

# **COMPREHENSIVE, COORDINATED, CLIENT-CENTERED CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES FOR NEW YORK CITY**

## ***STRATEGIC RESTRUCTURING PLAN FOR LEGAL SERVICES FOR NEW YORK CITY (LSNY)***

**MARCH 15, 2001**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The new structure and program set forth in this Strategic Restructuring Plan for Legal Services for New York City (LSNY) represents the culmination of a six-month planning process undertaken by the LSNY Board of Directors. The planning process engaged LSNY's stakeholders -- Board members, staff of LSNY, staff and Board members of its component programs, and, as well, representatives of community groups, bar associations, academia, the courts, funding organizations, other legal services providers and social service organizations -- in a structured discussion about how best to use LSNY's resources to address the civil legal services needs of low-income people in New York City.

The plan will lead to major structural change and operational improvements in LSNY. It unifies the program, builds on strengths, and allows for flexibility in employing the resources of neighborhood offices to address existing and emerging needs for legal

assistance. It balances a strong central operation that will provide coordination, support and oversight, with local delivery of services to the City's richly diverse and often geographically distinct communities.

**Overview:**

*The LSNY system will be reconfigured into an integrated, coordinated client-centered structure, with three core elements:*

- ? ?A strong central city-wide coordination and oversight body to promote quality services, improved client access to services, accountability and efficiency*
- ? ?Community-based constituent operations responsible for integrated local delivery of services subject to the governing authority of the LSNY Board of Directors*
- ? ?New accountability and governance systems to assure high quality legal services, effective use of resources and sound fiscal management*

*These structural changes will be coupled with a range of operational improvements that will enable LSNY to*

- ? ?Streamline and make more equitable client access*
- ? ?Take full advantage of technology*
- ? ?Enhance coordination of and support for a full range of client services*
- ? ?More effectively leverage, expand and deploy financial, pro bono and other resources*

***Significantly enhanced, integrated and strengthened central operation to promote quality services, improved client access to services, accountability and efficiency.***

LSNY's central operation will be expanded to take on a strong leadership, support, coordination and oversight functions. New or significantly enhanced responsibilities of the central LSNY operation will include:

- ?? Operating a city-wide "800" number for centralized intake and referral as a primary (but not exclusive) point of entry for LSNY's clients throughout New York City
- ?? Establishing a central technology support project that will implement a city-wide technology plan to support use of technology in delivery of legal services
- ?? Intensified central support and oversight to foster high quality client services
- ?? A thoroughly revamped centralized fiscal, administrative and human resources operation to provide oversight and management of fiscal and administrative tasks
- ?? New public relations and communications responsibilities to foster more effective client advocacy and resource development
- ?? Expansion, integration and coordination of private attorney involvement efforts

- ?? Coordinating services with other legal services providers in New York City and New York State
- ?? Encouraging and assisting constituent programs to collaborate more effectively with one another and with other civil legal assistance providers

***Constituent programs responsible for community-based delivery of services***

To balance the advantages of local service delivery with central responsibility for a high quality program for all LSNY's clients, the existing community-based legal services corporations will be transformed into constituent corporations pursuant to the N.Y. Not-for-profit Law in which LSNY, acting through its Board of Directors, is the sole member. These community-based programs will have primary responsibility for delivery of legal services in the communities they serve, with substantial oversight by the LSNY Executive Director and subject to the governing authority of the LSNY Board. The constituent programs will:

- ?? Assume responsibility for local, community-based legal service delivery and local community involvement
- ?? Strengthen coordination of legal service delivery at the local level with courts and other forums as well as with community and social service organizations and bar associations
- ?? Make staffing and budget decisions within their programs, subject to LSNY oversight and approval
- ?? Retain leadership opportunities for individuals from the bar and in the communities connected with and sensitive to the needs of New York City's diverse low-income populations
- ?? Retain a manageable scale and staff morale and *esprit de corps* within any given site
- ?? Stimulate additional opportunities for fundraising
- ?? Maximize the advantages of creativity, plurality and diversity responsive to the varying needs of New York City's ethnically diverse and widely distributed communities
- ?? Set local priorities and participate in setting city-wide priorities, with LSNY oversight and approval
- ?? Collaborate with each other and citywide projects to address client needs

In addition to community-based services, LSNY will continue to sustain city-wide projects that address particular client needs or populations. As needed, LSNY will support additional projects to address specific issues or emerging client needs.

