

MAR - 4 2016

Ronald R. Oganter
Clerk

THE SUPREME COURT OF WASHINGTON

IN THE MATTER OF THE REAUTHORIZATION OF
THE ACCESS TO JUSTICE BOARD

ORDER

NO. 25700-B-567

WHEREAS, the Washington judicial system is founded upon the fundamental principle that the judicial system is accessible to all persons, which advancement is of fundamental interest to the members of the Washington State Bar Association.

WHEREAS, responding to the unmet legal needs of low and moderate income people in Washington State and others who suffer disparate access barriers, the increasing complexity of civil legal services delivery, the importance of civil equal justice to the proper functioning of our democracy, and the need for leadership and effective coordination of civil equal justice efforts in our state, the Supreme Court in May 1994 established an Access to Justice Board and directed that the Board operate for an initial two year period.

WHEREAS, the Access to Justice Board's initial accomplishments in the face of tremendous difficulty demonstrated the practical value of coordinated and focused leadership under the auspices of the Supreme Court and led the Court to reauthorize the Access to Justice Board for an extended five-year period;

WHEREAS, the Access to Justice Board is a national model that has proven its value in expanding, coordinating and promoting effective and economical civil legal services delivery for vulnerable low and moderate income people, has developed a track record of significant accomplishments that maximized effective use of limited resources to address the civil legal needs of an increasing poverty population, and has made great strides in enhancing access to the civil justice system in Washington State.

Now, therefore, it is hereby

ORDERED:

That the Access to Justice Board is hereby reauthorized and shall continue to be administered by the Washington State Bar Association, and is charged with responsibility to achieve equal access to the civil justice system for those facing economic and other significant barriers.

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The Access to Justice Board shall consist of ten members nominated by the Board of Governors of the Washington State Bar Association and appointed by the Supreme Court. Members are appointed based on experience in and commitment to access to justice issues. Therefore, the Board of Governors shall broadly solicit and make nominations to the Supreme Court based on experience in and commitment to access to justice issues, consistent with the needs of the Access to Justice Board, including, for example, people affiliated with the following constituencies:

- Board for Judicial Administration
- Washington State Bar Association Board of Governors
- Statewide Staffed Legal Services Programs
- Volunteer Legal Services Community
- Other Members and Supporters of the Washington State Alliance for Equal Justice.

No less than one member of the Board shall be a person who is not an attorney.

The membership of the Board shall reflect ethnic, gender, geographic, and other diversity. Mid-term vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as original appointments, provided however, the solicitation for nominations may be abbreviated. The appointee for a mid-term vacancy shall fill the remainder of the vacated term and shall be eligible for reappointment up to two additional terms.

The Board shall designate one member as the Chair of the Board who shall serve a term of two years. An individual may continue to serve out their term as Chair and vote as a Board Member for up to one additional year notwithstanding the expiration of his or her term on the Board. In such event, the Board shall consist of eleven members until the end of such individual's term as Chair.

Appointments shall be for a three-year term. Board members shall be eligible for reappointment for one additional term.

The Access to Justice Board shall work to:

- Establish, coordinate and oversee a statewide, integrated, non-duplicative, civil legal services delivery system that is responsive to the needs of poor, vulnerable and moderate means individuals;
- Establish and evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the civil legal services delivery system against an objective set of standards and criteria;
- Promote adequate levels of public, private and volunteer support for Washington State's civil equal justice network;
- Serve as an effective clearinghouse and mechanism for communication and information dissemination;
- Promote, develop and implement policy initiatives and criteria which enhance the availability of resources for essential civil equal justice activities;
- Develop and implement new programs and innovative measures designed to expand access to justice in Washington State;
- Promote jurisprudential understanding of the law relating to the fundamental right of individuals to secure meaningful access to the civil justice system;
- Promote widespread understanding of civil equal justice among the members of the public through public legal education;
- Promote the responsiveness of the civil justice system to the needs of those who suffer disparate treatment or disproportionate access barriers; and
- Address existing and proposed laws, rules and regulations that may adversely affect meaningful access to the civil justice system.

The Access to Justice Board may adopt internal operational rules pertinent to these powers and duties.

The Access to Justice Board shall be funded and staffed by the Washington State Bar Association, which shall have authority to establish a budget and approve expenditures.

The Board shall file with the Supreme Court and the Board of Governors of the Washington State Bar Association an annual report outlining its work during the prior 12-month period.

DATED at Olympia, Washington this 4th day of March, 2016.

Johnson

Carr, J.

Fairhurst, J.

Stephens, J.

Madsen, C. J.

Wiggins, J.

Comiter, J.

Gods Mellalof

Jr., J.