

I. INTRODUCTION

Ohio's state justice community desires a more comprehensive and integrated civil legal services delivery system. This community seeks to develop such a system through a new strategic plan for Ohio. This new state plan will build on the assets present in the current system, the legal needs of existing and anticipated clients, and the current and potential capacity of the state's delivery system. This plan is a strategic plan, with which we expect programs to incorporate the vision, goals, and activities identified within this Plan into their own strategic planning process for their geographic service areas.

After more than six months of study and discussion, the Ohio State Planning Steering Committee unanimously adopted the principles and strategic plan outlined in this document. These principles capture the essence of many of the goals we have worked towards in the past and want to achieve in the future. While many challenges lie ahead, Ohio has established a solid foundation for successfully delivering legal services and will utilize this Plan to guide the achievement of these goals in the future.

In addition to a strategic plan, this Plan document also contains a concise summary of the recent history of legal services in Ohio. The evolution and successes of Ohio's legal services community contained in this document provide a "snapshot" and point of reference for us in our continued journey towards a more comprehensive and integrated civil legal services delivery system in Ohio. Finally, this summary provides us with some context in order to understand and appreciate the goals and activities within the strategic plan.

This document is divided into five sections: first, this introduction; second, an overview of the planning concepts and principles that guided the development of this new state plan; third, a summary of the recent history of legal services in Ohio; fourth, a chronology of the planning process used to develop this plan; and, fifth, the strategic plan for Ohio. Throughout the document, we reference several documents, which are included as attachments and may be found at the end of this document.