Access to Justice Conference, Nov. 20, 2017
Challenges of Accessing Legal Representation/Justice

- Thousands of legal consumers annually confront life-changing issues with little or no income

- **64% of eligible cases were turned away** by civil legal aid programs in 2013 due to lack of funding

- **80% to 90%** of litigants in some courts are appearing *pro se*

- Many recent law school graduates have over $100,000 in academic loans

Growth of Law Incubator Movement

Law incubators = Laboratories for researching new and different delivery techniques

TOTAL NUMBER OF LAW INCUBATORS IN UNITED STATES

Source: ABA 2016 Comprehensive Survey of Lawyer Incubators
Basic Elements of Justice Bridge Incubator

- A law incubator program with **16 incubator attorneys** and separate offices in Boston and in New Bedford
- Staffed with **18 volunteer resident mentors** and one full-time director
- Attorneys **incorporate individually** and obtain their own malpractice insurance
- Attorneys pay **rent on a graduated scale** from $200/month up to $400/month
- Justice Bridge **provides** mentors, practical skills training, business coaching, low-cost tech and tech support, referrals, discounted memberships in bar associations, and networking opportunities
- **Prospects** referred by program are not eligible for free civil services, but cannot afford market rates (250-300% Federal poverty line in Boston; 200-225% Federal poverty line in New Bedford). Fees range from $50 to $100 per hour based on household income. Rates vary on work attorneys generate on their own.
- Referrals come from **community partners**
  - Legal services offices
  - State agencies
  - Non-profit organizations
  - Web site and on-line platforms, community partners and law firms
Providing Resources to Assure a High Quality of Representation

- All representation is provided by recently licensed and insured attorneys in good standing, who consult with retired judges, senior attorneys in legal service organizations, and senior partners in law firms.
- We use interns/paraprofessionals to help our attorneys.
- On average, our resident mentors have over 30 years of legal experience.
- We have over 60 mentors in total between our two office locations, 18 of whom appear in-residence on a regular basis and 45+ who are available on an on-call basis.

Pursue Justice
Key Goal: To Provide Legal Services of Beneficial Impact Within People’s Limited Budgets

- Limited scope representation and one-time consultations
- Flat fee, flexible pricing, payment plans, fee-shifting, hybrid arrangements
- Early intervention/conflict avoidance programs
- Expedited mediations, conciliations, “partnering” w/other professionals, holistic services
- Technology
  - Connecting clients and lawyers
  - Connecting mentors and lawyers
  - Marketing/website
  - Tracking/”best practice” research thru virtual portal
  - Training modules, programs and webcasts

Pursue Justice
Helpful Links and Resources

- Limited Assistance Representation Training Manual

- Info on LAR standing orders, forms, separate FAQ sections for lawyers and litigants

- UPitt Law’s **Legal Innovations Toolbox** funded by ABA Catalyst Grant (concepts, technologies, services for serving underserved client communities)
  [http://www.law.pitt.edu/incubator/toolbox](http://www.law.pitt.edu/incubator/toolbox)

- Chicago Bar’s Step-by-Step Toolkit for **pricing** legal services for modest income clients

- Baylor Law’s comprehensive **practice development template** for start-up attorneys opening solo practices focused on improving access to justice

**Pursue Justice**