



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

THE PATH TO JUSTICE



INSTITUTE FOR THE
ADVANCEMENT OF THE
AMERICAN LEGAL SYSTEM

CONTENTS

From the CEO	1
Innovations Underway	
Ensuring Quality and Accountable Judges.....	2
Empowering Judges to be Leaders	4
Addressing Americans' Unmet Justice Needs	6
Building a Practice-Ready Legal Profession	9
Unlocking Legal Regulation	10
Improving Legal Licensure	14
Increasing Access to Middle Class Legal Services.....	16
2025 and Beyond	17
Partners	18
Donors	20
Board of Advisors	22
Staff	23
Awards	24
Join Us.....	25

OUR VISION

IAALS, the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System at the University of Denver, is an independent, nonpartisan 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

At IAALS, we envision a world where everyone has a clear path to justice. To make that vision a reality, our work is grounded in the bedrock principles of our justice system, including adherence to the rule of law, an independent judiciary, and a legal profession that serves and represents all.

While our justice system has weathered challenges in the past, these foundational principles are particularly under siege today. Yet in this moment the integrity and strength of our justice system is more important than ever. When the rule of law is questioned, our courts and the legal profession must be equipped to defend it. At the same time, old problems persist. Those in most need of legal help and justice through our system struggle to find it—and many are left behind and worse off. With pressure from all sides, our justice system needs new innovations to fortify its foundations and uphold its promise of justice for all.

IAALS is focused on advancing these bedrock principles while also urging innovation to ensure a justice system that meets the needs of people, communities, society, and our democracy. At every level, IAALS is making our system more just—and our work in 2024 put our core values into practice.

As we celebrate IAALS' 20th Anniversary in 2026, we will set our sights on the future with our Vision 2040—a summit, a system-wide call to action, and ultimately a collective roadmap with strategies and benchmarks for justice innovation that will guide not only our work in the coming years but the very future of our justice system.

The path to justice runs through IAALS. It runs through everyday people whose perspectives are helping us create people-centered solutions nationwide. It runs through the states and courts that pilot our forward-looking, data-backed innovations. And it runs through you—our partners and funders—who share a commitment to these principles, values, and the future of civil justice.



OUR VALUES

Question the Status Quo
Find Common Ground
Let Data Guide the Way
Center the People
Set our Sights on Tomorrow

QUESTION THE STATUS QUO

We challenge conventional norms and rise above the biases entrenched in today's business-as-usual systems. Our research and recommendations test traditional notions and dare to build a better system for everyone.



ENSURING QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABLE JUDGES

Most Americans have their job performance evaluated by supervisors, and judicial performance evaluation (JPE) programs provide a similar opportunity for the assessment of judges. IAALS is leading the movement for robust and renewed JPE programs nationwide, and 14 states have JPE programs that rely on our research, recommendations, and expertise.

Trust and confidence in our courts is at an all-time low. In our hyper-partisan world, JPE can change that tide while also maintaining high-caliber and neutral judges on the bench. At the same time, updating the JPE process is essential to account for modern realities and to keep JPE relevant into the future. 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 improve trust in our judiciary.

JPE 2.0 TIMELINE

- **2020:** Task Force
- **2021:** Foundational Research
- **2022:** National JPE Summit
- **2023:** Stakeholder Workshops
- **2024:** Judge Perspectives Survey

A first-of-its-kind survey of 658 judges from 8 states—Alaska, Colorado, Hawai'i, Idaho, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Utah, and Virginia—provided new perspectives on the JPE process. Full results published in our report, *National Perspectives on Judicial Performance Evaluation*.



Read the full report here.

A NEW ERA FOR JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Based on the wealth of perspectives and data we've collected, IAALS will soon publish a blueprint for modernizing JPE. Our empirically based recommendations shine a spotlight on the challenges facing JPE programs alongside comprehensive solutions for tackling them, and strengthening not only JPE but the judiciary at large.

WHAT'S NEXT

Challenges Facing the Judiciary and JPE:

- ▶ Declining public trust and confidence in courts.
- ▶ Reliability and helpfulness of evaluations for judges and the public.
- ▶ Concerns of bias and misuse of the evaluation process.
- ▶ Keeping focus on objective evaluation standards over case-outcome emphasis.
- ▶ Lack of information, resources, and support to improve judicial performance.

New Recommendations that Cover:

- ▶ Updating evaluation criteria to focus on modern judicial roles as well as objective and measurable performance metrics.
- ▶ Leveraging new technology and evidence-based practices to improve data collection, strengthen survey techniques, and mitigate bias.
- ▶ Providing better opportunities for the public and the judges themselves to participate in the evaluation process.
- ▶ Building a culture of professional development as a key outcome.

