EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

In alarming numbers, Americans cannot fully access our justice system. The consequences are directly felt by the people whose legal needs are not being adequately addressed. They are families and individuals in distress with their basic rights and needs hanging in the balance. The indirect consequences are also profound. State courts—where 70 million cases are filed every year and 98 percent of all litigation takes place—confront huge numbers of self-represented litigants every day. Meanwhile, public confidence in our courts and the justice system continues to decline.

The unmet legal need is staggering, affecting so many people who require help yet lack access to essential legal resources. Each year, tens of millions of people encounter difficult moments that intersect with the law: the care and custody of children and dependent adults, consumer issues, domestic violence, housing problems, probate needs, and many more. A significant portion of these people must address their legal issues without the support of an attorney. Many individuals are unaware of their rights or the existence of legal services, while others are deterred by high costs and complicated processes. This gap not only perpetuates a sense of injustice but also leaves many without the necessary tools to navigate legal complexities, undermining the very foundation of a fair and equitable justice system. Addressing this unmet need is critical to ensure that all individuals can secure their rights and access the legal support they deserve.

At the same time, the legal profession itself is undergoing profound changes. With fewer contested hearings, the growing use of artificial intelligence (AI) and other technologies, and declines in mentorship, new attorneys have fewer opportunities to hone their practice skills and learn from more experienced practitioners. The changing economics of practice sees clients less willing to pay for the training of new associates in private law firms and solo and small firm practitioners facing increasingly challenging financial realities. Public interest minded law students continue to face other serious barriers, from persistent negative perceptions of public interest work, to unclear career pathways, to lower salaries and higher debt burdens as compared with private practice. This is all while public trust in the courts has remained diminished, with many people expressing a lack of confidence in our judicial system.[1]

For the past eighteen months, members of the Committee on Legal Education and Admissions Reform have crisscrossed the country engaging stakeholders to better understand why the legal profession is not meeting the needs of the American people. The challenges faced by the profession are systemic and multifaceted; so, too, must be the responses. Breaking down the institutional impediments to reform will require the many actors and stakeholders to be better aligned around their shared goals of equal access to justice for all.

State courts are well-positioned to lead efforts for systemic change through innovation and reform. While there is already much groundbreaking work happening across the country, there is great potential for even more. We were repeatedly impressed not only by the level of engagement and enthusiasm for this undertaking, but also the desire for urgent reform. While the challenges facing the profession are great, the commitment to addressing them collectively and creatively is even greater. The recommendations outlined in this report offer a roadmap for how state courts can lead in advancing the profession and ensuring that access to justice for all is a reality.

Our Work

Against this backdrop, the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) established the Committee on Legal Education and Admissions Reform (CLEAR) in August 2023 to undertake a comprehensive examination of legal education, licensure, and entry into the practice of law in the United States. As the primary regulators of the legal profession in their respective jurisdictions, state supreme courts play a critical leadership role in ensuring that the public has access to competent legal representation. CLEAR's charge was to assess how legal education and licensure practices and processes can address the justice gap crisis and ensure public trust and confidence in the legal profession. While several states have been exploring and experimenting with licensing authorized justice practitioners (non-lawyers) in addition to lawyers, CLEAR's charge was restricted to the regulation of lawyers.

Over 18 months, CLEAR engaged in intensive factfinding to examine how legal education, licensure, and the training of new attorneys can respond to these challenges. This included:

WORKING GROUPS

CLEAR formed three working groups to examine the interrelated themes of practice readiness, bar admissions, and public service. Working Group members included law school deans, judges, public interest attorneys, clinical educators, academics, representatives from the private bar, public interest advocacy organizations, and others.

LISTENING SESSIONS

CLEAR also engaged directly with critical stakeholders from the legal profession, convening 12 listening sessions that brought together stakeholders from regional legal communities across the country to discuss how these issues manifest in unique ways in different places. At each listening session, CLEAR Executive Committee members interacted with these stakeholders to hear their stories and understand how issues of legal education, bar admissions, and access to justice gaps affect their work.

