



# **Results of the Legal Incubator Lawyers' Survey**

**April 2021**

**ABA Standing Committee on the  
Delivery of Legal Services**



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321 N. Clark Street  
Chicago, IL 60654  
<http://www.americanbar.org>

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# Executive Summary

Legal incubators, also known as law firm incubators, in the United States are designed to help lawyers develop and launch law practices while expanding access to underserved populations. Based on business incubator models, legal incubator programs support the creation of new law firms by providing space, mentoring, and training to licensed lawyers. Most of the law firms produced by these legal incubators are solo or small firms that exist as both for profit businesses and nonprofit entities. Since the first legal incubator appeared in 2007, over 70 self-identified legal incubator programs have emerged around the globe.

In 2016, the ABA Standing Committee on the Delivery of Legal Services published a Comprehensive Survey of Lawyer Incubators that provided data on U.S. legal incubator programs. The 2016 Incubator Program Survey Report found that all legal incubator programs were not uniform in structure; however, all of them were focused on training new lawyers to become successful solo and small firm practitioners. It also reported that 80 percent of these programs encouraged lawyers to establish law practices that addressed the needs of low- and moderate-income individuals.<sup>1</sup> That survey revealed an overarching commitment to access to justice by exposing lawyers to flat fee, unbundled legal services, and sliding scale fees models that are commonly employed to reduce the cost of legal services. The respondents of the 2016 survey identified training in practice management, ethics, and substantive law as the most common training areas<sup>2</sup> and reported that about two-thirds of their alumni continued to work in solo or small firms of less than 25 lawyers.<sup>3</sup> The study documented valuable lawyer training and contributions to the community, however, program sustainability was flagged as the most significant challenge to address.<sup>4</sup>

Our research team launched a survey to understand the impact of these programs on the incubated attorneys in February 2018. This report documents the responses from that survey which is estimated to have captured more than 10 percent of the population that participated in legal incubator programs spanning eighteen U.S. states. Since there is no central depository for qualitative data identifying the lawyers that participate in these programs, this participant survey provides a fractional overview of the characteristics of the participants, their law practices, and the perceived benefit of these programs to their professional development.

This report of the results of the legal incubator lawyers' survey serves several purposes, including:

- Confirming the program-reported data.
- Understanding the characteristics and experience of lawyers who participate in legal incubator programs.
- Measuring the short-term impact of legal incubator programs on the career development of lawyer participants.
- Gauging the impact of the legal incubator program as a model to address new lawyer training.

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<sup>1</sup> ABA Standing Committee on the Delivery of Legal Services, 2016 Comprehensive Survey of Lawyer Incubators 3, [https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/delivery\\_legal\\_services/ls\\_del\\_comprehensive\\_survey\\_lawyer\\_incubators.pdf](https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/delivery_legal_services/ls_del_comprehensive_survey_lawyer_incubators.pdf) [hereinafter "Incubator Program Report"], p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Incubator Program Report, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Incubator Program Report, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Incubator Program Report, p. 34.

- Giving lawyer incubator participants a baseline for measuring their experience to see how their experience compares to others nationwide.

## Key Findings

The survey data was collected between February 2018 and February 2019. It engaged 44 lawyers who were participating in the legal incubator programs at the time of the survey and 70 lawyers who graduated from such programs. An overview of the key findings is presented here with more detail provided in the subsequent pages.

### Lawyer Characteristics: Demographics and Finances

The research team was interested in understanding who was participating in legal incubator programs, why they chose to do so, and how they were faring financially. The survey revealed information that helps us get a better glimpse at who is most likely to participate in these programs.

#### *Demographics*

The average survey participant was 35 years old. Just under half the respondents reported being married or in a domestic partnership; 43 percent reported having one or more children. Fifty-one percent of respondents identified as female and 47 percent as male. White/Caucasian participants were underrepresented compared to their percentage representation in the legal profession. Participants that identified as Americans of Latino, Black, and Asian descent were overrepresented compared to their national representation in the legal profession.

#### *Financial Life*

More than three-quarters of all participants reported educational debt of \$50,000 or more, with six percent of participants reporting debt higher than \$300,000. Current incubator participants reported an average income of \$42,946, while past participants reported an average income of \$77,206. For both groups, their primary law practice was their main source of income, making up 75 percent of current participants' total income and 78 percent of former participants' total income. Sixty-five percent of former participants agreed that they were able to create a sustainable legal practice while in the incubator. Only a little over half of both sets of participants reported carrying their own health insurance.

### Choosing the Incubator Path: Law School Experience & the Decision to Join

The study also aimed to understand a little about the law school experience of lawyers who join an incubator program. Researchers found that almost all of the participants worked while attending law school and that almost three-quarters of the participants engaged in some sort of pro bono activity.

Almost two-thirds of all participants, 73 percent, indicated they joined the incubator to establish a new law firm or to grow an existing one. Approximately 25 percent indicated that they had previously tried to establish a law practice; however, many reported that they lacked the substantive knowledge to be successful. Only 5 percent reported that they joined the incubator because they did not have any other job offers at the time. Twenty-six percent of the respondents stated they ranked in the top 25 percent of their class.

### Program Value: Work Life, Program Experience and Career Impact

The survey of participants allows comparison between what participants feel they are receiving and what programs indicated they provide in the 2016 Incubator Survey. In addition to learning about lawyers' experiences in the incubator program, the survey revealed information about participants' work life and the impact of the program on their career.

#### *Program Experience*

Current incubator participants identified hands-on practice experience, mentorship from experienced lawyers, peer support, and subsidized business costs as the most valuable incubator aspects thus far into the program. Further, when asked what they thought was important to learn about, billing and collecting received the most "extremely important" and "very important" responses from current incubator participants, followed by money management/budgeting and client development and marketing. Nearly half responded that learning about nonprofit law firms was "not at all important." The participants marked networking as the area they felt most prepared in thus far into the program, followed by how to best serve low- and moderate-income clients.

Former incubator participants reported that, first and foremost, the incubator prepared them "extremely well" or "very well" for networking opportunities. They also indicated that the incubator experience prepared them well for flat or fixed fee arrangements, communicating with clients, and unbundled/limited scope services. They indicated that the "most helpful" training areas were in developing business plans, substantive law training, and networking. More former participants felt that subsidized business costs were "extremely valuable" than any other feature, followed by subsidized office space, peer support, and mentorship.

In terms of a pro bono requirement, 56 percent of current incubator participants and 35 percent of former incubator participants stated that the incubator program required them to provide pro bono service. Former participants reported that pro bono opportunities were the least valuable feature of the programs.

#### *Work Life*

Current incubator participants indicated that they worked an average of 46 hours per week, spending 34 percent of their time on billable client work and 9 percent on pro bono. Former participants reported a similar work week, spending 47 percent of their time on billable client work and 8 percent of their time on pro bono. Both groups indicated that they spent 18 percent of their time on administrative tasks and 25 percent of both groups of attorneys stated they either took no vacation or less than a week's vacation.

#### *Career Impact & Satisfaction*

A vast majority, 93 percent, of current incubator lawyers indicated that they wanted to continue to grow their existing solo practice or start a small private firm after they left the program. Approximately 72 percent of former incubator participants reported that they continued to operate the solo firm they incubated when they left the program. The majority of both groups reported that they were "extremely satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the control over their schedules, serving underserved populations, the opportunities to build their skills, and control over their cases/clients. More than 80 percent of all incubator lawyers expressed satisfaction with their career. Both groups of participants were least satisfied with their compensation, particularly as it relates to their ability to pay their bills.

### Clients: Services Provided & Financial Arrangements

The survey also revealed key information about these lawyers' relationships with clients. Specifically, we asked about the types of legal work they offer clients and the types of financial arrangements they make.

#### *Services Provided*

Both cohorts assigned the largest percentage to family law as an area of practice, followed by criminal law and estate planning/probate/wills for former participants. For current participants, family law was followed by estate planning/probate/wills and real estate.

The majority of former participants, 56 percent, reported building a niche practice while only 44 percent of current attorneys identified with a niche practice. In describing the client focus of these niche practices, the three that constituted the largest share of their client base were immigrants, elderly, and domestic violence survivors. Further, both former and current incubator lawyers reported that low- and moderate-income individuals constituted the majority of their client base while high-income individuals represented only 8 percent of their client base. For both groups, non-profit organizations or small businesses made up 5 percent or less of their client base. A large majority of all lawyers surveyed, 93 percent, reported that they carried malpractice insurance.

#### *Client communications*

At the time of the survey, only 23 percent of current participants' client interactions and 22 percent of former participants' client interactions took place remotely. For those who had remote client interactions, the primary mode of communication was email, followed by phone calls and texting. Only six percent of client communications occurred via an online portal, and only 1 percent were conducted via video-conferencing.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Financial Arrangements*

Many of the incubator participants employed alternative fee structures. Flat fees made up an average of 48 percent of current incubator participants' total billing and 44 percent of former participants' total billing. Hourly rates made up a roughly equal share. Sixty-five percent of current incubator participants and 58 percent of former participants reported providing sliding scale fees. More than half of both groups reported that more than 25 percent of their services were unbundled. Former incubator participants reported that they contributed an average of 10 hours per month of pro bono services.

### Conclusion

The study revealed that legal incubator programs support the career development of lawyers interested in starting solo and small firm law practices. While these lawyers are generally satisfied with their professional lives, many indicate significant concern about their financial instability. These lawyers report they provide personal legal services primary to low- and moderate-income clients. More research is required to understand the long-term impact of these programs on lawyer participants and the clients they serve.

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<sup>5</sup> We note that the survey closed just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic erupting in the United States. As such, these numbers are likely no longer indicative of participants' current practices.



# Introduction

Legal incubators in the United States first emerged in 2007, just before an economic recession impacted the legal profession in 2008.<sup>6</sup> That recession led to loss of employment opportunities for lawyers<sup>7</sup> and increased attention for legal incubator programs that promised training and mentorship opportunities to recent law school graduates and new lawyers starting their own law practices.<sup>8</sup> While the design of the first lawyer incubator program was developed to foster career opportunities, it also focused on serving the needs of underserved populations.