Our full recommendations set forth a vision for JPE programs that all stakeholders can trust is rigorous but fair, with clear and objective performance standards, reliable data reflecting a range of perspectives, transparency to the public, and meaningful support for judges to implement feedback. The recommendations are ambitious, but also practical, actionable, and achievable.

IAALS will now work with states across the country to make these changes a reality. And as courts nationwide continue to grapple with issues of bias, transparency, accountability, and public trust, these recommendations also provide a broader roadmap for modernizing our judiciary and building stronger, people-centered courts.

“Judicial performance evaluation is a critical connection between judges and the communities we serve. IAALS’ leadership on JPE and the recommendations in this report will strengthen Colorado’s program and will bolster public trust in the judiciary.”

CHIEF JUSTICE MONICA M. MÁRQUEZ
Colorado Supreme Court



OUR VALUES

FIND COMMON GROUND

Rather than stand behind a partisan line, we actively reach across aisles to invite diverse perspectives and listen with purpose. Finding common ground deepens the power of our work, energizing us all to make a stronger collective impact.



IN ACTION

EMPOWERING JUDGES TO BE COURT AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

Achievable and sustainable justice innovation requires broad collaboration among many stakeholders, and bringing more judges to the table increases our ability to make change a reality. Judges work on the front lines, interacting with people entangled in the legal system and witnessing firsthand the issues they face. If more judges are equipped to foster change in their local courts and their own courtrooms, countless people will experience a better path to justice.

Judges hold a uniquely powerful position that makes strong judicial leadership a core component of meaningful innovation. Judges are in a prime position to bring about practical, tangible improvements that directly benefit the public—and they should serve as catalysts for innovation by championing new ideas, testing pilot programs, and collaborating with colleagues locally and nationally. IAALS' partnership with judges opened a new chapter in 2024 with a focus on building a bench of leaders and innovators.



A SUMMIT OF JUDGES LEADS TO NEW INNOVATIONS

In September 2024, IAALS co-hosted “Advancing Innovation: A National Summit on Judicial Leadership” with the Berkeley Judicial Institute, which brought together state and federal judges and justices to spark fresh ideas and to equip them with the tools to bring them to life. The multidimensional event provided practical training on leadership and implementing change, and explored bold strategies for driving innovations that make the legal system work better for everyone. By allowing judges to step out of their silos and focus energy on collaborative problem-solving, the summit has inspired a new wave of innovations taking root in courts across the country.

33 judges from 15 states:

89%

identified at least one concrete idea for innovation that they plan to work toward

94%

felt equipped with new tools to make change

94%

plan to continue collaboration with other attendees

The Summit empowered robust and resilient judicial leaders to thrive in the midst of challenges, respond to crises, and drive change at the speed and scale needed to tackle the mounting challenges facing the legal system. These leaders have returned to their court systems across the country with a collaborative focus on local and broader innovations, and as a united force for a better justice system. In 2025, IAALS will continue to support these judges’ efforts, as well as host a series of webinars for judges nationwide to join the fold and inspire the next wave of innovation.

“The Judicial Leadership Summit inspired me to create instructional videos for litigants using an AI avatar of myself, which are now an approved pilot project by the Illinois Supreme Court. Without attending, I would not have known that this was even a possibility. Thank you for expanding my vision and imagination!”

JUDGE MARYAM AHMAD
Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois



OUR VALUES

LET DATA GUIDE THE WAY

Our work begins and ends with the data that lights our path forward. We make recommendations not by leaning on any particular agendas, but by grounding ourselves in the facts.



IN ACTION

ADDRESSING AMERICANS' UNMET JUSTICE NEEDS

Through the groundbreaking research of our *US Justice Needs* project, the alarming scope of unmet justice needs faced by Americans has come into sharp focus, encompassing people from all walks of life and backgrounds, of all income levels, and from every corner of the country. Our research shines a light on how Americans suffer without proper access to legal help and without ways to resolve the problems they face.

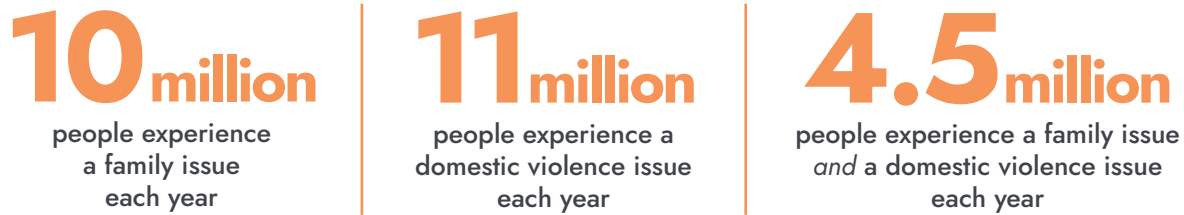
With a clear picture of what's at stake—and what “access to justice” really means for Americans lacking it—IAALS is targeting our work and innovations to make bigger impacts on the ground for more people in critical need. We are also exploring what the data reveals for key groups needing better access to justice: families, the middle class, rural communities, and businesses.

