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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NEW PROGRAM SEEKS TO MAKE COURTS AND THE LEGAL SYSTEM MORE
ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

(October 2, 2007 | Tampa, Florida) -- The Center for Legal and Court Technology (CLCT) and the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) Consulting Group are teaming up to eliminate the barriers between people with disabilities and the nation's state and federal courts and administrative agencies.

Today, CLCT and AFB launched the Accessible Courts Initiative—a partnership aimed at getting government agencies, law firms, law schools, judges, lawyers, and other members of the legal professions to make use of appropriate access technology in the courts in addition to making their web sites and other services accessible to people with disabilities.

"It is crucial that people with disabilities have equal access to our legal system," said Carl R. Augusto, President & CEO of AFB. "Using the right technology enables visually, audibly, and mobility impaired judges, jurors, witnesses, and attorneys to respond to visual evidence, observe non-verbal communication, and more."

Despite the fact that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other legislation require federal, state, and local courts to be accessible, far too many courts are not using appropriate assistive technology—devices that promote greater independence and equal access for people with disabilities.

"As public entities, our courts must be accessible to all— a duty made even more imperative by the aging of our population," noted Fred Lederer, Director of the CLCT. "From a technology perspective, the court system is woefully equipped, and many public web sites maintained to provide taxpayers with information are inaccessible to those who require the use of assistive technologies."

Under the Accessible Courts Initiative, the CLCT and AFB Consulting Group will provide consultation, training, and support services to courts, law firms, and others to ensure compliance with the legal requirements of the ADA and other mandates. The Initiative will guide courts in serving people with disabilities equally effectively by helping them assure that their services, ranging from name changes and marriage licenses to property and probate assistance, are

accessible, as well as helping them identify and implement appropriate methods for utilizing assistive technology in courtroom settings.

The Accessible Courts Initiative aims to help the 54 million Americans with disabilities participate in a legal system that includes more than 30,000 courts and 72,000 law firms. AFB and CLCT announced the initiative today in Tampa, Florida, at the National Center for State Courts' Tenth International Court Technology Conference.

For more information on the Accessible Court Initiative's consulting services, visit the ACI web site at www.accessiblecourts.net, contact Nancy Archibald at the Center for Legal and Court Technology at (757) 221-2228, or email clct@wm.edu.

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The Center for Legal and Court Technology, a joint initiative of William & Mary Law School and the National Center for State Courts, is a recognized authority on increasing accessibility to the legal justice system through the use of technology, and received a 2007 Access Award from the AFB after successfully completing an experimental laboratory trial to test technologies that may be used to assist people with disabilities in participating in American courts.

The American Foundation for the Blind Consulting Group is the consulting arm of the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB), the national organization based in New York City to which Helen Keller devoted her life. AFB has an 80-year track record for setting standards and achieving milestones to improve the quality of life for people with vision loss and other disabilities. Since 2002, AFB Consulting has been a national leader in evaluating and enhancing accessibility of products, services and websites for diverse clients, including a roster of Fortune 500 companies.

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