

SUBCHAPTER X—LEGAL SERVICES  
CORPORATION

**§ 2996. Congressional findings and declaration of purpose**

The Congress finds and declares that—

(1) there is a need to provide equal access to the system of justice in our Nation for individuals who seek redress of grievances;

(2) there is a need to provide high quality legal assistance to those who would be otherwise unable to afford adequate legal counsel and to continue the present vital legal services program;

(3) providing legal assistance to those who face an economic barrier to adequate legal counsel will serve best the ends of justice and assist in improving opportunities for low-income persons consistent with the purposes of this chapter;

(4) for many of our citizens, the availability of legal services has reaffirmed faith in our government of laws;

(5) to preserve its strength, the legal services program must be kept free from the influence of or use by it of political pressures; and

(6) attorneys providing legal assistance must have full freedom to protect the best interests of their clients in keeping with the Code of Professional Responsibility, the Canons of Ethics, and the high standards of the legal profession.

(Pub. L. 88-452, title X, §1001, as added Pub. L. 93-355, §2, July 25, 1974, 88 Stat. 378; amended Pub. L. 95-222, §2, Dec. 28, 1977, 91 Stat. 1619.)

AMENDMENTS

1977—Par. (3). Pub. L. 95-222 inserted provision relating to assistance in improving opportunities for low-income persons consistent with this chapter.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1977 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 95-222, §17(b), Dec. 28, 1977, 91 Stat. 1624, provided that: "The amendments made by provisions of this Act other than sections 11 and 15 [amending this section and sections 2996c, 2996e, 2996f, 2996g, 2996h, 2996i, and 2996j] of this title shall be effective on the date of enactment of this Act [Dec. 28, 1977]."

SHORT TITLE

This subchapter is known as the "Legal Services Corporation Act", see Short Title note set out under section 2701 of this title.

**§ 2996a. Definitions**

As used in this subchapter, the term—

(1) "Board" means the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation;

(2) "Corporation" means the Legal Services Corporation established under this subchapter;

(3) "eligible client" means any person financially unable to afford legal assistance;

(4) "Governor" means the chief executive officer of a State;

(5) "legal assistance" means the provision of any legal services consistent with the purposes and provisions of this subchapter;

(6) "recipient" means any grantee, contractee, or recipient of financial assistance described in clause (A) of section 2996e(a)(1) of this title;

(7) "staff attorney" means an attorney who receives more than one-half of his annual professional income from a recipient organized solely for the provision of legal assistance to eligible clients under this subchapter; and

(8) "State" means any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and any other territory or possession of the United States.

(Pub. L. 88-452, title X, §1002, as added Pub. L. 93-355, §2, July 25, 1974, 88 Stat. 378.)

TERMINATION OF TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

For termination of Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, see note set out preceding section 1681 of Title 48, Territories and Insular Possessions.

**§ 2996b. Legal Services Corporation**

**(a) Establishment; purpose**

There is established in the District of Columbia a private nonmembership nonprofit corporation, which shall be known as the Legal Services Corporation, for the purpose of providing financial support for legal assistance in noncriminal proceedings or matters to persons financially unable to afford legal assistance.

**(b) Principal office; agent for service of process**

The Corporation shall maintain its principal office in the District of Columbia and shall maintain therein a designated agent to accept service of process for the Corporation. Notice to or service upon the agent shall be deemed notice to or service upon the Corporation.

**(c) Status of Corporation under tax laws**

The Corporation, and any legal assistance program assisted by the Corporation, shall be eligible to be treated as an organization described in section 170(c)(2)(B) of title 26 and as an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of title 26 which is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of title 26. If such treatments are conferred in accordance with the provisions of title 26, the Corporation, and legal assistance programs assisted by the Corporation, shall be subject to all provisions of title 26 relevant to the conduct of organizations exempt from taxation.

(Pub. L. 88-452, title X, §1003, as added Pub. L. 93-355, §2, July 25, 1974, 88 Stat. 379; amended Pub. L. 99-514, §2, Oct. 22, 1986, 100 Stat. 2095.)

AMENDMENTS

1986—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 99-514 substituted "Internal Revenue Code of 1986" for "Internal Revenue Code of 1954" wherever appearing, which for purposes of codification was translated as "title 26" thus requiring no change in text.