- **66%** of Americans experienced at least one legal issue in the previous 4 years.
- **49%** of their legal issues were completely resolved.
- **120 million** legal problems are either not resolved or resolved in a way that's seen as unfair each year.
- Lower income, women, multiracial and Black Americans, younger and middle-aged, and urban and rural residents are the most vulnerable and disadvantaged populations.
- Employment and money-related problems are the most pressing unmet needs.



ENSURING FAMILIES GET BETTER HELP

Family justice 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. Many people feel isolated, fearful, vulnerable, and overwhelmed, and these negative experiences are also disproportionately felt by women and people of color. But IAALS' research and data are illuminating the path toward a better future.



In a forthcoming report, IAALS will publish data on the most pressing justice needs for families that also reveal opportunities for focused innovation. By understanding the journeys people take as they navigate their family justice issues, we can design solutions to improve outcomes for families, empower states with achievable changes, and reshape family justice for all.

BRINGING JUSTICE TO THE MIDDLE CLASS

Our data also highlights the struggles experienced by everyday Americans seeking justice. The middle class represents the majority of Americans and well over 100 million people, but many find lawyers too expensive and are forced to navigate some of life's toughest problems alone or never get the justice they deserve.

While most access to justice efforts rightly focus on low-income and poor people who are especially vulnerable, we can never achieve our nation's ideal of equal justice for all when middle-class people struggle to find affordable legal help when they need it most. IAALS will soon share data on these important unmet needs to support targeted, practical solutions for middle class justice. Our Above the Line Network is also focused on improving middle class justice; read more on page 16.

CONNECTING RURAL COMMUNITIES TO LEGAL SERVICES

One-fifth of all Americans live in rural areas, and these communities are disproportionately poor and have limited access to the most basic justice resources. Internet infrastructure is often not fast enough for virtual services. Rural lawyers are few, stretched thin, retiring, and are not being replaced by the next generation of legal providers. Forty percent of U.S. counties have fewer than one lawyer per 1,000 residents, leaving an already isolated population further distanced from the help they need.

Justice should not depend on geography. IAALS is compiling data on rural justice needs that can jumpstart new ways to bring justice within reach for more people—no matter where they live.



SUPPORTING BUSINESS NEEDS

Justice needs are not just going unmet for people. Businesses are a bedrock of our society, from mom and pops, to startups, to name brands. An array of issues like cybersecurity, compliance, and data privacy loom large for modern businesses, alongside environmental and societal issues at stake. We must ensure that our justice system is more accessible and better equipped to handle their evolving needs.

To build that future, IAALS is in the process of interviewing a variety of businesses to better understand the problems and challenges they face so we can recommend system improvements that provide better paths to justice. By bringing businesses to the table and better understanding how legal problems differ by company size, geography, and industry, solutions can be tailored to meet the needs of all.

THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS DISPUTES

In spring 2025, IAALS convened leading experts and business insiders to discuss the future of business disputes, including changes to business courts and tailored dispute resolution pathways for business. The convening focused on the evolving needs of businesses, where the system is failing to meet those needs, and the potential for innovative new approaches to getting resolution of legal problems. IAALS is using these actionable insights to develop recommendations to empower businesses of all sizes to better navigate their legal challenges—including new best practices for business courts and new models for business dispute resolution.



BUILDING A PRACTICE-READY AND CLIENT-FOCUSED 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. A decade ago, 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 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.

FOUNDATIONS 2.0 AND THE FUTURE OF LAWYERING

The face of lawyering has changed drastically in the ten years since the original *Foundations* data was collected, and the time is ripe to refresh the data upon which our *Foundations* models are built. IAALS is collaborating with the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC) to update the original survey, collect new data, and refine our learning and hiring models to reflect today's realities. The survey will be distributed in spring 2025 in partnership with bar organizations around the country, with new data and recommendations expected in late 2025.

IAALS continues to partner with law schools, individual faculty members, and law firms to forge the next generation of legal education and legal hiring. As law schools implement *Foundations*-based instructional, programmatic, and curricular design, we are improving legal education at all levels and training lawyers who can thrive in today's complex world. And as legal employers modernize hiring practices and techniques, we are priming law firms to achieve better outcomes for clients and their bottom lines.



IN ACTION



WHAT'S NEXT





OUR VALUES

CENTER THE PEOPLE

Justice for all is more than a rallying cry—it's a promise. And we deliver on it by keeping the experience of civil justice-seekers at the heart of everything we do.



