



February 22, 2017

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Washington State
Supreme Court

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THE ALLIANCE
for Equal Justice
SUPPORTER

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Temple of Justice
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Olympia, WA 98504-0929

To Whom It May Concern,

The Access to Justice Board strongly supports the Legal Foundation of Washington's proposed change to Court Rule 23, which would increase the percentage of residual funds disbursed for civil legal aid in our state from 25% to 50%.

The stark results of the 2015 Civil Legal Needs Study Update reveal that over 70% of low income households experience at least one civil legal need annually, and only 24% of low-income people in our state who need legal aid will be able to access services. While not a predictable revenue stream, by increasing the percentage of class action residuals from 25% to 50%, it would alleviate a huge burden on under-funded legal aid programs while potentially providing some additional resources for innovation in the delivery system.

The Access to Justice Board recognizes that access to the civil justice system is a fundamental right and works to achieve equal access for those facing economic and other significant barriers. An increase to the residual funds would help get our state closer to achieving equal access. We encourage the Court to adopt this proposed change.

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Diana Singleton, Access to Justice Manager, at dianas@wsba.org or 206-727-8205.

Respectfully,

Geoffrey Revelle, Chair
Access to Justice Board

cc: Paula Littlewood, Washington State Bar Association