited number of locations, including remote outreach sites. Wear and tear on computer CPUs will also be decreased with data software now housed on the web, increasing the life of computer components.

7. Expansion of Private Bar Contributions in the Delivery of Essential Services

Since the mid-nineties, the contributions of the private bar to the delivery of essential services to low-income clients through organized legal aid programs have increased tremendously. The Virginia Bar Association and the Harrisonburg/Rockingham Bar Associations have been nationally recognized for their model pro bono projects. The Virginia Bar Association's legal aid hotlines have become a national model for the using pro bono attorneys to provide legal advice to legal aid clients. In partnership with six Virginia programs, the Bar Association now oversees hotlines

around the state that provide brief advice to thousands of clients per year. At the same time, specialized pro bono and reduced fee panels in substantive areas such as housing, consumer law, employment, bankruptcy and domestic violence operate in all service areas. The Virginia Bar Association as well as many local bars and local program leaders partner in ongoing pro bono recruitment efforts. The Virginia State Bar has a statewide pro bono coordinator working in conjunction with local coordinators to recruit, train and advertise the contributions of the private bar. The State Bar conducts an annual pro bono awards ceremony and the Supreme Court Chief Justice devotes a significant amount of time to promoting pro bono activity. The delivery system also receives the help of the private bar in advocating for increased funding. Strategies to enhance pro bono even more include the use of private attorneys form larger urban volunteer pools to serve clients in service areas with smaller volunteer pools, enhancing pro bono contributions and improving relative equity of access for clients at the same time. Virginia's delivery system uses the resources of the private bar efficiently and effectively in the form of a unique statewide partnership for which low-income clients are the fortunate beneficiaries.

C. Organizational and Human Resource Management Configurations and Approaches

1. Current Configuration of Programs, Components and Funding Sources

Virginia's delivery system has six regional service areas each served by an LSC funded program. These six programs partner with other programs that receive mainly LSCV funding, but also other grant and local funding. They also collaborate with other legal and non-legal providers such as domestic violence shelters, bar association and foundation pro bono projects, social service organizations and community religious groups. All six regions receive both LSC and LSCV funding. Four of the regions have both LSC and LSCV funded programs. Two of the regions have large programs that receive both LSC and LSCV funds. In each region, the LSC funded program is generally the point of intake for clients although all programs and branch offices have intake capability for walk-in clients and those who call offices directly rather than the statewide centralized intake telephone number. The system has 43 (compared to 34 just three years ago) offices statewide including LSCV's and the statewide support center's. The system also operates an LSC funded statewide migrant farmworker program and a non-LSC statewide migrant worker and immigrant program. LSCV is the statewide funding, coordination and oversight office for the system and the Virginia Poverty Law Center

(VPLC) is the statewide support center. Within individual service areas are various specialty projects including a senior law center and two law centers devoted to children's issues. Most of the new offices are the result of reconfiguration schemes that include LSC and non-LSC partners in delivering services.

The Virginia delivery system will receive about $17 million in funding during the current year. A little more than $5 million of that is from LSC. Close to $7 million is from LSCV. In addition, the system receives substantial amounts of local government, United Way, private, Bar Association, Title III-B, foundation, Ryan White, Department of Justice domestic violence, and foundation funding. LSCV's funding is comprised of a state general revenue appropriation, a state filing fee appropriation and IOLTA revenue. LSCV administers the IOLTA program and devotes all funds to direct services from civil legal aid programs. The statewide support center is primarily funded by LSCV and has significantly increased other funding over the past several years. LSCV is the single largest funding source.

The six service areas follow relatively natural geographic boundaries and are quite large compared to the old configuration of programs. Two service areas (15% of the poverty population) in northern Virginia were merged. Two areas (12% of the poverty population) in northwestern and middle western Virginia were merged. Three service areas (17% of the poverty population) in southwest Virginia were merged. The southern service area (15% of the poverty population), the largest geographically, remained unchanged. Three areas in central Virginia were merged (17% of poverty population) and two service areas in eastern Virginia merged (24% of poverty population).

LSCV contracts annually with the Virginia State Bar to oversee all legal aid program activities in the state. LSCV in turn contracts with legal aid programs and provides general oversight, coordination, and statewide fundraising for the system. It's board of directors was described in another part of this report. Each service region is governed by a board of directors and each program as well. The current configuration of the system allows for effective and efficient delivery of services while maintaining the local identities of programs that are so integral to the support received by the system both from the private sector and the legislature.

