

ACCESS TO CIVIL JUSTICE:
RE-ENVISIONING AND REINVIGORATING RESEARCH:
A WORKSHOP
Chicago, Illinois
December 7-8, 2012

Working together across the lines of scholarship and practice, a group of researchers and field professionals in access to civil justice (A2J) in the United States is soliciting applications to attend a two-day Workshop to be held in Chicago, Illinois on December 7-8, 2012. The Workshop opens with a poster session and town hall meeting on the afternoon of Friday, December 7. This open session, held in conjunction with the National Legal Aid and Defender Association annual meetings, will bring together scholars and practitioners from many perspectives to identify and explore access to justice research needs. On the following day, Saturday, December 8, the Workshop will convene a smaller, closed session to push forward the work of revitalizing A2J research. We are grateful to the National Science Foundation Law and Social Sciences Program (SES-1237958) for recommending financial support.

The goal of the workshop is to open a conversation that may lead to partnerships on specific research projects and to the beginnings of a durable, national, A2J research program.

The Workshop is an important next step in building America's A2J research capacity. By way of a brief background, in 2010, Stanford Law Professor Deborah Rhode convened a small group of researchers, law school clinicians, and members of non-profit groups to discuss steps to promote access to civil justice. The group identified the lack of a research capacity as an important problem. This lack has several consequences, the most salient of which are: (i) existing research has fragmented into several highly specialized literatures across law and the social science disciplines, preventing cross-fertilization and the accumulation of knowledge across disciplinary boundaries; (ii) little high quality, publicly available data exist to stimulate theory, engage scholarship, and guide policy; (iii) some research has not taken full advantage of recent methodological developments, including randomized control trials, computer-assisted telephone interviewing, and Internet-based tools; and (iv) there is no network connecting researchers who may know how to answer questions with actors in the field who may have questions that need answering. The group decided that a good first step would be to seek funding for a workshop bringing together researchers and field actors from various perspectives to attempt to kickstart a sustainable access to justice research capacity.

This summer, a group led by University of Illinois professor and American Bar Foundation researcher Rebecca L. Sandefur sought funding from the National Science Foundation to conduct a two-day Workshop entitled, "Access to Civil Justice: Re-envisioning and Reinvigorating Research." The Workshop's ambitious goals include the following:

- Identifying key unanswered questions in access to civil justice that are central to both practice and scholarship;
- Considering opportunities and challenges faced in working to answer these questions, and devising ways to move forward;
- Growing capacity for access to civil justice research;
- Ultimately, generating information that can inform policy.

Although most participants in the second day of the Workshop will attend by invitation, a small number of slots are reserved for applications from both field personnel and researchers. Accordingly, the Planning Committee is currently seeking applications from field personnel and researchers. Any person interested in access to civil justice is eligible to apply – see below for application procedures. We are grateful to the National Science Foundation Law and Social Sciences Program (SES-1237958) for recommending funding that allows us to cover attendees' reasonable travel costs and accommodations for two nights in Chicago.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

To apply, please complete the informational form (below), attach a current CV or resume, and include a brief 300 word essay (see below) describing your interest in and potential needs for A2J research. Please submit your application to **A2JWorkshop@abfn.org** by the application deadline of **September 28, 2012**. Applications must be submitted via e-mail with a send date on or before the application deadline. A panel of scholars and practitioners with backgrounds studying and practicing in areas relevant to access to justice will review applications. The workshop will reimburse invitees for costs of transportation and reasonable accommodations and miscellaneous expenses. Successful applicants will be notified by the middle of October.

An explicit goal of the Workshop is to encourage junior researchers to become involved in access to civil justice research. Applications from researchers in the early stages of their careers are especially encouraged, as are applications from people whose backgrounds, perspectives and experiences increase the diversity of the workshop. More information is available on the ABF-hosted Workshop web site (<http://www.americanbarfoundation.org/research/A2J.html>.)

If you have any questions regarding the workshop, please send an email to **A2JWorkshop@abfn.org** and we will respond promptly.

APPLICATION

PERSONAL INFORMATION AND EMPLOYMENT
(Please also attach a current resume or CV to this application.)

Applicant Name: _____
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Address: _____

Office Tel. No. _____ E-mail Address: _____

Please also provide a 300 word response to the appropriate question (see below), depending upon your status as a researcher or as a professional in the field.

FIELD PROFESSIONALS

Tell us briefly (300 words) about a specific challenge regarding access to civil justice that you, your clients, your constituents, and/or anyone associated with the work that you do have identified that might benefit from empirical research. By empirical research, we mean qualitative or quantitative scientific observation and analysis. What would be useful to know about this challenge and how would this information affect your work?

RESEARCHERS

Tell us briefly (300 words) about a specific research question or area of inquiry regarding access to civil justice that you think is understudied and would benefit from qualitative or quantitative empirical research. In your narrative, address some or all the following questions: How would one go about investigating this question? What methodological approaches would be most appropriate? Are there any ethical issues to consider in formulating the research project? What would the researcher hope to learn and how would that knowledge contribute to our understanding of access to justice?