



INSTITUTE *for the* ADVANCEMENT
of the AMERICAN LEGAL SYSTEM

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

FROM ONE TO

MANY



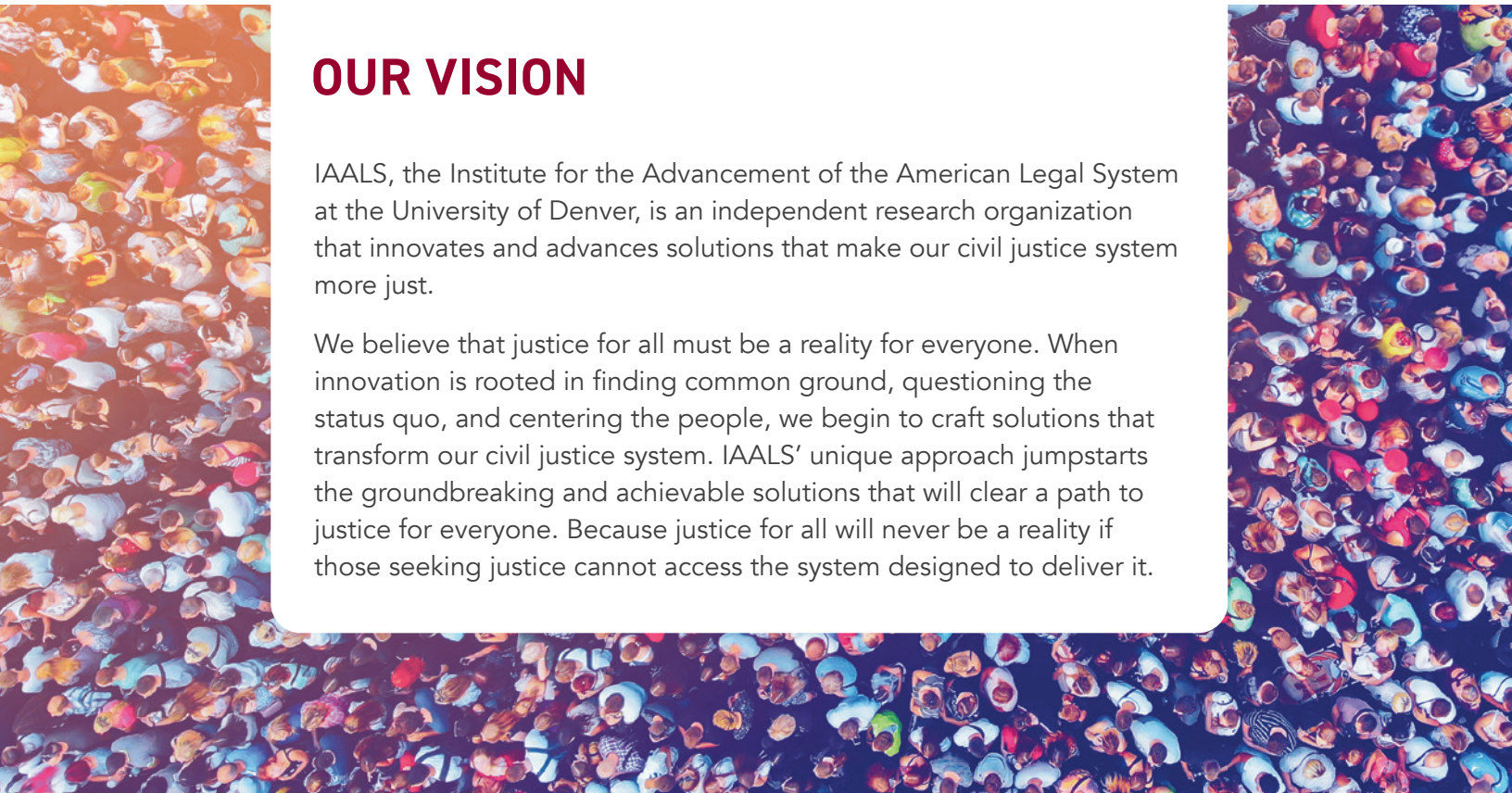
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OUR VISION

IAALS, the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System at the University of Denver, is an independent research organization that innovates and advances solutions that make our civil justice system more just.