SURVEYS OF JUDGES, LAWYERS, AND LAW STUDENTS

CLEAR surveyed over 4,000 judges, 4,400 attorneys, and 600 law students, revealing widespread agreement that newly admitted lawyers often lack sufficient preparation in critical applied practice skills and a hunger for innovative pathways to licensure to practice law.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

CLEAR conducted over 90 interviews with a diverse array of stakeholders from across the legal profession to gain in-depth insights into these issues. Interviews included college students seeking to understand the legal field, law students navigating their academic journeys, recent graduates working to pass the bar exam (sometimes after multiple attempts) or embarking on their first roles as new attorneys, clinical and doctrinal law faculty sharing their invaluable expertise, and supervising lawyers in a variety of professional settings.

NATIONAL CONVENING

CLEAR held the National Convening on the Future of Legal Education and Admissions in Cincinnati, Ohio, on March 14, 2025. The convening brought together representatives from CCJ and COSCA, AccessLex Institute, the American Bar Association (ABA) Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions, the Association of American Law Schools, the Law School Admission Council, the Law School Survey of Student Engagement, the National Conference of Bar Examiners, and the National Association for Law Placement. Attendees discussed the challenges facing the legal profession and identified shared goals to inform CLEAR's recommendations and to lay the foundation for future collaboration.



Aligning Stakeholders to Achieve Innovation and Reform

All this engagement revealed a pressing need to realign legal education and bar admissions with the realities of modern legal practice and public needs. It takes an integrated effort to create a new practice-ready lawyer. Just like interlocking gears that seamlessly turn together to power a machine, there are many stakeholders that must collaborate to produce practice-ready attorneys and address access to justice gaps. These include:

- **STATE SUPREME COURTS** (or a jurisdiction's equivalent highest court) serve as the regulators of the legal profession, setting bar admissions requirements including attendance at or graduation from law school (based on accreditation), the passing score for the bar exam, additional or alternative criteria for admission via innovative pathways, and conducting character and fitness reviews of candidates. State supreme courts also set portability rules, continuing legal education requirements, and other requirements for practicing lawyers in their jurisdictions.

  CCJ and COSCA serve as the associations of state court leadership, wherein state court leaders collaborate, share insights, and drive national progress in court administration.

- **ACCREDITORS** create uniform standards for law schools to meet the minimum education requirements for accredited law schools, including standards for experiential learning.[2] Most jurisdictions require graduation from a law school accredited by the ABA Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar to qualify a candidate to be eligible for admission to the bar.

- **LAW SCHOOLS** and related organizations educate and train future lawyers. There are both public and private law schools, serving a wide range of geographic communities, educational priorities, financial means, and substantive and clinical specialties. Legal educators also report varying approaches to bar exam preparation and offerings of experiential learning (with or without client responsibility).

- **BAR EXAMINERS AND BAR ADMISSIONS OFFICES** protect the public by implementing policy decisions made by state supreme courts with respect to bar admissions. They develop, administer and score bar examinations and, in some jurisdictions, they have implemented and supervised innovative licensure pathways. They also enforce character and fitness standards for admission developed by state supreme courts.

  The National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE) produces the Uniform Bar Examination (UBE) which is currently used in most states and has developed the NextGen Uniform Bar Examination (NextGen) that will begin to be implemented in July 2026 and will fully replace the UBE in 2028.

- **THE PRACTICING BAR** not only teaches law students and new attorneys how to apply legal skills in practice, but its members also serve as models of the values and norms of the legal profession and form the legal community that will support them as they transition into practice.

  Legal employers and state and local bar associations often serve as organizational partners in the training of law students and new attorneys, from ba-sponsored mentorship programs to structured employer onboarding and training programs.

- **NATIONAL, STATE, AND LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS** of public interest organizations are also instrumental in the landscape of legal education and licensure. Public interest associations often work to engage policymakers and the broader public on the issues that affect their clients and the attorneys that serve them. They also educate law students about public interest work generally as well as specific practice settings within public interest.

There is ample basis to be optimistic that such alignment can, in fact, lead to better results. Using their regulatory authority over the bar admissions process, state supreme courts have created innovative admissions pathways directed at issues such as increasing practice readiness and enhancing practice in the public interest. In addition, state supreme courts have and can play a critical role in encouraging mentorship opportunities for law students and new lawyers by experienced lawyers and judges. State supreme courts can also convene stakeholders at the local, regional, and national levels to share insights on best practices, identify areas for improvement and collaboration, and develop additional innovative strategies to promote effective, scalable, and affordable legal training, assessment, and professional development.