IN ACTION

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.



WHAT'S NEXT

UNITING LEADERS BEHIND BLUEPRINTS FOR ACTION

Based on multiple convenings of key stakeholders on issues of critical relevance to regulatory reform efforts, IAALS has developed 12 comprehensive recommendations for launching and sustaining regulatory innovation—covering necessary stakeholders, program structure and requirements, messaging, research and data, and other key areas.

The recommendations apply to the entire spectrum of regulatory innovation, including sandboxes, alternative business structures, allied legal professionals, and community-based justice workers. We envision a multi-pronged approach to regulatory innovation as the only way to reach and serve all people across the entire legal services gap. And because each state's needs and capabilities are different, our recommendations provide a general framework of best practices that all can use to launch, evaluate, and sustain regulatory reform.



Read the
recommendations
here.

INSPIRING NEW INNOVATIONS, IMPROVING EXISTING EFFORTS

IAALS' model for regulatory reform jumpstarted a national movement for change, and Utah used our model in its first-in-the-nation regulatory sandbox for legal services. IAALS is formally evaluating the Utah Sandbox and our interim evaluation provides numerous key insights relating to its operations, outcomes, and impacts.

- ▶ Most authorized entities have so far been low innovation, though the number of moderate-innovation services provided exceeds the number of low innovation services.
- ▶ Most services have been provided by lawyers rather than nonlawyers.
- ▶ The Sandbox has been successful in attracting a wide variety of business models, service types, and service providers in a broad range of legal service areas.
- ▶ There has been no indication of increased risk to consumers.
- ▶ Entities are optimistic about the future of their participation in the Sandbox, and 75% reported achieving their goals upon entering the Sandbox, like providing affordable services and increasing access for Utahns.
- ▶ Insights from Sandbox leadership indicate that:
 - ▶ Recent policy changes show promise for furthering the regulatory objective.
 - ▶ Broader inclusion and representation from the Utah legal community in the regulatory functions will improve decisionmaking.
 - ▶ Availability of financial and other resources for carrying out regulatory functions is a primary challenge.

Our full report will include robust considerations for the future of legal regulatory sandboxes.



GIVING EVERYDAY PEOPLE A SEAT AT THE TABLE OF REFORM

As states continue to develop and implement these new regulatory models, it is critical to engage members of the public from the start to ensure that innovations are designed to meet people's needs. IAALS' *People-Centered Legal Regulation* project is building a model for states to follow that will kickstart meaningful inclusion of everyday people in creating solutions to the justice crisis.

To help build this model, IAALS conducted a national survey of members of the public in 2024—and brought together leaders, experts, and changemakers to discuss and validate the survey results and to workshop best practices for engaging with the public on legal regulatory reform. Focus groups will follow in 2025. In the end, our model will help states give voice to people in need, make it easier for people to understand the process for reform and their role in it, and empower people to participate in nationwide efforts to increase their access to justice.

CHARTING THE FUTURE FOR AI IN LEGAL SERVICES

The rapid development of generative AI has brought it to the forefront of discussions around the future of legal services and how they are regulated. The legal profession is abuzz with questions about how lawyers should (or should not) use AI in their practice, how judges might use it in their courtrooms, and how it might outperform law students on the bar exam. But how AI might deliver legal services directly to the public has received less fanfare. IAALS is leading this national conversation and proposing a phased approach to regulating the use of AI in the delivery of consumer-facing legal products and services.

In November 2024, IAALS brought together leaders from cross sections of the AI and regulatory innovation spaces to forge consensus around the future for AI in the legal marketplace. Our forthcoming proposals suggest a first phase for legal regulators to prioritize experimentation and encourage responsible development, deployment, and use of AI legal tools. As AI continues to advance, IAALS will lead these critical conversations and deploy additional guidance and expert assistance to ensure that we are realizing the opportunity of AI in closing the justice gap.



EXPANDING ALLIED LEGAL PROFESSIONALS NATIONWIDE

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 supporting these vital Allied Legal Professional (ALP) programs—as well as growing and standardizing them in more states nationwide.

Our framework for expanding and improving ALP programs includes 18 recommendations to ensure successful and sustainable programs that bring legal help to people in need. And as more states get on board, IAALS is uniting them behind shared approaches and best practices, including reciprocity and program naming.

➤ In August 2024, IAALS convened leaders from all states with ALP programs to jumpstart the process of providing reciprocity between states. Just as processes exist for lawyers to practice across state lines, ALPs similarly need career mobility. These conversations informed a forthcoming framework for reciprocity that states can use to foster a more interconnected profession and a network of legal professionals that can integrate across the country.