We believe that justice for all must be a reality for everyone. When innovation is rooted in finding common ground, questioning the status quo, and centering the people, we begin to craft solutions that transform our civil justice system. IAALS' unique approach jumpstarts the groundbreaking and achievable solutions that will clear a path to justice for everyone. Because justice for all will never be a reality if those seeking justice cannot access the system designed to deliver it.



FROM THE CEO

The world at large is constantly evolving, and so must our civil justice system.

IAALS is uniquely positioned to bring that change. Our nonpartisan, independent approach cuts through the noise that consumes our modern society and empowers data-backed, people-centered innovations that are taking hold in courts, in law schools, and within the legal profession across the country. IAALS is focused on improving how our system serves people today, while also anticipating and preparing for future needs.

Driven by research and strengthened by partnerships, our recommendations provide a blueprint for positive change in courts and communities nationwide. Implementation is essential to innovation, and we partner with broad networks of people and organizations to make our recommendations a reality. From idea to impact—from one to many—IAALS is jumpstarting the groundbreaking and achievable solutions that will clear a path to justice for us all.

You are at the heart of our success. Our partners and collaborators power our solutions and empower the changemakers who bring them to life. At IAALS, we know that all voices must be heard and have a seat at the table for change to be effective and equitable. It takes a diversity of perspective to get better justice outcomes for more people. IAALS' ability to convene all sides is transformational to our work and impact on a system that all sides depend on.

Our work this year centers the people, and our solutions cascade from IAALS to the many who benefit nationwide. When we improve the way we evaluate judges, we improve public trust with millions of voters. When we provide new avenues for legal help, we give millions of people affordable options to resolve life's toughest moments. When we remove barriers and silos within the system, we build an ecosystem where everyone can thrive.

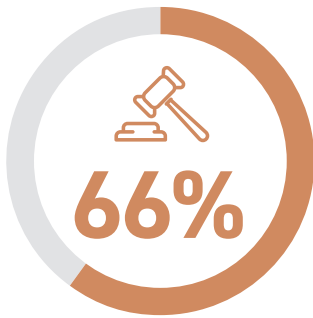
IAALS is leading the way toward a forward-looking system that progresses alongside the society it serves. When innovation is rooted in finding common ground, questioning the status quo, and centering the people, we begin to craft solutions that rebuild a trusted and effective system. Together, we are creating the future of civil justice.



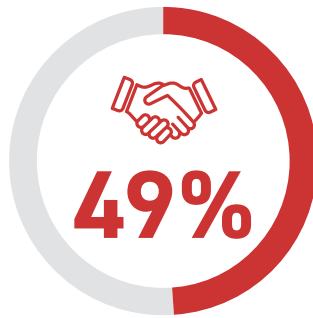
Brittany Kauffman

UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING THE JUSTICE NEEDS OF AMERICANS

Through the groundbreaking research of our *US Justice Needs* project, IAALS and our partners at HiiL–The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law–revealed the ongoing and unmet justice needs of Americans from all walks of life and backgrounds, of all income levels, and from every corner of the country. Based on the responses of 10,000 people, our research shed new light on how Americans suffer without proper access to legal help and without ways to resolve the problems they face.



experienced at least one legal issue in the previous 4 years



of their legal issues were completely resolved



legal problems are either not resolved or resolved in a way that's seen as unfair each year



read the report and explore the data



THE MOST VULNERABLE & DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS: lower income, women, multiracial and Black Americans, younger and middle-aged, urban and rural residents



THE MOST PRESSING UNMET NEEDS: employment and money-related problems

With this data, we at IAALS and other changemakers around the country have a better understanding of what's at stake—and what “access to justice” really means for Americans lacking it. Now, we are targeting our work and innovations within the system to make bigger impacts on the ground for more people in critical need.

“

US Justice Needs has changed our collective understanding of what ‘access to justice’ means and how we can solve this crisis for people in our state.