TRANSITION TO LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION PROGRAM

Pub. L. 93-355, §3(a)-(d)(1), (e), July 25, 1974, 88 Stat. 389, 390, provided that:

"(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, effective ninety days after the date of the first meeting of the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation established under the Legal Services Corporation Act (title X of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, as added by this Act) [this subchapter], the Legal Serv-

ices Corporation shall succeed to all rights of the Federal Government to capital equipment in the possession of legal services programs or activities assisted pursuant to section 222(a)(3), 230, 232 [sections 2809(a)(3), 2823, and 2825 of this title], or any other provision of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 [this chapter].

“(b) Within ninety days after the first meeting of the Board, all assets, liabilities, obligations, property, and records as determined by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity [now the Director of the Office of Community Services] or the head of any successor authority, to be employed directly or held or used primarily, in connection with any function of the Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity or the head of any successor authority in carrying out legal services activities under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 [this chapter], shall be transferred to the Corporation. Personnel transferred to the Corporation from the Office of Economic Opportunity or any successor authority shall be transferred in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, and shall not be reduced in compensation for one year after such transfer, except for cause. The Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity or the head of any successor authority shall take whatever action is necessary and reasonable to seek suitable employment for personnel who do not transfer to the Corporation.

“(c) Collective-bargaining agreements in effect on the date of enactment of this Act [July 25, 1974], covering employees transferred to the Corporation shall continue to be recognized by the Corporation until the termination date of such agreements, or until mutually modified by the parties.

“(d)(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity [now the Director of the Office of Community Services] or the head of any successor authority shall take such action as may be necessary, in cooperation with the president of the Legal Services Corporation, including the provision (by grant or otherwise) of financial assistance to recipients and the Corporation and the furnishing of services and facilities to the Corporation—

“(A) to assist the Corporation in preparing to undertake, and in the initial undertaking of, its responsibilities under this title [this subchapter];

“(B) out of appropriations available to him, to make funds available to meet the organizational and administrative expenses of the Corporation;

“(C) within ninety days after the first meeting of the Board, to transfer to the Corporation all unexpended balances of funds appropriated for the purpose of carrying out legal services programs and activities under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 [this chapter] or successor authority; and

“(D) to arrange for the orderly continuation by such Corporation of financial assistance to legal services programs and activities assisted pursuant to the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 [this chapter] or successor authority.

Whenever the Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity or the head of any successor authority determines that an obligation to provide financial assistance pursuant to any contract or grant for such legal services will extend beyond six months after the date of enactment of this Act [July 25, 1974], he shall include, in any such contract or grant, provisions to assure that the obligation to provide such financial assistance may be assumed by the Legal Services Corporation, subject to such modifications of the terms and conditions of such contract or grant as the Corporation determines to be necessary.

“(2) [Omitted. Provided for the repeal of section 2809(a)(3) of this title.]

“(e) There are authorized to be appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1975, such sums as may be necessary for carrying out this section.”

## § 2996c. Board of Directors

### (a) Establishment; membership

The Corporation shall have a Board of Directors consisting of eleven voting members appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, no more than six of whom shall be of the same political party. A majority shall be members of the bar of the highest court of any State, and none shall be a full-time employee of the United States. Effective with respect to appointments made after December 28, 1977, but not later than July 31, 1978, the membership of the Board shall be appointed so as to include eligible clients, and to be generally representative of the organized bar, attorneys providing legal assistance to eligible clients, and the general public.

### (b) Term of office

The term of office of each member of the Board shall be three years, except that five of the members first appointed, as designated by the President at the time of appointment, shall serve for a term of two years. Each member of the Board shall continue to serve until the successor to such member has been appointed and qualified. The term of initial members shall be computed from the date of the first meeting of the Board. The term of each member other than initial members shall be computed from the date of termination of the preceding term. Any member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration of the term for which such member's predecessor was appointed shall be appointed for the remainder of such term. No member shall be reappointed to more than two consecutive terms immediately following such member's initial term.

### (c) Board members not deemed officers or employees of United States

The members of the Board shall not, by reason of such membership, be deemed officers or employees of the United States.

### (d) Chairman

The President shall select from among the voting members of the Board a chairman, who shall serve for a term of three years. Thereafter the Board shall annually elect a chairman from among its voting members.

### (e) Removal

A member of the Board may be removed by a vote of seven members for malfeasance in office or for persistent neglect of or inability to discharge duties, or for offenses involving moral turpitude, and for no other cause.

### (f) State advisory councils

Within six months after the first meeting of the Board, the Board shall request the Governor of each State to appoint a nine-member advisory council for such State. A majority of the members of the advisory council shall be appointed, after recommendations have been received from the State bar association, from among the attorneys admitted to practice in the State, and the membership of the council shall be subject to annual reappointment. If ninety days have elapsed without such an advisory council appointed by the Governor, the Board is author-