➤ To date, states have varied in how they name or title these professionals, bringing a level of confusion to the legal marketplace. IAALS is working with existing programs nationwide to define a single national title for these legal professionals, based on community input, the practitioners' perspectives, work with translation experts, and a workshop with state leaders. With a standard, recognizable title, these practitioners will have greater visibility, reach more people, and thrive.

“Prior to Licensed Legal Paraprofessionals, many people handled their cases alone with no affordable options for legal help, relying on internet searches to understand their rights—often leading to poor outcomes. Now we are here to help, and guide families in Colorado through these difficult matters.”

LAURA LANDON

LLP, Cox Baker Page & Bailey, LLC

➤ SET OUR SIGHTS ON TOMORROW

OUR VALUES

We find ways for our big ideas to come alive within the bounds of today's reality. We pursue incremental change so that the innovations we aim for become actionable and achievable.

➤ IMPROVING LEGAL LICENSURE AND LOOKING BEYOND THE BAR EXAM

IN ACTION

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, an understanding solidified by IAALS' groundbreaking research. The exam's design and administration provide a substantial advantage to those who have access to costly test preparation, extensive time for studying, and strong personal support systems, raising concerns about fairness in the licensure process. 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, rigorous, and effective. Our 12 building blocks of minimum competence, paired with 10 recommendations for improving lawyer licensing, have inspired states to explore modern pathways that don't just assume the century-old tradition of a bar exam is best. IAALS advises several of these states, and aims to ensure the next generation of lawyers are actually equipped to best serve the public.



BUILDING NEW, STRONGER PATHWAYS TO LICENSING LAWYERS

We know that closed-book, multiple-choice, memory-based tests do not assess real-world lawyering or client-facing skills, and are thus not an ideal way to license lawyers. But what are the alternatives? Several new efforts are underway across the country, along with a few well-established methods that are decades old. Our *Pathways to Legal Licensure* project is evaluating the licensure landscape to understand each method's effectiveness in assessing minimum competence and protecting the public from malpractice. Instead of defaulting to the NextGen bar exam, IAALS will provide a direct comparison between traditional and alternative pathways to licensure that dissect the pros and cons of each method—and provide evidence-based recommendations for establishing a fair and valid licensure process that actually ensures lawyers are fit to practice law.

IAALS is also studying licensure through diploma privilege, a process where new lawyers who meet certain conditions are automatically admitted to the bar upon graduation from law school and can practice law without taking a bar exam. While Wisconsin is the only state that routinely offers this pathway, many states allowed or contemplated diploma privilege in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. IAALS is studying the preparedness and competence of lawyers licensed through diploma privilege in Washington in July 2020 to understand how prepared they were for practice—and how that compares with the preparedness of exam-licensed lawyers.

LEADING THE NATIONAL LICENSURE REFORM MOVEMENT

In 2023, IAALS hosted LicensureCon, a pivotal summit that brought together two dozen thought leaders and innovators to address the pressing challenges and opportunities in legal licensure reform. Against the backdrop of a legal profession reevaluating its traditions, the convening aimed to foster collaboration, share best practices, and chart a cohesive path forward. A forthcoming report with insights, strategies, and recommendations to lead the conversation forward will provide a roadmap for states and stakeholders to transform legal licensure.

IAALS will continue to lead the movement toward a licensure system that is more inclusive, practical, and reflective of the diverse needs of today's society—and a legal profession that is truly equipped to meet the challenges of the future.

“IAALS’ work on minimum competence and research related to the skills and knowledge new lawyers need has been instrumental in guiding our process for developing core competencies as a threshold for lawyer licensure.”

EMILY ESCHWEILER

Director, Minnesota Board of Law Examiners



IN ACTION

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.



WHAT'S NEXT

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.

In 2025, we are hosting roundtable discussions with each ATLN stakeholder group to start building resources that can help any provider innovate to reach more middle class clients. An online resource hub will further connect members with one another and with these methods of providing much-needed, cost-effective legal help.

108 MEMBERS AND GROWING

Representing **28 states, Washington, D.C.,**
and **3 Canadian provinces**

MEMBERS

- ▶ A2J Commissions
- ▶ Allied Legal Professionals
- ▶ Bar Associations
- ▶ Court Staff
- ▶ Government
- ▶ Incubators
- ▶ Judges
- ▶ Law Firms
- ▶ Legal Aid Organizations
- ▶ Legal Educators
- ▶ Legal Insurance
- ▶ Legal Tech Companies
- ▶ Non-Profit Organizations
- ▶ Paralegals
- ▶ Process Servers
- ▶ Self-Help Centers



2025 AND BEYOND: HIGH STAKES JUSTICE INITIATIVE

More and more people are navigating high-stakes legal issues without lawyer help and the consequences can be profound. An adverse outcome in a debt collection case can put your livelihood at risk; in a housing case, it could mean losing your home. The deck is stacked against self-represented litigants in these situations, and we must bridge the gap to prevent more people from facing needless hardship. Our *High Stakes Justice Initiative* takes a comprehensive approach to this crisis by simplifying the traditional and confusing court processes, leveraging modern and user-friendly technology, and expanding the universe of legal helpers to call upon—enabling ordinary people to navigate common legal issues with clarity and ease.