> THEORY ISN'T ENOUGH. LAW STUDENTS NEED TO HAVE PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE OUTSIDE OF LAW SCHOOL."
>
> —*CLEAR survey respondent*

Key Definitions

CLEAR defined several key terms that underpin many important recommendations. Prior to this report, stakeholders frequently used these terms with differing meanings. One of CLEAR's goals is to establish a baseline understanding of these important terms and their definitions, as follows

PRACTICE READINESS

The knowledge, skills, and professional abilities that a new attorney must possess to practice independently at a novice level.

These competences fall into four broad categories:
(1) foundational knowledge and analytical skills,
(2) ethics and professionalism,
(3) communication and durable skills, and
(4) legal practice skills.

PUBLIC INTEREST

Includes civil legal aid attorneys, prosecutors, public defenders, government attorneys, and solo and small law firm attorneys who serve individuals' legal needs, particularly in underserved rural areas and for those with modest means.

Many practitioners in rural communities do a mixture of contract indigent defense cases, general civil and/or criminal practice, and significant pro bono service [3] Broadly speaking, public interest is "people law," meaning the practice of law accessible to and responsive of people's legal needs.

BAR EXAM

A written exam approved by a state supreme court that is used to assess a lawyer's minimum competence to practice law.

The most common exam currently in circulation is the UBE, which has been adopted by 41 jurisdictions. The UBE is comprised of a series of multiple choice, essay, and performance exams. UBE scores are portable. Each state sets its score for passing the exam, and a test-taker may seek admission to other UBE states, subject to satisfaction of other admissions requirements.

The NextGen has been developed to test both legal knowledge and a practical application of skills in a more realistic legal setting.

INNOVATIVE LICENSURE PATHWAYS

In addition to the UBE or other traditional written bar exams, many jurisdictions have adopted other methods for assessing competence.

Currently, at least 13 states have enacted, or are considering, innovative pathways to licensure (Figure 1). Others are currently exploring what may work for their jurisdictions.

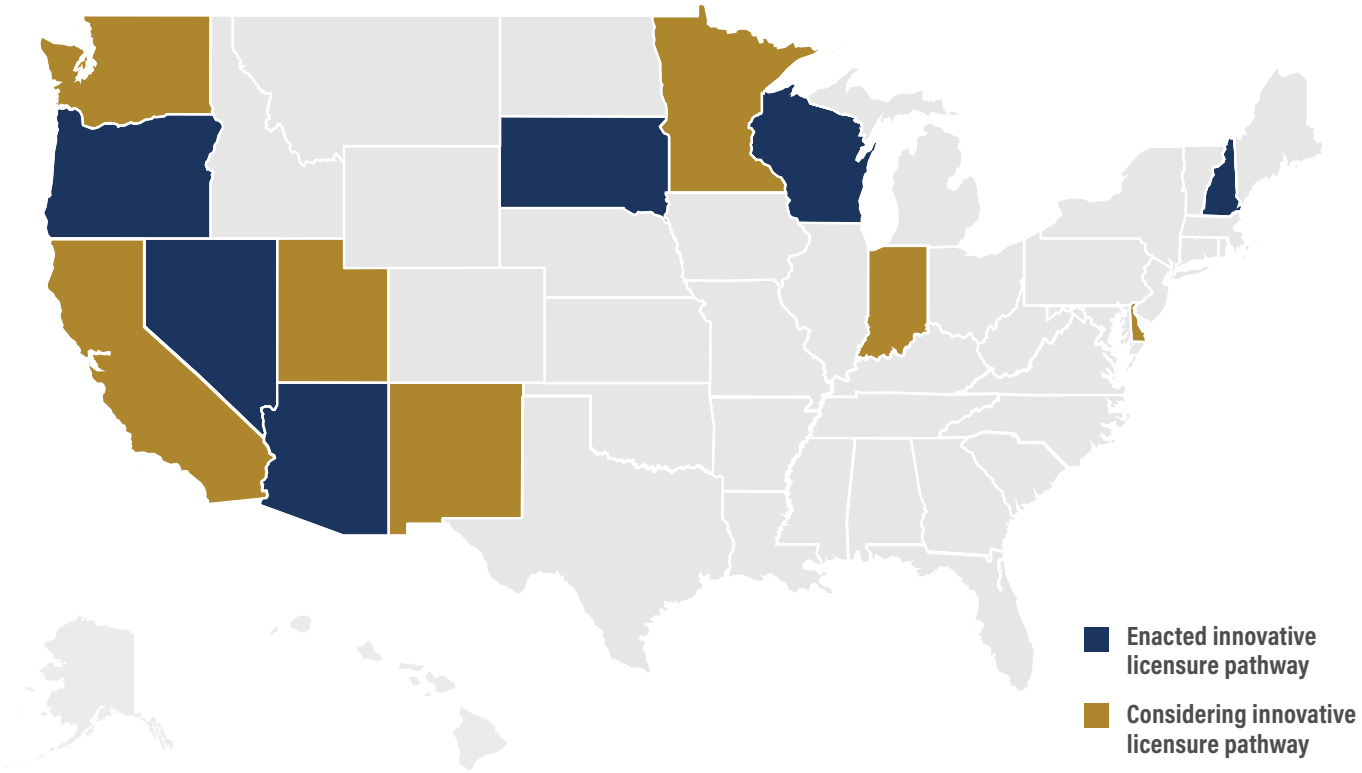
Many states are developing innovative licensing approaches that closely align with research identifying minimum competence in the legal profession, offering strong assurances of public protection. These models can assess essential entry-level skills in ways that traditional bar exams cannot. Experiential learning and field experience are recognized as the most effective methods for teaching practice skills, and these innovative pathways provide a new way to emphasize and evaluate a broader range of competencies relevant to legal practice.

