

# CONFERENCE OF STATE COURT ADMINISTRATORS

## RESOLUTION 1

### **In Support of State Courts of Cases with Self-Represented Litigants and Cases with Interpreters**

WHEREAS, the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) seeks to promulgate policy positions, standards, model guidelines, and uniform national data reports; and

WHEREAS, COSCA has long recognized that barriers to equal access to justice significantly impair public trust and confidence in the courts and has consistently proposed that fundamental requirements of access to justice are access to the courts for self-represented litigants and language access for limited English proficient litigants; and

WHEREAS, COSCA approved the Position Paper on Self-Represented Litigants and adopted Resolution 31 In Support of a Leadership Role for Conference of Chief Justices and COSCA in the Development, Implementation and Coordination of Assistance Programs for Self-Represented Litigants, which include the recommendation that states should support methods to better identify, collect, and analyze self-represented litigant (SRL) data; and

WHEREAS, COSCA approved the White Paper on Court Interpretation: Fundamental to Access to Justice, adopted Resolution 1 In Support of Court Interpretation: Fundamental to Access to Justice, and sponsored the National Call to Action: Creating Solutions to Language Barriers in State Courts summit, each of which includes the recommendation that states should support methods to better identify, collect, and analyze interpreter data; and

WHEREAS, COSCA established the Court Statistics Committee to work in partnership with the National Center for State Courts to carry out the Court Statistics Project (CSP), the primary function of which is to collect and analyze data relating to the work of the nation's state courts; and

WHEREAS, COSCA adopted Resolution 23 In Support of State Implementation of the *State Court Guide to Statistical Reporting, 2003* and recommended that the *Guide* data definitions and counting rules be adopted as the model approach to data reporting for the state trial and appellate courts; and

WHEREAS, CSP has developed definitions and counting rules for the reporting of cases with SRLs and for cases with interpreters and has included those definitions in the *State Court Guide to Statistical Reporting* and the same have been adopted by the COSCA Court Statistics Committee; and

WHEREAS, the definitions and counting rules for such cases provide states with standards that will facilitate meaningful management reports on the frequency with which SRLs appear in court in different case types and the frequency with which interpreters are used in different case types;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Conference of State Court Administrators adopts the definitions and counting rules for cases with self-represented litigants and cases with interpreters as added to the *State Court Guide to Statistical Reporting*;

AND urges all of its members to take appropriate steps to facilitate the counting and reporting of these cases in their states, to the extent feasible.

Adopted as proposed by the CCJ/COSCA Access, Fairness and Public Trust Committee at the COSCA Midyear Meeting on December 7, 2013.