REIMAGINING LEGAL REFERRAL

The gulf that exists between people who need legal help and the availability of that help is compounded by an outdated and incomplete network of legal help referral. Traditional lawyer referral services are no longer enough. Legal aid organizations, allied legal professionals, courts, librarians, community organizations, and others round out an ecosystem of providers that can guide clients toward positive outcomes—but people don't often know where to turn. There is a desperate need to connect legal consumers with the variety of helpers and resources available, and IAALS is spearheading the *Reimagining Legal Referral* project to create these new pathways to legal help. IAALS will kickstart this innovation in 2025, leading toward models we will pilot in states across the country.

NON-ADVERSARIAL FAMILY LAW MODEL

We know that the traditional, adversarial model for family law cases does more harm than good, and often leaves families further broken by a lengthy and stressful process that hurts children and drains financial resources. Many non-adversarial approaches to divorce and separation exist across the country and the world, but when they don't work families are forced right back into the adversarial process. IAALS is innovating to end this vicious cycle and establish a non-adversarial court-based model for family cases that can be adopted nationwide. Our model will focus on reducing time, stress, and expenses for families, while also reducing court time and burdens. This model will begin to develop in 2025 as we ground ourselves in research and convene key experts and stakeholders to help us chart the future of family law.



PARTNERS



ABOVE THE LINE NETWORK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Kari Burns

Director of Professional Development, Tucker Ellis, LLP

Lisa Dewey

Pro Bono Partner, DLA Piper

Sonja Ebron

CEO, Courtroom5

Judge Adam J. Espinosa

Denver District Court

Daylin-Rose H. Heather

Deputy Administrative Director of the Courts,
Hawai'i State Judiciary

Daniel R. Hernandez

Founder & Principal Attorney, NextLevel Law

Luz E. Herrera

Professor and Associate Dean for Experiential Education,
Texas A&M University School of Law

Lana Kleiman

Executive Director, Charleston Legal Access

Lauren Lester

Affordable Attorney, Lester Law

Gabrielle Mulnick Majewski

Executive Director, DC Affordable Law Firm

Erin Monahan

Project Manager, Access Pro Bono Society of BC

Dave Pantzer

Deputy Director, Maryland Legal Services Corporation

Lara Wagner

Managing Attorney, Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)

Joshua Weaver

Director, Texas Opportunity & Justice Incubator

FOUNDATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Jessica Brown

Partner, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP

Christine E. Cerniglia

Associate Professor of Law and Director of Clinical and Experiential Education, Stetson University College of Law

Gideon Dionne

Attorney, Immix Law

Jordan Furlong

Principal, Law21

Anahid Gharakhanian

Vice Dean, Co-Director of the Externship Program, and Professor of Legal Analysis, Writing, and Skills, Southwestern Law School

Martin Katz

Professor and Former Dean, University of Denver Sturm College of Law

Mathew Kerbis

Founder, Subscription Attorney LLC

Chris Martin

Associate, Holland & Hart LLP

Karen Masciulli

Director of Legal Talent, Colorado Attorney General's Office

Camille Nelson

Dean and Professor of Law, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa | William S. Richardson School of Law

Thiadora Pina

Clinical Professor, Senior Director of Inclusive Excellence, Santa Clara Law

Michele Pistone

Founder of VIISTA, Director of Clinic for Asylum, Refugee and Emigrant Services and Professor of Law, Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law

Jessi Tamayo

Director of Externship Programs and Lecturer in Law, University of Miami School of Law

JPE 2.0 TASK FORCE

Jordan M. Singer

Chair

Professor of Law, New England Law | Boston

Barbara Arnold

Program Manager, New Mexico Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission

Susanne DiPietro

Executive Director, Alaska Judicial Council

Farrah Fite

Communications Director, The Missouri Bar

Kent Wagner

Executive Director, Colorado Office of Judicial Performance Evaluation

LAWYERS COUNCIL

Davis Graham & Stubbs LLP

Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP

The Harris Law Firm

Friends of John Moya

Taft / Sherman & Howard

State Farm Insurance

Wheeler Trigg O'Donnell LLP

Womble Bond Dickinson LLP

DONORS

GIFTS \$25,000 AND ABOVE

Anonymous in Honor of Henry
Jacquelyn A. and James T. Burghardt
Charities Aid Foundation of America
Gates Frontiers Fund
State Farm Insurance
State Justice Institute