***New accountability and governance systems to assure high quality client-centered legal services and sound fiscal management***

Governance under the newly reconfigured structure will promote high quality client services throughout the LSNY program. The relationship and apportionment of powers

and decision-making authority between LSNY and its constituent corporations will be accomplished through a membership corporation structure, without the need for subrecipient agreements. Under the new reconfigured structure, governance will be as follows:

- ?? *LSNY Board:* The LSNY Board will be the governing authority for the city-wide LSNY program. It will continue as the governing body of LSNY and, through the new membership corporation structure, will constitute the core governing authority of the constituent corporations. The by-laws and, if necessary, the certificates of incorporation of the current OLSC's in the LSNY system will be amended to give LSNY, as the sole member, the right to approve all changes in the by-laws and the power to appoint and remove members of the Boards of Directors and/or the Project Director of the constituent corporations, as well as other specific powers that could be exercised if needed to address deficits in program performance.
- ?? *LSNY Central:* Administrative and substantive support and oversight of the LSNY system will be provided by the staff of LSNY Central, which will include an Executive Director, a Chief Financial Officer, a Chief of Operations, and a Director of Support (Executive Staff), with such reasonable additional central staff as needed to address its functions and responsibilities.
- ?? *Executive Council:* The LSNY Executive Council (EC) will include Project Directors of constituent programs and Directors of city-wide projects who will advise LSNY Central Executive Staff with respect to coordination of client services and implementation of policy.
- ?? *Statewide Peer Review:* Accountability will be further promoted through participation in a statewide peer review system that LSNY and its colleagues in LSC-funded programs in New York State will establish to conduct systematic evaluations of LSC-funded programs.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Legal Services for New York City (LSNY), one of the largest civil legal services organizations in the United States, has been providing free legal assistance to low-income people throughout New York City for over thirty years. LSNY has provided services through a network of LSNY units and community based legal services organizations located in low-income communities and transportation hubs in four of New York City's five boroughs.<sup>1</sup> Formerly known as Community Action for Legal Services, the LSNY system was formed as a confederation of community-based legal services programs, many of them created and operating well before the passage of the Legal Services Corporation Act in 1974. This plan significantly strengthens LSNY's ability to deliver high quality legal services by unifying the program through a strong, supportive central operation and a membership corporation structure under the governing authority of the LSNY Board of Directors.

Coupled with the newly reconfigured structure, the operational improvements to be implemented pursuant to this plan – including a city-wide “800” number for client access, integrated technology, enhanced coordination of litigation and supervisory skills, and better facilities for generating and deploying resources – should vastly improve services to clients. The LSNY programs and units have a rich history of providing legal services in a wide range of substantive areas as well as through a diverse and extensive range of approaches. This plan builds on that rich history while giving LSNY the tools to address the challenges of today and of the future.

LSNY launched its strategic planning process in October 2000 to examine how its resources for legal services to the poor should be organized in New York City and how key service delivery functions could be improved. The planning process, which was initiated in response to a request from Legal Services Corporation (LSC) as part of its state planning initiative, came after several years of statewide planning for legal services delivery, in which LSNY has played an active leadership role. LSNY's planning process followed a design that was developed by a Plan-to-Plan Committee drawn from LSNY's Board of Directors and a cross-section of LSNY's stakeholders. The LSNY Board established a 26 member Planning Committee, composed of representatives of the LSNY Board, LSNY's component entities, the union representing LSNY employees, community groups, the courts, academic institutions and bar associations, to develop a plan to recommend to the LSNY Board of Directors. The Board engaged in a thorough review of the proposed plan, which had also been circulated for comment to an Advisory Committee composed of individuals from a wide range of institutions concerned with delivery of legal services as well as to staff, Boards of LSNY's component organizations,

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<sup>1</sup> The LSNY system currently includes the following community-based legal services programs: Bedford-Stuyvesant Community Legal Services, Bronx Legal Services, Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A, Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation B (South Brooklyn Legal Services), Harlem Legal Services, MFY Legal Services and Queens Legal Services; and the following LSNY units: LSNY Brooklyn, Legal Services for the Elderly, the Legal Support Unit and a fiscal and administrative unit.

and others. The LSNY Board of Directors modified and approved the content of this plan at its March 13, 2001 meeting.