Elisa Marie Overall, Executive Director, Colorado Access to Justice Commission

”



NEXT STEPS & OPPORTUNITIES



FAMILIES NEED BETTER HELP

The critical unmet justice needs of families revealed in our data will be explored further by IAALS in a forthcoming report with empowering and achievable recommendations. Family issues are some of the most burdensome to resolve and are the second-most serious, time-intensive, and costly kind of issues people can experience.



BUSINESSES ALSO HAVE NEEDS

Businesses are a bedrock of our society, from mom and pops, to startups, to name brands. IAALS is conducting a companion study of U.S. businesses of all sizes to better understand their legal needs, whether those needs are being met, and how innovation could help them better navigate the legal system.



THE MIDDLE CLASS IS LEFT BEHIND

Our data also highlights the struggles experienced by everyday Americans seeking justice. A forthcoming report will explore opportunities to target achievable solutions for middle class justice.

STATE COURT RESEARCH & RECOMMENDATIONS

RENEWED LESSONS IN CASE MANAGEMENT

Coming through recent unprecedented challenges, courts must remain focused on ensuring superior access for all. IAALS, the National Center for State Courts, and the Texas Office of Court Administration evaluated the state's Expedited Actions Rules, which streamlined litigation. Alongside recommendations for improving Texas' program, we provide recommendations for all states that can help solve the modern challenges courts share.

Scan to read more:



A RENEWED ANALYSIS OF THE EXPEDITED ACTION RULES IN TEXAS COURTS

CASE FILING TRENDS

Understanding the legal issues facing our communities, seen through case filings, can help courts better meet public needs. IAALS partnered with four states—California, Minnesota, Ohio, and Texas—to analyze their long-term civil case filing trends. IAALS' research provides fresh insights that help courts and policymakers nationwide pursue stronger data collection, strategic planning, and reform in high-impact areas.

Scan to read more:



THE PAST & FUTURE OF STATE COURT CIVIL FILINGS

ENSURING QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABLE JUDGES

Most Americans undergo job evaluations, and there's no reason why judges should not do the same. IAALS is a trusted leader in the movement for robust judicial performance evaluation (JPE) programs nationwide, and 14 states have JPE programs that rely on IAALS' research and recommendations. JPE is critical for maintaining high-caliber and neutral judges on the bench, but the JPE process must evolve to match the evolving roles and daily experiences of judges—and the people who appear before them. Through our *JPE 2.0* project, IAALS is committed to improving and expanding JPE, and ensuring court leaders and the public have the information they need to enhance judicial independence and accountability, and maintain a trusted judiciary. The work so far:



As more states adopt and update JPE, IAALS will continue to be a trusted partner, primed with the expertise to ensure these programs help judges improve performance, help courts maintain a quality bench, and help inform the public about their community's judges.

FROM IAALS TO ACTION

COLORADO IN FOCUS:
IAALS facilitated a summit with **35** STATE LEADERS

IAALS recommendations are informing many improvements underway affecting:

239,591

evaluations sent to litigants, lawyers, court staff, and judges

358

judges and justices needing evaluation

4.4M

voters relying on JPE information

NEXT STEPS & OPPORTUNITIES



BEST PRACTICES AND MODERN UPDATES

Based on this wealth of perspectives and data, IAALS is developing empirically based recommendations to guide new and existing programs, and to spotlight the essential attributes judges need today.



STATE CONSULTING AND PARTNERSHIPS

IAALS has advised four states on making JPE improvements aligned with our recommendations—Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah—and anticipates additional state-level partnerships.



STRENGTHENING JUDICIAL LEADERSHIP

IAALS and the Berkeley Judicial Institute will host a summit in 2024 focused on building forward-looking and resilient judicial leaders who are able to thrive in the midst of challenges and drive innovation.

“ IAALS’ leadership toward practical, achievable improvements in the judiciary is felt nationwide. With IAALS’ help, we are targeting JPE changes in Colorado to ensure a stronger judiciary and increased public trust.

Judge Adam J. Espinosa,
Denver District Court



We are proud to have had U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor as part of our IAALS family. Justice O’Connor partnered with IAALS to launch the *Quality Judges Initiative* to house her work on judicial selection reform. The *O’Connor Judicial Selection Plan* continues to provide a foundation for states to improve and refine selection processes, including JPE. We carry on her legacy of strengthening our judiciary and courts, which serve as the bulwark of our democracy.

