

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

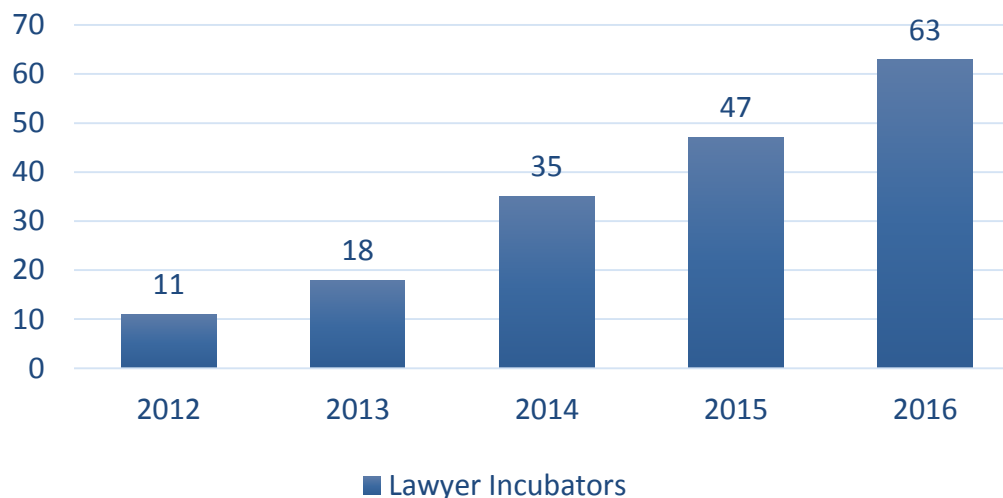


Source: Boston Bar Association Task Force Report, Investing in Justice (2014)

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.



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



Helpful Links and Resources



- Limited Assistance Representation Training Manual
www.mass.gov/courts/docs/lar-training-manual.pdf
- Info on LAR standing orders, forms, separate FAQ sections for lawyers and litigants
<http://www.mass.gov/courts/programs/legal-assistance/lar-gen.html>
- 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>
- Chicago Bar's Step-by-Step Toolkit for **pricing** legal services for modest income clients
<http://chicagobarfoundation.org/pdf/jep/pricing-toolkit.pdf>
- Baylor Law's comprehensive **practice development template** for start-up attorneys opening solo practices focused on improving access to justice
<http://legalmapmaker.com/>