In addition to the long hours of thoughtful discussion contributed at a dozen meetings of the Planning Committee and by the LSNY Board, as well as the helpful comments of the Advisory Committee, the planning process benefited from additional resources and assistance. Funding support for the planning process has been provided by the United Way, the New York Community Trust and the Legal Services Corporation. The specific steps of the planning process and all meetings of the Planning Committee were structured and facilitated by an outside consultant, Valyrie Laedlein of Community Resource Exchange, a consulting firm which strengthens nonprofit organizations serving New York's poor communities through management consulting, capacity building and facilitation services. Planning Committee meetings were hosted by the law firm Debevoise and Plimpton and the law firm Proskauer Rose. Research support to the planning process was provided by the Stein Center for Law and Ethics at Fordham Law School, the law firm Cleary Gottlieb, Steen and Hamilton and Lawyers Alliance of New York.

## **VISION AND GOALS FOR LSNY**

LSNY seeks to have an effective, comprehensive, integrated and efficient program that uses its resources in collaboration with other legal services organizations to deliver high quality civil legal services to low-income people in New York City in order to build strong and stable individuals, families and communities. LSNY must:

- ?? Be client-centered and responsive to real community needs
- ?? Have systems of accountability to assure high quality services, and fiscal and managerial efficiency and integrity
- ?? Have significant and meaningful community involvement in its operations and in determining its priorities
- ?? Have an intake and referral system that streamlines access and maximizes points of entry and that treats clients with dignity and respect
- ?? Use technology efficiently and effectively in delivery of services
- ?? Encourage innovation and creativity in service delivery and share and build upon strengths
- ?? To the extent permissible and in conjunction with our colleagues, provide clients with a full range of services
- ?? Foster coordination and cooperation within the program and with others
- ?? Operate in a manner consistent with the New York State planning process for provision of comprehensive, integrated delivery of legal services
- ?? Have the flexibility to use existing resources for diverse approaches to client assistance and to develop additional resources, governmental and private, to address current needs as well as emerging and changing needs

- ?? Provide leadership and, consistent with LSC regulations, a strong public role on legal issues affecting the lives of low-income residents of New York City

## **RECONFIGURED STRONG CENTRAL OVERSIGHT, COORDINATION AND SUPPORT**

***Goals for the Central Operation*** At the heart of the new structure is the expansion of LSNY Central's role in overseeing and supporting the delivery of client services and managing fiscal and administrative operations, and the redefinition of its relationship with the entities that provide direct services. The functions of the central operation -- establishing standards and providing substantive support for service delivery, providing effective fiscal and administrative support and oversight, coordinating appropriate technology applications and developing and conducting citywide public relations on behalf of the program -- will be part of an integrated whole. This new, strengthened role for LSNY central is intended to realize the following goals:

- ?? Stronger central leadership for establishing organizational vision and identity, setting city-wide priorities, and providing a coordinated response to city-wide needs and opportunities
- ?? Stronger mechanisms for quality assurance and control
- ?? Economies of scale through standardized, shared and streamlined administration, fiscal operations and reporting
- ?? Synergies among local efforts at multiple sites by creating formal opportunities for shared learning and shared strategies
- ?? Greater impact and cost savings by standardizing, sharing and consolidating joint functions, such as fundraising, staff and management orientation and training, permissible legislative advocacy, and by providing centrally-available legal and technical materials
- ?? A sense of LSNY's larger impact and potential among staff
- ?? Greater clarity among clients, potential clients and the other organizations serving them about the resources available and how and where they might be accessed

***Staffing and Responsibilities*** Administrative and substantive support and oversight of the LSNY system will be provided by the staff of LSNY Central, which will include an Executive Director, a Chief Financial Officer, a Chief of Operations, and a Director of Support (Executive Staff), with such reasonable additional central staff as needed to address its functions and responsibilities. The Executive Staff of LSNY will be responsible for:

- ?? Administering and overseeing compliance with all city-wide LSNY contracts, including reporting, financial oversight and services;
- ?? Monitoring the constituent corporations' compliance with requirements for routine evaluations of their Project Director



