

Law School Solo Practice Incubators and Legal Residency Programs

In the following report, Hanover Research discusses efforts by law schools to support recent graduates as they endeavor to start work in solo practice or in small firms. The report first discusses some of the obstacles that confront recent law graduates as they seek to launch their own solo practices, as well as recommendations regarding how to best support graduates in such endeavors. Following this introduction to the topic, the report provides examples of the types of support programs—in the form of incubators and legal residency programs—offered by a sample of law schools across the United States in order to help law school graduates successfully establish practices and gain real world professional experience.

Introduction

Many new law school graduates are forgoing the law firm or corporate attorney route upon graduation, instead deciding to “go solo” and open their own law firms.¹ Indeed, the number of law graduates following this path into solo practice is on the rise. In a 2011 article for MSNBC, author Anita Anand notes that “the number of recent law graduates going solo increased from 3.5 percent in 2008 to 5.5 percent in 2009, the biggest one year jump since 1982, the National Association for Law Placement (NALP) reports. That percentage increased to 5.7 percent of all private practice jobs for the class of 2010, the highest it’s been since 1997.”²

“Going solo” or working in small law firms is a reality for many lawyers, both new graduates and accomplished professionals. Indeed, in a January 2012 news release, the American Bar Association notes that about 70 percent of American lawyers in private practice work in solo offices or in small law firms with 20 or fewer members.³ As the ABA explains, “it is estimated that the United States has about 435,000 solo law practitioners (comprising about 48 percent of private-practice lawyers) and about 200,000 lawyers in firms of between two and 20 lawyers (about 22 percent of lawyers in private practice).”⁴

In recent years, several institutions and organizations, including the ABA, have begun to place emphasis on preparing law school students and newly-minted lawyers to practice as solo practitioners or as part of small firms. One example of the emphasis on solo practice is seen in the subscription-based website “Solo Practice University,” which was founded in 2009 by Susan Liebel. This site offers “video, written and audio tutorials for prospective or current solo practitioners,” using the tagline “*Solo Practice University picks up where your legal education left off.*”⁵ Subscribers to the site pay \$175 a month, or \$695 annually, for access to courses and other educational content with titles such as “Virtual Law Practice—The Delivery of Legal Services Using Technology” and “How to Hang a Shingle Right Out of Law School...Or Shortly Thereafter.”⁶ According to founder Susan Liebel, “solos have always been neglected...Now that the legal market is being squeezed and law schools are coming under tremendous pressure for getting placements, solo practice is becoming popular again... In terms of the attention it’s getting, it’s a direct result of the economy.”⁷

¹ Anand, Anika. “Law Grads Going Solo and Loving It.” MSNBC. June 20, 2011. http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/43442917/ns/business-careers/t/law-grads-going-solo-loving-it/#.T-OECZFFn_E

² Ibid.

³ “ABA Serves Solo and Small-Firm Lawyers With New Online Resource Center.” American Bar Association. January 19, 2012. <http://www.abanow.org/2012/01/aba-serves-solo-and-small-firm-lawyers-with-new-online-resource-center/>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Anand, Anika. Op. Cit.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

Other organizations have also taken notice of the renewed emphasis on preparing law school graduates for solo practice. For example, in January 2012, the American Bar Association announced that it will offer assistance for solo and small firm practitioners through its newly-debuted Solo and Small Firm Resource Center. The ABA describes the new resource as follows:

The Solo and Small Firm Resource Center provides online articles, CLE programming, a discussion list for solo and small firm lawyers and other information from groups throughout the ABA, including the ABA General Practice, Solo and Small Firm Division and Law Practice Management Section. The website offers practice management advice, business development strategies, career guidance, advice for handling problem cases and clients, technology reviews, networking events and more.⁸

Various law schools have also launched efforts to serve students interested in pursuing solo and/or small firm work upon law school graduation. In recent years, several law schools have launched solo practice incubators designed to help recent graduates establish solo and/or small firm practices. Other law schools have sought to provide recent graduates with support and on-the-job training through legal “residency” programs, in which recent graduates work as lawyers for school-affiliated law firms.

In order to assist our member as it considers establishing programming to support law students interested in pursuing work as solo practitioners, this report provides an environmental scan of similar law school programs and support structures. The report is divided into two main sections:

- ❖ The first section—“Hanging Your Shingle: Preparing Recent Law Graduates to Establish a Solo or Small Group Law Practice”—reviews some of the obstacles that confront recent law school graduates as they attempt to set up their own solo or small firm practice upon graduation. This first section further considers several recommendations for how to successfully support recent graduates in their solo practice or small firm endeavors.
- ❖ Building on this review of potential obstacles and strategies for success, the second section of the report—“Profiles of Solo Practice Support Programs”—features brief profiles of solo practice incubators and residency programs currently in operation at law schools across the United States, as well as a selection of programs in the design phase.

The key findings of the research conducted for this report are presented on the following page.

⁸ “ABA Serves Solo and Small-Firm Lawyers With New Online Resource Center.” Op. Cit.

Key Findings

- ❖ Various lawyers, authors, and experts have noted that law schools do not always teach students the skills and knowledge they need to enter, and succeed in, the solo practice market. For example, Deborah L. Rhode, a law professor and former director of the Center on Ethics at Stanford, has noted that law schools often do not teach students critical skills such as general management and human resources skills, which are needed to establish a successful practice.
- ❖ A number of solo practice incubator programs are currently in operation across the country. One of the most well-known incubator programs hails from the City University of New York School of Law, which established its solo practice incubator program, the “Incubator for Justice,” in 2007. This program helps recent graduates establish solo practices, while at the same time helping to increase access to legal services among underserved communities. Program participants are furnished with low-cost office space and staff support for the 18-month duration of the program. Incubator participants have access to a network of solo practitioners who function as mentors. Participants further receive training in basic business skills relevant to solo practice, such as billing and record keeping. Additionally, participants are encouraged to develop client bases by offering services pro bono or at reduced cost in areas that are underserved by private attorneys.
- ❖ The University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law opened its “Solo and Small Firm Incubator” in October 2010. The program provides affordable office space for approximately nine tenants, as well as practice management assistance. Incubator participants also receive mentoring from experienced attorneys and retired judges. The institution features coursework aimed at helping students become legal entrepreneurs. Students may participate in summer courses, as well as fall and spring semester workshops which provide instruction in various topics of interest related to the foundation and operation of a law firm.
- ❖ At Florida International University College of Law, the “LawBridge” program provides program participants with office space in downtown Miami. LawBridge participants are coached in a variety of areas related to law practice management and meet regularly with marketing professionals. A locally-based, mid-size accounting firm provides each participant with accounting and tax preparation services during the two years of the program, and LawBridge participants meet periodically with bankers and other professionals to discuss various aspects of the business side of the legal profession. The LawBridge program further offers lectures and continuing legal education coursework, as well frequent contact with other members of the legal profession.

- ❖ The University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law introduced its solo practice incubator program in January 2011. The Incubator promotes civil justice through a partnership with Civil Justice Inc., a legal non-profit organization which is an affiliated program of the University of Maryland School of Law. The program is 6-10 months in length and furnishes participants with training related to law office management. Participants can also work on Civil Justice Inc. grant-funded initiatives which generate fees for attorney services, thus providing participants with modest amounts of financial support during the program. At the end of the program, Incubator participants are afforded continued access to client referrals, case management, and mentoring through the Civil Justice Inc. network.
- ❖ The Columbus Bar Association announced a new solo practice incubator program, Columbus Bar inc, in January 2011. This program is one year in length and equips participants with office space and basic office fixtures such as copiers, internet service, and phones. The Incubator also provides participants with training related to various aspects of managing a law practice, such as billing, firm marketing, and client intake. The program features on-site mentors who commit to a specific amount of time per week on-site. Participants also benefit from a specially-designed CLE curriculum and can participate in networking opportunities. Program participants receive referrals through Columbus Bar Association programs and must consent to taking on at least one pro bono case during their time in the incubator.
- ❖ The Thomas Jefferson School of Law has announced that it will open a solo practice incubator for recent graduates in the fall of 2012. Participants will spend 12-18 months in the incubator, and will be provided with affordable office space and mentoring from law faculty and alumni. In addition to the Incubator, Thomas Jefferson School of Law is also in the processing of developing a year-long “solo practice track,” designed as a series of mini-courses. This solo practice track is also set to debut in the fall of 2012. According to Luz Herrera, J.D., a faculty member at Thomas Jefferson School of Law who is spearheading the Incubator, the second semester of the solo practice track will eventually serve as a pipeline for the Incubator program.
- ❖ In 2011, the Pace University Law School announced plans to launch the Pace Community Law Practice (PCLP), set to open in September 2012. This program is slated to employ between five and seven recent graduates who will provide affordable legal services to individuals and community groups in the Lower Hudson Valley region of New York. The PCLP will feature elements of both a legal residency and a solo practice incubator. Participants will be classified as “fellows,” paid by the law school, and housed in space on campus. However, the program will also feature a “solo practice component,” which will provide seminars on issues relating to the setup of a law practice.