UNLOCKING LEGAL REGULATION AND INCREASING LEGAL HELP FOR ALL

Current regulations limit many innovations that could provide the public with more accessible and affordable legal services, leaving people with few alternatives to expensive lawyers or forgoing legal help altogether. Lawyers themselves are also inhibited by rules that prevent them from connecting with and serving clients in new ways. IAALS is leading the country towards solutions that place the justice system back within reach of everyday Americans. The work so far:

IAALS consults with **6** STATES

COLORADO
CONNECTICUT
MINNESOTA
OREGON
UTAH
WASHINGTON

3 SUMMITS with **87** cross-profession expert perspectives

3,600+ WEBINAR PARTICIPANTS



IAALS' MODEL FOR REGULATORY REFORM JUMPSTARTED A NATIONAL MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE. **>>>** UTAH USED OUR MODEL IN ITS FIRST-IN-THE-NATION REGULATORY SANDBOX.

FROM IAALS TO ACTION

UTAH IN FOCUS:
Using the IAALS model for consumer-focused regulatory reform

105
applicants to provide legal services

51
new legal providers

24,000
consumers seeking affordable legal help

69,829
legal services provided:

- business
- veteran/military benefits
- immigration
- end-of-life planning
- accident/injury
- marriage/family/domestic violence
- bankruptcy/debt collection

2.2M
lower- and middle-class Utahans stand to benefit most

IAALS evaluation will fuel continued improvements

NEXT STEPS & OPPORTUNITIES



INSPIRING, EVALUATING, AND IMPROVING EXISTING EFFORTS

Washington has proposed a sandbox like Utah's, similarly based on IAALS' model. While that continues to develop, IAALS is formally evaluating the success of and satisfaction with the Utah sandbox; an Interim Report will be published in 2024.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE INNOVATION

Based on multiple convenings of key stakeholders, including our now-annual summit of regulatory reform leaders, IAALS is developing comprehensive recommendations for launching and sustaining regulatory innovation, slated for 2024.



GRASSROOTS, PEOPLE-CENTERED ENGAGEMENT

IAALS will soon launch a national project to develop best practices for public-engagement campaigns around legal needs, regulation strategy, and building a movement of people-centered reform.



EDUCATING THE PROFESSION AND THE PUBLIC

Our popular Redesigning Legal speaker series, in partnership with the American Bar Association, continues with webinars in 2024 to share best practices and inspire new innovations. IAALS' regulation newsletter and online knowledge center provide an up-to-date gathering place for industry stakeholders, reaching over 800 people bimonthly. IAALS experts have also been on the ground or provided virtual advice to changemakers in nine states.

“

The sandbox has allowed lawyers, lay advocates, and technology to help more than 24,000 people who might not have received legal assistance otherwise. The justice crisis demands bold innovations like this one to be replicated across the country.

Lucy Ricca, Executive Director,
Deborah L. Rhode Center on
the Legal Profession

”

CREATING A NEW, AFFORDABLE TIER OF LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

Like nurse practitioners working alongside doctors, a new type of legal professional is now working alongside lawyers in seven states, providing high-quality and lower-cost legal services. These professionals often help with family law, debt collection, and landlord/tenant cases, which upend the lives of millions each year and leave people worse off when they can't afford legal assistance. IAALS is nationally recognized as the go-to organization researching and supporting these vital Allied Legal Professional (ALP) programs—as well as growing and standardizing them in more states nationwide. The work so far:

1ST
OF ITS KIND
research on existing
and planned
programs

ALP SUMMIT
21
cross-profession
expert
perspectives

1
NATIONAL FRAMEWORK
18
RECOMMENDATIONS

EXPERT LIAISON
13
STATES & D.C.

4
PROPOSED
PROGRAMS
reference IAALS'
expertise

“ IAALS’ recommendations and expertise helped guide Oregon in the creation of our new program, which opens the door to much-needed, affordable legal services for the people of our state.