- ?? Coordinating city-wide legislative and other fundraising activities
- ?? Coordinating regular peer evaluations through the statewide peer review system
- ?? Providing substantive, technological and administrative support
- ?? Establishing, in consultation with the Executive Council, required standards for delivery of services

**Operations** In its coordination and oversight role, LSNY Central will look for opportunities to leverage the considerable talent, experience, and resources of its network for increased accountability, better responsiveness and outreach, greater impact, and mutual learning. Toward this end, LSNY Central will reconfigure its central operation in the following ways:

*Fiscal and Administrative Functions* As part of the planning process, LSNY obtained an accelerated review of its fiscal and administrative operation by Neil McBride, of Rural Legal Services of Tennessee, who has been engaged in evaluating the LSNY programs since late 1999. LSNY also retained a respected consulting firm, Marks, Paneth and Shrom, to assess the overall fiscal and administrative operations both at Central and in component programs. LSNY will incorporate the suggestions in these assessments, and continue to work with consultants to develop specific strategies to achieve and improve the following:

- ?? Integration of central and local operations to better the flow of information to achieve internal and external reporting
- ?? Coordinated use of technology within the system for financial tracking and reporting
- ?? Cash management, to mitigate cash flow problems stemming from delays in the receipt of non-LSC funding, among other causes
- ?? Developing a budgeting template and uniform standards and format to guide budget development, including enforceable timelines for submission and reporting
- ?? Operating manuals for and training in fiscal and administrative procedures
- ?? Centralized Human Resources management, including administration of compensation, benefits, personnel policies and labor relations

*Technology Support Project* A city-wide project housed at LSNY Central will be developed to foster effective use of technology in delivery and support of legal services by LSNY and others in the advocacy community. Use of technology throughout the LSNY system will be improved by integrating hardware/software needs, technical support and maintenance, substantive support, and training. The planning process is to continue in this area, with development of a detailed technology plan with the assistance of ProBono.net and Columbia Law School's technology clinic to address:

- ?? Expanded use of information technology in the delivery of services, including computer-assisted research, information databases, listservs, etc.
- ?? A uniform case management system and standardization of other information and communication technologies

- ?? Technology upgrades for fiscal management and budgeting, and integration of systems across sites and Central LSNY
- ?? Uniform minimum hardware and software standards throughout the LSNY system, including email and internet access on every desktop
- ?? Videoconferencing capacity
- ?? Needed technology for the central “800” number
- ?? Adequate staffing to design and support the use of technology throughout the LSNY system

*Referral, information and outreach project* LSNY will develop a project that will consolidate and coordinate client access, outreach and information efforts. The project will:

- ?? Develop a single “800” number for client access to intake, city-wide referral and community legal education materials or other brief information
  - Volunteer component, using retired lawyers, law students
  - Collaborative project within LSNY including substantial involvement of constituent program staff, other city-wide projects, etc.
  - Collaborate, to the extent feasible, with Lawhelp, Shield and the other legal services providers
  - Connected to office intake systems and specialized substantive hotlines
- ?? Establish a coherent city-wide approach to outreach, including
  - Continuation and expansion of existing outreach efforts in particular communities
  - Collaboration with settlement houses, community groups, Beacon schools
  - Analysis of demographic data to assess the adequacy and location of existing offices and outreach operations and to identify means to address unmet legal needs of different communities

*Legal Support Unit* The Director of Support will spearhead and maintain efforts to support delivery of legal services across New York City and, with the Executive Director and Project Directors of constituent corporations, jointly plan and set city-wide priorities for service delivery, coordinate litigation across local offices and projects, and support and develop legal skills as well as management and supervisory skills. Under the Director of Support, the functions of the existing Legal Support Unit (LSU) will be continued, i.e., serving the LSNY program and the legal and advocacy communities by providing continuing legal education (now mandated by the Office of Court Administration) in poverty law, training for advocates, social services professionals, etc., maintenance of task forces, back-up, consultations, coordination of advocacy efforts, and other support. In addition, the LSU will expand its functions to include:

- ?? Supervisory and management skills training support with the assistance of Management Information Exchange
- ?? Regular meetings of supervisory and managerial personnel
- ?? Expanded role in litigation coordination and support
- ?? Coordination of the city-wide PAI and other Pro bono efforts through

- Better use of our existing relationships with Volunteers of Legal Service and bar associations
- Developing a more coordinated and integrated approach to pro bono relations
- As soon as the regulations are finalized, obtaining accreditation from the State's Office of Court Administration to provide CLE credit for pro bono work (This is in addition to the existing accreditation to provide CLE credits for training.)