- ❖ Recently, the Arizona State University Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law has announced that it will open a nonprofit training law firm designed to give interested graduating law students a "residency" experience. This as-yet-unnamed law firm is currently slated to open in 2013, and will employ recent ASU graduates who will spend a set amount of time cycling through different law practice areas. Graduates in the program will be paid and receive benefits, and they will be hired with the ability to stay on staff for two years with the option to extend their time at the firm for a third year. However, program participants will be free to leave at any time for a long-term job. The proposed ASU nonprofit firm will differ from solo practice incubators as it will operate much like a traditional law firm. As ASU Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law Dean Douglas Sylvester notes, "it's not a mentor; it's a boss."⁹

⁹ Young, Elise. "A Residency Program for Lawyers." Inside Higher Ed. June 26, 2012.
<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2012/06/26/arizona-state-plans-create-law-firm-hire-and-train-recent-graduates>

Hangin' Your Shingle: Preparing Recent Law Graduates to Establish a Solo or Small Group Law Practice

While solo and small firm practice has been the reality for many practicing attorneys in the United States for some time, recent years have seen a variety of authors, lawyers, law schools, and other organizations begin to place renewed emphasis on solo and small firm law work. Despite emerging emphasis on this area, various experts and organizations have noted that the skills and knowledge students receive in their law school studies are not always sufficient to prepare students to enter, and succeed in, the solo practice market. This section briefly reviews some of the obstacles that confront recent law school graduates as they attempt to set up their own solo or small firm practice upon graduation. Additionally, attention is paid to several recommendations for how to successfully support recent graduates as they attempt to start a solo practice or small firm.

Challenges in Establishing Solo and Small Group Practices

While a great many lawyers work as solo or small firm practitioners, there is no one “right” way to build a successful solo practice. In a 2009 article in the *ABA Journal*, author Deborah Cohen notes, **“There is no magic formula for building a successful solo practice. It takes planning, persistence, long hours, sweat equity and personal sacrifice.”**¹⁰ Some authors and experts emphasize that the career of solo practitioner is not for everyone, a point stressed by Cohen, who notes that not all lawyers “have what it takes” to successfully launch their own practice.¹¹ In a 2010 article for the *Texas Lawyer*, attorney and solo practitioner Scott King Field echoes this opinion. He writes, “[Solo practice] is not a practice for those with a low tolerance for stress or a weak constitution. And, in my view, it is not the optimal form of practice for a recent law school graduate.”¹² Field goes on to point out, “A solo practice is difficult even for a seasoned legal veteran. No one else is responsible for bringing in business. There is no safety net. There is also no one down the hall to ask questions of or to provide ideas.”¹³ Field opines that recent law school graduates should first find a traditional position in which they can gain on-the-job training and experience before going solo.¹⁴

Field is not the only author to note that **many law school graduates are simply unprepared to deal with the business realities of operating a solo practice.** In a

¹⁰ Cohen, Deborah L. “So You Want to Go Solo? You Sure?” *ABA Journal*. November 1, 2009.
http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/so_you_want_to_go_solo_you_sure/

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Field, Scott K. “Advice for New Law Grads Who Want to Open a Solo Practice.” *Texas Lawyer*.
http://www.law.com/jsp/article.jsp?id=1202458764337&Advice_for_New_Law_Grads_Who_Want_to_Open_a_Solo_Practice

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

2008 article in *The New York Times*, Deborah L. Rhode, a law professor and then director of the Center on Ethics at Stanford, notes that law schools often do not teach law students many of the skills needed to run a successful practice. As Rhode points out, “We don’t teach practice management skills, we don’t teach human resources, we don’t teach lots of what students need to run an effective practice.”¹⁵ Echoing this sentiment, Mr. Fred Rooney, director of the City University of New York School of Law’s Community Legal Resource Network, and one of the creators of CUNY’s solo practice incubator program, notes that he was driven to create the program, in part, due to the painful learning experience he received in 1987 when he first “hung out his shingle.” Of his experience, Rooney notes, “With a lot of hard work and sacrifice and sweat equity and you name it, we created an economically viable practice...but I wouldn’t wish that on my worst enemy.”¹⁶

Other authors and lawyers have noted other potential obstacles to setting up a solo practice upon graduation from law school. **Starting a solo firm can be a risky venture, as most solo practitioners start with no paycheck and few (or often no) clients.**¹⁷ Furthermore, solo practitioners are often responsible for many different functions not often associated with the practice of law. As Joan Rigdon notes in a 2006 article for the *Washington Lawyer*, the official publication of the D.C. Bar, many lawyers who choose to go solo “are used to being ‘grinders’ who do the work, but not ‘finders’ and ‘minders’ who bring in and manage the work.”¹⁸ However, as Rigdon points out, “once they have their own firm, the grinders must do it all. In addition to rainmaking, they must develop a business plan, find an office, and unless they can pay someone else, set up phones and computers by themselves. If they don’t have secretaries, they must also change the fax toner and calculate postage.”¹⁹ Rigdon notes that “most lawyers can learn, but they usually lose money while they do.”²⁰

The fact that many solo practitioners often start with few clients (and thus few sources of revenue), means that the issue of securing capital—or “the money needed to start, maintain, and expand a successful practice”—is an issue that all lawyers seeking to go solo must seriously consider.²¹ Financial concerns are often aggravated by a lack of general managerial skills. In a 2010 article in the American Bar Association’s *Law Practice Magazine*, author Tom Mighell highlights the fact that,

¹⁵ Glater, Jonathan D. “Lawyers Learn How to Be Businesslike.” *The New York Times*. January 9, 2008. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/09/nyregion/09law.html>

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Rigdon, Joan Indiana. “Going Solo.” *Washington Lawyer*. January 2006.

http://www.dcbar.org/for_lawyers/resources/publications/washington_lawyer/january_2006/solo.cfm

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Calloway, Laura A., and Bilinsky, David J. “Financing a Law Practice.” *GPSolo*. Vol. 28 No. 5. July/August 2011.

http://www.americanbar.org/publications/gp_solo/2011/july_august/financing_law_practice.html

“while law school may teach lawyers about substantive law and how to think and argue in a logical way, most lawyers are woefully uneducated when it comes to managing the practice of law—marketing, technology, finance and general management skills.”²² Mighell, currently the chair of the ABA Law Practice Management Section, notes that this problem occurs on multiple levels. The problem begins, Mighell asserts, in law school, where students often do not receive effective training and instruction in the skills needed to manage a law practice. Indeed, in a 2008 article for the *Albany Law Review*, author Debra Moss Curtis writes of a survey of 195 ABA-accredited law schools, in which she found that only 64 of the responding institutions offered some type of course focused on topics related to law practice management. Furthermore, as Mighell notes, the titles of many of these courses, which include “Civil Practice Skills,” “Law of Law Firms,” “Lawyering Practice,” and “The Law Profession,” “demonstrate that there is no consensus” as to how these courses should be taught.²³

The problem extends farther than law schools, however. As Mighell points out, **law schools often attract certain types of people—those who can think like lawyers and excel in “analysis, theory, persuasion and intellectual brilliance,” but who “have been historically poor in the area of business management.”**²⁴ While modern lawyers recognize that they must operate their firms according to good business practices, practicing lawyers often do not receive adequate opportunities for practice management education. Mighell notes that, while “many state bars have practice management programs...not nearly enough do. At last count, only 21 states offered dedicated practice management assistance.”²⁵ One reason more states do not offer practice management programs, Mighell notes, is that many lawyers do not appear interested in learning such skills. For example, in regard to technology skills training, Mighell explains:

In the 2009 edition of the *ABA Legal Technology Survey Report*, more than 82 percent of those surveyed said that it was either “Very important” or “Somewhat important” to receive training in technology. However, a more interesting answer was that of lawyers saying that technology training is “Not very” or “Not at all” important. The clear majority were solo and small firm lawyers—arguably those who need this kind of education most.²⁶

Mighell also argues that lawyers’ opinions about continuing legal education seem to indicate that many lawyers are not interested in pursuing studies outside their practice

²² Mighell, Tom. “No Lawyer Left Behind.” *Law Practice Magazine*. Vol. 36 No. 5. September/October 2010.
http://www.americanbar.org/publications/law_practice_home/law_practice_archive/lpm_magazine_articles_v36_is5_pg64.html

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

area. When asked “Why do you take CLE courses?” only 12 percent of 2009 respondents indicated they took these courses out of “a desire to expand knowledge on topics outside my practice area.”²⁷ Over three quarters of 2009 respondents selected the answer: “I need to fulfill my state requirements.”²⁸ These survey results seem to back Mighell’s assertion that “most lawyers are simply uninterested in learning about topics that are outside their main areas of practice.”²⁹

To confront the problem of inadequate practice management education, Mighell proposes a threefold solution—what he identifies as “two reasonably realistic steps and one pretty radical (but familiar) suggestion.”³⁰ First, **Mighell argues that “all law schools should offer some form of practice management education” and that, while the courses can be elective, they should be mandatory.**³¹ Mighell asserts that “full-time faculty should be dedicated to this curriculum” and that, “ideally, the faculty will consist of practicing attorneys who have substantive experience in the four core areas of practice management.”³² According to the American Bar Association Law Practice Management Section, the core areas of law practice management include: Marketing, Management, Finance, and Technology.³³ Mighell also suggests that state bar exams should include practice management questions to spur law schools to offer courses on these topics.