Helen M. Hirschbiel, CEO, Oregon State Bar



NEXT STEPS & OPPORTUNITIES



PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

IAALS champions the successes of ALP programs and advocates their adoption nationwide to increase access to justice. We build momentum and consensus within the legal profession and with the public they serve through collaborative events, speaking engagements, webinars, and an online knowledge center with comprehensive, up-to-date information.



A UNIFIED NAME IN EVERY STATE

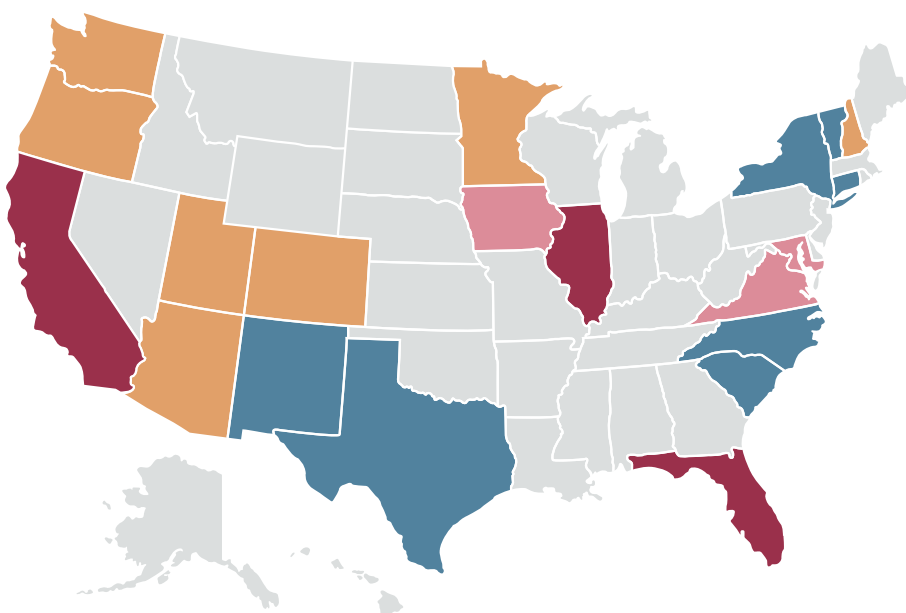
To date, states have varied in how they name or title their allied legal professionals. IAALS is collaborating with existing programs around the country to define a single national title for these legal professionals, based on community focus groups, work with translation experts, and a virtual workshop with partner states.



IMPROVING PROGRAMS, INCREASING ACCESS

IAALS seeks state partnerships to evaluate ALP program data. Continued program improvements will translate to even better legal services and greater access for more people.

ALLIED LEGAL PROFESSIONALS IN PRACTICE



7 states with ALPs

14M

middle class people in those states stand to benefit most

10.7%

of the U.S. population has access to ALPs

38%

of the U.S. population would have access if the 11 other states contemplating programs approved them