The original incubator program, developed at the City University of New York School of Law, was designed to help lawyers develop and launch law practices while expanding access to underserved populations.<sup>9</sup> The first model was based on an entrepreneurship incubator model that supported new businesses by providing space, mentoring, and training. A number of subsequently developed legal incubator programs adopted a dual mission – to train lawyers and to address gaps in legal service delivery for underserved populations. Since the first legal incubator appeared in 2007, over 70 self-identified legal incubator programs have emerged around the globe – the majority of them in the United States.<sup>10</sup>

The Comprehensive Survey of Lawyer Incubators, published by the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Delivery of Legal Services in 2016 (the “Incubator Program Report”), described these legal incubator programs as having varied structures and designs.<sup>11</sup> Some are organized as support structures that do not pay or provide sizeable stipends to attorney participants, while others are structured as legal residencies where attorneys receive a salary or significant compensation.<sup>12</sup> That study found that despite their different forms, legal incubator programs

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<sup>6</sup> Fred Rooney and Stephanie Everette, Legal Incubator Programs: An Emerging Movement, 36 GPSolo 58 (2019), [https://www.americanbar.org/groups/gpsolo/publications/gp\\_solo/2019/january-february/legal-incubator-programs-emerging-movement/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/gpsolo/publications/gp_solo/2019/january-february/legal-incubator-programs-emerging-movement/).

<sup>7</sup> Kathryn Rubino, “What the 2009 Layoffs Were Really Like”, Above the Law, Sept. 28, 2016 at 2:00 PM, <https://abovethelaw.com/2016/09/what-the-2009-legal-layoffs-were-really-like/>. See also Eli Wald, The Economic Downturn and the Legal Profession, Foreword: The Great Recession and the Legal Profession, 78 Fordham L. Rev. 2051 (2010). Available at: <https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/flr/vol78/iss5/1>.

<sup>8</sup> Jeremy Nobile, “In the recession’s wake, attorneys increasingly find success on their own,” Crain’s Cleveland Business, July 22, 2017, 12:00 PM, <https://www.craincleveland.com/article/20170722/news/170729949/recessions-wake-attorneys-increasingly-find-success-their-own>

<sup>9</sup> Jonathan D. Glater, *Lawyers Learn how to be Businesslike*, New York Times, January 9, 2008 (discussing the legal incubator at the City University of New York School of Law), <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/09/nyregion/09law.html?partner=permalink&exprod=permalink>.

<sup>10</sup> The American Bar Association’s Standing Committee for the Delivery of Legal Services has kept track of these programs. The most recent standing of those programs is listed as [Appendix A](#). The foreign countries where legal incubators were founded are the Dominican Republic, India, Pakistan, Spain, and Bulgaria. According to the Fulbright consultant on these projects, Fred P. Rooney, all remain active except the one in the Dominican Republic. Email exchange with Fred P. Rooney on January 27, 2021 (on file with author).

<sup>11</sup> \Incubator Program Report

<sup>12</sup> See also Luz E. Herrera, *Encouraging the Development of Low Bono Law Practices*, 14 U. MD. L.J. RACE, RELIGION, GENDER & CLASS 1, 29-30 (2014) (noting also that residency programs have experienced attorneys supervising the attorneys’ work where incubator programs have less supervision and are focused on creating self-sufficient solo and small firm lawyers).

advance “social responsibility through pro bono services and orientations to low- and moderate-income populations.”<sup>13</sup> Of 46 programs whose responses appeared in the 2016 Incubator Program Survey Report, 69 percent indicated they required the lawyers in their program to provide pro bono services and 53 percent indicated their programs required attorneys to serve moderate-income clients.<sup>14</sup> The Incubator Program Report found that while a variety of organizations such as bar associations, bar foundations, law firms, and legal aid organizations participated in organizing these programs, it was law schools that most often took the lead.<sup>15</sup>

This report adds to our understanding of the approximate 843 lawyers who have participated in legal incubator programs since 2017.<sup>16</sup> Since that report some programs have shuttered or are on the brink of ceasing operations, but there are new ones that emerged since 2016.<sup>17</sup> Program sustainability was identified as a key challenge in the Incubator Program Report. Of the programs that participated in that survey, 46 percent stated they had annual budgets that are \$50,000/year or less. Only three programs reported budgets of \$500K or greater.<sup>18</sup> Based on feedback provided by the incubator program organizers during the course of this study, the current pandemic and its economic repercussions seem to have impacted the financial support to maintain some of these programs.<sup>19</sup>

This Incubator Lawyer Report seeks to create a better understanding about the lawyers that join these legal incubator programs. The survey included attorneys currently participating in these programs and those who had graduated. Including both groups of lawyers provides a more longitudinal view of these lawyers’ career development as a group. Prior to this survey, in 2015, the American Bar Association collected personal testimonials by incubator program participants who discussed the impact of these programs. Those testimonials were compiled in a video called *In Their Own Words*.<sup>20</sup> Throughout this report, we highlight quotes from lawyers in that video that provides a more personal dimension to the survey results. This survey offers a quantitative component to those testimonials.

*“The incubator is helping me start my own practice by teaching me what I want to do and what I don’t want to do. And what I can do as a solo person versus what it would be probably better left to a firm to do.”* - Kate Thomas, Vermont Lawyer Incubator Project, The Vermont Bar Association and Vermont Law School

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<sup>13</sup> Incubator Program Report, p. 4. Seven out of ten programs reported pro bono activities as a key feature.

<sup>14</sup> Incubator Program Report, p. 30.

<sup>15</sup> Incubator Program Report, p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> As there is no central depository of incubator participant information, this number is based on reports by program directors as well as information gleaned from the 2016 Incubator Program Report.

<sup>17</sup> For example, the legal incubator at Arizona State University, ASU Law Group, closed its doors in June 2020. However, the Dallas Bar Association launched a legal incubator program in the fall of 2019.

<sup>18</sup> Incubator Program Report, p. 16.

<sup>19</sup> There are a number of legal incubator programs, including the incubator at Loyola University New Orleans College of Law and Thomas Jefferson School of Law in San Diego that have ceased operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, but hope to resume after the pandemic. Appendix A has a list of the various programs and the status of its operations as far as our research indicates.

<sup>20</sup> See the videos at *In Their Own Words*,

[https://www.americanbar.org/groups/delivery\\_legal\\_services/initiatives\\_awards/program\\_main/incubator\\_video/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/delivery_legal_services/initiatives_awards/program_main/incubator_video/)

The responses of lawyers who participated in legal incubator programs overwhelmingly indicate that these programs truly serve as training grounds for the solo and small firm bar, and are not a temporary holding pad for unemployed lawyers as has been previously espoused. Survey participants also provided further insight into the types of lawyers they train, their practice areas, their billing arrangements, some of the delivery methods they employ and, most importantly, which clients they serve.

## **A. Research Team**

As a follow up to the 2016 Incubator Program Report, the survey instrument was developed by Sara Smith, principal author of the 2016 Incubator Program Survey and former Research and Policy Analyst for the ABA Standing Committee on the Delivery of Legal Services,<sup>21</sup> and Luz Herrera, Professor of Law at Texas A&M University School of Law. A draft of the survey was initially vetted with sociologist Rebecca Sandefur and after incorporating her feedback, the research team presented the survey instrument to several incubator program directors and low bono leaders for additional input. Once the survey instrument was complete, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Texas A&M University reviewed the research plan and granted permission to proceed. Shortly after receiving IRB approval, Briana Morris, former Senior Counsel to the ABA Standing Committee on the Delivery of Legal Services, received IRB approval and joined the research team.<sup>22</sup>

## **B. Methodology**

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Texas A&M University approved a research plan to send an invitation through the ABA Incubator Program listserv (“Incubator Listserv”) to directors of self-identified legal incubator programs. The Incubator Listserv has approximately 370 members that include program directors, incubator participants, and others interested in incubators. It is managed by the ABA Standing Committee on the Delivery of Legal Services. The ABA Standing Committee on the Delivery of Legal Services also listed the survey participation invitation on their website. Because the survey did not capture participants’ name or contact information, all survey participants were completely anonymous.

The invitation asked directors of legal incubator programs to forward the survey link to “attorneys who are currently part of, or formerly participated in, a program, a law firm, or a nonprofit that provides services for modest-income populations.” In order to participate, survey respondents had to be at least 18 years of age. Participation in the survey was voluntary and respondents could decide not to complete it once they began it. Respondents could also skip any question they wished. We estimated that it would take a participant approximately 20 minutes to complete the survey, a copy of which is available on the Standing Committee on Delivery of Legal Services website.

The initial goal was to keep the survey open for two months. However, given the difficulty in locating past participants due to decentralized participant information, the survey remained active from February 2019 to February 2020. The research team was initially perplexed about the lack of responses but ultimately, we attribute the long timeline to transitions of personnel in the research team, lack of experience in social science research

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<sup>21</sup> Sara Smith is currently the Assistant Director of Curriculum Development at the Center for Computer Assisted Legal Instruction (CALI).

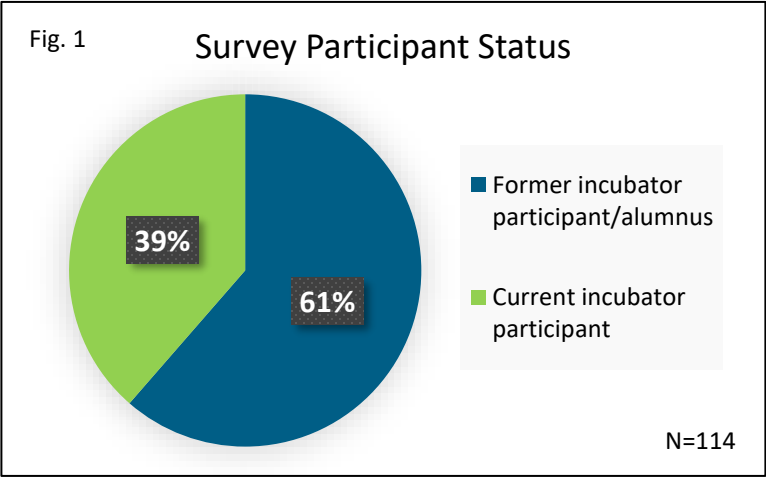
<sup>22</sup> Briana Morris is currently Senior Counsel to the ABA Standing Committee on Lawyer Referral and Information Service as well as to the ABA Center for Professional Responsibility Publications Board.

methods, and reluctance from program directors to identify incubator participants and/or distribute the survey to their participants.<sup>23</sup>

The survey instrument was organized on the Qualtrics platform and data was stored at the ABA. All of the research team’s findings are the result of this survey instrument, which was formulated to ask current and former incubator participants about themselves and their practices, the resources and training they received while in the incubator program, the clients they served, the services they provided, and their future outlook. Not all participants saw all of the questions, as some questions were only displayed as a follow-up query to a previous response.