Since 1998, a Statewide Planning Assembly has governed the planning process. While individual programs bear the costs of individual travel, LSCV has born most of the costs associated with this process. The Assembly has a Chair and Secretary and is governed by Roberts Rules

of Order. The Assembly still meets 5 or more times a year and has numerous planning teams that meet in between meetings of the statewide Assembly. The planning teams include those devoted to intake and eligibility and funding. Others remain ready and available to address specific issues as they arise, such as pro bono, barriers, and configuration.

2. Other Configurations and Approaches Considered or Explored

In the years leading up to the current configuration, the Virginia Planning Assembly considered and explored many service area configuration alternatives. Since the final service area reconfiguration was just completed this past July, and the others are still new enough to be refining operational components, it is too early to fully evaluate the current configuration. The implementation of many new initiatives such as the centralized telephone intake system, comprehensive statewide website and the centralized web-based case management system also require more time for refining. These improvements do better integrate the delivery system for clients who need access and for the service regions and offices that now have a great deal of interconnectivity. And many steps have been taken to improve and ensure that clients receive a consistent level of representation statewide. The community continues to work on implementation of goals, refining of goals and development of new goals in its ongoing planning recognizing that the delivery system needs constant refinement and improvement. If after a sufficient period of time, our self-evaluation or an independent evaluation suggests further or other configurations, the Planning Assembly will consider them at that time.

3. Duplication in Capacities and Services in Virginia

There is now very little duplication in the Virginia delivery system. With the implementation of the centralized web-based case management system, all service areas are connected and using the same system for managing clients making intake, transfer and referral of files a much more efficient process. To ensure that not just LSC funded programs participate in this centralized system, LSCV is awarding special technology grants during the current fiscal year to its non-LSC funded grantees so that they are linked to the same case management system as their LSC funded service area partners. The centralized telephone intake system is participated in by all LSC and non-LSC funded programs. Perhaps some duplication exists administratively, not so much in numbers of staff as in job descriptions, particularly on the financial and accounting side. Since a great deal of time during reconfiguration of service areas was spent on determining which funding sources would fund LSC programs and

which would fund non-LSC programs, it is still necessary for these two components to maintain separate accounting procedures. And the cost is not believed to be significant. Training is highly centralized through the state support center. Administrative matters such as the statewide Lexis contract, employee health benefits and group audit contracting are centralized at LSCV. Legislative work and program oversight for quality issues are also centralized at LSCV. Compared to 1998, the current system minimizes duplication significantly.

4. Innovative Service Delivery Systems/Mechanisms/Initiatives

Since 1998, a number of innovative mechanisms and changes have been implemented in the Virginia delivery system. They have been described elsewhere in the report, and are listed below.

- Statewide centralized telephone intake system
- Statewide centralized web-based case management system
- Statewide comprehensive web-site
- Reconfiguration of 13 service areas into 6 service areas
- Integration of LSC and non-LSC funded programs
- Opening of nine additional offices as part of reconfiguration
- Issuance of Report: *Enhancing Access to Justice: Self Represented Litigants in the Virginia Court System*
- Increase in filing fee appropriation and other funding sources
- Statewide intake and eligibility standards
- Statewide core priorities
- Statewide standards for treatment of clients including minimum wait time before acceptance or rejection and minimum wait time before meeting with a lawyer
- New projects focusing on the legal needs of the elderly, children and domestic violence victims
- Diversity assessment
- Minimum technology standards
- Cy Pres awards for special consumer law projects
- Expansion of pro bono hotlines and pro bono contributions
- Implementation of Program Performance Standards and Program Evaluations
- Implementation of Outcomes Benefits reporting and data collection
- Implementation of Other Matters reporting and data collection
- Implementation of client rejection data collection
- Creation of legislative and marketing materials using outcomes and other reported data

The Virginia Delivery System has implemented many changes over the past several years, changes that we hope will inure to the benefit of our client community. In the coming year, the Virginia Planning Assembly will continue to work on goals and strategies and work to involve clients and other groups in the planning process. We are striving to develop the most efficient, effective and qualitative delivery system possible for clients given available resources and believe we have advanced significantly toward that goal.