*Public Relations* A staff person will be added to LSNY Central who will be responsible for communication, and public relations. Responsibilities of this new staff person will include:

- ?? Internal/ external newsletter
- ?? Docket of cases and projects
- ?? Press relations
- ?? Promotional materials: brochures, etc.
- ?? Support for fundraising and contracts with government funders

## **COORDINATED AND INTEGRATED COMMUNITY-BASED CLIENT SERVICES**

LSNY and all of the elements of its structure exist to deliver quality legal services to low-income people in New York City. Those services have been delivered, and will continue under the new structure to be delivered, by the staff of the local offices of the LSNY programs.<sup>2</sup> Local service delivery remains a core value of the program, and local offices remain the vehicles to deliver services. However, the structure of the delivery system and the relationship of the local programs to the center will change. The current subrecipient arrangement with the OLSC's, in which the relationship between LSNY and the local entities is defined by a contract between the parties, will be replaced with a membership corporation structure. LSNY, acting through its Board of Directors will be the sole member of the constituent corporations. By-laws of the OLSC's, and if needed, certificates of incorporation, will be amended to establish their constituent corporation status and to set forth the terms of the relationship, without the need of subgrant agreements.

*Constituent programs* As the core locus for service delivery, constituent programs will  
 ?? Be allocated a sum for delivery of legal services out of LSC and other city-wide resources based on proportionate share of the poor person population in New York City in the area they serve

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<sup>2</sup> LSNY programs currently operate 14 offices in four of the City's five boroughs. The legal services needs of Staten Island, by far the City's least populous borough, will be met through separate arrangements, most likely through a satellite office with the Legal Aid Society – a matter already under discussion between LSNY and the Legal Aid Society.

- ?? Raise funds to address local needs and priorities, and participate in city-wide fundraising efforts
- ?? Have managing Boards, drawn from the bar and communities to provide oversight of program staff and service delivery
- ?? Bear authority, with LSNY oversight and approval, for staffing within their programs and for budget development, management and reporting to LSNY as contractor
- ?? Manage relations with community and social services organizations, local courts and other forums and bar associations in their locality
- ?? Develop systems with their local offices and projects that are consistent with city-side standards and that will ultimately allow the city-wide legal services system to function as a workable, coordinated whole
- ?? Be responsible for coordination of delivery of services with other LSNY constituent corporations and projects, and other legal service delivery organizations
- ?? Be responsible for determining local legal needs and approving local priorities consistent with the city-wide priority-setting process in which all projects in the LSNY system will participate, with priorities subject to approval by the LSNY Board
- ?? Be accountable for compliance at the local office and constituent program levels with uniform standards and systems for client case management, fiscal management, budgeting, technology, client intake, data reporting and community needs assessment
- ?? Participate as integral players in the LSNY Executive Council

*Priority-setting* The constituent corporations will be linked to each other and the center through shared structure, governance, technology, standards and policies. A shared system of priority-setting will be established, through which local and city-wide priorities will be determined. Elements of that system will include:

*Community needs assessment* Recognizing that “community needs” for legal services fall into three levels is important to the ongoing process for assessing and prioritizing community needs. Those levels are: individuals and families; community organizations; and city-wide communities of interest and their organizations. In light of this, LSNY will work with consultants to chart and quantify demographic data using the 2000 census and other sources for use in determining priorities and allocating resources.

*Priority-setting conference* LSNY will organize a periodic city-wide conference for staff, boards, clients, community organizations and other stakeholders to discuss emerging issues affecting the legal rights of low-income people in New York City, devise strategies for addressing those issues, and inform program priority decisions. This conference will be an additional means of obtaining meaningful input into the delivery of legal services from client-eligible individuals as well as representatives of local and citywide community organizations, and of advocacy organizations that work on issues affecting poor people.