C. Representation and Responses

We received a total of 130 responses but 16 responded “None of the above” to the prompt that asked them to identify themselves as either a former or current incubator participant and were therefore exited from the survey. Of the 114 remaining responses, 39 percent identified as current participants in an incubator program, and 61 percent were incubator program graduates. (Fig. 1) There is a drop from the 114 total respondents to 112 as soon as the fifth question. When responses do not add up to 112, we assume that respondents skipped the question or stopped taking the survey. This report presents the best information available to the research team. Each figure includes the number of responses for the question represented. Percentages represent the number of affirmative responses against the total number of responses received for that question or item within a question, unless otherwise noted. Further, charts represent responses from both current and former incubator participants unless otherwise noted.



The survey respondents are located throughout 18 U.S. states, including: Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, and Washington. (Fig 2) Based on the known number of 843 lawyers that comprise the pool of possible respondents, the study’s N=114 response rate was approximately 14 percent. The survey does not included responses from lawyers outside of the United States.

<sup>23</sup> Some of the feedback we received regarding the lack of participation included objections that the research team did not embrace more participatory research methods, concerns about having our data gathering conflict with their similar efforts, and/or time constraints that prohibited key gatekeepers from prioritizing our research.

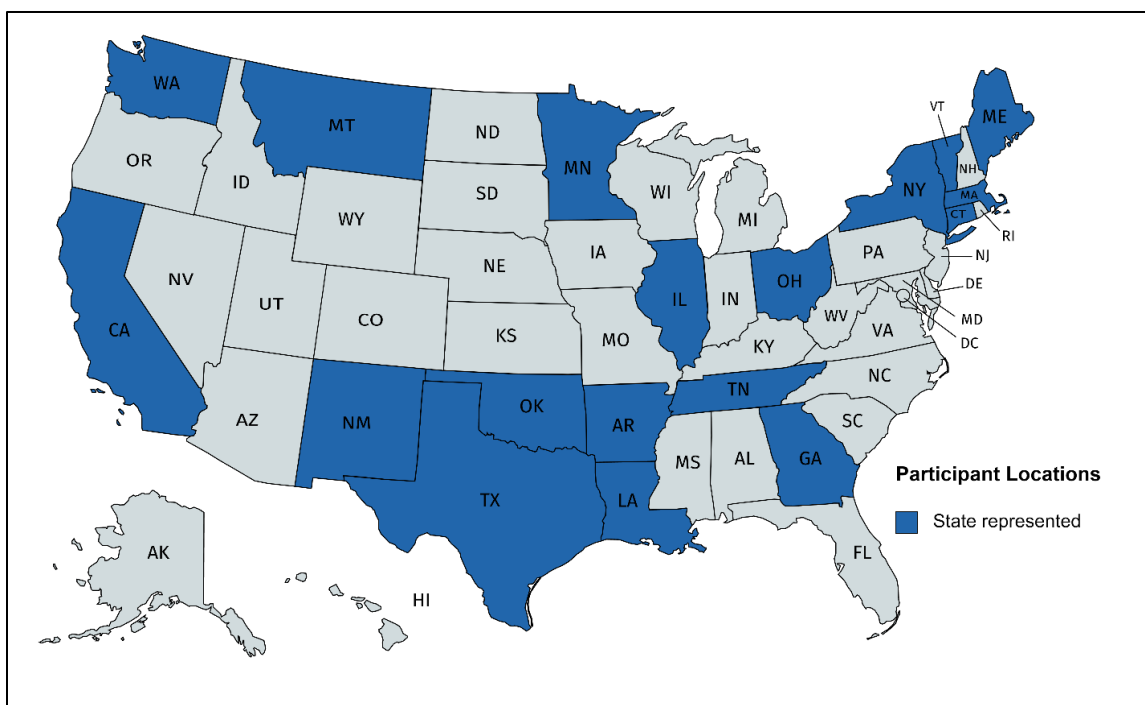


Fig. 2. Created with mapchart.net

## D. Report Structure

Part I, Lawyer Characteristics, presents demographic information in addition to some information that provides a better understanding of these lawyers' educational experience and their motivation for joining an incubator. This part also includes information about the lawyers' income and their practice infrastructure including workload, salary, and related information. Here, the findings of all participants combined seem more appropriate but there are some areas that require a discussion of differences found between current and former incubator program participants.

Part II, Program Value: Resources and Training, offers the incubated lawyers' views about the value of the resources and training they receive(d) from their program. This part asked them to identify the resources and training provided during their incubation period. It also asked former participants to evaluate the value of program offerings that continue to be helpful in their practice.

Part III, Client and Community Services, presents the findings on what client populations these incubator lawyers reported serving. It discusses their practices areas, their fee and billing arrangements, and their ongoing pro bono commitments. It also reports on their use of technology for remote communication.

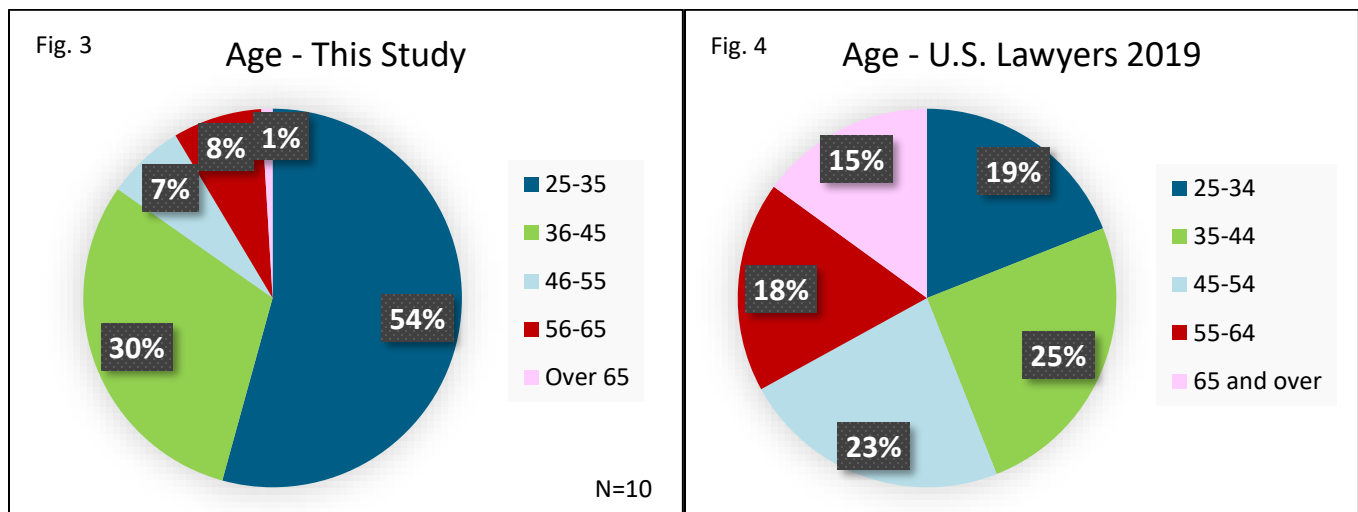
The report ends with Learned and Future Outlook, which proposes next steps in data collection efforts and discusses the impact of COVID-19 on incubators, law practice generally, and the need for affordable legal services.

# I. Lawyer Characteristics

The 2020 ABA Profile of the Legal Profession (the “2020 ABA Profile”) indicated, among other things, that the average lawyer in the United States is a 47.5 year old white male.<sup>24</sup> One of the primary purposes for this survey was our interest in knowing whether the demographics of legal incubator programs were the same. To that effect, the survey asked lawyers to report on basic demographic characteristics including age, gender, and race or ethnicity. It also asked about elements of their law school experience that may have contributed to their decision to participate in an incubator, including details about engagement in pro bono work prior to joining the incubator and educational debt incurred. This section captures the responses given about motivation and employment status at the time they applied to and joined an incubator program, and it offers insight into the reported and projected salaries of current and former incubator participants. A final element of lawyer characteristics captured by the survey and presented in this section is their law practice infrastructure, including information about their workload, vacation time, and career satisfaction.