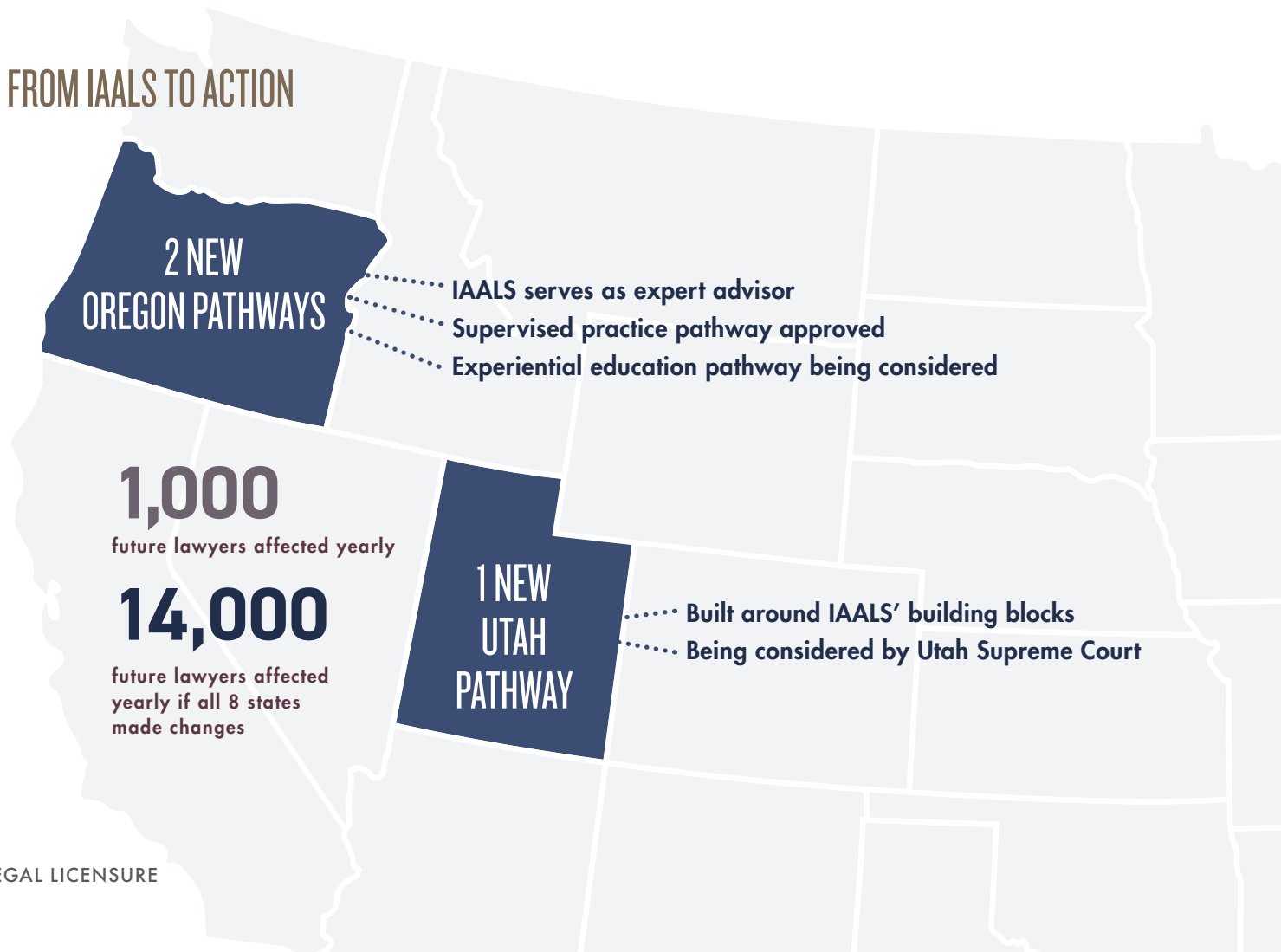
● Implemented ● Under Consideration ● Being Studied ● Currently Not Moving Forward

IMPROVING LEGAL LICENSURE AND LOOKING BEYOND THE BAR EXAM

There is now broad recognition that the current bar exam is not aligned with the skills and knowledge required to demonstrate minimum competence to practice law. The exam also has a long and well-documented history of disparate outcomes for people of color, and is administered in a way that creates disadvantages for many test takers. The NextGen bar exam will be an evolution, but it remains doubtful that it will resolve these substantial challenges. IAALS advocates for new approaches to licensure that are valid, equitable, and effective. The work so far:



FROM IAALS TO ACTION



NEXT STEPS & OPPORTUNITIES



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE REFORM EFFORTS

Based on a convening with key licensure changemakers, IAALS is developing recommendations for states when planning and implementing new licensure pathways that build on successes to date, promote state collaboration, and address concerns of reform opponents.



EDUCATING THE PROFESSION AND THE PUBLIC

IAALS will launch an online knowledge center with up-to-date scholarship, news, and resources related to the changing legal licensure landscape across the country.



ADVISING STATE EFFORTS

IAALS continues to advise Oregon on the creation, rollout, and evaluation of its new licensure pathways, as well as other states exploring ways to improve their licensure processes.



EXAMS STILL MISS THE MARK

Research is clear that closed-book, multiple-choice, memory-based tests do not assess real-world lawyering and are thus not an ideal way to license lawyers. IAALS is closely following the development of the NextGen bar exam, and will continue to study, build, and promote valid assessment approaches that evaluate client-facing skills.

