

CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUSTICES

Resolution VII Encouraging Pro Bono Services in Civil Matters

WHEREAS, lawyers has professional responsibility to provide legal services to those who cannot afford them; and

WHEREAS, the demand for civil legal services by those who cannot afford them is growing dramatically; and

WHEREAS, the already substantial gap between these legal needs and the resources available to meet them is growing so rapidly that it has reached crisis proportions; and

WHEREAS, this lack of legal representation impedes access to justice, a subject in which the judiciary has a special responsibility and interest; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the Conference of Chief Justices should promote broader access for people unable to afford legal services and should encourage the legal profession to increase pro bono efforts. In furtherance of these goals, the individual members of the conference in their respective states should consider:

1. Establishing a statewide committee of judges, bar leaders, legal services providers and community leaders to plan and implement methods of increasing the delivery of civil legal services; and
2. Encouraging judges to:
 - recruit lawyers to do pro bono work;
 - participate in events to recognize lawyers who do pro bono work;
 - consider special procedural or scheduling accommodations for lawyers who are volunteering their services; and
 - act in an advisory capacity to pro bono programs.

Proposed by the Professionalism and Lawyer Competence Committee of the Conference of Chief Justices in Indianapolis, Indiana, at the Twentieth Midyear Meeting, on February 6, 1997, and adopted in February by the Conference of Chief Justices.