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American Bar Foundation Has Record Year in Research and Program Grant Awards

CHICAGO, August 3, 2017 — The [American Bar Foundation](http://americanbarfoundation.org) (ABF) announced today that it has secured over \$1 million in grant awards to support new research and ongoing programming activity in the area of law and social science, a new record for the organization in garnering external funding. The ABF, a leading research institute for the empirical, interdisciplinary study of law and legal processes, has won grants to support its research and programming in the fields of access to justice, legal education, and the future of the Latino population in the United States. The ABF has also received significant grants in support of the organization's growing doctoral and postdoctoral fellowship programs in law and social sciences.

Key external funding has been granted this year by the [National Science Foundation](http://www.nsf.gov), [Open Society Foundations](http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org), [AccessLex Institute](http://www.accesslex.com), the [California Community Foundation](http://www.californiafoundation.org), the [Spencer Foundation](http://www.spencerfoundation.org), and other agencies providing smaller grants. Supported entirely by contributed income since its founding in 1952, the organization's core support is provided by the [American Bar Endowment](http://www.abfn.org), and the [Fellows of the American Bar Foundation](http://www.fellows.org), an honorary society of practicing lawyers, judges, and legal academics. For additional research and programming support, the ABF relies heavily on securing external research grants from a variety of funding sources, for which the competition is intense.

"We are extremely grateful to all our new and continuing funding partners," said [Ajay K. Mehrotra](http://www.abfn.org), executive director of the ABF. "While the ABF is smaller in size than some other research institutes, few research organizations have the capability to conduct the kind of rigorous, independent empirical projects that are hallmarks of ABF research."

When asked what he thinks sets the ABF apart from other research institutions, given its relatively small size, Mehrotra observed, "The ABF's mission is to advance justice by creating new knowledge about how the law works in society, and sometimes, more saliently, how it doesn't work. To do this research, we hire and retain extraordinary scholars from many disciplines at all stages of their careers who are innovative thinkers. We try to foster an environment where our researchers can do their work in a supportive community of colleagues—a community where they are challenged and enriched by one another."

The ABF is also noted for its commitment to fostering the next generation of law and social science scholars. A key grant from the Spencer Foundation to the ABF was awarded to support the research of ABF postdoctoral fellow, Matthew Shaw, who begins an academic appointment at [Vanderbilt University](http://www.vanderbilt.edu) this fall. Shaw's project examines the financial stability of historically Black colleges and universities on a state-by-state basis. "Matt Shaw is an example of a highly original scholar who has learned a great deal during his time at the ABF," Mehrotra noted. "The

findings from his project will inform funding and policy decisions that will affect thousands of lives and careers in the years ahead.”

In 2017, the ABF has won grants from the following organizations: the National Science Foundation, AccessLex Institute, Open Society Foundations, Kenneth and Harle Montgomery Foundation, Spencer Foundation, California Community Foundation, [NALP Foundation](#), [Northwestern Pritzker School of Law](#), [American Society for Legal History](#), [AT&T](#), [Oscar M. Ruebhausen Fund at Yale Law School](#), and the [UCLA César E. Chávez Department of Chicana/o Studies](#).

About the American Bar Foundation

The [American Bar Foundation](#) (ABF) is among the world’s leading research institutes for the empirical and interdisciplinary study of law. An independent, nonprofit organization for more than 60 years, The ABF seeks to expand knowledge and advance justice through innovative, interdisciplinary, and rigorous empirical research on law, legal processes, and legal institutions. To further this mission the ABF will produce timely, cutting-edge research of the highest quality to inform and guide the legal profession, the academy, and society in the United States and internationally. The ABF’s primary funding is provided by the [American Bar Endowment](#) and [The Fellows of The American Bar Foundation](#).

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