“ IAALS’ building blocks provide the basis for Utah’s proposed alternative pathway to licensure. If the path is approved by the Utah Supreme Court, hundreds of new lawyers would have a better, more equitable path to the profession in the coming years. ”

Catherine Bramble
Member, Utah Bar Admissions
Working Group;
Associate Professor, BYU Law

INCREASING ACCESS TO LEGAL SERVICES FOR THE OVERLOOKED MIDDLE CLASS

Middle-class Americans face daunting challenges finding affordable legal help but are rarely considered by providers, reformers, or funders. They are “above the line” of income eligibility for the free legal aid reserved for the poorest Americans, but they also struggle to find legal services that don’t break the bank. With the middle class representing more than 50% of our nation’s population, their challenges in getting legal help have profound, far-reaching consequences. In partnership with The Chicago Bar Foundation, IAALS launched the Above the Line Network (ATLN) to connect providers from across the United States, Canada, and beyond, and collectively transform and increase legal services for the underserved middle class.

NEXT STEPS & OPPORTUNITIES

UNITING BEHIND WHAT WORKS AND SCALING UP MIDDLE-CLASS FOCUSED LEGAL SERVICES

ATLN is bringing existing successful efforts together—from incubators, socially conscious private law firms, nonprofit law firms, legal aid programs, and other organizations—into a collaborative community where ideas, resources, and best practices can be shared, further developed, scaled to reach more people, and replicated anywhere.

“ The expense of lawyers forced me to delay getting divorced for years. After finally finding an affordable option, we could move on with our lives. So many people like me in the middle class are stuck and need help. The Above the Line Network is doing something about it and making affordable lawyers more available for everyone. ”

Stephanie Sheppard, Client of ATLN Member

ATLN IN FOCUS

61 FOUNDING MEMBERS FROM
24 STATES
2 CANADIAN PROVINCES

100+
MEMBERS
expected in
2024

THE MIDDLE CLASS IN NEED

100+
MILLION PEOPLE

>50%
OF U.S. POPULATION

REMAKING A PRACTICE-READY AND EQUITABLE LEGAL PROFESSION

Being a successful new lawyer doesn't come from a high class rank or attending a prestigious law school; it comes from attaining the right mix of skills that actually benefit clients and employers. IAALS' original *Foundations for Practice* project developed an empirically driven framework of the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities new lawyers need, along with models to align legal education and legal hiring around it. These models are built upon data collected in 2014 from more than 24,000 lawyers, representing a broad spectrum of practice areas, practice types, employment settings, geographic locations, and demographic characteristics. Dozens of law schools, law professors, and legal employers today rely on *Foundations* to guide their teaching and hiring practices, resulting in thousands of new lawyers who are better prepared to serve their clients.

NEXT STEPS & OPPORTUNITIES

FOUNDATIONS 2.0

The pandemic and AI have changed—and will continue to change—the face of lawyering, and the time is ripe to refresh the data upon which our *Foundations* models are built. IAALS is partnering with the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC) to update the original survey and future learning and hiring models to reflect today's realities. *Foundations 2.0* will also provide new insights into creating a more equitable profession. New data and recommendations are expected in late 2025.

EMBEDDING FOUNDATIONS WITHIN EDUCATION AND LEGAL HIRING

IAALS is partnering with law schools and individual faculty members to implement *Foundations*-based instructional, programmatic, and curricular design to improve legal education at all levels. IAALS is also partnering with law firms to modernize hiring practices and techniques and measure improved hiring outcomes.

FROM IAALS TO ACTION

Piloted with
686
WAITLISTED
APPLICANTS

SOUTHWESTERN
LAW SCHOOL

FOUNDATIONS-BASED
ADMISSIONS PROCESS

377
ADMITTED

UNIVERSITY OF DENVER
STURM COLLEGE OF LAW

Once fully
implemented,
will benefit nearly
300
law students
yearly

FOUNDATIONS-BASED
LEARNING OUTCOMES
ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

WHEELER TRIGG
O'DONNELL

FOUNDATIONS-BASED
HIRING PROCESS

INCREASED
DIVERSITY OF
NEW HIRES



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We greatly appreciate your support and investment in our vital work. IAALS is a self-funded nonprofit and relies on the generosity of corporations, law firms, private foundations, and individual donors to achieve our vision of a people-centered justice system. Our funders and benefactors are key partners in jumpstarting the groundbreaking and achievable solutions that will clear a path to justice for everyone.