The second part of Mighell’s proposal centers on practicing lawyers. Mighell asserts that, “once out of law school, lawyers will have responsibilities to keep abreast of the latest in practice management topics.”³⁴ To this end, **Mighell recommends that CLE credit be given for practice management courses, and preferably, “early practice management CLE should be mandatory.”**³⁵ He also recommends that lawyers receive automatic and free membership to the practice management services of state bars that feature practice management sections or advisors. Additionally, he notes that, “eventually, practice management programs [should] be established within all 50 state bar associations.”³⁶

Finally, **Mighell sets forth what he acknowledges is a more radical step towards equipping lawyers with the knowledge and skills necessary for law practice management: lawyer internships.** In these internships, Mighell notes, new lawyers would begin “a one-year practice management curriculum” which would be

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ “About Us.” American Bar Association Law Practice Management Section.

http://www.americanbar.org/groups/law_practice_management/about_us.html

³⁴ Mighell, Tom. Op. Cit.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

administered by their employer or their state/local bar association.³⁷ This curriculum would include a mentoring component, as well as on-the-job training and intensive support for the “transition to law.”³⁸

Strategies to Support Graduates

There are other steps that institutions can take in order to support recent graduates as they enter solo or small firm practice. In order to garner more information than is available in the published literature, Hanover conducted an interview with Luz Herrera, J.D., an Assistant Professor at the Thomas Jefferson School of Law who is spearheading the institution’s solo practice incubator program. According to Herrera, one of the main challenges confronting recent graduates seeking to set up a solo practice is the fact that many do not know how to “manage the law” and do not see the law as a business.³⁹ When asked what resources, training, and other support she believes should be offered to law school graduates as part of a successful solo practitioner incubator, Herrera stressed the importance of “instruction in law office management.”⁴⁰ Incubator participants, she noted, need instruction in issues such as “managing client trust accounts,” “networking,” developing their market, and managing their budget.⁴¹ Herrera also noted that **it is important not only to provide support for recent graduates, but also to students who are interested in pursuing the solo practice route.** To this end, she noted that the Thomas Jefferson School of Law is in the process of developing a solo practice concentration to provide instruction and support to students interested in solo practice. According to Herrera, **mentoring is also an important component for a solo practice incubator.**

The selection process used to select participants for a solo practice incubator is also a critical point for consideration. Herrera expressed uncertainty over whether such a program could be successful if the participants approached solo practice as a fallback option—in other words, if participants graduated from law school without employment and thus decided to pursue solo practice as a safety net. Rather, participants should be highly motivated and engaged. They should have “some idea” as to how their solo practice will operate as a business. While Herrera noted that this does not necessarily mean a prospective incubator participant needs a complete business plan prior to participation (as an incubator program can help a recent graduate define a business plan), “they should have some sense” of how their solo practice will operate.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Herrera, Luz. Personal Communication. June 25, 2012.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

The importance of properly selecting incubator participants has been echoed by Fred Rooney. When asked in a 2011 interview what he would have done differently in setting up the CUNY incubator program, Rooney noted, “We were not as careful as we might have been in selecting participants and setting clear expectations.”⁴² As he noted, **“participants are more successful if they come to the incubator with ideas and goals about what they want to accomplish in the Incubator.”**⁴³

Herrera also stressed that not everyone is meant to be a solo practitioner, and that **graduates need to be very honest when asking themselves whether they have the personality for solo practice.** While Herrera noted that, at times, “it’s just an issue of adjustment” as graduates may lack confidence, the management (or mismanagement) of money is an issue of importance. Solo practice, she noted, can be “rough living” for the first two years, and **solo practitioners have to be frugal and disciplined.** These challenges exist for individuals who have been out of law school for years, as well. As Herrera noted, “whether you’ve been out of law school 5 years or 5 months, if you’ve never had your own practice the challenges are the same.”⁴⁴

When asked how law schools can support students who wish to pursue solo practice, Herrera stressed the importance of “postgraduate support through continuing legal education and law practice management.”⁴⁵ Part of this support, she noted, should be focused on the issue of “client development,” since, even with strong support, new solo practitioners will face trouble if they are not able to secure clients.⁴⁶

When asked about the skills and knowledge that a solo practice incubator should seek to impart on participants, Herrera noted that **incubator programs should provide support and guidance in the area of ethics.** As she pointed out, the legal profession is a “little behind in the ethics field,” especially given the growing use of technology for law practice management.⁴⁷ Issues related to virtual presence and ethical obligations, client confidentiality when using technology such as social media, and uses of social media for marketing purposes all need to be addressed. Law schools, Herrera noted, are in an excellent position to look into “best practices” in these areas, as solo practitioners in many cases simply do not have the resources to look into these issues themselves.

Institutions seeking to offer a solo practice incubator program should also leverage outside organizations, Herrera pointed out. As she put it, “legal aid organizations and the bar associations are critical partners in these programs,” as they

⁴² Zorza, Richard. “NewsMaker Interview – Fred Rooney on the CUNY Incubator.” Richard Zorza’s Access to Justice Blog. September 22, 2011. <http://accesstojustice.net/2011/09/22/newsmaker-interview-fred-rooney-on-the-cuny-incubator/>

⁴³ Herrera, Luz. Op. Cit.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

can offer natural mentors and existing CLE (continuing legal education) courses.⁴⁸ Such organizations can also be useful as they offer “built in networking events” and can be used to refer potential clients to incubator participants. As Herrera noted, legal aid programs can also be “very critical” with regard to referring potential clients to solo practitioners, as, instead of simply stating “we can’t help you,” they can inform an individual seeking legal aid that there is another program (in the form of a solo practice incubator) that might be able to provide assistance.⁴⁹ Law schools seeking to create a solo incubator program may also consider partnering with centers at their parent universities. Rooney recommends that law schools seeking to launch incubator programs “involve their university if it has small business or entrepreneurs’ centers.”⁵⁰

Another recommendation put forth by Herrera is that **law schools should consider a solo practice incubator’s potential as an “alumni outreach” tool.** Solo practice incubator programs can serve to “build a bridge” to alumni who have not necessarily been courted by their law school.⁵¹ Alumni can also help support solo practitioners in an incubator program, a point made by Rooney. As Rooney has noted, CUNY School of Law alumni help with the incubator program by providing CLEs to incubator participants. At CUNY’s incubator program, alumni also serve as mentors. As Rooney has noted, “contributions made by alumni volunteers are invaluable to achieve cost-savings, contribute to participants’ professional development and generate all-around goodwill for CUNY Law.”⁵²

Rooney has also put forth other recommendations related to the establishment of law school solo practice incubator programs. In particular, he has encouraged law schools to see incubator programs not just as programs which provide graduates with business development opportunities, but also as “ways to meet university commitments to the community.”⁵³ When asked what he would have done differently in setting up the CUNY incubator program, Rooney has also noted the importance of a strong CLE component. As he has explained, “our lawyers needed greater time to develop law office management skills and to develop practice outreach plans. We would have required participants to attend CLE and small firm management trainings.”⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Zorza, Richard. Op. Cit.

⁵¹ Herrera, Luz. Op. Cit.

⁵² Zorza, Richard. Op. Cit.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Profiles of Solo Practice Support Programs

This section set forth several brief profiles of solo practice incubator programs and legal “residency” programs established by different law schools and organizations across the United States. These profiles describe the structure of such programs at:

- ❖ The City University of New York School of Law
- ❖ University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law
- ❖ Florida International University College of Law
- ❖ The University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law
- ❖ The Columbus Bar Association

Additionally, this section describes several solo practice incubator and “legal residency” programs that are currently in the design phase and will be implemented in the future at the following institutions:

- ❖ Thomas Jefferson School of Law
- ❖ Pace University School of Law
- ❖ Arizona State University Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law

These three programs have not yet been fully enacted and are slated to open in the future. Both the Thomas Jefferson School of Law and the Pace University School of Law will open their respective programs beginning in the fall of 2012.^{55,56} The Arizona State University Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law, which is in the process of creating a “nonprofit teaching law firm” designed to give interested graduates a “residency” experience, has announced that it hopes to have this firm up and running by 2013.⁵⁷

It should be noted that the amount of information made available to the public varied across the sample. As such, the profiles vary in their level of comprehensiveness. The profiles are not designed to be comprehensive descriptions of every facet of each incubator or residency program, but rather an overview of each program’s structure and the strategies used to support recent graduates as they gain professional experience and build law practices.