## A. Demographic Information

Unlike the 2020 ABA Profile, the majority of the respondents to this question identified as part of the 25-45 age group. (Fig. 3) The youngest survey participants were 26 years of age and the oldest was 66 years of age. The median age was 35. This is well below the national legal professional median age of 47.5, which was reported in 2019.<sup>25</sup> (Fig. 4)

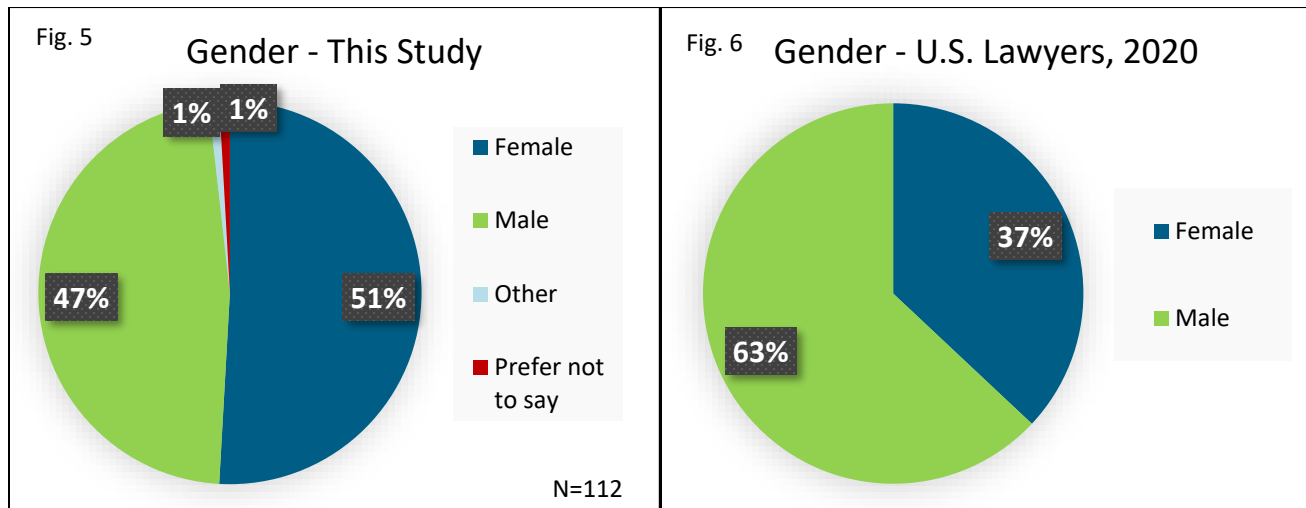


Further, 51 percent of respondents identified as female, 47 percent identified as male, and 2 percent identified as other or preferred not to say. (Fig. 5) The proportion of women to men far exceeded the numbers included in the

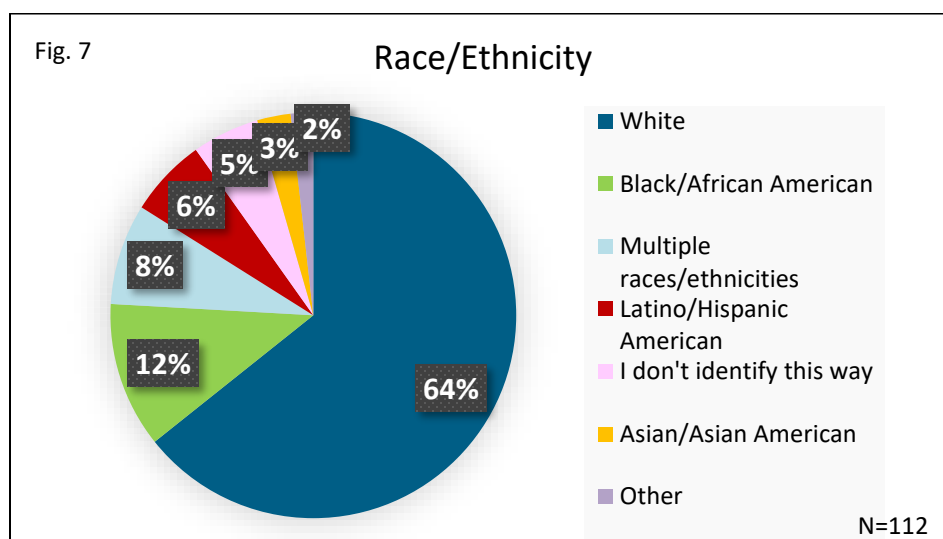
<sup>24</sup> American Bar Association, ABA Profile of the Legal Profession 2020, p. 32-35, <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/news/2020/07/potlp2020.pdf> [hereinafter “Legal Profession Profile”]

<sup>25</sup> Legal Profession Profile, p. 35.

2020 ABA Profile, which reported that only 37 percent of lawyers were women.<sup>26</sup> (Fig. 6) One possible cause for the overrepresentation of women in legal incubator programs may be due to greater gender parity in recent law school graduating classes. In 2019, the ABA Section on Legal Education and Admission to the Bar reported that there were 7,620 more female law students than male students.<sup>27</sup> The trend toward parity in gender of law school students can be traced back to the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when the number of female law students reached 49 percent.<sup>28</sup>



Similar to the makeup of the legal profession as a whole, 64 percent of respondents identified as White, 12 percent as Black or African American, 6 percent as Latino/Hispanic American, and 3 percent as Asian American. There were also 8 percent of respondents that indicated they were of mixed race and 2 percent identified as other. Of the 112 who answered this question, 5 percent indicated they did not identify by race and ethnicity. (Fig. 7)



<sup>26</sup> Legal Profession Profile, p. 32.

<sup>27</sup> Legal Profession Profile, p. 58.

<sup>28</sup> Id.

The 2020 ABA National Lawyer Population Survey reported that White men and women are overrepresented in the legal profession. Non-Hispanic White men and women comprised 60 percent of the population in 2019 but the same group represents 86 percent of all lawyers in 2020. People of color are more adequately represented in incubators than in the legal profession but all groups, except for Whites, are underrepresented compared to their percentage of the U.S. population. (Fig. 8)

Fig. 8 Race/ Ethnicity Comparison to U.S.

Racial or Ethnic Group	U.S. Demographics <sup>29</sup>	U.S. Lawyer Demographics <sup>30</sup>	Incubator Survey Participants
White	76.3%	86%	64%
Hispanic	18.5%	5%	6%
Black	13.4%	5%	12%
Asian & Pacific Islander	6.1%	2%	3%
Native American/American Indian	1.3%	0.4%	---
Mixed	2.8%	2%	8%
Other/Don't Identify This Way	---	---	7%

Prior research on solos suggests that many solo and small firm lawyers are immigrants, children of immigrants, or first generation professionals.<sup>31</sup> We therefore asked participant about whether their parents or grandparents were attorneys and also asked if they, their parents, or grandparents identified as immigrants. Ninety-one percent of all respondents indicated that they were born in the United States. Twenty-four percent stated that at least one of their parents were born outside of the United States. Only six percent indicated that a grandparent was an attorney and only seven percent indicated that one of their parents was an attorney. Data from the American Community Survey tells us that in 2019, 9 percent of all lawyers in the U.S. were foreign-born.<sup>32</sup>

When asked about their marital status, 49 percent responded that they were either married or in a domestic partnership. Forty-three percent were never married, 7 percent were divorced and 1 percent stated they were widowed. (Fig. 9) That same group of respondents indicated that 57 percent did not have children. From the group

<sup>29</sup> Estimates of American Community Survey data for 2019-20, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219>, the Census 2020 data is due to be released no later than April 1, 2021.

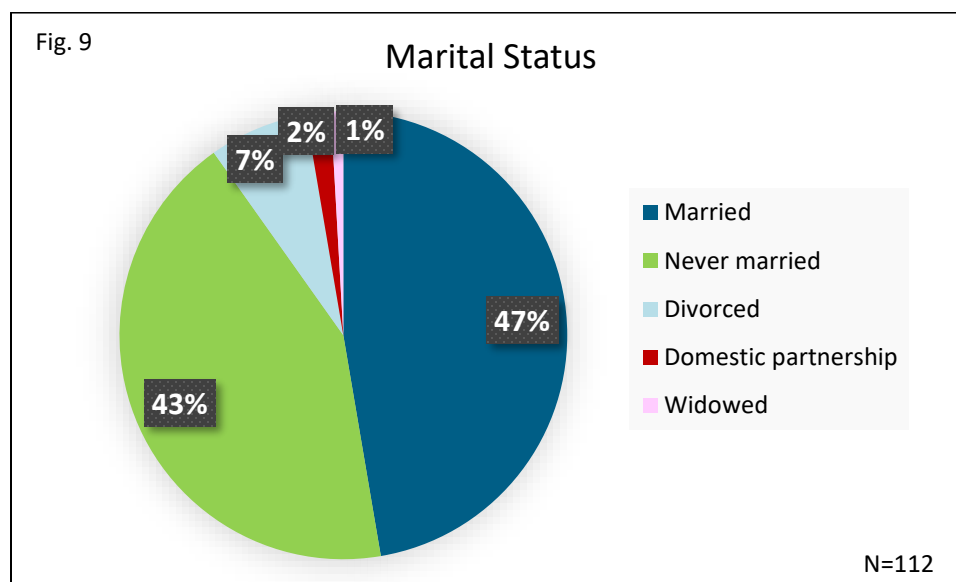
<sup>30</sup> Legal Profession Profile, p. 34.

<sup>31</sup> JEROME E. CARLIN, LAWYERS ON THEIR OWN 17-18 (1962).

<sup>32</sup> A special thank you to Alisha Kerchoff and Ethan Michelson who ran data to determine the most recent numbers of foreign-born attorneys. For data from 2000 to 2012, please see Michelson, Ethan (2015) "Immigrant Lawyers and the Changing Face of the U.S. Legal Profession," 22 Indiana J. of Global Legal Studies 105, 108 (2015). Available at: <https://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/ijgls/vol22/iss1/6>.



with children, the median and average number of children was 2. Seventeen of the 48 respondents to this question stated they had one child, and one identified as a parent of 5.