*City-wide Projects:* City-wide projects that provide direct client services will continue to be part of the LSNY system. These projects provide a mechanism for delivering legal

services to non-geographically-based constituents (e.g., the elderly or disabled) or carrying out a functional or support service across the city. As need arises, the LSNY system will encourage or “grow” additional projects to address specific issues. These could be units of LSNY Central or projects of constituent corporations. Existing city-wide projects include: Legal Services for the Elderly (a unit of LSNY) and the Mental Health Law Project (project of MFY Legal Services). Areas for potential additional city-wide projects include community economic development, health care, complex advocacy, domestic violence, education rights advocacy, low-income taxpayers’ issues, and/or welfare-to-work issues.

## **EFFECTIVE SYSTEMS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE**

A primary goal of this restructuring effort is increased accountability at two levels:

- ?? to the communities served by LSNY by promoting responsiveness to community legal needs in determining *what* services are provided and evaluating *how* they are delivered; and
- ?? to LSNY and its funders by fostering compliance with the systems and standards established for quality assurance and sound fiscal and administrative management

*Statewide Collaborative Peer Review* A comprehensive statewide peer review system for LSC grantees is being developed and will provide an important vehicle for program accountability. The LSNY Board will have these evaluations to take into account in its oversight of LSNY and constituent corporation operations. Features of this system include:

- ?? A mutually accepted set of standards
- ?? An agreed-upon protocol, using McBride protocol as model
- ?? Regular, periodic peer reviews – once every 3 year cycle, with the possibility of more frequent evaluations if warranted
- ?? Initially administered by an association of LSC-funded legal services providers (other providers could join eventually)
- ?? Using both legal services and outside evaluators
- ?? Accountability through an obligation to implement a plan for corrective action

*Governance* The membership corporation structure will provide all the necessary tools to address issues of accountability in the LSNY program. Measures that will be incorporated into the relationship will include but not be limited to:

- ?? Vesting in LSNY the power to appoint members of the Boards of Directors of constituent corporations for staggered renewable terms, and the power to remove such constituent Board members with or without cause. (It is anticipated that, as a general matter, the present Boards of Directors would be reappointed, and that the LSNY

Board would receive recommendations for appointment and renewal from the constituent Boards as vacancies occur.)

- ?? Requiring LSNY approval for any amendments to constituent corporation by-laws
- ?? Requiring constituent corporations to comply with contract reporting requirements, LSC and other regulatory policies, personnel and accounting manuals and other manuals, policies and directives established by LSNY as needed
- ?? Requiring constituent corporations to obtain approval of LSNY to select a Project Director of a constituent program and vesting in LSNY the power, if necessary, to terminate a Project Director

*LSNY Board* In addition to LSNY's function as sole member of the constituent corporations, the LSNY Board will have the following continued and expanded responsibilities related to accountability:

- ?? Hire, routinely evaluate and, if necessary, terminate the LSNY Executive Director
- ?? Monitor the constituent corporations' compliance with requirements for routine evaluations of their Project Directors and, if necessary, require a retention review by a local Board of its Project Director
- ?? Determine the distribution of LSC and all other city-wide funds
- ?? Ratify the collective bargaining agreement with the staff union
- ?? Approve and oversee the budgets and expenditures of LSNY and its component corporations
- ?? Determine priorities for LSNY and its city-wide projects and, in consultation with constituent programs, determine city-wide core priorities for local programs, and approve priorities of constituent corporations
- ?? After consultation with the Executive Council, adopt standards for staffing of local programs to assure adequate supervision and support and appropriate resources devoted to client services

*Constituent corporations* Constituent corporations will be expected to:

- ?? Participate in a process for determining minimum standards for delivery of services, including parameters for staffing, intake availability, outreach, and technology
- ?? Participate in a process for establishing minimum city-wide core priorities as well as local priorities
- ?? Comply with the standards and priorities that are established
- ?? Participate in the peer review system
- ?? Participate in the single city-wide "800" number for client access to services
- ?? Evaluate local Project Directors' performance on an annual basis. Constituent corporations can be required to undertake a retention review of the Project Director at the request of LSNY's Board, Executive Director or a majority of the members of the Executive Council