GIFTS \$10,000 TO \$24,999

Anonymous
Mark Chandler and Laurie Wingate
The Chicago Bar Foundation
Davis Graham & Stubbs LLP
R. Stanton Dodge
El Pomar Foundation
Florence J. Gillmor Foundation

Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP
The Harris Law Firm
Douglas G. and Mary B. Scrivner
Taft / Sherman & Howard
Samuel and Cynthia Walker
Wheeler Trigg O'Donnell LLP
Womble Bond Dickinson LLP

GIFTS \$1,000 TO \$9,999

Anonymous
Arkin Rabin Charitable Trust
Jim and Kristin Bender
Boettcher Foundation
Buell Foundation
Colorado and Denver Bar Associations and CBA-CLE
DISH Network
Embrace Love Fund
Jeremy D. Fogel
Kirk Jones
Judicial Arbiter Group, Inc.

Brittany and Traver Kauffman
Gregory J. Kerwin
Lathrop GPM LLP
Steven and Janice Livingston
Bridget Mary McCormack
Friends of John Moyer
B. LaRae Orullian
PS.Design
James J. Sandman and Elizabeth D. Mullin
Francis M. Wikstrom and Linda Jones
Jack Zouhary

GIFTS UP TO \$999

Andrew M.J. Arruda	Elizabeth C. Jackson	Daniel B. Rodriguez
Jennifer D. Bailey	Jackson Janvier	Colin Rule
Scott Bales and Michele Kemp	Martin Katz and Phoenix Cai	Kelley Southerland
Frederick J. Baumann	Kenzo Kawanabe	Andrea and Stefan Stein
Jessica Bednarz	Leslie E. Kobayashi	Mikel L. Stout
Ryan and Jennifer Bergsieker	Ken and Barbara Laff	Keith Swisher
Jessica and Chris Brown	Cindy Lainez	Paul Thissen
Kevin S. Burke	Corinne S. Lengsfeld	Dr. Brenda Wagenknecht-Ivey
Russell and Susan Carparelli	Amy Livingston	Theresa Wardon Benz
Judith A. Clinton	Thomas McClure	James D. Wascher
Consolidated Investment Group	Ruth V. McGregor	Mark A. Weinberg
Alyssa Curry	Brooke and Eric Meyer	Russell R. Wheeler
Amy Downing	Kristen L. Mix	Gary Willis
Janet Drobinske	Kelsey Montague	Zachary A. Willis
Sonja Ebron	John and Carly Partridge	David Yellen and Leslie Richards-Yellen
Theresa Gomez	Victor D. Quintanilla	YourCause LLC
Alex J. Harris	Marcus and Anita Reinkensmeyer	
Joey Orduña Hastings	Lucy Ricca	

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.

We extend our sincere gratitude to our end-of-year match supporters: Sam and Cynthia Walker, an anonymous donor, and a second anonymous donor in honor of Henry. Their generosity inspired others and helped raise \$100,000+ to close 2024 and ensure justice for all is a reality for all.

BOARD OF ADVISORS



James J. Sandman
Chair
President Emeritus,
Legal Services Corporation



**Judge Leslie
E. Kobayashi**
United States District Court
for the District of Hawai'i



**Justice Carlos A.
Samour, Jr.**
Colorado Supreme Court



Andrew Arruda
CEO,
Automate Medical



Corinne S. Lengsfeld
Senior Vice Provost for Research
& Graduate Education, University
of Denver



Douglas G. Scrivner
Former General Counsel &
Secretary, Accenture PLC



**Chief Judge
Susan Blanco**
8th Judicial District of Colorado



Stacey Marz
Administrative Director,
Alaska Court System



Bruce Smith
Dean,
University of Denver
Sturm College of Law



Mark Chandler
Fellow, Deborah L. Rhode
Center on the Legal Profession



Bridget Mary McCormack
President & CEO,
American Arbitration Association-
International Centre for
Dispute Resolution



Carla C. van Dongen
Vice President — Counsel,
State Farm Mutual Automobile
Insurance Companies



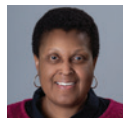
Mary Clark
Provost,
University of Denver



**Chief Justice
Ruth V. McGregor (Ret.)**
Arizona Supreme Court



Sam Walker
Executive in Residence,
Office of the
Colorado Attorney General



Sonja Ebron
CEO,
Courtroom5



Camille Nelson
Dean and Professor of Law,
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa |
William S. Richardson School
of Law



Francis M. Wikstrom
Shareholder,
Parsons Behle & Latimer



**Judge
Jeremy Fogel (Ret.)**
Executive Director,
Berkeley Judicial Institute



Victor D. Quintanilla
Professor of Law & Val Nolan
Faculty Fellow, Indiana University
Maurer School of Law



Joey Orduña Hastings
CEO, National Council of
Juvenile and Family
Court Judges



Kathryn A. Reilly
Firm President, Wheeler Trigg
O'Donnell LLP



Helen M. Hierschbiel
CEO, Oregon State Bar



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



Martin Katz
Professor and Former Dean,
University of Denver
Sturm College of Law



William A. Rossbach
Principal and Owner,
Rossbach Law, P.C.