The programs being implemented focus on three types: 1) curricular, 2) supervised practice, and 3) combined models:

- **Curricular Pathways** allow bar applicants to complete most, if not all, of the admission requirements while in law school. These options range from full diploma privilege to programs that require applicants to complete detailed curricular requirements and compile a portfolio of legal work that is evaluated by bar examiners.
- **Supervised Practice Pathways** allow applicants to demonstrate their competence while working under a licensed supervisor for a defined period.
- **Hybrid Pathways** combine written examinations with elements of curricular and supervised practice pathways.

A detailed landscape of programs nationwide is available on page 69.

Figure 1: Blue states have approved and enacted an innovative pathway to licensure. Gold states are in the process of considering innovative pathways to licensure.



Challenges Facing the Legal Profession

There are real and pressing challenges facing the legal profession that directly and urgently affect the people we serve. They should inform the scope of preparation new attorneys receive, the way we license, and the support we provide to new attorneys. The whole legal profession—from legal educators, to regulators, to the practicing bar—has an important role to play in equipping new lawyers with the skills, knowledge, and support they need as they begin their legal careers. These challenges include:

RISE OF SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS

The justice gap represents a significant barrier to achieving equitable access to legal services. Many people find it increasingly difficult to obtai legal assistance due to a lack of available lawyers, rising costs of legal representation, and inadequate resources for civil legal services, prosecution, and criminal defense. Though family, probate and estate, housing, consumer, and criminal matters can be life-altering for those who experience them, most litigants are left to navigate a complex court system with inadequate or no legal assistance.[4] While attorneys play a central role in the adversarial legal system, too often we see "lawyer -less courts" where at least one party goes unrepresented and unassisted in highly consequential legal matters.[5]

INADEQUATE RESOURCES FOR PROVIDERS OF CIVIL LEGAL AID, CRIMINAL DEFENSE, AND PROSECUTION

Reports from across the country show that government agencies, public defender practices, and civil legal aid programs are losing their core assets—their attorneys who have dedicated their careers to public interest. Beginning in law school, students face numerous barriers to pursuing a career in public interest, from less predictable career paths as compared to private practice, to a perceived lack of prestige in many schools, to the prospect of managing educational loans on a public interest salary.

