



RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMMISSION

Certificate of Action Taken by Written Consent

November 10, 2022

The members of the South Carolina Access to Justice Commission consent to adopt and take the following resolutions as the action of the Commission:

Expansion of the Charleston Housing Court Pilot Project

WHEREAS the Commission recognizes that the Charleston Housing Court Pilot Project has been in operation since 2019. The pilot project was originally supported by this Commission and authorized by the South Carolina Supreme Court, and

WHEREAS the Commission recognizes that the Housing Court Pilot Project in Charleston County conducted 410 hearings during its first year in operation and evictions were avoided in 74% of those hearings. Other benefits of the program include increased court efficiency, greater access to funding needed by landlords, and education on the eviction process for both tenants and landlords, and

WHEREAS the Commission recognizes that in 2021, again with the support of this Commission, the South Carolina Supreme Court authorized expansion of the Housing Court Pilot Project to all Magistrate Courts in the Charleston area. Housing Court is now operating in five courts within Charleston County, and

WHEREAS the Commission recognizes that funding has been secured to staff additional Housing Court programs and determine best practices for expansion to other parts of the state through Equal Justice Works and the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Eviction Protection Grant Program. Organizations coordinating to leverage this funding include South Carolina Legal Services, One80 Place, Charleston Legal Access, Charleston Pro Bono

Legal Services, South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center, and SC Thrive. The funding will be used to provide direct representation to clients facing eviction, expand the Housing Court Pilot Project to other counties, and implement a court navigation program, and

WHEREAS the Commission recognizes that the expansion of the Housing Court Pilot Project will increase access to justice in South Carolina by ensuring that evictions are lawful, defenses are effectively asserted, and court users are connected with financial and other resources to increase housing stability and prevent homelessness.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Commission supports the expansion of the Charleston Housing Court Pilot Project and recommends that the Supreme Court of South Carolina approve such expansion to all counties in South Carolina.

The above resolutions are taken by a majority of the members of the South Carolina Access to Justice Commission as of November 10, 2022.