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PROGRAM LETTER 99-1

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To: All LSC Program Directors

From: Karen J. Sarjeant, Vice President for Programs

Date: February 8, 1999

Subject: 1998-99 Grant Activity Reports and Case Service Reporting

The purpose of this program letter is to inform all programs of the due date for submission of annual Grant Activity Reports and to reiterate the need for accurate case service reporting (CSR). Because CSR statistics are a mainstay of the budget request which the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) submits to the United States Congress each year, accurate reporting of case information is vital to obtaining continued Federal funding for legal services.

1998-99 Grant Activity Reports

Grant Activity Reports are due on March 1 this year. All recipients of 1998 and 1999 grants are required to submit grant activity reports for the year(s) in which they receive LSC funding. As in previous years, the Grant Activity Reports and instructions are accessible through the Recipient Information Network at <http://www.rin.lsc.gov>. Additional information about the Grant Activity Reports is available at that site.

Reporting Federal Funding to Combat Domestic Violence

This year, for the first time, we are asking programs to report amounts of funding received from other Federal sources specifically for assisting clients who are victims of domestic violence. In its annual budget request, LSC has requested

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funding to address domestic violence. Information about the extent to which programs have been able to obtain other funding for domestic violence issues will be helpful to our budget request. Therefore, Forms D-3 and D-4 of the 1998-99 Grant Activity Reports contain a line for indicating amounts of such funding. Otherwise, the format and content of the Grant Activity Reports are essentially the same as last year.

Accurate Case Service Reporting

On May 12, 1998, LSC issued Program Letter 98-3 in an effort to maintain the quality of CSR information reported to LSC. That program letter explained that programs **should not include the following in 1998 CSR data reported to LSC:**

- (1) restricted case types under either the LSC Act or our 1998 appropriations act, Public Law 105-119;
- (2) cases in which clients do not meet LSC income and asset eligibility criteria adopted pursuant to 45 C.F.R. Part 1611;
- (3) referrals to other providers of cases falling into categories 1 and 2 above;¹ and
- (4) cases which are wholly funded with non-LSC funds.

On November 24, 1998, LSC issued Program Letter 98-8 and a revised CSR Handbook to emphasize further the importance of accurate case reporting. The revised Handbook contains new requirements for reviewing CSR information prior to its submission to LSC. When reviewing 1998 CSR data, all programs should ensure that data submitted to LSC does not include restricted or ineligible cases as described in items (1) through (4) above.

The need for revising the CSR Handbook and issuing Program Letters 98-3 and 98-8 resulted from on-site visits which revealed that some programs were misapplying the CSR Handbook and consequently were incorrectly classifying and reporting cases to LSC. Because correct classification and reporting of LSC-supported cases is important to measuring each program's services to its clients and our national program's services to all our clients, we need to take reasonable and necessary steps to ensure the accuracy of 1998 CSR data. Therefore, LSC will

¹ Cases that fall under categories 1 and 2 above may be referred, but may not be included in CSR Category C, "Referred After Legal Assessment". This category should be used only for an eligible case which is referred after the client is accepted for service and receives some assistance from the program (other than the referral).

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conduct selected on-site reviews of programs during 1999 to confirm that applicable provisions in the CSR Handbook and in Program Letters 98-3 and 98-8 are being followed, and that 1998 CSR statistics reported to LSC are accurate.

Case Service Reporting for 1999 Cases

The revised CSR Handbook contains several significant changes for reporting of 1999 cases in early 2000. The changes include requirements to report certain wholly non-LSC funded cases and to conduct systematic reviews of case service information to ensure cases are closed in a timely fashion and are not reported to LSC more than once in the same year. On or about March 1, 1999, LSC will be posting on the Recipient Information Network Bulletin Board a summary of frequently asked questions and answers about the revised Handbook.

Persons to Contact for Assistance

LSC staff are available to answer questions about reporting case service data and preparing 1998-99 Grant Activity Reports. For assistance, please contact:

Case Service Reporting

John Meyer

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1998-99 Grant Activity Reports

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