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TITLE 8. THE ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNMENT OF COURTS [68070 - 77655] (Title 8 added by Stats. 1953, Ch. 206.)

CHAPTER 2.2. California Access to Justice Commission [68655 - 68659] (Chapter 2.2 added by Stats. 2023, Ch. 34, Sec. 7.)

68655. (a) The California Access to Justice Commission (commission), a nonprofit public benefit corporation, is authorized to receive funding as appropriated by the Legislature.

(b) The purposes for which the commission may receive and use funding shall include any or all of the following:

(1) To provide ongoing leadership in efforts to achieve full and equal access to justice for all Californians, including indigent and moderate-means Californians, immigrants, children and families, seniors, persons with disabilities, persons in rural areas, veterans, and others currently unable to meet their legal needs.

(2) To identify and promote improved methods of delivering legal help through coordinated efforts among the three branches of government, the public, attorneys, and others in the public and private sectors.

(3) To carry out functions designated for the commission in legislation or the annual Budget Act, including, but not limited to, administering grant programs and programs supporting the recruitment and retention of legal aid attorneys.

(4) To encourage increases in the resources available to achieve equal access to justice, including funding for legal help for people who cannot afford to pay, and donated time and effort by pro bono lawyers and others.

(Added by Stats. 2023, Ch. 34, Sec. 7. (SB 133) Effective June 30, 2023.)

68656. The commission shall be subject to the Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation Law (Part 2 (commencing with Section 5110) of Division 2 of Title 1 of the Corporations Code). To the extent of any conflict between this chapter and the Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation Law, this chapter shall prevail.

(Added by Stats. 2023, Ch. 34, Sec. 7. (SB 133) Effective June 30, 2023.)

68657. (a) Members of the commission appointed by state officials shall be as follows:

(1) Two members appointed by the Governor of California.

(2) One member appointed by the Senate President pro Tempore.

(3) One member appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly.

(4) Three members appointed by the Judicial Council.

(b) Action by the commission shall require approval by a majority of members appointed pursuant to subdivision (a) present at a meeting.

(c) Pursuant to its bylaws, the commission may appoint members, who shall be approved by the members specified in subdivision (a) present at a meeting. The appointing authorities shall, in making appointments, make every effort to ensure that there is a geographic balance of representation, and that the members will include a broad representation of organizations and communities who participate in or are affected by the provision of civil justice in California.

(Added by Stats. 2023, Ch. 34, Sec. 7. (SB 133) Effective June 30, 2023.)

- 68658.** (a) The term of each commission member shall be four years. Each appointing authority may reappoint a member whose term has expired and shall fill any vacancy for the unexpired portion of the term in which it occurs.
- (b) All appointees may continue their term until the appointment of their successors, subject to compliance with subdivision (d).
- (c) The commission shall meet as often as required, but at least twice per year. The commission shall provide the public with notice of the date, time, and manner of attendance at least 10 days in advance of each commission meeting and public comments shall be solicited during each meeting. A confidential executive session may be conducted only for attorney-client communications with a lawyer representing the commission.
- (d) The commission shall appoint an executive director to serve at the pleasure of the commission to assist in the commission's duties. The executive director may serve for the commission pro bono.
- (e) Members shall attend at least 50 percent of all duly convened meetings in a calendar year, unless the absence has been excused by the executive director. A member who fails to attend at least 50 percent of all duly convened meetings of the commission in a calendar year forfeits membership on the commission, unless the absence has been excused by the executive director. The vacancy shall be filled pursuant to Section 68657.
- (f) The commission shall not be a state body and judges who participate as part of their judicial office shall not thereby be undertaking a nonjudicial state office.
- (g) Members shall be uncompensated volunteers. Members may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred in participating if the funds available to the commission permit.

(Added by Stats. 2023, Ch. 34, Sec. 7. (SB 133) Effective June 30, 2023.)

- 68659.** (a) The commission is expressly authorized to inform the Legislature of its position on any legislative proposal pending before the Legislature and to urge the introduction of legislative proposals.
- (b) The commission is expressly authorized to state its position and viewpoint on issues developed in the performance of its duties and responsibilities as specified in this chapter.
- (c) The commission is expressly authorized to inform the executive and judicial branches of its positions, including stating positions on regulations and rules and submitting amicus curiae briefs on issues supporting the commission's mission.
- (d) The commission is expressly authorized to hold public hearings, issue reports and recommendations, and initiate projects to provide legal assistance.
- (e) In carrying out its mission, the commission does not speak on behalf of any appointing authority or any commissioner as an individual or as the holder of another office, but instead on behalf of the commission as a whole.

(Added by Stats. 2023, Ch. 34, Sec. 7. (SB 133) Effective June 30, 2023.)