

VI. PROCESS TO DEVELOP 2004-2007 OHIO STATE PLAN

A. General Overview

The Ohio Planning Steering Committee has led the process to develop the 2004-2007 Ohio State Plan. As noted above, the Steering Committee includes representatives of legal services programs, the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation, law schools, pro bono programs, the client community, community-based organizations, and the organized bar. A core group of the Steering Committee was responsible for the developing the planning process, facilitation the various planning activities, the solicitation, hiring, and oversight of a configuration planning consultant, and the drafting of the final plan document. Over the course of approximately six months, the Steering Committee and its various work groups and sub-committees engaged in a dynamic planning process to develop the new state plan. Eight work groups were charged with developing a specific vision statement, goals, and activities for its respective topic area. The Steering Committee reviewed the work of each work group and selected the most appropriate work group materials for inclusion in the new State Plan. Public comment on the draft materials included notice to program staff, board members, and other delivery system stakeholders, which total hundreds of individuals. The notice invited individuals to complete a Web-based survey, which outlined the draft Plan and solicited the respondent's levels of agreement with the various components of the Plan. (See Attachment H for a summary of survey results.) Following public comment and extensive discussion on each topic area, the Steering Committee adopted the new State Plan. Details regarding this planning process are summarized below.

1. Client-Centeredness

Client-centered state planning remains a top priority in Ohio. The new State Plan manifests this priority in its client service delivery structure and resource allocation components. State planners relied on client community input and information relating to client demographics, characteristics, critical needs and barriers to service delivery to establish and refine the new State Plan. For example, state planners utilized the following client resources to develop the strategic plan section of the new State Plan: committees, partially composed of client representatives;

client surveys, focus groups, and “key informant” interviews; regional and statewide census and other empirical information; and established target priorities for client services.

As in previous state planning efforts, state planners were unable to adequately and systematically gather client information. However, client-centered goals and activities emerging from the Plan’s planning process include: improved capacity to serve clients; full-range of legal services available to clients throughout the state; improved education of client community about their rights and about the resources available to them; joint intake and hotlines; effective pro se representation; and the desire to complete a new statewide and continued regional client needs assessments.

2. *Degree Of Unified Planning*

The 2004-2007 Ohio State Plan planning process focused largely on state-level planning. This process has been robust and, as a result, provides the framework for regional and individual program plans. Following this planning process, state planners will seek to incorporate vision statements, goals, and activities identified in the new state plan with current and future regional and program plans. The hope is that program and regional planning will mirror and build on the strategic plan section of the new state plan. Throughout the new state plan, regions and programs are challenged to improve service delivery through specific strategies or to explore various options to enhance program services. New state plan activities also support and guide regional- and program-based planning. For example, each region is challenged by the new state plan to adopt new intake system standards and each program is challenged to explore new and under-utilized funding sources. Finally, existing regional and program plans served as input to the new state plan and helped state planners to best identify and address state, regional and local needs. For example, regional- and program-based information gathered during OLAF grantee annual reports and peer reviews greatly assisted state planners identify needs and propose activities to best address these needs.

3. *Participation In State Planning Effort*

State planners were able to successfully engage all legal services programs in the state – regardless of the source of their funding – in the state planning process either directly or through

an effective representation process. In general, the Steering Committee, as a representative body for the delivery system, and its state planning work groups developed the new plan. Work groups consisted of a work group leader, who was responsible for coordinating and leading the work of a specific topic area of the plan, and five to ten work group members, who may be a program staff, board member, client, or other stakeholder. At least one of the eight work group leaders represented his/her own LSC-funded program. (*See* Attachment I for list of Work Group Leaders and Members.) Additionally, in many cases, a work group had multiple representatives from a single program or region. Finally, all programs potentially effected by re-configuration had both staff and board member representation.

4. *Stature Outside Legal Services Community*

State and federal courts, state legislative and executive branch leadership, and business and community organization leadership were generally aware of the efforts of state planners to develop a new State Plan. In an environment of continuous state and regional planning, it was somewhat difficult to distinguish this effort from other past planning efforts or the planning efforts simultaneously occurring in other, related delivery systems and sectors. Even with this obstacle, OLAF and program board membership and state and local bar association participation helped elevate state planning respect and awareness levels. Because of the involvement of leaders outside of the legal services community in these planning steps, these same leaders were engaged and aware of the state plan planning activities. Finally, the continued use of newsletters, grant reports, and annual reports by state planning participants helped ensure ongoing awareness and involvement by outside leaders.

