



INSTITUTE *for the* ADVANCEMENT  
*of the* AMERICAN LEGAL SYSTEM



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### **First National Study of its Kind to Assess Justice Needs Across the U.S.**

*IAALS and HiiL begin research to provide in-depth understanding of the problems everyday Americans face resolving legal issues and accessing justice, on a national scale.*

In the first-ever, broad-based research of its kind, IAALS, the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System, is partnering with Netherlands-based The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law (HiiL) to assess the justice needs of people and businesses in the United States. Funded by the Bohemian Foundation, the two-year *US Justice Needs* study launched this week with a kick off meeting of the two organizations at IAALS' headquarters at the University of Denver.

"This study is focused on justice for all in the United States. The issue of access to justice is broader and deeper in our society than has historically been recognized. *US Justice Needs* will help us to understand the problems people in our society face in their everyday lives and how they seek to solve them," says Brittany Kauffman, Senior Director at IAALS. "We do not have a current, national survey that provides this important data. What we learn will provide the insight we need to reform the American legal system and tailor services to actually meet the needs of *all* users."

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 and entities who have not historically been included, including small and mid-size business owners and large companies.

Both IAALS and HiiL are dedicated to user-friendly justice, and data and evidence are central to all we do. The data from HiiL's Justice Needs and Satisfaction Survey provides an in-depth understanding of people's legal problems, experiences, resolutions, and access to justice. By the time of this release, HiiL has conducted the survey—tailored to specific jurisdictions—in 18 countries spanning the globe.

IAALS and HiiL are now bringing that survey to the United States. The partnership leverages HiiL's experience conducting this type of research with IAALS' knowledge of and work within the American

legal system, and IAALS' network of decision-makers and users of the system.

“There is a common misconception that most access to justice issues affect developing countries,” explains Dr. Martin Gramatikov, Measuring Justice Director at HiiL. “Our research has revealed that to be unfounded. In fact, we can state that often times the more developed a nation is, the more justice needs exist in the population, and the greater the challenge of access to justice for all. That is why we specifically chose to bring our experience and survey to the United States. Given IAALS' focus on evidence-based reform, we look forward to a very synergistic partnership.”

“At a time when access to justice issues are hitting the headlines and the mainstream, this study will expand our understanding and coalesce energies in a way that will allow us to truly target the on-the-ground realities of people in the United States,” explains Kauffman. “It will provide probative data for nonprofits, for lawyers—including those seeking new business models—for courts, and for policy makers. IAALS envisions justice for all and justice we can believe in. *US Justice Needs* brings the United States closer to making that vision a reality.”

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, with online interactive dashboards that allow greater transparency and a deeper dive into the data. The ultimate findings, set to be released in the fall of 2020, will create a baseline, with the opportunity for a comparative study in five or ten years. Most importantly, the results will inform and transform justice reform work and access to justice solutions in the United States in a profound way.

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*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.*

*HiiL (The Hague Institute for Innovation of Law) is a social enterprise devoted to user-friendly justice. To us that means justice that is easy to access, easy to understand, and effective. Data and evidence are the fundamentals in all we do. From that we facilitate and stimulate innovation and scaling what works best. We are friendly rebels focused on concrete improvements in the lives of people. HiiL is an equal opportunity, international employer, based in the International City of Peace & Justice.*