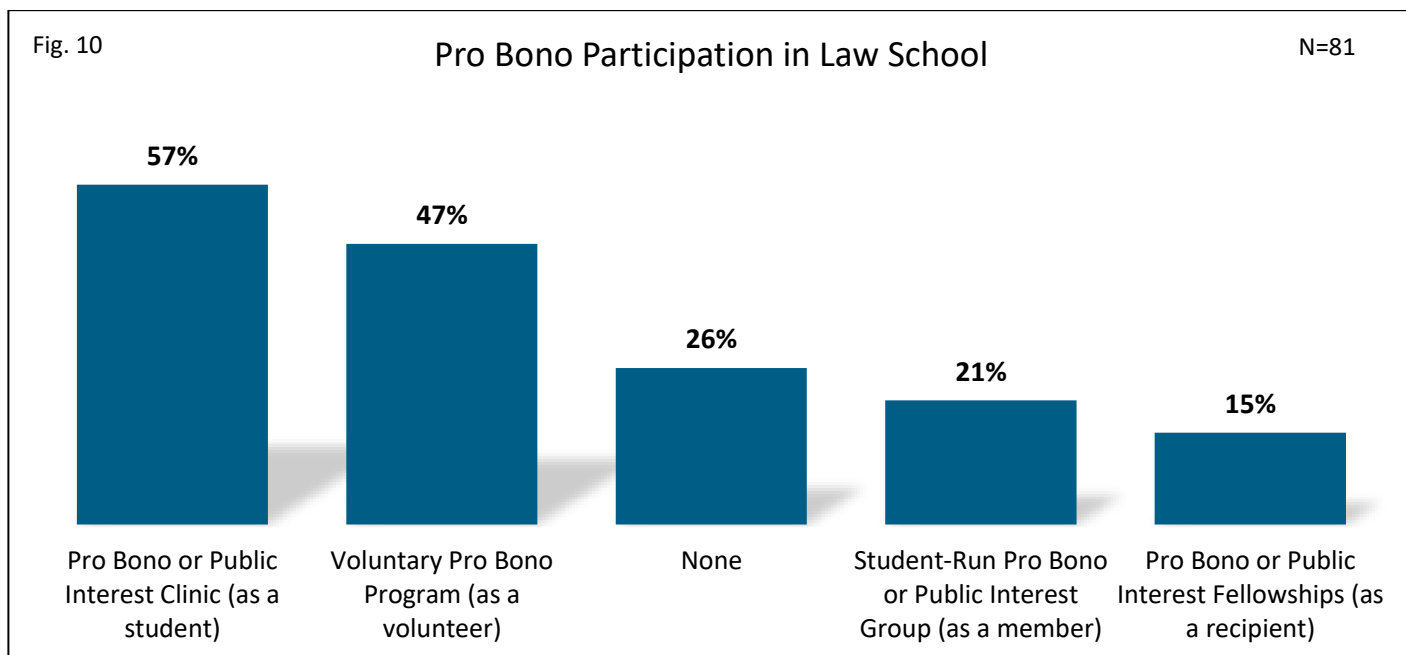
## B. Law School Experience

The survey also sought to determine how various elements of respondents' law school experience impacted their decision to enter a legal incubator program. As such programs often have an extensive pro bono component, the survey asked about a participant's engagement with pro bono during law school, their class rank, their employment status during law school, and their educational debt after completing their JD degree.

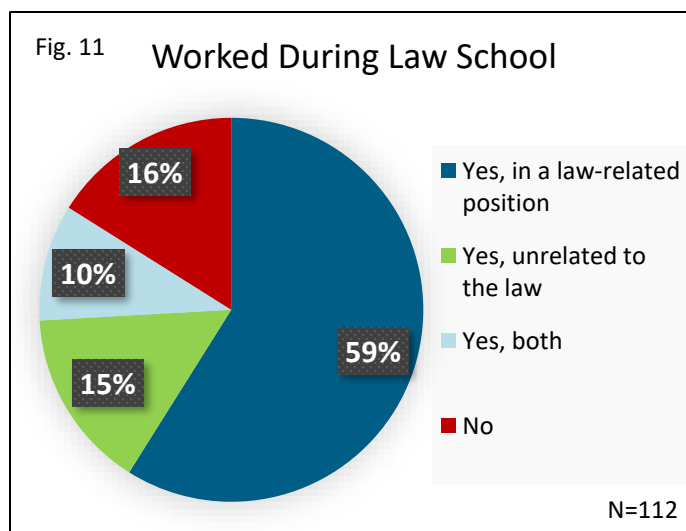
Eighty-one respondents cited pro bono programs, clinics, and fellowships as sources of their pro bono engagement as law students.<sup>33</sup> Over half of the respondents who engaged in pro bono while in law school did so in a prop bono or public interest clinic as a student, and just under half did so in a voluntary pro bono program as a volunteer. The question permitted respondents to choose all that apply, so some reported that they participated in more than one activity. The question did not provide an option for those who did not engage in any pro bono, but based on the reduced number of responses between this question and the next, we conclude that 26 percent of the respondents did not engage in pro bono activities during law school.<sup>34</sup> (Fig. 10)

<sup>33</sup> The survey did not provide a "None" or "Other" category. We assume that the total number of respondents would be 110, based on the number of respondents who answered the previous question.

<sup>34</sup> The 2019 Law Student Pro Bono Hours Survey administered by the Association of American Law Schools reported that law students perform about 221 hours of pro bono work during law school through experiential activities ( including clinics, externship, pro bono projects, and other experiential classes), 2019 AALS Law Student pro Bono Hours Survey Report, <https://www.aals.org/aals-newsroom/2019-aals-law-student-pro-bono-hours-survey-report/>.



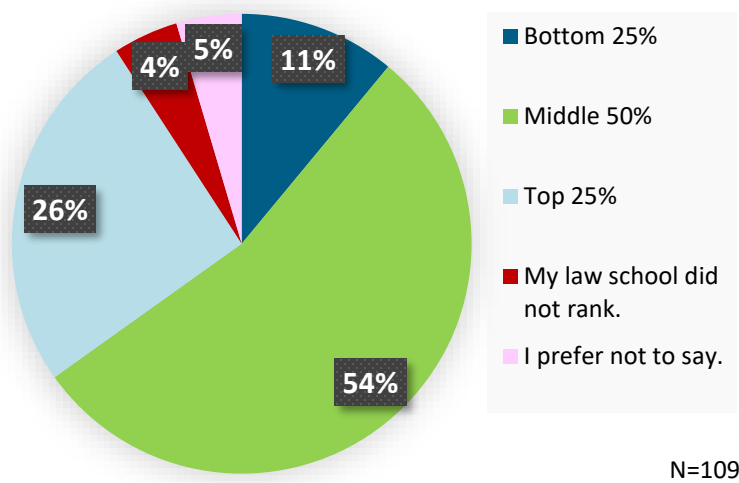
Furthermore, 84 percent of respondents indicated that they worked during law school. (Fig. 11) This is significantly higher than the 57 percent of all law school students who the ABA indicates worked in 2016.<sup>35</sup> Of that those who indicated they worked, sixty-nine percent of survey respondents stated that they worked in a law-related position during law school. Only 15 percent of them worked a job that was unrelated to law. While we did not inquire as to the income produced through any of this employment, many of the positions included in the 15 percent were professional jobs including positions in the IT, medical, insurance, and real estate arenas. Others worked in retail and hospitality and at least 1 participant was a first responder.



<sup>35</sup> Legal Profession Profile, p. 27, <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/news/2020/07/potlp2020.pdf>.

Fig. 12

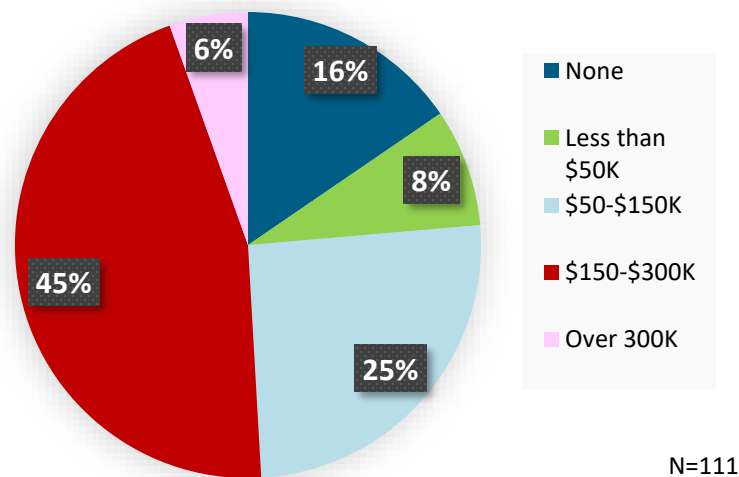
## Law School Class Rank



Another point of inquiry was class rank. Twenty-six percent of the responses stated they ranked in the top 25 percent of their class. Another 11 percent responded that they ranked in the bottom 25 percent of the class. Fifty-four percent responded that they were in the middle in their class. Sixteen percent did not report their rank citing that either their “law school did not rank” or they preferred not to state their rank. (Fig. 12) These findings indicate that the majority of the students who participate in legal incubators are average students, not necessarily the lowest ranked as some critics of legal incubator programs often assume.

Fig. 13

## Educational Debt

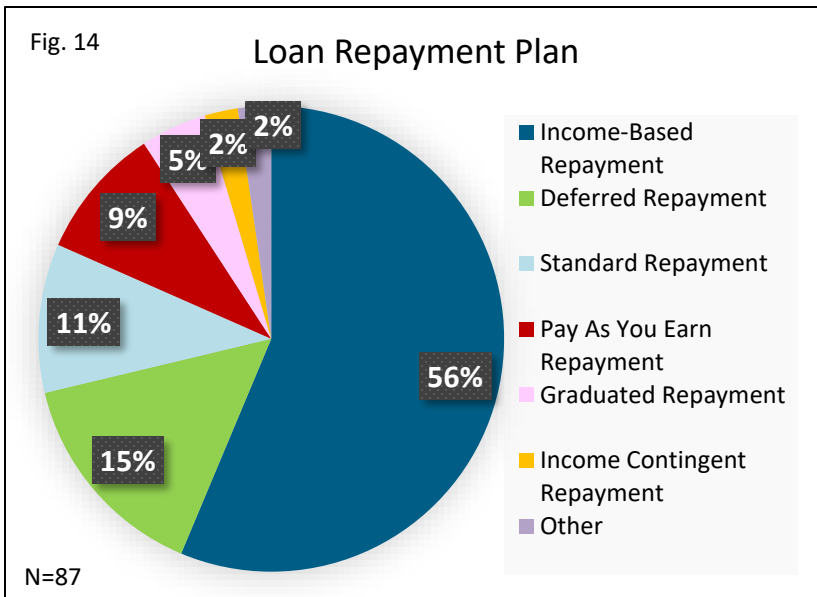


The survey also asked about respondents' educational debt. A surprising 16 percent indicated they had no education debt while another 8 percent indicated less than \$50,000. One quarter of the 111 respondents indicated debt burdens between \$50,000 and \$150,000, and 45 percent indicated educational debt between \$150,000 and \$300,000. Six respondents, or 6 percent of the pool, disclosed educational debt over \$300,000. (Fig. 13) By comparison, the National Center for Education Statistics at the U.S. Department of Education reported that the average cumulative student debt for lawyers was

\$145,500.<sup>36</sup> Further, the ABA Reports that in 2016, 29 percent of all law school graduates did not borrow money for law school.<sup>37</sup> However, only six percent of attorneys who participated in that study indicated they had no debt.