⁵⁵ Semeraro, Steve. “Thomas Jefferson School of Law Commits to Solo Practice.” Thomas Jefferson School of Law. May 21, 2012. <http://www.tjssl.edu/news-media/2012/6505>

⁵⁶ Sloan, Karen. “Pace Solo Incubator Will Assist Low-Income Clients.” The National Law Journal. November 18, 2011. <http://www.law.com/jsp/nlj/PubArticleNLJ.jsp?id=1202532839299>

⁵⁷ Sloan, Karen. “Think of it as a Residency for Lawyers.” The National Law Journal. June 4, 2012. <http://www.law.com/jsp/nlj/PubArticleNLJ.jsp?germane=1202556825131&id=1202556661573&slreturn=1>

City University of New York School of Law

In 2007, the City University of New York School of Law established an incubator program, called the **Incubator for Justice**, “that helps recent graduates establish solo practices while also encouraging free or low-cost legal services to underserved communities.”⁵⁸ This program is related to a longer-running CUNY collaborative, the **Community Legal Resource Network (CLRN)**. The CLRN, which started in 1998, “supports CUNY Law School graduates as they work to set up and run solo or small-group practices devoted to serving pressing needs of the poor and disadvantaged in communities that are underserved by lawyers.”⁵⁹ The driving force behind the Incubator program is Mr. Fred Rooney, director of the Community Legal Resource Network.⁶⁰ Rooney is credited with setting up CUNY’s Incubator and has also advised other law schools on how to establish similar programs.⁶¹

According to the CUNY School of Law, the Incubator program:

...trains CLRN members, over an 18-month period, in basic business issues such as billing, record-keeping, technology, bookkeeping and taxes while, at the same time, facilitating Incubator participants’ involvement in larger justice initiatives and in subject-based training in immigration law, labor and employment and other topics that will arise continually as these attorneys build their practices.⁶²

The ultimate goal of both the CLRN and the Incubator for Justice program is “continuing legal education tailored to members’ needs, and a sophisticated mentoring program to make its members financially, professionally, and personally successful, and help them achieve their individual justice missions.”⁶³ As part of the Incubator, the City University of New York School of Law offers low-cost office space in midtown Manhattan, as well as staff support, to a select number of graduates aiming to establish solo or small firm practices.⁶⁴ According to a 2008 article in *The New York Times*, this office space, on Fifth Avenue at 27th St., is housed in the office of Laura Gentile, a CUNY law graduate who has a small law firm and who also serves as one of the teachers in the Incubator.⁶⁵ In a 2011 interview with Richard Zorza, an attorney and independent consultant who

⁵⁸ Sloan, Karen. “Incubators Give Birth to Flocks of Solo Practitioners.” *The National Law Journal*. September 5, 2011. <http://www.law.com/jsp/law/article.jsp?id=1202513353708>

⁵⁹ “Community Legal Resource Network (CLRN).” The City University of New York School of Law. <http://www.law.cuny.edu/clinics/JusticeInitiatives/Community.html>

⁶⁰ Sloan, Karen. “Incubators Give Birth to Flocks of Solo Practitioners.” *Op. Cit.*

⁶¹ Semeraro, Steve. *Op. Cit.*

⁶² “Community Legal Resource Network (CLRN).” *Op. Cit.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Sloan, Karen. “Incubators Give Birth to Flocks of Solo Practitioners.” *Op. Cit.*

⁶⁵ Glater, Jonathan D. *Op. Cit.*

works on issues related to access to justice, Rooney notes that Incubator participants pay \$500 a month for office space.⁶⁶

Program participants receive 18 months of training, which spans a range of topics related to building a legal practice, including training designed to equip graduates with the legal skills necessary for launching successful practices in underserved communities. In his 2011 interview with Richard Zorza, Rooney explains the Incubator as follows:

Over an 18-month period, Incubator participants are offered intensive training to fine-tune their skills as both lawyers and as micro entrepreneurs. Our training provides participants with the skills to eventually launch solo practices in underserved New York City communities. Through professional legal training, participants learn to effectively represent low-income individuals and families in areas such as housing, immigration, real property, family and consumer credit, critical areas of public interest law. We also offer training in business skills and practice to create and effectively manage economically viable solo practices.⁶⁷

However, the program also offers participants access to a large network of solo practitioners who serve as mentors. **During their training, program participants are assigned a mentor from a pool of retired attorneys.**⁶⁸ Participants also benefit from on-site mentoring from Laura Gentile, who serves as an on-site mentor and as an adjunct professor at CUNY. Training in the program is also provided by other CUNY law faculty, as well as faculty from LaGuardia Community College's Small Business Development Center.⁶⁹ Additionally, lawyers in the program have access to office equipment such as computers and copiers, as well as clerical support.⁷⁰ Incubator participants can also make use of free law office management software from Thomson West (ProDoc) and Clio, an online legal management software suite.⁷¹

Incubator participants also “enjoy an internal support network among their colleagues in the incubator.”⁷² In the words of Yogi Patel, a 2006 graduate of the CUNY School of Law and subsequent participant in the incubator program, “the setup lends itself to a ton of collaboration...There are a lot of attorneys in the office with different levels of experience in different areas. We help each other. I have

⁶⁶ Zorza, Richard. Op. Cit.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Sachar, Emily. “Community Legal Resource Network (CLRN) CUNY to Train Start-up Lawyers in Business Basics to Enhance Justice.” CUNY Law. City University of New York School of Law. Fall 2007. <http://www.law.cuny.edu/giving-alumni/cunylaw/archive/07-fall-cunylaw.pdf> p.6.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Poh, Jennifer, and Chen, Angela. “From Law to Lawyering: A Case Study on the Incubator for Justice.” Obtained via personal communication with Fred Rooney, June 29, 2012. P.7.

⁷² Sloan, Karen. “Incubators Give Birth to Flocks of Solo Practitioners.” Op. Cit.

other attorneys read everything that goes out of the office.”⁷³ In the Spring 2012 issue of the *CUNY Law* magazine, author Paul Lin notes that the Incubator “has given Patel a chance to work alongside CUNY Law alumni with wide-ranging legal concentrations, making it easy to consult with colleagues on matters as varied as landlord/tenant issues, family law, health care, education, elder law, criminal law, labor and employment, litigation, and entertainment law.”⁷⁴

This collaboration has proved to be a great benefit of the program, according to Rooney. In his 2011 interview, Rooney notes:

Most participants agree that the greatest benefits derived from their Incubator experience flow from the camaraderie that develops over their 18-month stint. Although each participant is a solo practitioner, participants use the collaboration skills developed during their years at CUNY Law to collectively tackle complex legal issues, share their work product, cover for each other and deal with ethical issues that arise in the day-to-day practice of law.⁷⁵

According to a 2009 case study of the Incubator for Justice program written by students at Columbia Law School, **the Incubator effort is chiefly financed through four sources: “CUNY, funds from foundations, funds from the state, and participants’ own financial contributions.”**⁷⁶ According to Rooney, basic expenses for space and other amenities are fully covered by the \$500 monthly rent paid by Incubator participants.⁷⁷ However, “the costs for management, training and justice projects come from a variety of other sources.”⁷⁸ As Rooney explains, a portion of his law school salary covers the time he spends in the Incubator—roughly six hours per week. Additionally, Rooney notes that Benjamin Flavin, an Incubator participant, is paid a part-time salary through funds raised by Rooney from public and private sources. Flavin works to “manage the day-to-day needs of the Incubator, to fundraise, to create Continuing Legal Education opportunities for participants and to serve as an intermediary between the Incubator and CUNY Law.” In his role, he works to help ensure the “quality control and success” of the Incubator program.⁷⁹

Additionally, the Incubator program “receive[s] funding to support a practice mentor in housing and small firm practice from the City University of New York’s Workforce Development Initiative (WDI).”⁸⁰ The City University of New York

⁷³ Glater, Jonathan D. Op. Cit.

⁷⁴ Lin, Paul. “Helping Small Businesses Succeed.” *CUNY Law*. City University of New York School of Law. Spring 2012. <http://www.law.cuny.edu/giving-alumni/cunylaw/archive/12-spring-cunylaw.pdf> p.13.

⁷⁵ Zorza, Richard. Op. Cit.

⁷⁶ Poh, Jennifer, and Chen, Angela. Op. Cit., p.8.

⁷⁷ Zorza, Richard. Op. Cit.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

receives funds each year from the state of New York to support workforce development through “workforce training and education programs and research projects.”⁸¹ The University was able to secure state funding for the Incubator by advancing the idea that lawyers need ongoing training to effectively set up practices in underserved communities, and that lawyers who do so increase the economic health and standard of living in these communities “through the eventual hiring of support staff, paralegals and associates[,] as well as [by] providing support to local businesses.”⁸² Additionally, the Bernard F. and Alva B. Gimbel Foundation, a private family foundation which currently funds programs/services in the areas of “economic development, education, civil legal services, criminal justice, reproductive rights, and the environment,”⁸³ has provided money to CLRN generally, with part of this money being used to develop the Incubator program.⁸⁴ Finally, funding for the Incubator also comes from the state via money from elected officials who use the Incubator to increase their constituents’ access to justice. These elected officials provide money to the Incubator, which, in turn, contracts participants to provide legal assistance to their constituents.⁸⁵

Karen Sloan notes in a 2011 article in *The National Law Journal* that Incubator participants themselves garner income from engaging in what Rooney terms “low bono” work: “they earn \$75 an hour for providing legal representation to underserved communities throughout New York, paid for by contracts with New York City. The work provides the new attorneys with experience and exposure, and provides representation to people who otherwise could not afford an attorney.”⁸⁶ Additionally, Incubator participants take on their own cases beyond the contract work.

The Incubator program also helps program participants build their client base in other ways. **Participants are encouraged to network and engage in community education forums designed in conjunction with local civil and religious organizations.** For example, Rooney notes that “CLRN will arrange Saturday morning workshops in underserved communities that are staffed by Incubator attorneys. During the typical program, attorneys have an opportunity to interact with clients and provide one-on-one counseling.”⁸⁷ Incubator participants are also encouraged to market their services to individuals in groups or organizations they belong to, and the CLRN shares its contact lists with participants to maximize networking opportunities. Participants are further encouraged to develop their client base by offering services pro bono or at reduced cost in areas that are underserved by

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ “Bernard F. and Alva B. Gimbel Foundation Inc.” Bernard F. and Alva B. Gimbel Foundation Inc. <http://www.gimbelfoundation.org/>

⁸⁴ Poh, Jennifer, and Chen, Angela. Op. Cit.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Sloan, Karen. “Incubators Give Birth to Flocks of Solo Practitioners.” Op. Cit.