Each year, nearly a million people who seek help from civil legal aid providers are turned away due to the lack of resources to provide help.[6] Low-income Americans receive inadequate or no assistance whatsoever for 92 percent of their civil legal needs.[7] There are 1.3 million attorneys in the United States, but only 10,000 of them are legal aid attorneys.[8] Numerous cost-benefit studies show that legal aid services deliver far more in benefits than costs, but communities cannot reap these benefits without efforts to broaden the pool of willing and able attorneys to take on these important roles.[9] With the lowest salaries in the legal profession—less than half the median salary—civil legal aid organizations face intense competition with other public interest employers as they struggle to recruit and retain attorneys.[10]

Indigent defense systems nationwide are in crisis. With at least four of every five people accused of crimes unable to afford an attorney, public defender workloads are more than double the estimated reasonable capacity for effective representation.[11] These high caseloads are a major factor in public defender turnover and require public defenders to face the reality that they often cannot advocate effectively for their clients despite working long hours.[12] Adjusted for inflation, public defender salaries have remained stagnant for decades, with an average starting public defender salary of $59,700 in 2022.[13]

Prosecutors' offices across the country are also critically short-staffed. Although prosecutors have a higher average starting salary, e.g., $68,000 in 2020, they are still resigning at record numbers without new hires to replace them.[14]

> A PRACTICE IN A RURAL SPACE OFTEN LOOKS VERY DIFFERENT AND MANY OF US ARE SOLO ATTORNEYS THAT DON'T HAVE SUPERVISORS TO GUIDE US."
>
> —*CLEAR survey respondent*

SPREAD OF LEGAL DESERTS

The existence of legal deserts (often in rural communities) leaves many without any means to effectively navigate their legal needs. Although legal deserts are often most prevalent in rural areas, they can also be found in suburban and urban areas.[15] Over 50 percent of rural counties nationwide are considered legal deserts, with less than one lawyer per 1,000 people.[16] Rural communities not only struggle to find enough practicing lawyers, but also lack enough judges and government attorneys, leaving people living in rural communities with little access to critical legal infrastructure.[17]

Rural residents, who are more likely to stay in practice in rural areas, face barriers to accessing higher education and law school, while new attorneys who practice in rural areas often do not have the support that they need to balance the delicate economics to keep their practices afloat. Rural areas are served in large part by solo and small firm attorneys, who frequently combine their private practice with contract indigent defense, guardian ad litem, and sometimes prosecutorial work.[18] This rural legal scarcity is accelerated by consistent trends of rural attorneys who are retiring, but are not being replaced.[19] While the advancing age of the legal profession is even more heightened in rural areas, young attorneys also face other serious barriers to establishing lasting law practices in rural places.[20]

THE CHANGING LEGAL PROFESSION

The practice of law itself is changing, in both litigation and transactional work. With just 4% of state civil lawsuits and 3% of criminal cases going to trial, contested hearings are far less frequent than in the past.[21] New attorneys have fewer opportunities to hone the litigation skills that not only make them effective as court advocates, but also make them more effective in case evaluation, pretrial litigation, and negotiation.[22]

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming traditional legal practices, diminishing many hands-on training experiences essential for skill development.[23] AI excels in tasks like legal research, writing, and drafting. It is effectively handling work typically assigned to associates, such as reviewing large volumes of documents and crafting memos.[24] While remote proceedings have enhanced access to courts for attorneys and clients, they also hinder new attorneys' training by reducing opportunities to observe experienced practitioners and learn courtroom procedures.[25] Although technology can improve efficiency and access to legal services, it is crucial that the training and support for the next generation of lawyers are responsive to these changes to ensure they can successfully navigate the evolving legal landscape.

Legal employers across the profession are reporting that they have less capacity to train new attorneys. The economic model of law firms, which once allowed for greater training costs and for new associates to gain practical experience working on client matters, is being replaced by a tighter market where clients are less willing to pay expenses related to new associate training.[26] This issue is further compounded by the struggles of public interest organizations, which are often overwhelmed with high caseloads, limiting their capacity to provide effective training and mentorship.

GENERATIONAL CHANGES AND AFTEREFFECTS OF THE COVID–19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic greatly hindered the educational and developmental skills of many students, creating significant disruptions that have led to gaps in knowledge and skill acquisition during crucial formative years.[27] At the same time, young lawyers face reduced opportunities for court observation and informal mentoring, exacerbated by the retirement of seasoned practitioners which has resulted in a loss of experienced mentors. This situation highlights the urgent need to address the long-term implications of these changes for this generation's readiness for both higher education and the workforce, emphasizing the importance of enhancing training and support.