<sup>36</sup> Legal Profession Profile, p. 27.

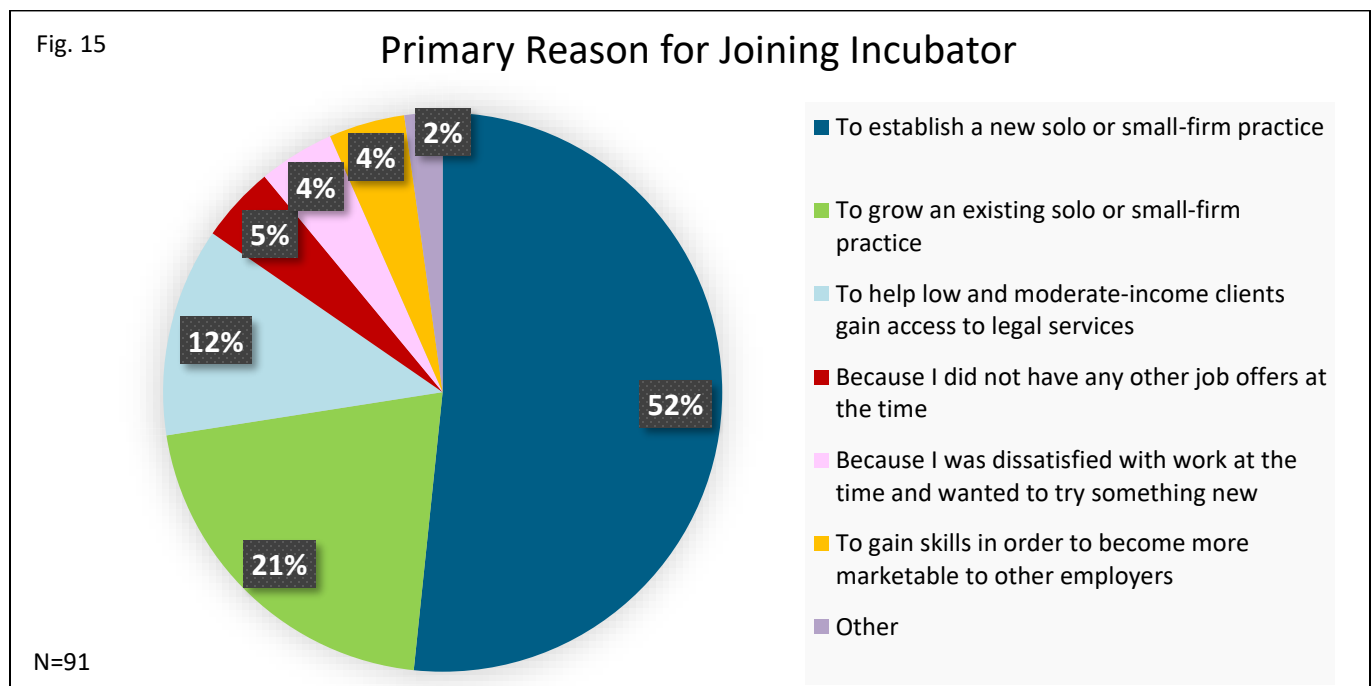
<sup>37</sup> Legal Profession Profile, p. 28, Only six percent indicated they had no debt.



The follow up question for those who indicated they had some educational debt inquired about how they were re-paying it. Only 11 percent of these lawyers indicated they were on standard loan repayment plans. Sixty-seven percent indicated they were on some type of income-driven repayment plan – 56 percent on an Income-Based Repayment Plan, 9 percent on a Pay As You Earn Repayment Plan (PAYE Plan), and 2 percent on an Income-Contingent Repayment plan. Five percent of respondents indicated they were on a Graduated Repayment Plan, and 15 percent had deferred payments. (Fig. 14)

## C. Decision to Join the Incubator

Key to understanding who incubators appeal to is the motivations that lawyers have to join them. The majority of respondents, 73 percent, said they joined an incubator primarily because they were interested in starting or growing a solo or small law firm. Twelve percent of the respondents indicated they joined because they wanted to assist low- and moderate-income clients in gaining access to legal services. Only 5 percent cited the primary reason for joining an incubator as not having any other job offers at the time, and only four percent cited dissatisfaction with an existing job and wanting to try something new as the primary reason. (Fig. 15)

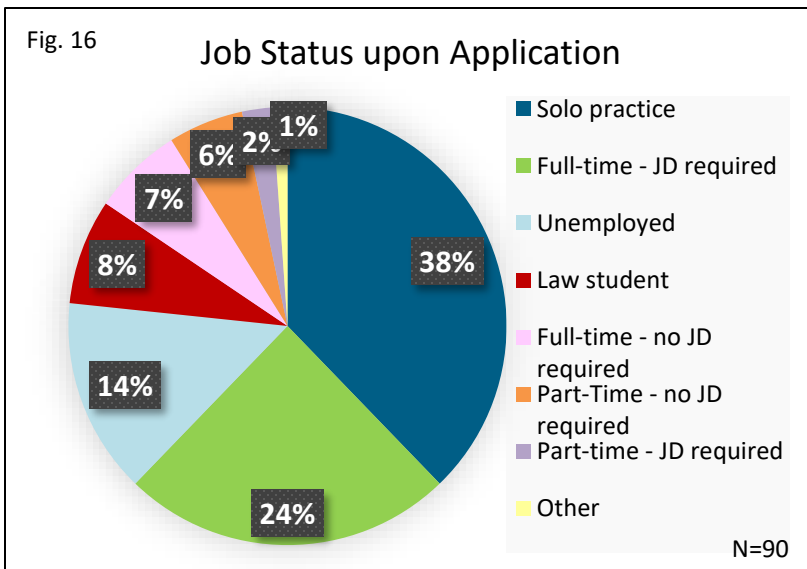


*“I wanted to be in the incubator because I wanted to help people and have the opportunity to work with the community.” - Cory H. Morris,*

Community Justice Center, Touro Law Center

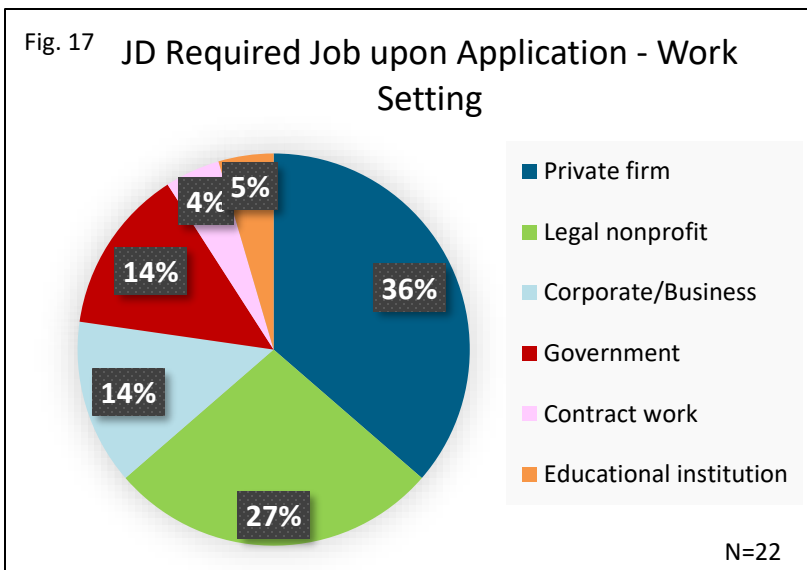
Thirty-eight percent of survey participants stated they were already trying to start a solo practice when they joined the incubator. Twenty-four percent indicated that they were in full-time jobs where a law degree was required, which is distinguished from solo practice for the purposes of this study. Thirteen percent were employed in a position which did not require a JD. In stark contrast to common tropes, only 14 percent said they were unemployed when they applied to the legal incubator program. Eight percent applied to the program as law students. (Fig. 16)

Fig. 16

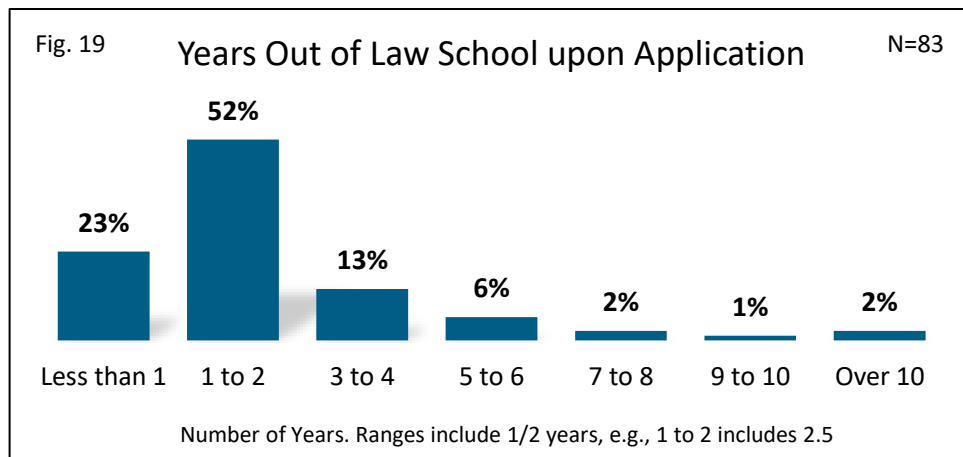


To give more context to these responses, we asked those who were employed full-time where a law degree was required to choose the option that best described their primary work setting when they applied. Of those who were working full-time jobs with a JD required, 36 percent were working at private firms and 27 percent were working at legal nonprofits. Others indicated that that they were working for a corporation or business or for a government entity, and to a lesser extent, doing contract work for other lawyers or working for an educational institution. (Fig. 17) All who worked in law firms, with one exception, worked for law firms of less than 100 attorneys. (Fig. 18)