⁸⁷ Zorza, Richard. Op. Cit.

private attorneys. As Rooney points out, this can frequently generate clients for participants in the future, as individuals served through pro bono or reduced cost services will often refer the lawyer to other clients who can pay.⁸⁸

Recently, participants in the Incubator for Justice program have also become involved in other legal work. In the fall of 2009, CLRN and the New York State Courts piloted the “LaunchPad for Justice” program. In this program, recent CUNY graduates are afforded the opportunity to represent clients before being admitted to the New York State Bar.⁸⁹ This initiative, an offshoot of the Incubator program, was designed, according to Rooney, “to jumpstart the careers of new CUNY Law graduates and provides much-needed legal representation to low-income New Yorkers.”⁹⁰ Through this program, CUNY law graduates, referred to as “Justice Fellows” are trained and supervised by CLRN and court-employed attorneys to represent clients in civil issues, for which they receive a small stipend.⁹¹ These graduates can represent clients in civil court through the “Volunteer Lawyers for a Day” (VLFD) program, which “allows volunteer attorneys, trained by the Court, to provide ‘unbundled’ legal services that address the immense unmet legal needs of low-income New Yorkers. Through unbundled legal services, lawyers provide some, but not all, of the work involved in traditional, full-service representation.”⁹² Incubator participants have joined these “Justice Fellows” in taking VLFD cases.⁹³

The resources of the City University of New York School of Law are also utilized to support the CLRN, of which the Incubator for Justice is an offshoot. Rooney notes that his salary is paid by the Law School, and “the Incubator, an offshoot of CLRN, [has been] embraced by [the] administration from the onset since Dean Anderson understood the intrinsic value that it would bring to...graduates. CLRN is included in the Law school’s major fundraising initiatives.”⁹⁴ The Law School was heavily involved in starting the program. As Rooney notes, a professor at the Law School, Professor Sue Bryant, as well as other CUNY officials, “helped conceptualize the program.”⁹⁵ While the Law School did not initially include funds for the Incubator program in its budget, “when state allocated funds failed to materialize on time, the Law School advanced the program start-up funds.”⁹⁶

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ “Launching Careers.” City University of New York School of Law. Fall 2010.

<http://www.law.cuny.edu/clinics/JusticeInitiatives/Community/launching-careers.pdf> p.1.

⁹⁰ Zorza, Richard. Op. Cit.

⁹¹ “Launching Careers.” Op. Cit., p.2.

⁹² “Launching Careers.” Op. Cit.

⁹³ Zorza, Richard. Op. Cit.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law

In October 2010, the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) School of Law opened its **Solo and Small Firm Incubator**, which was developed “with assistance from The Missouri Bar Association and the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association’s Solo Practitioner/Small Firms committee.”⁹⁷ The Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association has taken on the Incubator as a public service project. The Association has donated furniture to the program, and its members have agreed to serve as mentors for Incubator participants.⁹⁸ According to UMKC, **the Incubator is designed to assist recent graduates entering solo and small practice by providing “affordable office space for about nine tenants, as well as practice management assistance and mentoring so that graduates can gain support in launching their own practices, while also providing pro bono or affordable legal services to the underserved Troost area corridor,” an area adjacent to the UMKC campus.**⁹⁹ Participants in the Incubator program are housed in two adjacent storefront offices on the edge of campus, next to a low-income neighborhood.¹⁰⁰ The program offers participants “office space (including telecommunications services), an office assistant, experienced attorneys (including retired judges) who will provide guidance on managing a legal practice, and practice-area mentoring, all at below-market rates.”¹⁰¹

The UMKC School of Law Incubator program is an outgrowth of the school’s entrepreneurial lawyering course.¹⁰² **Launched in 2004, the school’s Solo and Small Firms Institute helps to position students to become entrepreneurs. It features a summer course, as well as fall and spring semester workshops “on business planning and other topics of interest in founding and operating a law firm.”**¹⁰³ Both the entrepreneurial lawyering course and these workshops involve interaction with faculty from the School of Law, faculty from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Henry W. Bloch School of Business and Public Administration, and “practicing attorneys and other professionals.”¹⁰⁴ Students also attend the Missouri Bar Association’s annual Solo & Small Firm Conference. As students in the entrepreneurial lawyering course are required to create a business plan, they can utilize their coursework in this area to assist them in the Incubator program.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁷ “UMKC School of Law Launches Solo and Small Firm Incubator.” University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law. October 29, 2010. <http://www.umkc.edu/news/news-release.asp?id=959>

⁹⁸ “A National Model for Law Practice Development: School of Law Opens Solo and Small Law Firm Incubator.” University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law. <http://www.umkc.edu/news/feature.asp?id=198>

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Sloan, Karen. “Incubators Give Birth to Flocks of Solo Practitioners.” *Op. Cit.*

¹⁰¹ “Solo and Small Firm Incubator.” University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law. <http://law2.umkc.edu/Incubator/index.htm>

¹⁰² Sloan, Karen. “Incubators Give Birth to Flocks of Solo Practitioners.” *Op. Cit.*

¹⁰³ “UMKC School of Law Launches Solo and Small Firm Incubator.” *Op. Cit.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ “A National Model for Law Practice Development: School of Law Opens Solo and Small Firm Practice Incubator.” *Op. Cit.*

The UMKC School of Law notes that **the Incubator program is designed to assist eligible individuals who have drafted business plans that “demonstrate both an aptitude to develop their own successful practice and a commitment to include in their plans a significant contribution of pro bono or affordable legal services to members of the surrounding Troost community.”**¹⁰⁶ Individuals eligible for the Incubator program at UMKC apply for the program through the completion of an application document, as well as the provision of a number of different documents and resources. As part of the application process, eligible Incubator tenants submit a statement detailing why they should be selected to participate in the Incubator program, as well as their current resume and resumes of any partners (if they are applying with a partner or partners).¹⁰⁷ Additionally, individuals eligible for the Incubator must provide the following:

- ❖ A business plan detailing the intended practice areas;
- ❖ A marketing plan;
- ❖ Budget and financial projections covering the time period during which the practice will be housed within the Incubator, plus two years beyond that timeframe; and,
- ❖ A “statement as to the extent to which the applicant plans to apportion some professional time to pro bono or discounted legal serves to the clients of limited financial means, particularly to residents of the Troost Avenue corridor.”¹⁰⁸

The Solo and Small Firm program, as well as the Incubator at the UMKC School of Law, are supported at least in part by a number of different individuals, private law firms, and other organizations, including the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association and the Missouri Bar.¹⁰⁹

Florida International University College of Law

Another program which shares components with the CUNY Incubator for Justice and the UMKC Solo and Small Firm Practice Incubator is found at the Florida International University College of Law. This program, called the **LawBridge** program, is touted by Florida International University as “a post-graduate program that provides new lawyers an opportunity to enter an apprenticeship with elements akin to both a medical school residency and a business school entrepreneurial incubator.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ “Application Process.” University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law. <http://law.umkc.edu/careers-cle/solo-and-small-firm-application-process.asp>

¹⁰⁷ “Solo and Small Firm Incubator University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law.” University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law. <http://law2.umkc.edu/Incubator/IncubatorApplication.pdf> p.2.

¹⁰⁸ “Application Process.” Op. Cit.

¹⁰⁹ “Sponsors.” University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law. <http://law.umkc.edu/careers-cle/solo-and-small-firm-incubator-sponsors.asp>

¹¹⁰ “LawBridge: A Legal Residency Program.” Florida International University College of Law. <http://law.fiu.edu/alumni/lawbridge-a-legal-residency-program/>

The LawBridge program is referred to as a “legal residency program” and is open to recent FIU College of Law graduates “who have passed the Florida Bar Examination and are qualified to practice.”¹¹¹ Currently, the program is limited to students “who have graduated within 12 months of being sworn into The Florida Bar.”¹¹² The program is outlined by the school as follows:

Each participant agrees to enroll in the FIU LawBridge program for two years and to house their solo practice within the FIU LawBridge facilities. They meet with clients, set fee structures and manage their own attorney-client relationships. Each participant will be expected to establish a client base and manage all aspects of the attorney-client relationship, and manage the business aspects of the practice. The College of Law will provide guidance in the establishment and operation of each participant’s law practice, together with professionalism and ethics using a series of short lecture series and other course offerings throughout the term. FIU LawBridge participants will also be expected to engage in the community through extensive pro-bono services intended to provide further experience and to teach the basics of professionalism.¹¹³

The office space provided to LawBridge participants is located in Miami’s financial district and features “reception areas, conference rooms and work spaces.”¹¹⁴ Participants are also provided with a desk and desktop phone, copiers, and fax machines, as well as access to a variety of online research and reference tools and materials.¹¹⁵ The FIU College of Law notes that this environment provides program participants with an experience similar to that of law school graduates employed at larger law firms. **LawBridge participants are coached in a variety of different topics related to law practice management, such as “best practices for conducting initial client meetings, establishing and documenting attorney-client relationships, timekeeping and billing, value billing methodologies and opportunities and overall management of workloads.”**¹¹⁶

The LawBridge program also provides participants additional support in the areas of marketing, public relations, accounting, and financial planning.¹¹⁷ **Participants in the program meet on a regularly scheduled basis with marketing professionals to work on topics such as “business card design, website content and use, the ‘elevator pitch’ and marketing initiatives.”**¹¹⁸ Additionally, a locally-based mid-size accounting firm provides each LawBridge participant “with all accounting and

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² “LawBridge FAQs.” Florida International University College of Law.

