The Future of Latinos in the United States: Law, Opportunity, and Mobility

A project of the American Bar Foundation

The Vision: project overview

The Future of Latinos in the United States: Law, Opportunity, and Mobility is a nation-wide, interdisciplinary research initiative of the American Bar Foundation devoted to understanding the current condition of Latinos in the United States, the structural barriers that impede full equality and integration for this emerging population, and the sites of intervention that promise to be most impactful in promoting opportunity and mobility through law and policy. The project is a forward-looking one with a mission of ensuring the flourishing of the Latino population as a means of safeguarding the wellbeing of our communities, the strength of our economy, and the representativeness of our democracy. We are committed to research that will make a difference: Our aim is to generate findings that can be converted into concrete recommendations for reform that can be readily utilized by organizations and individuals to effect change.
Rachel F. Moran is the William H. Neukom Fellows Research Chair in Diversity and Law and the Co-Director of “The Future of Latinos in the United States: Law, Opportunity, and Mobility” with Robert L. Nelson. Moran is also Dean Emerita and Michael J. Connell Distinguished Professor of Law at UCLA School of Law. Moran was appointed dean of UCLA Law School in 2010. Prior to her tenure at UCLA, Professor Moran was the Robert D. and Leslie-Kay Raven Professor of Law at UC Berkeley School of Law.

From July 2008 to June 2010, Moran served as a founding faculty member of the UC Irvine Law School. Moran received her A.B. in Psychology with Honors and with Distinction from Stanford University in 1978, where she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa her junior year. She obtained her J.D. from Yale Law School in 1981, where she was an Editor of the Yale Law Journal. Following law school, she clerked for Chief Judge Wilfred Feinberg of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit and worked for the San Francisco firm of Heller Ehrman White & McAuliffe.


Robert L. Nelson is the Director Emeritus of the American Bar Foundation, the MacCrate Research Chair in the Legal Profession at the ABF, and professor of sociology and law at Northwestern University. He holds a J.D. and Ph.D. in sociology, both from Northwestern, and has held several positions of academic leadership throughout his career.
He is a leading scholar in the fields of the legal profession and discrimination law. He has authored or edited eight books and numerous articles, including *Legalizing Gender Inequality*, which won the prize for best book in sociology in 2001, and *Urban Lawyers: The New Social Structure of the Bar*, co-authored with John Heinz, Edward Laumann, and Rebecca Sandefur, which was published by the University of Chicago Press in 2005.

His current research includes *After the JD*, a national study of the careers of lawyers, which is tracking the entering bar class of 2000 for the first 10 years of their careers (with several collaborators); the *Changing Dynamics of Employment Discrimination* project, which examines a large national sample of federal court filings between 1988 to present and has interviewed parties and their lawyers about their experiences in these cases (with Laura Beth Nielsen and Ellen Berrey); and the *Future of Latinos in the United States: Law, Opportunity, and Mobility* (with Rachel Moran). He is co-director of the ABF’s Research Group on Legal Diversity.

As part of this research initiative, we have:

1) Created an annotated bibliography that contains **415** academic and news media sources.

2) Generated a database of over **300** Latino-serving organizations across the United States, Puerto Rico, and Mexico that address the needs and concerns of Latino communities in the United States. Utilized the program ArcGIS to make an interactive map with descriptions and contact information that can be easily navigated.

3) Produced a comprehensive list of over **100** law school clinics across the United States that may participate in our Network for Justice pilot program.

4) Convened over **80** individuals at our inaugural Midwest roundtable, held at the American Bar Foundation on June 6-7, 2017.

5) Recruited **18** scholars nationwide to serve on our Advisory Council.

6) Begun organizing our Clinical Network Planning Summit, to be held at UCLA Luskin Center on November 7, 2016 and our Northeast Roundtable, to be held at Yale University School of Law on April 8-9, 2017.

7) Constructed a log-in website at [https://futureoflatinos.org](https://futureoflatinos.org) (Username: abfnvisitor; Password: futurodelatinos)
**Inaugural Roundtable**  
June 6-7, 2016  
American Bar Foundation  
Chicago, IL

*On June 6-7, 2016* the American Bar Foundation, with support from the Chicago Community Trust, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, and Northwestern University’s Office of the Provost, convened over 80 Latino leaders in the Midwest at the Inaugural Regional Roundtable.

The roundtable brought together members of the Latino community from Chicago and the Midwest, including law and non-law scholars, legal advocates, community activists, politicians, media representatives, foundation representatives, and emerging leaders to imagine the different futures for Latinos that are possible by 2050. The small group and plenary discussions explored vitally important issues that will shape the prospects for Latinos in the region in coming years. Questions of immigration, education, economic opportunity, and civic and political engagement were central to the conversations that took place over the two-day event.

