

Conference of Chief Justices

Policy Statements & Resolutions

Resolution 23 Leadership to Promote Equal Justice

WHEREAS, equal justice for all is fundamental to our system of government; and

WHEREAS, this promise of equal justice under law is not realized for individuals and families who have no meaningful access to the justice system; and

WHEREAS, this de facto denial of equal justice has an adverse impact on these individuals, families, and society as a whole, and works to erode public trust and confidence in our system of justice; and

WHEREAS, the Judicial Branch, in our constitutional structure, shoulders primary leadership responsibility to preserve and protect equal justice and take action necessary to ensure access to the justice system for those who face impediments they are unable to surmount on their own; and

WHEREAS, the Conference of Chief Justices has, by resolution, provided leadership in improving the administration of justice by encouraging pro bono services in civil matters, supporting the Interest on Lawyers Trust Account Program, and supporting the continued funding of the Legal Services Corporation;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference acknowledges that judicial leadership and commitment are essential to ensuring equal access to the justice system and to the achievement through nationwide effort of equal justice for all and encourages individual members in their respective states to establish partnerships with state and local bar organizations, legal service providers, and others to:

1. Remove impediments to access to the justice system, including physical, economic, psychological and language barriers; and
2. Develop viable and effective plans, to establish or increase public funding and support for civil legal services for individuals and families who have no meaningful access to the justice system; and
3. Expand the types of assistance available to self- represented litigants, including exploring the role of non-attorneys.

Adopted as proposed by the Access to and Fairness in the Courts Committee of the Conference of Chief Justices in Baltimore, Maryland at the 24th Midyear Meeting on January 25, 2001.