<http://law.fiu.edu/alumni/lawbridge-a-legal-residency-program/lawbridge-faqs/>

¹¹³ “LawBridge: A Legal Residency Program.” Op. Cit.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ “LawBridge FAQs.” Op. Cit.

¹¹⁶ “LawBridge: A Legal Residency Program.” Op. Cit.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

tax preparation services required during the two years in the FIU LawBridge program.”¹¹⁹ Planning activities involve activities such as “identifying and recording key performance statistics, preparing monthly and quarterly projections and analyzing financial and marketing results.”¹²⁰ Participants also meet periodically with bankers and other professionals to discuss aspects of “the business of law.”¹²¹ One of the key goals of the LawBridge program is to train participants to manage their operations and maintain a low overhead, which will drive better financial performance over time.

The LawBridge program offers participants access to lectures and continuing legal education coursework in the areas of “risk management, ethics and professionalism.”¹²² The LawBridge program has teamed with risk management experts who work with each participant “through all aspects of the risk management core of a law firm, including reviews of applications for professional liability insurance, risk management tips and understanding how claims can be avoided through the adoption of good business practices.”¹²³ Additionally, the LawBridge program offers participants “frequent contact and exchanges with members of the judiciary, ethics commissions and other members of the profession” in an effort to provide participants with a full understanding of the rules for professional conduct and other ethical principles.¹²⁴ **LawBridge participants must participate in a minimum number of “continuing legal education, practice skills and business administration courses” and must participate in various mentorship opportunities.**¹²⁵ Each week, participants are given the opportunity to attend 1-3 hours of “basic skills training courses” which cover legal topics, as well as “ethics, business skills and general law practice administration skills.”¹²⁶ These presentations are made by rotating faculty, including “professors, seasoned practitioners, tax advisors, marketing professionals, judges, legal administration professionals and others.” Participants earn CLE credit from The Florida Bar where appropriate.¹²⁷

The LawBridge program also places emphasis on networking with other lawyers and members of the business community. Participant responsibilities include attending a minimum number of optional programs to meet “other seasoned practitioners, judges and individuals from other professions.”¹²⁸ The FIU College of Law notes that “weekly roundtables are conducted with participants to discuss skillset improvements and lessons learned from the previous week’s networking events.”¹²⁹

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ “LawBridge FAQs.” Op. Cit.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ “LawBridge: A Legal Residency Program.” Op. Cit.

¹²⁹ “LawBridge FAQs.” Op. Cit.

To participate in the LawBridge program, interested individuals must first submit an application for admission. Admission to the program is on a “first come, first served” basis, though it is subject to admission to The Florida Bar if the individual applying for the program submits an application prior to being sworn into the Bar.¹³⁰ As part of the application process, individuals must submit the following documents:

- 1) A statement of no more than one letter sized page, single spaced indicating why you should be selected to participate in the FIU LawBridge Program.
- 2) Current resume
- 3) Executive Summary of your business plan on one letter-sized page that provides:
 - a. Area(s) of your proposed practice focus (e.g., real estate transactions, bankruptcy, banking, international business transactions, commercial litigation, etc.)
 - b. Your preparation for the area of practice focus
 - c. Sources of capital to pay for practice start-up and monthly expenses
 - d. First year gross income projection
 - e. Marketing initiatives you will employ during the first 6 months¹³¹

Applicants to the program must also pay a \$50 application fee. Once admitted, each participant must sign a license agreement with the FIU College of Law which outlines the respective obligations both of the participant and the College. These obligations include: “compliance with ethics and other professional responsibility obligations to the Bar, minimum insurance requirements, minimum attendance at key practice and professional development programs,” as well as pro bono public service commitments and other obligations.¹³² Participants must carry professional liability insurance “of not less than \$250,000 per claim/\$250,000 aggregate during the first 12 months and \$500,000 per claim/\$500,000 aggregate during the last 12 months of...participation in the Program.”¹³³

In the program, participants are incorporated as “a single shareholder Professional Association” pursuant to Florida Statutes.¹³⁴ Participants open a commercial bank account for operations, as well as “an IOLTA trust account for the handling of any funds held in trust.”¹³⁵ Additionally, participants establish a website using a unique domain name.¹³⁶ Program participants are also expected to pay for office space and other services offered through the program, but at a significantly reduced rate.¹³⁷

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ “Florida International University College of Law Law Bridge Solo Practice Incubator Application for Admission.” Florida International University College of Law. <http://law.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/FIU-Law-Bridge-Application-11-08-11.pdf> p.1.

¹³² “LawBridge FAQs.” Op. Cit.

¹³³ “Florida International University College of Law Law Bridge Solo Practice Incubator Application for Admission.” Op. Cit., p.2.

¹³⁴ “LawBridge: A Legal Residency Program.” Op. Cit.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ “LawBridge FAQs.” Op. Cit.

University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law

The University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law introduced a solo practice incubator in January 2011. According to Dana Morris, the assistant dean for career development at the UMD School of Law, the Incubator was enacted in response to the economy. Morris has noted, “Looking down the line at the economy, we knew we would have more students looking at going solo, and we were looking for ways to creatively meet that need.”¹³⁸ **The University of Maryland’s Incubator promotes civil justice through a partnership with Civil Justice Inc.,¹³⁹ a legal non-profit organization which is an affiliated program of the University of Maryland School of Law.¹⁴⁰**

The solo incubator program, referred to as the **Solo Practice Incubator for Justice**, is 6-10 months in length.¹⁴¹ **Participants in the program work in a law office across the street from the law school which belongs to Civil Justice Inc.^{142,143}** Participants in the Incubator can focus their practice in any area of the law, “but must commit to devoting part of that practice to providing affordable legal services to underserved communities in Maryland.”¹⁴⁴ **During the program, Incubator participants are provided with “intense training on law office management and mentorship” and are also given opportunities “to work on Civil Justice grant-funded initiatives that generate fees for attorney services,” which provide Incubator participants with “modest financial support.”¹⁴⁵**

Both the University of Maryland School of Law and Civil Justice Inc. are involved with the operation of the program. **The University of Maryland School of Law Career Development Office oversees program recruitment and overall management, while Civil Justice Inc. attorneys supervise program participants and provide one-on-one training and mentoring.¹⁴⁶**

According to the University of Maryland School of Law, training in the Incubator includes educational sessions on the following topics:

¹³⁸ Sloan, Karen. “Incubators Give Birth to Flocks of Solo Practitioners.” Op. Cit.

¹³⁹ “Help Wanted...A Few Good UMB Law Graduates Ready to Work as Practicing Attorneys.” Civil Justice Inc. Obtained via personal communication with the University of Maryland. June 27, 2012.

¹⁴⁰ “About > Affiliations (UMD and Consortium).” Civil Justice Inc. <http://www.civiljusticenetwork.org/about/affiliationsumdandconsortium.aspx>

¹⁴¹ Sloan, Karen. “Incubators Give Birth to Flocks of Solo Practitioners.” Op. Cit.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ “Fact Sheet University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law & Civil Justice Solo Practice Incubator for Justice Project.” University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law. Obtained via personal communication with the University of Maryland. June 27, 2012. P.1.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

Developing a business plan and financing a law office; marketing a law practice; effective networking techniques; client development and relations; using technology to operate the practice; billing, setting and collecting fees; personnel management; IOLTA compliance; using electronic case management and time keeping systems.¹⁴⁷

At the end of the Incubator, graduates are afforded “continued access to mentorship, case management support and client referrals generated among the 80-plus attorneys in the Civil Justice network.”¹⁴⁸ Participation in the Incubator is open to graduates of the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, with priority given to members of the most recent graduating class. In the pilot year of the project (January 2011), seven graduates from the class of 2010 participated in the Incubator.¹⁴⁹

The Incubator program can also serve as one potential placement site for Fellows in the JD Legal Fellows Program.¹⁵⁰ This program, launched in 2010, is designed to assist recent graduates in the transition from law school to full-time employment and enables recent graduates to work part-time for legal employers for up to six months. This work experience is designed to help recent graduates build professional networks and “enhance their prospects for securing full-time employment.”¹⁵¹ During the Fellows program, “fellows receive professional development coaching, assistance [with] identifying mentorship opportunities, and a stipend to help support their ongoing job search.”¹⁵² Fellows partner with the University of Maryland School of Law Career Development Office or identify organizations where they can perform work under the supervision of attorneys, such as private practices, public service organizations, and the government.^{153,154} Once they are assigned to employers, Fellows are required to check in regularly with the Career Development Office, and their employers are asked to submit an evaluation of the Fellow’s work upon the conclusion of the fellowship. Of note, at the time of this report (June 2012), the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law was uncertain as to whether the JD Legal Fellows Program would be offered in the next year due to funding issues.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ “Help Wanted...A Few Good UMB Law Graduates Ready to Work as Practicing Attorneys.” Op. Cit.