SENIOR FELLOWS



**Judge Jennifer
D. Bailey (Ret.)**
11th Judicial Circuit of Florida,
Circuit Civil Division



Russell Wheeler
President, Governance
Institute
Visiting Fellow,
The Brookings Institution

STAFF



Brittany K.T. Kauffman
CEO



Kirk Jones
Senior Director
of Operations



Jessica Bednarz
Director of Legal Services
and the Profession



Ericka Byram
Program Associate



Logan Cornett
Director of Research



Julia Curry
Operations Specialist



Amy Downing
Events and Partnership
Manager



Janet Drobinske
Senior Executive Legal
Assistant



Theresa Gomez
Budget and
Operations Manager



Michael Houlberg
Director of
Special Projects



Danielle Kalil
Director of Civil Justice
and the Judiciary



Amy Livingston
Director of Development



Megan Loeb*
Assistant Director of
Development, Foundations,
and Sponsored Programs



Kelsey Montague
Director of Marketing and
Public Relations



Jonna Perlinger
Senior Program
Legal Assistant



Courtney Petersen-Rhead
Program Associate



James Swearingen
Research Analyst



Zachary Willis
Director of
Communications

PART-TIME/TEMPORARY STAFF AND CONSULTANTS

Santana Andazola
Law School Intern

Krista Jolivette
Law School Intern

Heather Dugdale
Development Advisor

Sophia Miller*
Law School Intern

Judge Jeremy Fogel (Ret.)
Senior Advisor

Gabriella Rojas
Student Employee

Jordan M. Singer
Consultant on the Judiciary

Staff list as of April 2025. *Joined in 2025

REBUILDING JUSTICE AWARD

At our 16th Annual Rebuilding Justice Award Dinner, IAALS celebrated and honored the year's Rebuilding Justice Awardee, the **Oregon Alternatives to the Exam Task Force**, in recognition of its leadership, innovation, and role in catalyzing the national conversation around licensure reform. The Task Force led its state—and the broader movement—in tackling concerns with the current bar exam and developing a groundbreaking new pathway for legal licensure that increases equity and access.

The Rebuilding Justice Award recognizes individuals and groups 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 fourth annual Alli Gerkman Legal Visionary Award to **Eduardo Gonzalez**, program officer for civil justice at the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, for his efforts to facilitate a narrative change for civil justice that right-sizes the roles of system stakeholders, reframes civil justice as an empowerment tool, and restores trust in our legal system.

The Alli Gerkman 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.



REMEMBERING SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR

At the dinner, IAALS paid special tribute to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, the inaugural recipient of the Rebuilding Justice Award in 2007. IAALS Founding Executive Director Rebecca Love Kourlis and Arizona Supreme Court Chief Justice Ruth V. McGregor (Ret.) reflected on Justice O'Connor's partnership with IAALS, her commitment to judicial independence, and her enduring legacy.

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. Moye, business leader and philanthropist Charles C. Gates, and Founding Executive Director Rebecca Love Kourlis.



REMEMBERING DANIEL L. RITCHIE (1931-2025)

Twenty years ago, Dan Ritchie had a conversation with Rebecca Love Kourlis about whether there was a think tank for the legal system—one that would be collaborative and action-oriented. “No? Well, why don’t we start one.” As one of our founders, Ritchie played an active role in IAALS’ work and lent his expertise to our projects, board of advisors, and executive committee. In 2017, he moved his office into John Moye Hall where IAALS is located on campus, and he became a daily presence among the team.

Ritchie continually urged that there was no more critical mission, and that we must remain steadfast in our work. IAALS is incredibly grateful for the vision and inspiration he brought both to IAALS’ founding and to its future.

JOIN US

Visit our Website

iaals.du.edu

Subscribe to Updates

iaals.du.edu/connect

Invest in IAALS

iaals.du.edu/donate

Follow our Progress

iaals.du.edu/blog

Consulting Inquiries

iaals@du.edu





**INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT
OF THE AMERICAN LEGAL SYSTEM**



**UNIVERSITY OF
DENVER**

Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System
University of Denver
John Moyer Hall, 2060 South Gaylord Way
Denver, Colorado 80208

303.871.6600 iaals.du.edu

How can we help? Consulting Inquiries: iaals@du.edu