

(e) Political activities of Corporation employees and staff attorneys

(1) Employees of the Corporation or of recipients shall not at any time intentionally identify the Corporation or the recipient with any partisan or nonpartisan political activity associated with a political party or association, or the campaign of any candidate for public or party office.

(2) Employees of the Corporation and staff attorneys shall be deemed to be State or local employees for purposes of chapter 15 of title 5, except that no staff attorney may be a candidate in a partisan political election.

(f) Harassment; malicious abuse of legal process

If an action is commenced by the Corporation or by a recipient and a final order is entered in favor of the defendant and against the Corporation or a recipient's plaintiff, the court shall, upon motion by the defendant and upon a finding by the court that the action was commenced or pursued for the sole purpose of harassment of the defendant or that the Corporation or a recipient's plaintiff maliciously abused legal process, enter an order (which shall be appealable before being made final) awarding reasonable costs and legal fees incurred by the defendant in defense of the action, except when in contravention of a State law, a rule of court, or a statute of general applicability. Any such costs and fees shall be directly paid by the Corporation.

(Pub. L. 88-452, title X, §1006, as added Pub. L. 93-355, §2, July 25, 1974, 88 Stat. 381; amended Pub. L. 95-222, §§5(a), (b), 6, 7(a), 8, Dec. 28, 1977, 91 Stat. 1619, 1620.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The District of Columbia Nonprofit Corporation Act, referred to in subsec. (a), is Pub. L. 87-569, Aug. 6, 1962, 76 Stat. 265, as amended, which is not classified to the Code.

AMENDMENTS

1977—Subsec. (a)(3). Pub. L. 95-222, §5(a), (b), substituted “, or” for “and not” and in par. (A) inserted exception for broad general legal or policy research.

Subsec. (b)(1). Pub. L. 95-222, §6(a), designated existing provisions as subpar. (A) and added subpar. (B).

Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 95-222, §6(b), inserted provisions setting forth situations when the Corporation may participate in litigation.

Subsec. (d)(6). Pub. L. 95-222, §6(c), added par. (6).

Subsec. (e)(2). Pub. L. 95-222, §7(a), inserted provisions relating to staff attorneys.

Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 95-222, §8, substituted “the court shall” for “the court may”.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1977 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 95-222 effective Dec. 28, 1977, see section 17(b) of Pub. L. 95-222, set out as a note under section 2996 of this title.

§ 2996f. Grants and contracts

(a) Requisites

With respect to grants or contracts in connection with the provision of legal assistance to eligible clients under this subchapter, the Corporation shall—

(1) insure the maintenance of the highest quality of service and professional standards, the preservation of attorney-client relation-

ships, and the protection of the integrity of the adversary process from any impairment in furnishing legal assistance to eligible clients;

(2)(A) establish, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget and with the Governors of the several States, maximum income levels (taking into account family size, urban and rural differences, and substantial cost-of-living variations) for individuals eligible for legal assistance under this subchapter;

(B) establish guidelines to insure that eligibility of clients will be determined by recipients on the basis of factors which include—

(i) the liquid assets and income level of the client,

(ii) the fixed debts, medical expenses, and other factors which affect the client's ability to pay,

(iii) the cost of living in the locality, and

(iv) such other factors as relate to financial inability to afford legal assistance, which may include evidence of a prior determination that such individual's lack of income results from refusal or unwillingness, without good cause, to seek or accept an employment situation; and

(C) insure that (i) recipients, consistent with goals established by the Corporation, adopt procedures for determining and implementing priorities for the provision of such assistance, taking into account the relative needs of eligible clients for such assistance (including such outreach, training, and support services as may be necessary), including particularly the needs for service on the part of significant segments of the population of eligible clients with special difficulties of access to legal services or special legal problems (including elderly and handicapped individuals); and (ii) appropriate training and support services are provided in order to provide such assistance to such significant segments of the population of eligible clients;

(3) insure that grants and contracts are made so as to provide the most economical and effective delivery of legal assistance to persons in both urban and rural areas;