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CY PRES AWARDS

IAALS' work to ensure justice for all is a reality for all makes us an ideal charitable beneficiary for cy pres awards that can target transformative change nationwide.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Midland Credit Management, an Encore Capital Group Company, and its General Counsel, Matt Jubenville; and Theodore W. Seitz, Member, Dykema, for the 2023 cy pres award.

To learn more about directing a cy pres award to IAALS, contact Amy Livingston, Director of Development: 303.871.6613 or amy.livingston@du.edu

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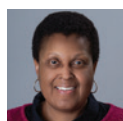
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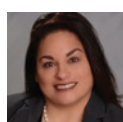
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of Operations



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Director of Legal Services
and the Profession



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Public Relations



Jonna Perlinger
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Legal Assistant



James Swearingen
Research Analyst



Zachary Willis
Associate Director of
Communications

PART-TIME/TEMPORARY STAFF AND CONSULTANTS

Robin Beattie
Legal Consultant

Jordan M. Singer
Consultant on the Judiciary

Judge Jeremy Fogel (Ret.)
Senior Advisor

James Teufel
Consultant on Evaluation and
Regulatory Reform

Geneva Heffernan
Law School Intern

Natalie Anne Knowlton
Advisor on Regulatory Innovation

Staff list as of March 2024. *Joined in 2024



REBUILDING JUSTICE AWARD

At our 15th Annual Rebuilding Justice Award Dinner, IAALS celebrated and honored the year's Rebuilding Justice Awardee, Michigan Chief Justice Bridget Mary McCormack (Ret.), in recognition of her leadership, innovation, and service in fostering broad reform in our justice system and legal profession, and her work to ensure a system that is more accessible, more transparent, more data driven, and more efficient.

Chief Justice McCormack serves as a model and inspiration for the judiciary, the bar, our court system, legal innovation organizations like IAALS, and the public.

The Rebuilding Justice Award recognizes individuals and organizations who exemplify the spirit of innovation and leadership that we champion as we work toward building a legal system that is accessible, fair, reliable, efficient, and accountable.



ALLI GERKMAN LEGAL VISIONARY AWARD

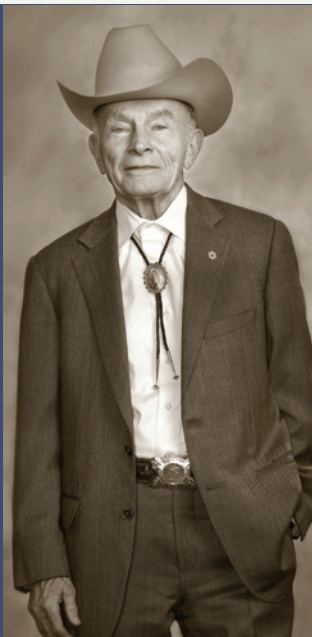
IAALS was also proud to give the third annual Alli Gerkmán Legal Visionary Award to Ariadna M. Godreau-Aubert, founder and executive director of Ayuda Legal Puerto Rico, for her efforts to promote access to justice and defend fundamental rights through community legal education, advocacy, and direct services.

The Alli Gerkmán Legal Visionary Award is designed to encourage and showcase innovators, risk takers, visionaries, and emerging leaders who bring a different perspective and a reform-minded approach to the improvement of our legal system, and who are early in their legal careers.



HISTORY

Located on the campus of the University of Denver, IAALS opened its doors on January 17, 2006, and was founded by the University's Chancellor Emeritus Daniel L. Ritchie, Denver attorney and bar leader John E. Moyer, business leader and philanthropist Charles C. Gates, and Founding Executive Director Rebecca Love Kourlis.



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