¹⁵¹ “University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law JD Legal Fellow Program.” University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law. Obtained via personal communication with the University of Maryland. June 27, 2012.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Lloyd, Ann. University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law Career Development Office. Personal Communication, June 27, 2012.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

The Columbus Bar Association

In January 2011, the Columbus Bar Association announced a new incubator program, called **Columbus Bar inc: A Professional Development Center**, which is designed to offer newly-admitted attorneys assistance as they work to build solo practices.¹⁵⁶ The Incubator officially opened its doors in April 2011.¹⁵⁷ The Columbus Bar notes that it is the first in the country to develop an incubator program for lawyers interested in entering solo practice.¹⁵⁸

The Incubator is one year in length. It was limited to eight individuals during the one-year pilot in 2011, though, as of the opening of the program in April 2011, the program featured only six attorneys.^{159,160} During the first year of the program, participation was limited to attorneys who had been admitted to practice law in Ohio within the last two years and who had graduated from Capital University Law School or Moritz College of Law. **The program is housed in the same building as the Columbus Bar Association, and provides “an office facility that includes basic office fixtures such as desks, chairs, file storage, phones, internet access and a copier/scanner, in return for inexpensive rent.”**¹⁶¹ Additionally, attorneys that participate in the Incubator can access a number of services at reduced rates, such as “office supplies,” “case management and billing software,” and “professional liability coverage.”¹⁶²

Participants in the program are provided with **extensive education and training in a variety of areas, including “client intake, billing practices, law office management, law firm marketing, lawyer ethics and professionalism, case management, court rules, discovery, and other practice-related topics.”**¹⁶³ The program also features on-site mentors who commit to a specific amount of time per week on site in the Incubator. **Mentors include “retired judges, practice-area specific attorneys, and general practitioners.”**¹⁶⁴ Participants are also provided with a list of attorneys who have agreed to make themselves available to participants via phone to provide mentoring related to specific practice areas.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁶ “Columbus Bar Announces New Incubator Program.” January 21, 2011. Columbus Bar Association. <http://www.cbalaw.org/articles/news/recent-news/2011/1631>

¹⁵⁷ “Open for Business – Columbus Bar incl?” Columbus Bar Association. April 8, 2011. <http://www.cbalaw.org/articles/news/recent-news/2011/1712>

¹⁵⁸ “Columbus Bar inc Takes Home ABA Award.” May 21, 2012. Columbus Bar Association. <http://www.cbalaw.org/articles/news/recent-news/2012/2144>

¹⁵⁹ “Columbus Bar Announces New Incubator Program.” Op. Cit.

¹⁶⁰ “Open for Business – Columbus Bar incl?” Op. Cit.

¹⁶¹ “Columbus Bar Announces New Incubator Program.” Op. Cit.

¹⁶² “Columbus Bar inc: A Professional Development Center.” Columbus Bar Association. http://www.cbalaw.org/_files/Columbus%20Bar%20inc%20Sponsorship%20Packet.pdf p.2.

¹⁶³ “Open for Business – Columbus Bar incl?” Op. Cit.

¹⁶⁴ “Columbus Bar Announces New Incubator Program.” Op. Cit.

¹⁶⁵ “Columbus Bar inc: A Professional Development Center.” Op. Cit.

Participants in the Incubator also benefit from a “specially designed CLE curriculum” and the support of an office administrator. Participants further benefit from networking opportunities made available through the program.¹⁶⁶

In addition to being charged a modest rent, **participants must agree to accept at least one pro bono case during their one-year term in the Incubator.**¹⁶⁷ Participants in the program receive referrals through the Columbus Bar Association’s Lawyer Referral Service and Lawyers for Justice Program.¹⁶⁸ The Columbus Bar Lawyer Referral Service helps individuals find a lawyer either over the phone or online,¹⁶⁹ while the Lawyers for Justice program works to reduce the unmet need for legal services among indigent central Ohio residents.¹⁷⁰ Program participants are “frequently featured in Columbus Bar publications, and the program is promoted to law firms, small businesses, and other partners who might refer routine legal transactions to participants as a means of generating a client base and revenue, while giving participants experience in a variety of areas.”¹⁷¹

Individuals applying for the Incubator with the Columbus Bar Association must submit an application, including a business plan (which itself must include a marketing plan and budget, in addition to other information), a statement outlining career goals, and three letters of recommendation.¹⁷² The Columbus Bar inc program is supported by the Columbus Bar Foundation, which has provided a \$25,000 grant to help subsidize the program,¹⁷³ and also relies on cash and other support from law firms and other providers of legal services.¹⁷⁴ The Columbus Bar Association states, for example, that Tiano & Associates, Ltd. Has made office space available for the program, Vorys Sater Seymour and Pease has donated furniture, LexisNexis has “donated PCLaw software licenses for each of the attorneys,” PIP Printing and Marketing Services has donated office supplies, and Affinity Consulting Group has helped to set up internet and phones in the office suite.¹⁷⁵ Other individuals and organizations have also supported the program, and the Columbus Bar Association notes that it is “currently seeking financial contributions, in-kind donations of needed services, educators, and mentors.”¹⁷⁶

¹⁶⁶ “Columbus Bar inc Takes Home ABA Award.” Op. Cit.

¹⁶⁷ “Columbus Bar inc.” Columbus Bar Association. <http://www.cbalaw.org/resources/jobs/job-seekers/columbus-bar-inc.php>

¹⁶⁸ “Columbus Bar News Bites.” Columbus Bar Association. Vol. 22. January 18, 2011. http://www.cbalaw.org/_files/publications/bar-bytes/vol22/newsletter.htm

¹⁶⁹ “Find a Lawyer.” Columbus Bar Association. <http://www.cbalaw.org/resources/find-lawyer/>

¹⁷⁰ “Columbus Bar Association Lawyers for Justice.” Columbus Bar Association. <http://lawyers.justia.com/firm/columbus-bar-association-lawyers-for-justice-9524>

¹⁷¹ “Columbus Bar inc: A Professional Development Center.” Op. Cit.

¹⁷² “Columbus Bar Association’s Columbus Bar inc: A Professional Development Center 2013 Application.” Columbus Bar Association. http://www.cbalaw.org/_files/jobs/Columbus-Bar-inc-Application-2.pdf p.4-5.

¹⁷³ “Columbus Bar inc Takes Home ABA Award.” Op. Cit.

¹⁷⁴ Sloan, Karen. “Incubators Give Birth to Flocks of Solo Practitioners.” Op. Cit.

¹⁷⁵ “Open for Business – Columbus Bar inc!” Op. Cit.

¹⁷⁶ “Columbus Bar inc.” Op. Cit.

In 2012, the program was honored with the Solo and Small Firm Project Award by the ABA General Practice and Solo Division, an award presented “for successful implementation of a project or program specifically targeted to solo and small firm lawyers.”¹⁷⁷

Thomas Jefferson School of Law

The Thomas Jefferson School of Law (TJSL) has set out to prepare graduates to open solo practices through two routes: the adoption of a special solo practice track in its curriculum, and an incubator program for recent graduates. Both of these programs will debut in the fall of 2012.¹⁷⁸

According to the Thomas Jefferson School of Law, **the solo practice track is designed as a year-long sequence of “mini-courses” that will teach students various “core lawyering skills,” such as how to draft a fee agreement, and “critical business skills,” such as how to attract clients.**¹⁷⁹ In the fall semester of this track, students will focus on “general skills necessary for all solo practitioners” such as “client interviewing,” “building a website,” and “obtaining malpractice insurance.”¹⁸⁰ Following this, in the spring semester, the solo practice track curriculum will focus on discrete areas of practice often pursued by solo practitioners, such as “criminal law, bankruptcy, employment, and family law.”¹⁸¹

The incubator program is being spearheaded by TJSL professor Luz Herrera, who ran a solo practice before entering academia.¹⁸² Fred Rooney of CUNY has also been involved in the development of the TJSL incubator program. Rooney travelled to the Thomas Jefferson School of Law and spent several weeks advising TJSL staff on the development of the incubator program.

According to a May 2012 article in *The National Law Journal*, **the TJSL incubator program will start taking applications in July, and it is expected to have six to eight participants initially. Program participants will spend 12-18 months in the incubator, and will be provided with affordable office space and mentoring from law faculty and alumni.**¹⁸³ Participants will also be assisted by MBA students at San Diego State University, who are researching the solo practitioner market in the

¹⁷⁷ “Columbus Bar inc Takes Home ABA Award.” Op. Cit.

¹⁷⁸ Semeraro, Steve. Op. Cit.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Sloan, Karen. “The Next Solo Incubator Will be in San Diego.” *The National Law Journal*. May 15, 2012. <http://www.law.com/jsp/nlj/PubArticleNLJ.jsp?id=1202553744579&et=editorial&bu=National%20Law%20Journal&cn=20120516nlj&src=EMC-Email&pt=NLJ.com-%20Daily%20Headlines&kw=The%20next%20solo%20incubator%20will%20be%20in%20San%20Diego&slreturn=1>

¹⁸³ Routman, Brent. “Time to Get Serious.” Minnesota State Bar Association. June 12, 2012. <http://mnbenchbar.com/2012/06/time-to-get-serious/>

city and helping to identify areas of unmet legal need.¹⁸⁴ These MBA students are working with professor Luz Herrera to develop a “generic business plan” which fits the needs of TJSJL alumni seeking to practice in San Diego.¹⁸⁵ This business plan will help to provide guidelines to recent graduates on how to start a practice and will help recent graduates consider, for example, how to develop clients and what kind of law they intend to practice.