(4) insure that attorneys employed full time in legal assistance activities supported in major part by the Corporation refrain from (A) any compensated outside practice of law, and (B) any uncompensated outside practice of law except as authorized in guidelines promulgated by the Corporation;

(5) insure that no funds made available to recipients by the Corporation shall be used at any time, directly or indirectly, to influence the issuance, amendment, or revocation of any executive order or similar promulgation by any Federal, State, or local agency, or to undertake to influence the passage or defeat of any legislation by the Congress of the United States, or by any State or local legislative bodies, or State proposals by initiative petition, except where—

(A) representation by an employee of a recipient for any eligible client is necessary to the provision of legal advice and representation with respect to such client's legal rights and responsibilities (which shall not be con-

strued to permit an attorney or a recipient employee to solicit a client, in violation of professional responsibilities, for the purpose of making such representation possible); or

(B) a governmental agency, legislative body, a committee, or a member thereof—

(i) requests personnel of the recipient to testify, draft, or review measures or to make representations to such agency, body, committee, or member, or

(ii) is considering a measure directly affecting the activities under this subchapter of the recipient or the Corporation.

(6) insure that all attorneys engaged in legal assistance activities supported in whole or in part by the Corporation refrain, while so engaged, from—

(A) any political activity, or

(B) any activity to provide voters or prospective voters with transportation to the polls or provide similar assistance in connection with an election (other than legal advice and representation), or

(C) any voter registration activity (other than legal advice and representation);

(7) require recipients to establish guidelines, consistent with regulations promulgated by the Corporation, for a system for review of appeals to insure the efficient utilization of resources and to avoid frivolous appeals (except that such guidelines or regulations shall in no way interfere with attorneys' professional responsibilities);

(8) insure that recipients solicit the recommendations of the organized bar in the community being served before filling staff attorney positions in any project funded pursuant to this subchapter and give preference in filling such positions to qualified persons who reside in the community to be served;

(9) insure that every grantee, contractor, or person or entity receiving financial assistance under this subchapter or predecessor authority under this chapter which files with the Corporation a timely application for refunding is provided interim funding necessary to maintain its current level of activities until (A) the application for refunding has been approved and funds pursuant thereto received, or (B) the application for refunding has been finally denied in accordance with section 2996j of this title;

(10) insure that all attorneys, while engaged in legal assistance activities supported in whole or in part by the Corporation, refrain from the persistent incitement of litigation and any other activity prohibited by the Canons of Ethics and Code of Professional Responsibility of the American Bar Association, and insure that such attorneys refrain from personal representation for a private fee in any cases in which they were involved while engaged in such legal assistance activities; and

(11) ensure that an indigent individual whose primary residence is subject to civil forfeiture is represented by an attorney for the Corporation in such civil action.

(b) Limitations on uses

No funds made available by the Corporation under this subchapter, either by grant or contract, may be used—

(1) to provide legal assistance (except in accordance with guidelines promulgated by the Corporation) with respect to any fee-generating case (which guidelines shall not preclude the provision of legal assistance in cases in which a client seeks only statutory benefits and appropriate private representation is not available);

(2) to provide legal assistance with respect to any criminal proceeding, except to provide assistance to a person charged with an offense in an Indian tribal court;

(3) to provide legal assistance in civil actions to persons who have been convicted of a criminal charge where the civil action arises out of alleged acts or failures to act and the action is brought against an officer of the court or against a law enforcement official for the purpose of challenging the validity of the criminal conviction;

(4) for any of the political activities prohibited in paragraph (6) of subsection (a) of this section;

(5) to make grants to or enter into contracts with any private law firm which expends 50 percent or more of its resources and time litigating issues in the broad interests of a majority of the public;

(6) to support or conduct training programs for the purpose of advocating particular public policies or encouraging political activities, labor or antilabor activities, boycotts, picketing, strikes, and demonstrations, as distinguished from the dissemination of information about such policies or activities, except that this provision shall not be construed to prohibit the training of attorneys or paralegal personnel necessary to prepare them to provide adequate legal assistance to eligible clients;

