

# CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUSTICES

## Resolution 3

### Expanding Meaningful Access to Justice for All

WHEREAS, the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators have long championed the importance of meaningful access to the justice system for all; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, the Conferences' Resolution 5 set the aspirational goal of establishing 100 percent access to effective assistance for essential civil legal needs through a continuum of meaningful and appropriate services; and

WHEREAS, the Conferences recognized that a continuum of meaningful and appropriate services includes, but is not limited to, expanded self-help services to litigants, new or modified court rules and processes that facilitate access, discrete task representation by counsel, increased pro bono assistance, effective use of technology, increased availability of legal aid services, enhanced language access services, and triage models to match specific needs to the appropriate level of services; and

WHEREAS, the Conferences urged their members to provide leadership in achieving that goal by working with Access to Justice Commissions or other entities focused on improving access to justice to develop a state strategic plan with realistic and measurable outcomes; and

WHEREAS, the Conferences urged the National Center for State Courts and other national organizations to develop tools and provide assistance to states, territories, and the District of Columbia in achieving the goal of 100 percent access through a continuum of meaningful and appropriate services; and

WHEREAS, the Justice for All project, funded by the Public Welfare Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, and the Open Society Foundations, and housed at the National Center for State Courts, has produced guidance materials that assist states, territories, and the District of Columbia (1) in identifying the sixteen major components of a viable and comprehensive Justice for All strategy, (2) in conducting an inventory assessment of the community resources currently available to satisfy those components, (3) in identifying the access to justice gaps to address the problems of persons in need, and (4) in developing a strategic action plan to fill those gaps to achieve meaningful justice for all through a continuum of services; and

WHEREAS, the Justice for All project supported the strategic action planning efforts of seven states (Alaska, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and New York), which has resulted in the preparation of statewide strategic action plans; and

WHEREAS, the Justice for All project has shown the promise and potential to expand access to justice for all when a state works in partnership with traditional and non-traditional access to justice stakeholders to focus on the problems faced by those in need from their perspective, to identify the full panoply of community resources available to address these problems, to develop a strategic action plan that is designed to enable every person who needs legal help to receive help and services appropriate to the problem and to the person in need, and to implement the plan through a continuum of user-focused solutions and services; and

WHEREAS, the Justice for All project has highlighted the importance of a collaborative, broad-based governance structure to succeed in developing a strategic action planning effort and in pursuing meaningful access to justice for all;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices encourages all states, territories, and the District of Columbia to:

- Review the Justice for All project guidance materials and the lessons learned from the planning efforts in the seven states;
- Undertake their own inventory assessment of the services and capabilities required to achieve meaningful access to justice for all;
- Use the resulting assessment to identify access to justice gaps; and
- Create an integrated and coordinated statewide strategic action plan to fill those gaps and initiate efforts to implement that plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices urges its members to work with traditional and non-traditional access to justice stakeholders to establish and maintain a collaborative governance structure to coordinate the preparation of the inventory assessment, to conduct strategic action planning, and to design implementation efforts to expand access to justice to realize 100 percent meaningful access to justice for all.

Adopted as proposed by the CCJ/COSCA Access, Fairness and Public Trust Committee at the 2018 Midyear Meeting on January 31, 2018.