MISALIGNMENT OF LEGAL EDUCATION, LICENSURE, AND LAW PRACTICE

Most law school graduates enter the legal profession, moving into diverse practice areas where preparedness is essential for effective client representation. In high-volume public defense, prosecution, solo and small firm practice, and civil legal aid offices, new attorneys must quickly adapt to their roles, often representing clients in court very soon after starting their careers. However, surveys reveal a concerning gap in practice skills; while new attorneys generally excel in areas like legal research and technology use, they often struggle with critical competencies such as client communication, legal writing specific to practice tasks, negotiations, and oral advocacy—skills that are typically developed through experiential learning opportunities like clinics and internships. Client contact is particularly important, as it helps new lawyers build the interpersonal skills necessary for maintaining effective relationships with clients and understanding their unique needs.

The role of bar licensure further complicates this issue. Noting that NexGen has yet to be implemented, the bar exam has not covered many practical realities of the profession. Although the bar exam is intended to assess minimum competence, many new attorneys and practicing lawyers alike believe it does not accurately reflect the skills needed for their daily responsibilities. Research indicates that extensive time dedicated to bar exam preparation is a key ingredient to passage, which proves difficult for candidates with other obligations, including job and caregiving responsibilities.[28]

These discrepancies pose a challenge to ensure that new attorneys are both competent and ready to engage with the communities they serve. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a reevaluation of both legal education and bar licensure to align them more closely with the practical skills required for successful legal practice.

THE ABSENCE OF COURT LEADERSHIP IN LEGAL EDUCATION AND ADMISSIONS

While there are, of course, exceptions, state supreme courts have not consistently or sufficiently led efforts around the regulation of the practice of law. This inconsistency has allowed others to fill the void, often without the consideration from or support by the judicial system. Collaboration across the legal profession is necessary to overcome entrenched structural impediments to innovation and reform, and state supreme courts must lead this effort.

CLEAR Recommendations for State Supreme Courts

RECOMMENDATION **1**

Lead collaborative efforts to realign legal education, bar admissions, and new lawyers' readiness to practice with public needs.

State supreme courts are uniquely well-positioned to lead efforts to create a legal system that better addresses the legal needs of the communities they serve. Because innovation and reform are often hindered by existing and entrenched institutional impediments, state supreme courts should take a leadership role in fostering innovation and reform to realign legal education, bar admissions, and new lawyers' readiness to practice, meeting the legal needs of the public they serve.

RECOMMENDATION **2**

Implement state-level strategies to improve practice readiness.

Due to the disconnect between the knowledge and skills most new lawyers have and those they need to be ready to practice, state supreme courts should lead in identifying and implementing specific strategies before and after lawyers are admitted to the practice of law.

RECOMMENDATION **2.1:** State supreme courts should increase opportunities for internships and externships, facilitate mentorship opportunities, and amend court rules to allow more students and recent graduates to appear under an attorney's supervision.

RECOMMENDATION **2.2:** State supreme courts should adopt CLE requirements to address practice readiness gaps, increase opportunities for law clerkships in state and local courts, and facilitate, encourage, and perhaps even require new lawyer mentorship opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION **3**

Encourage law school accreditation that serves the public.

State supreme courts should encourage an accreditation process that promotes innovation, experimentation, and cost-effective legal education geared toward lawyers meeting the legal needs of the public.

RECOMMENDATION **4**

Reduce reliance on external law school rankings.

In an increasingly competitive landscape, the emphasis on external rankings can often overshadow the core values and unique strengths of individual law schools and legal professionals. All stakeholders should reduce their reliance on external rankings, including those published by the U.S. News and World Report.

RECOMMENDATION **5**

Encourage experiential learning that involves client responsibility.

Because experiential learning is imperative to train lawyers, both in law school and upon graduation, state supreme courts should encourage innovations and reforms in experiential learning that encourage greater client responsibility, through clinics, internships, externships or other practice settings, and through licensing requirements established in collaboration with legal educators.

RECOMMENDATION **6**

Reform bar admissions processes to better meet public needs.

Because the bar admissions process—involving both a determination of competence and a successful character and fitness examination—plays a crucial role in the education and preparation of new lawyers, state supreme courts should encourage innovations and reforms to ensure that the bar admissions process aligns with the needs of the public they serve.

RECOMMENDATION **6.1:** State supreme courts should explore innovative pathways to licensure that enhance practice readiness and address access to justice.