(7) to initiate the formation, or act as an organizer, of any association, federation, or similar entity, except that this paragraph shall not be construed to prohibit the provision of legal assistance to eligible clients;

(8) to provide legal assistance with respect to any proceeding or litigation which seeks to procure a nontherapeutic abortion or to compel any individual or institution to perform an abortion, or assist in the performance of an abortion, or provide facilities for the performance of an abortion, contrary to the religious beliefs or moral convictions of such individual or institution;

(9) to provide legal assistance with respect to any proceeding or litigation relating to the desegregation of any elementary or secondary school or school system, except that nothing in this paragraph shall prohibit the provision of legal advice to an eligible client with respect to such client's legal rights and responsibilities;

(10) to provide legal assistance with respect to any proceeding or litigation arising out of a violation of the Military Selective Service Act [50 U.S.C. App. 451 et seq.] or of desertion from the Armed Forces of the United States,

except that legal assistance may be provided to an eligible client in a civil action in which such client alleges that he was improperly classified prior to July 1, 1973, under the Military Selective Service Act or prior corresponding law; or

(11) to provide legal assistance in a manner inconsistent with the Assisted Suicide Funding Restriction Act of 1997 [42 U.S.C. 14401 et seq.].

(c) Recipient organizations

In making grants or entering into contracts for legal assistance, the Corporation shall insure that any recipient organized solely for the purpose of providing legal assistance to eligible clients is governed by a body at least 60 percent of which consists of attorneys who are members of the bar of a State in which the legal assistance is to be provided (except that the Corporation (1) shall, upon application, grant waivers to permit a legal services program, supported under section 2809(a)(3)¹ of this title, which on July 25, 1974, has a majority of persons who are not attorneys on its policy-making board to continue such a non-attorney majority under the provisions of this subchapter, and (2) may grant, pursuant to regulations issued by the Corporation, such a waiver for recipients which, because of the nature of the population they serve, are unable to comply with such requirement) and at least one-third of which consists of persons who are, when selected, eligible clients who may also be representatives of associations or organizations of eligible clients. Any such attorney, while serving on such board, shall not receive compensation from a recipient.

(d) Program evaluation

The Corporation shall monitor and evaluate and provide for independent evaluations of programs supported in whole or in part under this subchapter to insure that the provisions of this subchapter and the bylaws of the Corporation and applicable rules, regulations, and guidelines promulgated pursuant to this subchapter are carried out.

(e) Corporation president authorized to make grants and enter into contracts

The president of the Corporation is authorized to make grants and enter into contracts under this subchapter.

(f) Public notification

At least thirty days prior to the approval of any grant application or prior to entering into a contract or prior to the initiation of any other project, the Corporation shall announce publicly, and shall notify the Governor, the State bar association of any State, and the principal local bar associations (if there be any) of any community, where legal assistance will thereby be initiated, of such grant, contract, or project. Notification shall include a reasonable description of the grant application or proposed contract or project and request comments and recommendations.

(g) Staff-attorney program study

The Corporation shall provide for comprehensive, independent study of the existing staff-at-

torney program under this chapter and, through the use of appropriate demonstration projects, of alternative and supplemental methods of delivery of legal services to eligible clients, including judicare, vouchers, prepaid legal insurance, and contracts with law firms; and, based upon the results of such study, shall make recommendations to the President and the Congress, not later than two years after the first meeting of the Board, concerning improvements, changes, or alternative methods for the economical and effective delivery of such services.

(h) Study and report to Congress on special needs of eligible clients

The Corporation shall conduct a study on whether eligible clients who are—

- (1) veterans,
- (2) native Americans,
- (3) migrants or seasonal farm workers,
- (4) persons with limited English-speaking abilities, and
- (5) persons in sparsely populated areas where a harsh climate and an inadequate transportation system are significant impediments to receipt of legal services²

have special difficulties of access to legal services or special legal problems which are not being met. The Corporation shall report to Congress not later than January 1, 1979, on the extent and nature of any such problems and difficulties and shall include in the report and implement appropriate recommendations.

