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James A. Bamberger, Director

Dear Equity and Justice Community Leaders:

Happy New Year! May it prove to be a watershed year in the struggle for equity and justice.

For the Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA), 2023 will be a year of transition, innovation, and growth. I recently informed Chief Justice González that this will be my final year as OCLA Director. Among the areas of unfinished business that will be the focus of intensive activity this year will be the operational implementation of OCLA's Race Equity and Justice Initiative (REJI) commitments. To this end, I am pleased to share with you the recently adopted REJI Statement of Purpose that will guide the team's work in the coming years.

Starting in late 2021, the OCLA team began an intentional and often difficult process of self-discovery, evaluation, and reflection. We concluded that OCLA cannot just be equity-focused, it must also assume an [anti-racist](#) orientation in the design and implementation of its internal and external practices and initiatives. We recognize that the most persistent and pernicious inequities in our civil law and justice systems are those that differentiate around race. By leading with the values, commitments, desired impacts, and desired objectives outlined in the REJI Statement of Purpose, OCLA will use its position as an agency within the judicial branch of state government to help identify, disrupt, and dismantle law and justice related systems that have historically and continue to perpetuate racially disparate outcomes experienced by individuals and communities of color.

With this REJI Statement of Purpose as our north star, we begin the next phase of our pro-equity and anti-racism journey. First on the agenda is development of a two-year workplan. The workplan will translate the REJI Statement of Purpose into actionable steps, goals, and outcomes in the following three work functions and domains: 1) day-to-day and internal operations; 2) HR practices, staffing, and workplace culture; and 3) external relations, contracting and performance expectations, and community engagement.

The OCLA team cannot do this important work alone or in isolation. As we begin to implement the workplan, there will be many opportunities for collaboration and engagement. OCLA team members are unified in their commitment to move forward. All commit to be transparent and accountable in the execution of this effort. We invite and welcome your help in holding the team accountable to its commitments, including letting us know when, where, and how you observe us falling short or acting contrary to the same.

Jim Bamberger