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Justice we can believe in

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Contact: Kelsey Montague

Associate Director of Marketing and Public Relations, IAALS

303-888-0393

kelsey.montague@du.edu

SURVEY LAUNCHES IN LARGEST-EVER NATIONAL STUDY TO ASSESS JUSTICE NEEDS OF AMERICANS

IAALS and HiiL will collect data from 10,000 people in the United States to gain an in-depth understanding of the scope of legal issues people encounter and their experiences in resolving them, on a national scale.

DENVER, CO (August 20, 2020) — IAALS, the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System, and the Netherlands-based HiiL (The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law) recently launched the largest-ever survey of its kind as part of their [US Justice Needs](#) project. Funded by Bohemian Foundation, the *US Justice Needs* survey will reach 10,000 people in the United States and seek to uncover their experiences in accessing justice when they need it.

"A broad study of justice needs at all income levels is badly needed," says Jim Sandman, President Emeritus of the Legal Services Corporation, Distinguished Lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School, and member of the *US Justice Needs* Advisory Committee. "We lack current data on what legal needs people in different economic circumstances and geographic locations have and how, if at all, they address them. The survey responses will allow meaningful, research-informed progress in closing justice gaps across our legal system. This has never been more important than now, with the COVID-19 pandemic and longstanding racial injustices posing serious challenges to our society."

The scope of the survey is a major next step in the research in this field, which has been heavily focused on identifying the unmet legal needs among those with low income, or has been limited in geographical scope. *US Justice Needs* will survey people across all regions of the United States, including urban and rural areas, and people who have not historically been included.

"We want to know the legal problems that young and old, rich and poor, and urban and rural Americans have to deal with," explains Dr. Martin Gramatikov, Measuring Justice Director at HiiL. "What are the journeys that they take to resolve these problems? How fair are the resolutions that people achieve? What are the limitations they face, and how can we remove these barriers to increase access to justice? And a new question in light of the current crisis—which legal problems do people anticipate experiencing as a result of the COVID-19 crisis?"

The results of the survey will be directly applicable to the issues we currently face as a nation, and how those intersect with access to justice for Americans. Data will be collected between mid-August and the end of September from a nationally representative sample of individuals in the United States.

“The survey is not only historic, its timing is critical,” says Rebecca Sandefur, professor in the School of Social and Family Dynamics at Arizona State University and *US Justice Needs* Advisory Committee member. “We’re seeing a lot of innovation right now because of the current circumstances in the United States. The time is ripe for research on this scale, to benchmark need and inform evidence-based reforms going forward.”

Outcomes from *US Justice Needs* will contribute vital information to the conversation regarding access to justice in order to assure that the solutions are truly addressing the right problems. IAALS and HiiL will co-publish the final report early next year, with online interactive dashboards that allow greater transparency and a deeper dive into the data. The ultimate findings will create a baseline, with the opportunity for a comparative study in the future.

“This research will be vital in the fight to provide real-world solutions tailored to the current problems that Americans face in their pursuit of justice, no matter where they reside and no matter how much they earn,” says Brittany Kauffman, Senior Director at IAALS. “The results will inform—and help to transform—justice reform work and access to justice solutions in the United States in a profound way.”

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About IAALS

IAALS, the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System at the University of Denver, is a national, independent research center dedicated to facilitating continuous improvement and advancing excellence in the American legal system. Our mission is to forge innovative and practical solutions to problems within the American legal system.

About HiiL

HiiL (The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law) is a social enterprise devoted to user-friendly justice. That means justice that is easy to access, easy to understand, and effective. We will ensure that by 2030, 150 million people will be able to prevent or resolve their most pressing justice problems. We do this by stimulating innovation and scaling what works best. We are friendly rebels focused on concrete improvements in the lives of people. Data and evidence is central in all that we do. We are based in The Hague, the City of Peace and Justice.