

SRLN Brief: Incubators - Changing the Practice of Law (SRLN 2015)



In recent years, many law schools have started post-graduate training and support “incubator” programs designed to help recent graduates or new attorneys start their own firms. Incubators meet two important access to justice initiatives: they facilitate access to legal services for low- and moderate-income people while helping new lawyers build sustainable practices that leverage technology and utilize unbundling to keep legal fees low. Generally incubator participants receive office technology resources, training in building a law practice and networking and mentoring opportunities in exchange for a low monthly fee.

According to the American Bar Association’s Directory of Incubator Programs, the City University of New York started the first incubator program over a decade ago, and incubator programs have spread throughout the country since 2012. Currently, there are around 50 incubator programs listed in the [American Bar Association’s](#)

[Directory of Incubator Programs](#). Although the majority of incubators have started in law schools, bar associations are also launching incubator programs including several in California as well as in Columbus, Ohio, Chicago and New York City. There are many related innovative developments including use of technology to keep costs low, expanding the traditional law school curriculum and collaboration between the courts, law schools, bar associations, legal aid and law libraries.

Resources for those wishing to learn more about incubators include the following:

- The American Bar Association's website for a [directory of current and planned incubators](#), [profiles of the programs](#) and information about the [latest developments in law school incubators](#);
- [Incubator Guide \(opens as PDF\)](#) (California Commission on Access to Justice, 2014) for organizations planning to start incubators;
- [Incubator Bibliography \(opens as PDF\)](#) (Touro Law Center, June 2015);
- The second annual conference on [Enhancing Social Justice Through the Development of Incubator and Residency Programs](#) was held in February 2015 at Cal Western Law School in San Diego, CA. The [first conference](#) was held at Touro Law Center in New York in April 2014.

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