Thomas Jefferson School of Law is hiring a full-time director to coordinate both the solo practice concentration and the incubator program. This director will be working with a committee of alumni, faculty and administrators, which will serve as an advisory committee. The director will report to the academic dean and will also work closely with staff from the alumni and career services offices, who will be working with the incubator program.¹⁸⁶

According to Rooney, who was quoted in a May 2012 article in *The National Law Journal*, the TJSJL incubator program may emphasize cross-border matters, given the school’s close proximity to the U.S.-Mexico border.¹⁸⁷ **Professor Luz Herrera has noted that the focus of the program is more broadly related to “access to justice” and helping to provide more affordable legal services to the community, but that as the program grows it may begin to deal more and more with cross-border issues.**¹⁸⁸ Herrera has further explained that the focus of the incubator will depend upon the focus areas of the alumni involved.

According to Herrera, **the second semester of the solo practice track will eventually serve as a pipeline of sorts for the solo practice incubator, as in the future, preference may be given to incubator applicants who have completed the solo practice curriculum during their studies at TJSJL.** However, Herrera has noted that, as both the solo practice track and the solo incubator are being rolled out during the same time period (fall 2012), the first batch of attorneys in the incubator program will not have been involved with the solo practice curriculum being developed.¹⁸⁹

Pace University School of Law

In 2011, the Pace University Law School announced plans to launch the **Pace Community Law Practice (PLCP)**, which is set to open in September 2012, according to a November 2011 article in *The National Law Journal*.¹⁹⁰ When the Pace

¹⁸⁴ Sloan, Karen. “The Next Solo Incubator Will be in San Diego.” Op. Cit.

¹⁸⁵ Herrera, Luz. Op. Cit.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Sloan, Karen. “The Next Solo Incubator Will be in San Diego.” Op. Cit.

¹⁸⁸ Herrera, Luz. Op. Cit.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Sloan, Karen. “Pace Solo Incubator Will Assist Low-Income Clients.” *The National Law Journal*. November 18, 2011. <http://www.law.com/jsp/nlj/PubArticleNLJ.jsp?id=1202532839299>

University School of Law announced the program in November 2011, it indicated that the program will employ between five and seven recent Pace graduates. These individuals will offer low-cost legal assistance in a variety of areas, including “immigration, family and housing law.”¹⁹¹ **The PCLP features components of a legal residency program, as participants will be classified as “fellows” and paid by the law school, and will be housed in space on the law school’s campus.**¹⁹² According to a November 2011 article in the *Fairfield County Business Journal*, Pace plans to pay program staff “on par with the starting public interest legal services salary – \$42,000 according to the National Association of Law Placement.”¹⁹³

Participants in the program will provide affordable legal services to individuals and community groups in the Lower Hudson Valley region of New York.¹⁹⁴ However, **the PCLP also features a component designed to prepare participants to enter solo or small firm practices.**¹⁹⁵ A pool of seasoned attorneys will offer these participants support and guidance, with the goal to help them eventually form their own solo practices. **The “solo practice component” of the Pace Community Law Practice will feature “seminars on incorporation, malpractice insurance, obtaining and billing clients and setting up a law office.”**¹⁹⁶

Pace University School of Law has already raised \$100,000 to help launch the PCLP from David Anthony Pope, the president and chief executive officer of the Generoso Pope Foundation. According to a January 31, 2012 news release from Pace University Law School, the school was still seeking additional funding at that time.¹⁹⁷ The University has appointed Jennifer Friedman, director of the Public Interest Law Center and associate director of public interest at the Center for Career Development at the Pace University School of Law as the executive director of the PCLP.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Rozycki, Bob. “Pace Law to Launch Incubator for Recent Graduates.” *Fairfield County Business Journal*. November 28, 2011. <http://westfaironline.com/17575/pace-law-to-launch-incubator-for-recent-graduates/>

¹⁹⁴ Plumb, Tierney. “Pace Law School Enters the In-House Law School Market.” *PreLaw*. November 18, 2011. <http://www.nationaljurist.com/content/pace-law-school-enters-house-law-school-market>

¹⁹⁵ Pace Law School Debuts New “Residency” Program for Recent Grads to Serve the Community’s Legal Needs. Pace University School of Law. November 11, 2011. <http://newswire.blogs.law.pace.edu/2011/11/11/pace-law-school-debuts-new-%E2%80%9Cresidency%E2%80%9D-program-for-recent-grads-to-serve-the-community%E2%80%99s-legal-needs/>

¹⁹⁶ Plumb, Tierney. Op. Cit.

¹⁹⁷ “Pace Community Law Practice Featured in PreLaw Magazine.” Pace University School of Law. January 31, 2012. <http://newswire.blogs.law.pace.edu/2012/01/31/pace-community-law-practice-featured-in-prelaw-magazine/>

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

Arizona State University Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law

Recently, the Arizona State University Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law announced that it will create a “nonprofit teaching law firm” designed to give interested graduating law students a “residency” experience.¹⁹⁹ According to a June 2012 article in *The National Law Journal*, the details of this program are still being worked out by administrators, but administrators hope to have the firm up and running by 2013.

Preliminary plans for the ASU law firm, which has yet to be named, call for the firm to hire “five or six experienced attorneys who would essentially act as partners” and who would supervise a larger number of recent ASU School of Law graduates termed “resident lawyers.”²⁰⁰ The exact number of “resident lawyers” who will serve in the nonprofit law firm appears not to be set at the time of this report. In a June (2012) article, Karen Sloan of *The National Law Journal* reports that the preliminary plan for the firm calls for the hiring of 15-30 “resident lawyers.” In an article three weeks later for *Inside Higher Ed*, author Elise Young reports that Dean Douglas Sylvester has noted that “the firm will eventually employ between 25 and 35 recent graduates.”²⁰¹

These recent ASU graduates will spend a set amount of time cycling through different law practice areas, such as “bankruptcy, family law and corporate organization.”²⁰² **Graduates in the program will be paid and receive benefits, and the firm will charge clients for legal services, but at low rates.**²⁰³ Dean Sylvester has noted that the firm will provide “cost effective legal services” to serve unmet community legal needs, which he has identified as “middle-class individuals and businesses.”²⁰⁴ Administrators are working with nonprofit groups in the region to create a referral pipeline for the firm.

The length of the program may vary. While a June 6th ASU news release notes that program participants will likely spend two years in the program, **Dean Douglas Sylvester has indicated that program participants will be hired “with the ability to stay on for two years and the option to extend for a third year.”**^{205,206} However, Sylvester has also noted that program participants will be free to leave at any time for a long-term job: “If after six months you’ve managed to get enough experience and enough networking to walk out the door and begin your long-term

¹⁹⁹ Sloan, Karen. “Think of it as a Residency for Lawyers.” Op. Cit.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Young, Elise. Op. Cit.

²⁰² Sloan, Karen. “Think of it as a Residency for Lawyers.” Op. Cit.

²⁰³ “Sylvester’s ‘Residency for Lawyers’ Program Featured in ‘National Law Journal’ Report.” Arizona State University. June 6, 2012. https://asunews.asu.edu/20120606_sylvester_lawjournal

²⁰⁴ Young, Elise. Op. Cit.

²⁰⁵ “Sylvester’s ‘Residency for Lawyers’ Program Featured in ‘National Law Journal’ Report.” Op. Cit.

²⁰⁶ Young, Elise. Op. Cit.

career, we think that's a great opportunity, and we don't plan on standing in peoples' way."²⁰⁷ The proposed ASU non-profit firm will differ from solo practice incubators such as those outlined at other institutions above as it will provide participants with a "law firm environment." As Dean Sylvester notes, "it's not a mentor; it's a boss... You are working with an experienced attorney at every level in the same way that you would be working with them at any legal practice office in the country."²⁰⁸

According to Dean Sylvester, the proposed firm will not cost the University money, as he is exploring different sources to help fund startup costs. Additionally, Sylvester has indicated that "he expects the firm to be self-sufficient through its foundation once it is established."²⁰⁹ However, as of early June 2012, ASU School of Law administrators were still deciding how to finance the firm initially, with Dean Sylvester noting that startup funding may hail from the school itself, from private donations, or from a combination of both sources.²¹⁰

Programs at Other Institutions of Higher Education and Organizations

It is important to note that the above institutions are by no means the *only* institutions which are considering offering or are in the process of implementing solo practice incubator programs or legal residency programs. Faculty and administrators at other institutions, including the University of Dayton School of Law and Georgia State University College of Law have also considered adding similar programs. The Charlotte School of Law announced in 2011 that it was in the process of launching its "Small & Solo Practice Center," which would provide recent graduates forming their own practices after law school with access to resources and support for up to two years.²¹¹ This program will be designed to serve as an incubator for new law firms by providing graduates "office space and services including a conference room, copier, fax machine, receptionist, and IT support."²¹² Additionally, new solo practitioners will be paired with experienced attorneys who will act as mentors to recent graduates. According to a September 2011 article in *The National Law Journal*, at that time, the Charlotte School of Law was planning to have the program up and running the following summer.²¹³

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Sloan, Karen. "Think of it as a Residency for Lawyers." Op. Cit.

²¹¹ Batty, David L. "The Charlotte School of Law's Commitment to Training Law Students to be Practice-Ready Attorneys Drives Our Transactional Course of Study." North Carolina Bar Association. June 28, 2011. <http://businesslaw.ncbar.org/newsletters/nbijune2011/charlotte.aspx>

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Sloan, Karen. "Incubators Give Birth to Flocks of Solo Practitioners." Op. Cit.

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