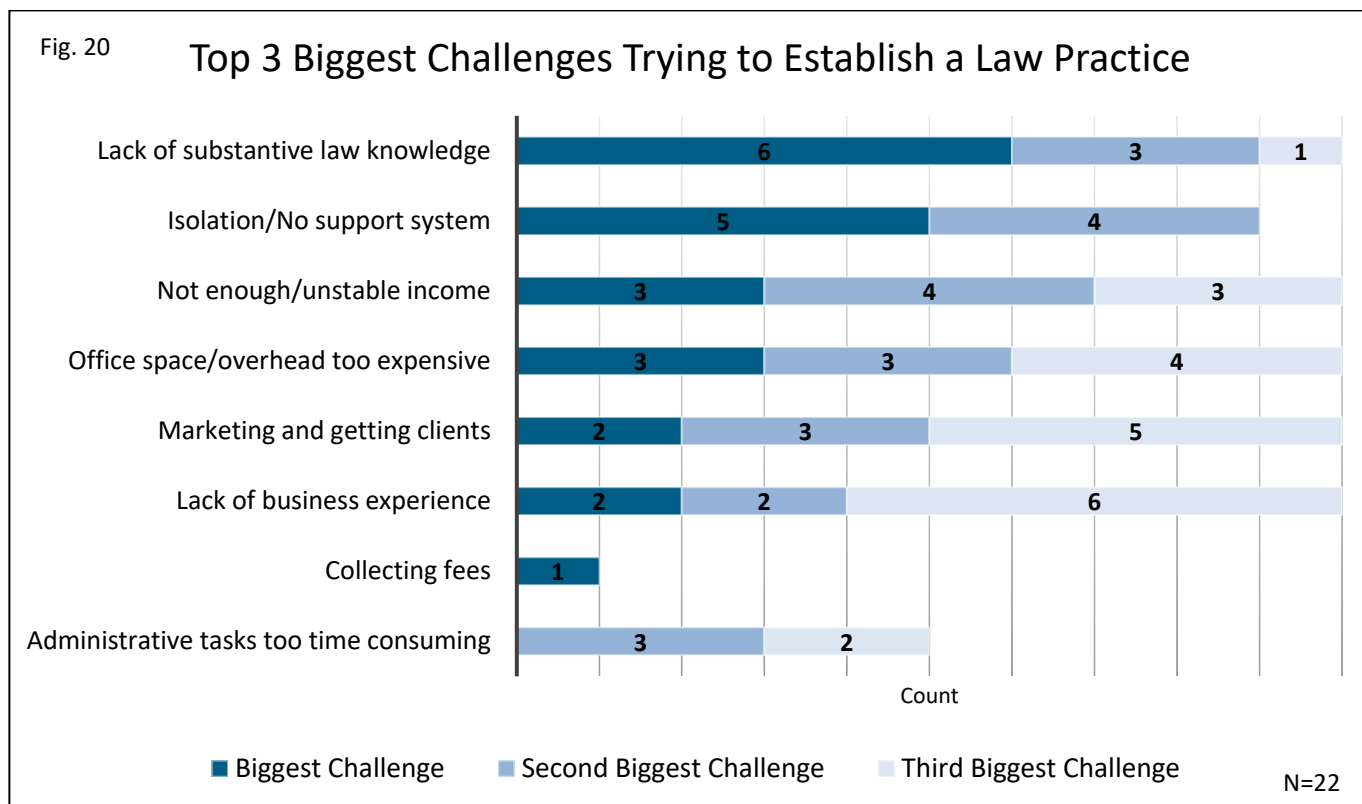
Fig. 17



When asked when they had applied to the incubator program, 75 percent of respondents indicated that they applied to the incubator program within two years of graduating from law school. (Fig. 19)



The survey also asked participants whether they had ever tried to establish a law practice before joining the incubator. One-quarter of the 88 respondents responded affirmatively that they had. Of the 22 who had tried to establish a practice before joining the incubator, they identified the lack of substantive law knowledge as the biggest challenge followed by isolation or not having a support system and not being able to make significant income. The expense of space and other overhead, marketing and getting clients, and lack of business experience were also cited by some as being challenging. Respondents found collecting fees and administrative tasks the least challenging among the options provided. (Fig. 20)



## D. Income

Considering average educational debt and the cost of living, a common question that arises about the lawyers in these programs is whether the law practices they build generate sufficient income to make them sustainable. To begin to shed light on this question, the survey asked respondents to report their gross income from all employment sources in the most recent fiscal year.

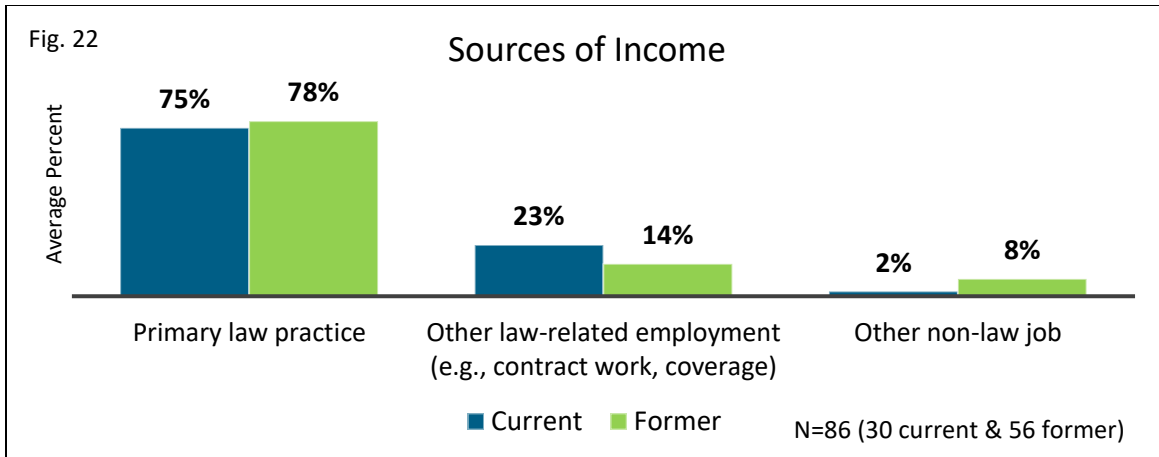
The responses generated an average income of \$42,946 with a median of \$35,000 for lawyers who were participating in legal incubator programs. Former incubator program participants indicated an average salary of \$77,206, with a median of \$65,000. For both sets of attorneys, the lowest income level reported was \$0. The maximum reported was \$350,000 for current participants and \$370,000 for former participants. (Fig. 21) Since the question permitted lawyers that had not completed a fiscal year to project responses, we found that 66 percent of current and 27 percent of former incubator participants reported income projections. As a point of comparison, the National Association of Law Placement reported a median salary of \$58,000 for attorneys in law firms of ten lawyers or less.<sup>38</sup>

Fig. 21 Pre-tax/Gross Income from All Employment Sources				
Status	Average	Median	Min	Max
<b>Current (n=29)</b>	\$42,946	\$35,000	\$0	\$350,000
<b>Former (n=55)</b>	\$77,206	\$65,000	\$0	\$370,000
<b>All (n=84)</b>	\$65,378	\$50,000	\$0	\$370,000

We asked survey participants to identify the sources of income by assigning an approximate percentage of their total income to each option that included: “primary law practice,” “other law-related employment,” or “other non-law job.” The responses indicate that both current and former participants are relying on their primary law practice as the principal source of their income. Current participants in legal incubator programs indicated that, on average, 75 percent of their income came from their primary law practice and 23 percent came from other law related work, including contract work. A job that did not require a law degree was the source of only 2 percent of their income. Former incubator lawyers indicated that, on average, 78 percent of their income came from their primary law practice and 14 percent came from other law related work, including contract work. For former participants, a job that did not require a law degree was the source of 8 percent of their income. (Fig. 22)

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<sup>38</sup> Employment Report & Salary Survey reports/*Jobs & JDs* reports for the Classes of 1993-2017, <https://www.nalp.org/1018research>.



While the primary source of income for both current and former participants was from their primary law practice, neither group collected all of the fees for the work they performed. On average, individuals who had graduated from these programs had a more successful fee collection rate than current participants. Current incubator participants reported collecting 71 percent of the fees they billed while former incubator participants reported collecting 81 percent of the fees they billed. (Fig. 23) Overall, both groups combined reported an average of 77 percent and a median of 85 percent of fees collected when billed.

Fig. 23

Percentage of Fees Collected				
Status	Average	Median	Min	Max
<b>Current (n=34)</b>	71%	80%	0%	100%
<b>Former (n=55)</b>	81%	90%	0%	100%
<b>All (n=89)</b>	77%	85%	0%	100%

## E. Work Life

Some of our questions sought to understand not only the attorneys, but also the practices they built. Their answers reveal key elements that help us understand these attorneys' workload, their decision to obtain insurance, and the amount of time they devote to vacations.