RECOMMENDATION **6.2:** State supreme courts should develop passing scores for the NextGen UBE using evidence-based standard setting (psychometric standards).

RECOMMENDATION **6.3:** Because the bar exam causes economic and other hardships for many applicants, state supreme courts should consider allowing third-year law students to take the bar exam during law school, offering licensing exams in stages, and/or advocating for funding for applicants to cover preparation and living expenses during the study period.

CLEAR Recommendations for State Supreme Courts

RECOMMENDATION 6

(Continued)

RECOMMENDATION **6.4:** To support score portability—a current reality of the profession, and the expectation of lawyers in an increasingly interconnected world—state supreme courts should explore how to accept other jurisdictions' determinations of competence, whether by innovative or bar exam pathways.

RECOMMENDATION **6.5:** State supreme courts and their boards of bar examiners should engage in careful review of character and fitness requirements to streamline the process and focus on information that meaningfully predicts misconduct (as each state defines the term).

RECOMMENDATION 7

Support public service attorneys.

State supreme courts should work to support opportunities for lawyers to pursue careers in public service and to represent those currently underserved by the profession.

RECOMMENDATION **7.1:** State supreme courts should champion public interest lawyering by considering innovative pathways to licensure, supporting efforts to lower caseloads and support lawyer well-being, raising awareness and prestige of public interest careers, and advocating for strong public interest loan repayment assistance programs at the state and national levels and tax credit programs for public interest lawyers.

RECOMMENDATION **7.2:** State supreme courts should encourage all stakeholders to engage prospective and enrolled law students about the financial and professional implications of law school, especially related to salary, debt, public interest specialization programs and centers, and proactive individual assistance.

RECOMMENDATION **8**

Encourage rural practice.

Because rural areas face the access to justice crisis acutely, often experiencing a critical shortage of attorneys to meet the legal needs of the community, state courts should work with stakeholders to expand opportunities for cost-effective rural education by promoting distance learning, exploring innovative pathways designed to address rural legal needs, and encouraging internship, externship, and law clerkships in rural communities.

RECOMMENDATION *9*

Continue the work of CLEAR.

To assist state supreme courts with implementing the above recommendations, CCJ/COSCA should institutionalize the Committee on Legal Education and Admissions Reform (CLEAR) by establishing it as a joint standing committee of the conferences.

RECOMMENDATION **9.1:** CLEAR should continue to organize regular convenings among key stakeholders, regionally and locally, and among state supreme courts, bar examiners, and legal educators.

RECOMMENDATION **9.2:** CLEAR should facilitate and provide support to jurisdictions considering innovative pathways to bar admission.

RECOMMENDATION **9.3:** CLEAR should monitor the implementation of the Next Gen UBE and report to CCJ/COSCA about further refinement to the examination.

RECOMMENDATION **9.4:** Because score portability is a critical issue to the longevity and spread of innovative pathways, CLEAR should develop and recommend model standards and rules to state supreme courts.

What is CLEAR?

CLEAR's Charge

In August 2023, CCJ and COSCA passed Resolution 1, establishing the Committee on Legal Education and Admissions Reform (CLEAR). The resolution calls on CCJ/COSCA to examine how legal education and licensure practices and processes can address the justice gap crisis and ensure public trust and confidence in the legal profession. The resolution is attached as Appendix A. As the resolution states, CLEAR's charge was to:

> **Examine the current state of legal education in the United States to ascertain how changes to it are impacting the professionalism and competence of law school graduates.**

> **Consider the role of state supreme courts as the profession's primary regulators and their responsibility for new lawyer preparation.**

> **Determine what reforms should be considered to legal education to produce "practice ready" and ethical lawyers who clearly understand their roles as both advocates and officers of the court.**

> **Consider admissions testing requirements on legal ethics, promote and create ethics standards for new attorneys, and review the role of state supreme courts in training on those subjects as well as the procedural and substantive methods to enforce ethical standards.**

> **Assess what types of legal education programs might encourage law school graduates to pursue careers in public service or to represent those currently underserved by the profession.**

> **Examine the bar admissions process and recommend reforms that appropriately assess bar applicants' doctrinal, ethical, and practice-ready competence at a time when the legal profession is experiencing profound change, where such reforms may include alternative paths to bar admission programs and alternative testing approaches.**[29]