Keynote addresses were made by Sylvia Puente of Latino Policy Forum, Professor Lilia Fernandez from The Ohio State University, and Ricardo Meza of Greensfelder and formerly of MALDEF. Participants included: Peggy Davis (Chief Officer of Programs, Chicago Community Trust), Juan Salgado (CEO and President of Instituto del Progreso Latino), Cecilia Abundis (Assistant Attorney General, Illinois), Dr. Wanda Figueroa-Peralta (ASPIRA of Illinois), Jesús del Toro (Director/Editor of La Raza Newspaper), Honorable Patricia Mendoza (Associate Judge, Circuit Court of Cook County), and Nancy Andrade (ABA Commission on Hispanic Legal Rights and Responsibilities).

Former Mayoral Candidate and Cook County Commissioner Jesus “Chuy” Garcia led a final discussion on the second day of the event.
Today, as our nation confronts levels of inequality unprecedented since the Gilded Age, the Latino community is particularly disadvantaged. The numbers are staggering. Nationwide, Latinos lost 40% of their wealth during the Great Recession. In California, 60% of Latino children are born into poverty or near-poverty. Throughout the United States, California Latinas are hardest hit by gendered inequality, making 43 cents to the dollar as compared to white non-Hispanic men. These challenges are daunting, but California is uniquely situated to combat these structural inequalities through a sustained and collaborative effort among the many organizations, institutions, and individuals who advocate on behalf of Latinos. There is currently neither a state-based nor a national network that operates specifically to assist Latinos with law and policy matters. We propose a network that will help to address the legal issues that disproportionately affect Latinos. We hope to pilot the Network for Justice initiative in California because its demographic profile represents the future of the United States and its impressive list of organizations and institutions committed to social justice surpasses any other in the nation.
This planning summit and Network for Justice initiative are being led by Luz Herrera (photo, left) and Leticia Saucedo (photo, right).

Luz Herrera was formerly the Assistant Dean for Clinical Education, Experiential Learning, and Public Service at UCLA School of Law. Assistant Dean Herrera earned her A.B. in Political Science and her J.D. from Harvard Law School. After law school, Herrera worked as an associate in the real estate department of an international corporate law firm. In 2001, Herrera started her own law practice, representing low- and moderate-income clients with civil legal needs in the areas of real estate, estate planning, and family law.

Herrera’s public service work has been recognized over the course of her career with several awards, including: 100 Top Attorneys in California Recognition by the Daily Journal (September 2009); Cruz Reynoso Community Service Award from the Mexican American Bar Association (February 2011); LA Opinion Mujeres Destacadas Award (March 2011); and Emerging Scholars Award from Diverse Issues in Higher Education (January 2013). Her publications include: “Training Lawyer-Entrepreneurs,” 89 Denver University Law Review 887 (2012) and “Encouraging the Development of Low Bono Law Practices,” 14 U.Md.L.J. Race, Religion, Gender & Class 1 (2014).

Leticia Saucedo is a professor of law and the Director of Clinical Legal Education at U.C. Davis School of Law. She is an expert in employment, labor, and immigration law and she teaches immigration law and employment law at U.C. Davis. She has developed experiential courses in international and domestic service learning that explore the immigration consequences of crime and domestic violence in a post-conflict society. Saucedo’s research interests lie at the intersections of employment, labor, and immigration law.

She has focused her research on the impact of employment and labor laws on conditions in low-wage workplaces, and on the responses of immigrant workers to their conditions. Her law review articles have appeared in Notre Dame Law Review, the North Carolina Law Review, the Ohio State Law Journal, the Buffalo Law Review, and the Richmond Law Review, among others.

Saucedo earned her AB, cum laude, from Bryn Mawr College in 1984 and her JD, cum laude, in 1996 from Harvard Law School.
Presentations

Board and Faculty of the American Bar Foundation, Chicago, IL, October 22, 2015

Advisory Board, California Bar Foundation, Los Angeles, CA, December 3, 2015

Chicago Community Trust, Chicago, IL, December 9, 2015


Sidley Austin, Chicago, IL, April 1, 2016

Past Events 2015-2016

Seminars and Conferences

American Bar Foundation Fellows CLE Research Seminar, San Diego, CA, February 6, 2016

Inaugural Roundtable on the Future of Latinos in the United States, American Bar Foundation, Chicago, IL, June 6-7, 2016

Images from Inaugural Roundtable, June 6-7, 2017, Chicago, IL
Clinical Network Planning Summit: UCLA Luskin Center, November 7, 2016
Northeast Roundtable: Yale University School of Law, April 8-9, 2017

We also plan to host roundtables in California, Florida, and Texas in the 2017-2018 year.

For more information about our project on the Future of Latinos in the United States, please contact our Project Manager, Dr. Pilar Margarita Hernández Escontrías, at pescontrias@abfn.org.