(Pub. L. 88-452, title X, §1007, as added Pub. L. 93-355, §2, July 25, 1974, 88 Stat. 383; amended Pub. L. 95-222, §§7(b), 9(a), (b)(1), (c), 10-13, Dec. 28, 1977, 91 Stat. 1620-1623; Pub. L. 105-12, §9(o), Apr. 30, 1997, 111 Stat. 28; Pub. L. 106-185, §2(d), Apr. 25, 2000, 114 Stat. 211; Pub. L. 111-211, title II, §234(d), July 29, 2010, 124 Stat. 2282.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Military Selective Service Act, referred to in subsec. (b)(10), is act June 24, 1948, ch. 625, 62 Stat. 604, which is classified principally to section 451 et seq. of Title 50, Appendix, War and National Defense. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see References in Text note set out under section 451 of Title 50, Appendix and Tables.

The Assisted Suicide Funding Restriction Act of 1997, referred to in subsec. (b)(11), is Pub. L. 105-12, Apr. 30, 1997, 111 Stat. 23, which is classified principally to chapter 138 (§14401 et seq.) of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 14401 of this title and Tables.

Section 2809 of this title, referred to in subsec. (c), was repealed by Pub. L. 97-35, title VI, §683(a), Aug. 13, 1981, 95 Stat. 519.

AMENDMENTS

2010—Subsec. (b)(2). Pub. L. 111-211 added par. (2) and struck out former par. (2) which read as follows: “to provide legal assistance with respect to any criminal proceeding, except to provide assistance to a person charged with a misdemeanor or lesser offense or its equivalent in an Indian tribal court;”.

2000—Subsec. (a)(11). Pub. L. 106-185 added par. (11).

1997—Subsec. (b)(11). Pub. L. 105-12 added par. (11).

1977—Subsec. (a)(2)(B)(iv). Pub. L. 95-222, §9(a), substituted provisions setting forth factors which may be included in determining financial ability, for provisions

¹ See References in Text note below.

² So in original. Probably should be followed by a comma.

setting forth factors required to be included in determining financial ability.

Subsec. (a)(2)(C). Pub. L. 95-222, §9(b)(1), expanded existing provisions by requiring the Corporation to establish procedures for determining and implementing priorities and criteria for such priorities, and inserted provisions relating to appropriate training and support services.

Subsec. (a)(5). Pub. L. 95-222, §9(c), in introductory text inserted prohibition relating to influencing the passage or defeat of State proposals by initiative referendum, in subpar. (A) substituted provisions relating to representation by an employee of a recipient for any eligible client, for provisions relating to representation by an attorney as attorney for any eligible client, and in subpar. (B) designated existing provision as cl. (i), inserted exception for testifying, drafting, or reviewing measures, and added cl. (ii).

Subsec. (a)(6). Pub. L. 95-222, §7(b), struck out provisions relating to prohibitions against political activities by staff attorneys of the types described under cls. (B) and (C) of this par. and section 1502(a) of title 5.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 95-222, §10, redesignated and reorganized provisions of former par. (1) as pars. (1) to (3) and, as so redesignated, enumerated criteria for assistance under such pars., redesignated former pars. (2) and (3) as (4) and (5), respectively, struck out former par. (4) relating to assistance to any unemancipated person of less than eighteen years of age, redesignated former par. (5) as (6), redesignated former par. (6) as (7) and, as so redesignated, inserted provision relating to initiation and provision relating to acting as an organizer, and struck out provisions relating to organization, assistance or encouragement to organize, or to plan for the creation, formation or structuring of entities, and provision respecting guidelines for assistance to clients, redesignated former par. (7) as (9) and, as so redesignated, inserted exception for legal advice to clients, reenacted par. (8) without change, and redesignated former par. (9) as (10) and, as so redesignated, inserted exception for actions concerning classifications prior to July 1, 1973.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 95-222, §11, substituted provisions requiring recipients to include at least one-third membership of eligible clients or eligible clients who may also be representatives of associations or organizations of eligible clients, for provisions requiring recipients to include at least one individual eligible to receive legal assistance.

Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 95-222, §12, inserted provision requiring notice to principal local bar association, if any, of community.

Subsec. (h). Pub. L. 95-222, §13, added subsec. (h).

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2000 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 106-185 applicable to any forfeiture proceeding commenced on and after the date that is 120 days after Apr. 25, 2000, see section 21 of Pub. L. 106-185, set out as a note under section 1324 of Title 8, Aliens and Nationality.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1997 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 105-12 effective Apr. 30, 1997, and applicable to Federal payments made pursuant to obligations incurred after Apr. 30, 1997, for items and services provided on or after such date, and also subject to also being applicable with respect to contracts entered into, renewed, or extended after Apr. 30, 1997, as well as contracts entered into before Apr. 30, 1997, to the extent permitted under such contracts, see section 11 of Pub. L. 105-12, set out as an Effective Date note under section 14401 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1977 AMENDMENT

Amendment by sections 7(b), 9(a), (b)(1), (c), 10, 12, and 13 of Pub. L. 95-222 effective Dec. 28, 1977, see section 17(b) of Pub. L. 95-222, set out as a note under section 2996 of this title.

Pub. L. 95-222, §17(a)(1), Dec. 28, 1977, 91 Stat. 1624, provided that: "The amendment made by section 11 of

this Act [amending this section] shall be effective six months after the first day of the first calendar month following the date of enactment of this Act [Dec. 28, 1977]."

IMPLEMENTATION OF SYSTEM FOR COMPETITIVE AWARD OF GRANTS AND CONTRACTS

Pub. L. 101-515, title VI, §607 (part), Nov. 5, 1991, 104 Stat. 2153, provided: "That after October 1, 1991, (but not before) the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation shall develop and implement a system for the competitive award of all grants and contracts, including support centers, except that nothing herein shall prohibit the Corporation Board, members, or staff from engaging in in-house reviews of or holding hearings on proposals for a system for the competitive award of all grants and contracts, including support centers, and that nothing herein shall apply to any competitive awards program currently in existence".

Pub. L. 101-162, title VI, §608 (part), Nov. 21, 1989, 103 Stat. 1036, provided: "That none of the funds appropriated under this Act or under any prior Acts for the Legal Services Corporation shall be used to consider, develop, or implement any system for the competitive award of grants or contracts until such action is authorized pursuant to a majority vote of a Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation composed of eleven individuals nominated by the President after January 20, 1989, and subsequently confirmed by the United States Senate, except that nothing herein shall prohibit the Corporation Board, members, or staff from engaging in in-house reviews of or holding hearings on proposals for a system for the competitive award of all grants and contracts, including support centers, and that nothing herein shall apply to any competitive awards program currently in existence; subsequent to confirmation such new Board of Directors shall develop and implement a proposed system for the competitive award of all grants and contracts".

Pub. L. 100-459, title VI, §605, Oct. 1, 1988, 102 Stat. 2227, provided: "That a Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation, composed of individuals nominated by the President after January 20, 1989 and subsequently confirmed by the United States Senate, shall develop and implement a system for the competitive award of all grants and contracts, including support centers, to take effect after September 30, 1989."

§ 2996g. Records and reports

(a) Authority to require reports

The Corporation is authorized to require such reports as it deems necessary from any grantee, contractor, or person or entity receiving financial assistance under this subchapter regarding activities carried out pursuant to this subchapter.

(b) Authority to require recordkeeping; access to records

The Corporation is authorized to prescribe the keeping of records with respect to funds provided by grant or contract and shall have access to such records at all reasonable times for the purpose of insuring compliance with the grant or contract or the terms and conditions upon which financial assistance was provided.

(c) Annual report to President and Congress; contents

The Corporation shall publish an annual report which shall be filed by the Corporation with the President and the Congress. Such report shall include a description of services provided pursuant to section 2996f(a)(2)(C)(i) and (ii) of this title.