5. *Staff Support*

Ohio's 2004-2007 State Plan planning process relied largely on in-kind support from legal services staff. State planners decided to hire and utilize a paid consultant to facilitate the discussion of service delivery configuration planning. Ohio's state support office and the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation provided the largest amount of in-kind staff support. Staff from each program provided varying levels of support and participation in the planning process, including leadership on the Steering Committee and topic area work groups. Program and

project directors represented the largest amount of in-kind, non-state support staff involvement. One criticism of this use of in-kind staff was that such a heavy reliance upon existing staff depleted resources away from direct client services. The Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation contracted with and paid for the services of John Tull, the configuration planning consultant. Both State Support and OLAF staff contributed significant amounts of time and supplies to the planning and efforts.

6. *Continuity*

The six-month planning process for the new state plan maintained a high level of continuity of planning authority membership and staff. There were significant work demands placed on Steering Committee members and work group leaders and members during this planning process. Work group participation was the strongest, while Steering Committee participation varied depending upon the meeting. Overall, key stakeholders from the state and local bars, Supreme Court, client advocacy groups, law schools, and funders have remained engaged in the planning process.

7. *Ability To Overcome Turf Issues*

Like previous state planning efforts, the new state plan represents a reasonable balance between client and entity interests, with the former serving as the building blocks of the delivery system. The 2004-2007 Ohio State Plan planning process did have to resolve various “turf issues.” For example, state planners were able to successfully transcend many turf issues to develop a new configuration plan for the state. As a second example, state planners were able to move beyond various “turf issues” regarding the use of technology, which resulted in more focused, better-defined plans for technology in the delivery system.

8. *Leadership*

For the most part, leadership of state planning efforts in Ohio is continuing, conveys a compelling vision of legal services delivery, is effective in achieving consensus, and is capable of achieving results. There remains a strong and wide consensus that the Steering Committee should, and does, serve as the lead entity in state planning efforts in Ohio. Furthermore, program

and project directors and their organization's respective board of trustees largely support the activities of the Steering Committee and state planners. Finally, state planning has strong "grassroots" support from the various work groups and task forces working as standing subcommittees of the state steering committee or on an ad hoc basis to address existing and emerging issues.

9. *Formality Of State Planning Organization*

Finally, while the Steering Committee does not have a written charter, its composition and processes remain consistent from year to year. Additionally, the Committee now operates in a more formal manner with advance meeting notices to members; voting on Committee actions; meeting minutes taken and approved; and, regularly scheduled meetings. Finally, the Committee continually explores expanded membership and emerging issues for consideration by the Committee.

10. *Breadth Of Participation*

All legal services providers in the state – whether or not they receive LSC funding – are represented on the State Planning Steering Committee. Legal services provider representatives include both members of governing boards and staff directors. Plan input and feedback was obtained in an organized, systematic fashion for consideration in the planning process. Input and feedback was obtained from a broad and diverse set of clients, community organizations, and governmental entities for use in the planning process. (See Attachment J for summary of participating groups and individuals.)

11. *Use Of Empirical Data*

Empirical data was utilized during this planning process. Ohio's sophisticated planning process took advantage of much statistical information on legal services clients, their needs, and existing state legal services delivery programs. Data sources include 2000 federal census data and detailed information on each legal aid provider. The latter includes the following data: Client Demographics (2002 cases closed grouped by ethnicity and legal aid society and 2000 Census data for Ohio); Statewide Revenue Summaries (2002 Actual and 2003 Projected Program

Budgets); CSR / Matters Summaries (2002 CSR totals by case closing category by legal aid societies - All and PAI; 2002 CSR statewide totals - All and PAI; 2002 CSR statewide totals: comparison of legal aid societies by substantive areas - All and PAI; 2002 CSR totals: brief services and extended cases - family law, and non-family law; by legal aid society - All and PAI; 2002 statewide totals - Matter Service Reports); Legal Aid Societies Data (2002 CSR data - All and PAI; 2002 Matters Report; 2002 Actual and 2003 Projected Funding); and, Delivery System Capacity Assessment Data.