*Executive Council:* The LSNY Executive Council (EC) will include Project Directors of constituent corporations, Directors of city-wide projects, and LSNY Central Executive Staff (Executive Director, Chief Financial Officer, Chief of Operations and Director of Support). The purpose of the Executive Council will be to propose and implement policy

for the delivery of quality legal services in the LSNY system. The EC will function in an advisory capacity on matters of city-wide policy and all decisions will be recommendations to the Executive Director of LSNY and the LSNY Board, except to the extent the LSNY Board delegates decision-making authority in a particular area. EC functions will include regular meetings to address substantive and administrative concerns, such as:

- ?? ethical, substantive and administrative obligations related to city-wide contract requirements
- ?? supervision, coordination of and standards for legal work and delivery of services
- ?? functioning of the city-wide projects
- ?? city-wide fundraising
- ?? permissible legislative advocacy

*Board training initiative:* Recognizing the importance that Board effectiveness will play in implementing this plan at LSNY Central and at the local levels, a Board training and development process will be undertaken. Board members of LSNY and the constituent corporations will need to learn about the realignment of roles and expectations that are contained in this plan and to prepare themselves for effectively playing those new roles. The process is likely to require some refresher training in LSNY background information; orientation on the contents of the restructuring and operations plan and implications for the Boards; some self-assessment of contributions, skills and resources individual members bring; some prioritizing and work-planning for the Board's activities for the year; and some upgrading of skills that will enhance their working as a team with other Board members and with management. We will use consultants in this process.

## NEXT STEPS

Submission of this plan to LSC by the LSNY Board ends the first phase of the planning process and launches its next phase. To implement and further flesh out the changes needed to improve and restructure LSNY, much work remains to be done. Specific remaining tasks include:

- ?? LSNY will work with ProBono.net and the Columbia Law School technology clinic develop a detailed, comprehensive long-term technology plan.
- ?? The Fiscal and Administrative working group formed as part of the planning process will continue to meet and work with consultants:
  - To follow up and implement the recommendations of evaluator Neil McBride and consultants Marks, Paneth and Shrom
  - To evaluate budget implications of the restructuring plan and prepare allocations and a resource development plan accordingly
- ?? To support a more comprehensive look at community needs, LSNY will retain a consultant to develop an analysis of demographic patterns and needs. This consultant will examine 2000 census and other data and chart where:
  - low income people live (by zip codes)

- there are concentrations of AIDS/HIV, asthma and other health conditions,
  - there are pockets of elderly, youth, disabled, immigrants/refugees, welfare recipients, and other populations with unique and pressing unmet legal needs
- ?? LSNY will, with the aid of counsel, work through the various legal steps required to implement the reconfiguration contemplated in this plan
- ?? LSNY Central staff, along with the Board, will develop a timeline for implementation, and a system for monitoring progress in implementation

## CONCLUSION

The LSNY planning process was an inclusive, honest discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of the current LSNY operation as well as an effort to reach substantial consensus on a direction for the program that would significantly enhance LSNY's ability to deliver quality services. As could well have been anticipated, this was a complicated and at times contentious process, given the diversity of views, interests and perspectives represented. All participants in the process shared a strong commitment to providing maximum access to high quality legal services for New York City's low-income communities, but held divergent views on how that goal can be best achieved.

This final plan makes major changes in the LSNY program by substantially strengthening the central oversight, support and coordination functions, by transforming the delegate corporations into constituent programs and by instituting new operational functions and measures for accountability. Yet, by retaining local service delivery, priority setting and fundraising features, the plan retains continuity with the strengths of the prior structure. Its changes go too far for some and not far enough for others. But the plan represents a consensus of a substantial portion of the Planning Committee, incorporates many of the comments and suggestions of the Advisory Committee and, after lengthy discussion and thorough review, was adopted unanimously by LSNY Board. The LSNY Board is confident that this plan will vastly improve coordination, accountability and effectiveness, and thereby substantially enhance delivery of high quality civil legal services to low-income people in New York City.



## **APPENDICES**

- A. LSNY Board Members
- B. Planning Committee Members
- C. Advisory Committee Members
- D. LSNY Plan-to-Plan
- E. Plan-to-Plan Committee Members
- F. Statewide Peer Review Plan of the NYS LSC Providers