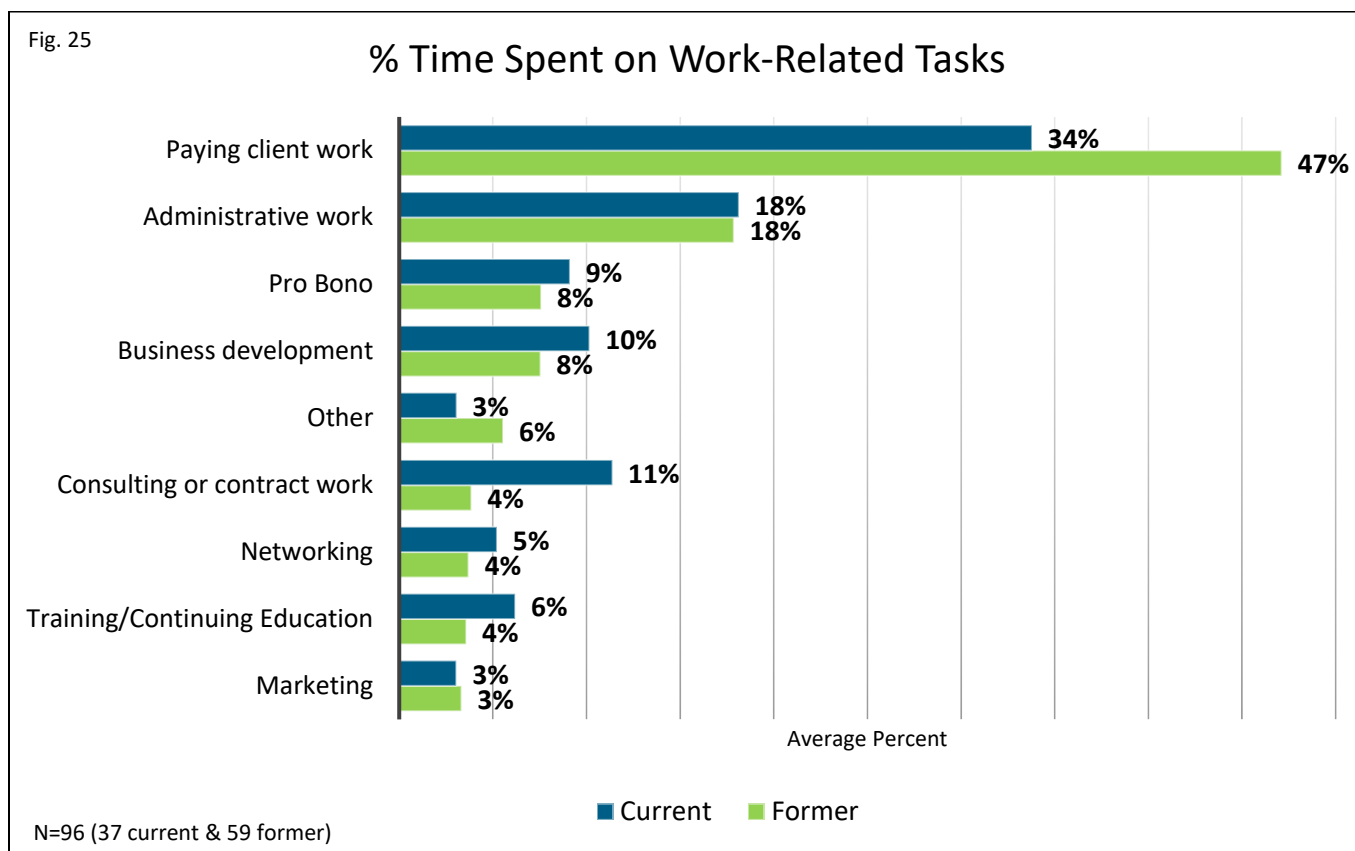
Current incubator participants indicated they worked an average of 46 hours per week. The minimum hours reported were 20 hours and the maximum were 100 hours. Former incubator participants said they worked on average 43 hours per week. The minimum number of hours they reported working were 10 and the maximum was 75 per week. (Fig. 24)

Fig. 24

Number of Hours Worked per Week				
Status	Average	Median	Min	Max
<b>Current (n=34)</b>	46	45	20	100
<b>Former (n=63)</b>	43	40	10	75
<b>All (n=97)</b>	44	40	10	100



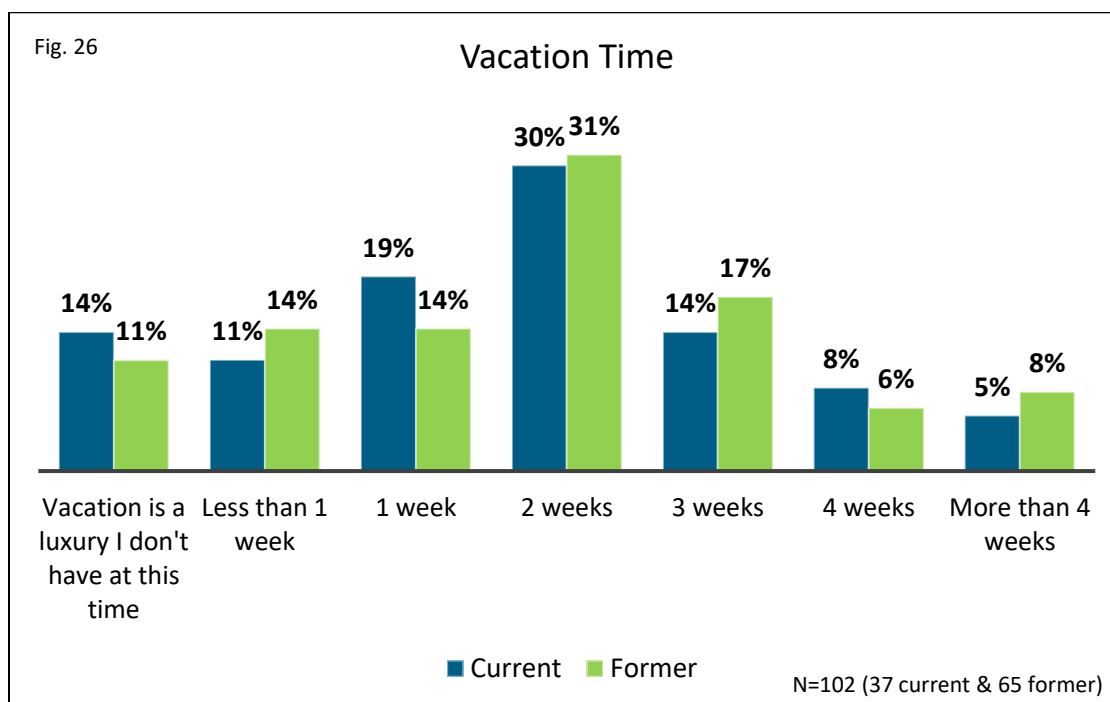
As a further probe to understand these attorneys' work lives, we asked them to account for the time spent on various work-related tasks by assigning an approximate percentage of their total time to each task. Participants reported that they spent the most time on billable work. Former incubator lawyers reported spending an average of 47 percent of their time on billable work while current incubator participants spent an average of 34 percent of their time on billable work. After billable work, both sets of attorneys recorded spending the second most time on administrative work, with an average of 18 percent of their time allocated to those tasks. Marketing received the least allocation of time with both current and former incubator attorneys allotting only 3 percent of their time, on average, to that task. Both current and former participants recorded spending a similar amount of time on pro bono,<sup>39</sup> business development, networking, training and education, and marketing. The difference is that current incubator participants spent an average of 11 percent of their time on consulting or contract work, and that number is only 4 percent for former incubator lawyers. "Other" responses included allocations for intake calls, waiting for new business, court-appointments, crypto research, fundraising, contingency client work, government committees, non-legal work, legal work, and public work. (Fig. 25)



<sup>39</sup> According to the ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono & Public Service, solo practitioners are amongst the lawyers who report providing the most pro bono hours annually (44.7 hours). ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono & Public Service, Supporting Justice: A Report on the Pro Bono Work of America's Lawyers 33 (2018) ("Pro Bono Report"), [https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/probono\\_public\\_service/ls\\_pb\\_supporting\\_justice\\_iv\\_final.athcheckdam.pdf](https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/probono_public_service/ls_pb_supporting_justice_iv_final.athcheckdam.pdf).

*“The daily life of a program attorney is fast, out of necessity for juggling pro bono hours, billable hours, administrative duties, and the legal learning curve.”* - Jonah Freedman, Incubator Program, Loyola University New Orleans College of Law

When asked how much vacation time they took in 2018, 14 percent of current incubator lawyers and 11 percent of former incubator lawyers selected the option “Vacation is a luxury I don’t have at this time.” However, around 60 percent of current and former incubator participants confirmed that they took some time off but not more than 2 weeks. Twenty-seven percent of current incubator participants and 31 percent of former incubator participants stated they took more than 2 weeks of vacation. (Fig. 26)



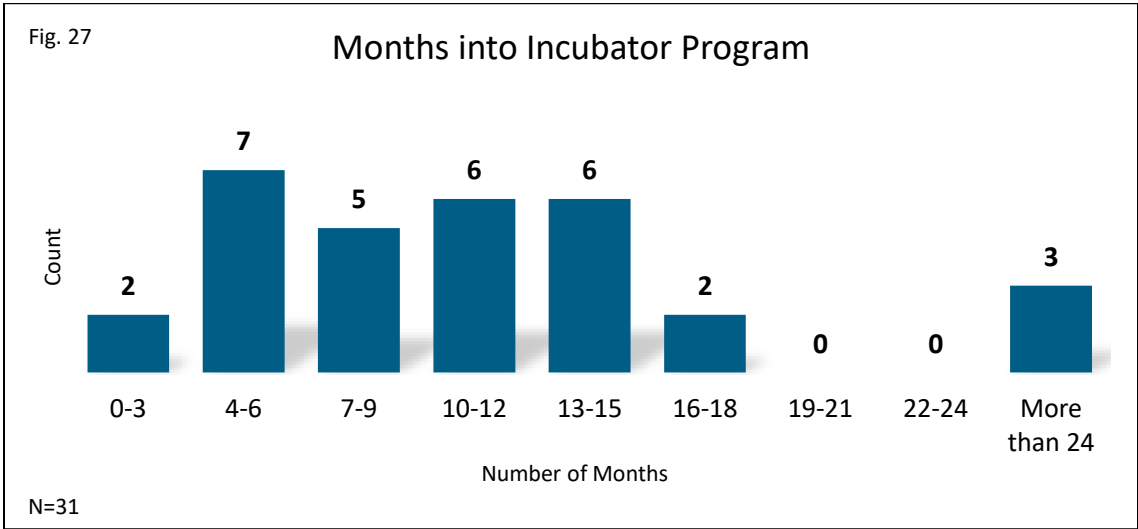
# II. Program Value: Resources and Training

The 2016 incubator program survey report captured preliminary metrics of these programs that highlighted the resources and training they imparted to their lawyers. These programs primarily indicated that they offered mentoring and training through pro bono opportunities, one-on-one mentoring, and continuing legal education programming.<sup>40</sup> In addition, networking opportunities, case referrals, and law office infrastructure were amongst the most commonly cited benefits by program organizers.

This survey used that knowledge and asked the lawyers who participated to tell us what they received in those programs that they found most valuable. Ultimately, the impact of legal incubator programs is meant to have a long-term impact on a group of lawyers’ careers, particularly those who are able to learn the tools needed to maintain sustainable law practices that meet the legal needs of clients that are underserved. Part A explores the responses of lawyers who were in the incubator program at the time of the survey. Part B highlights the responses of those lawyers who had already completed their time in such a program. Part C discusses career satisfaction for both groups.

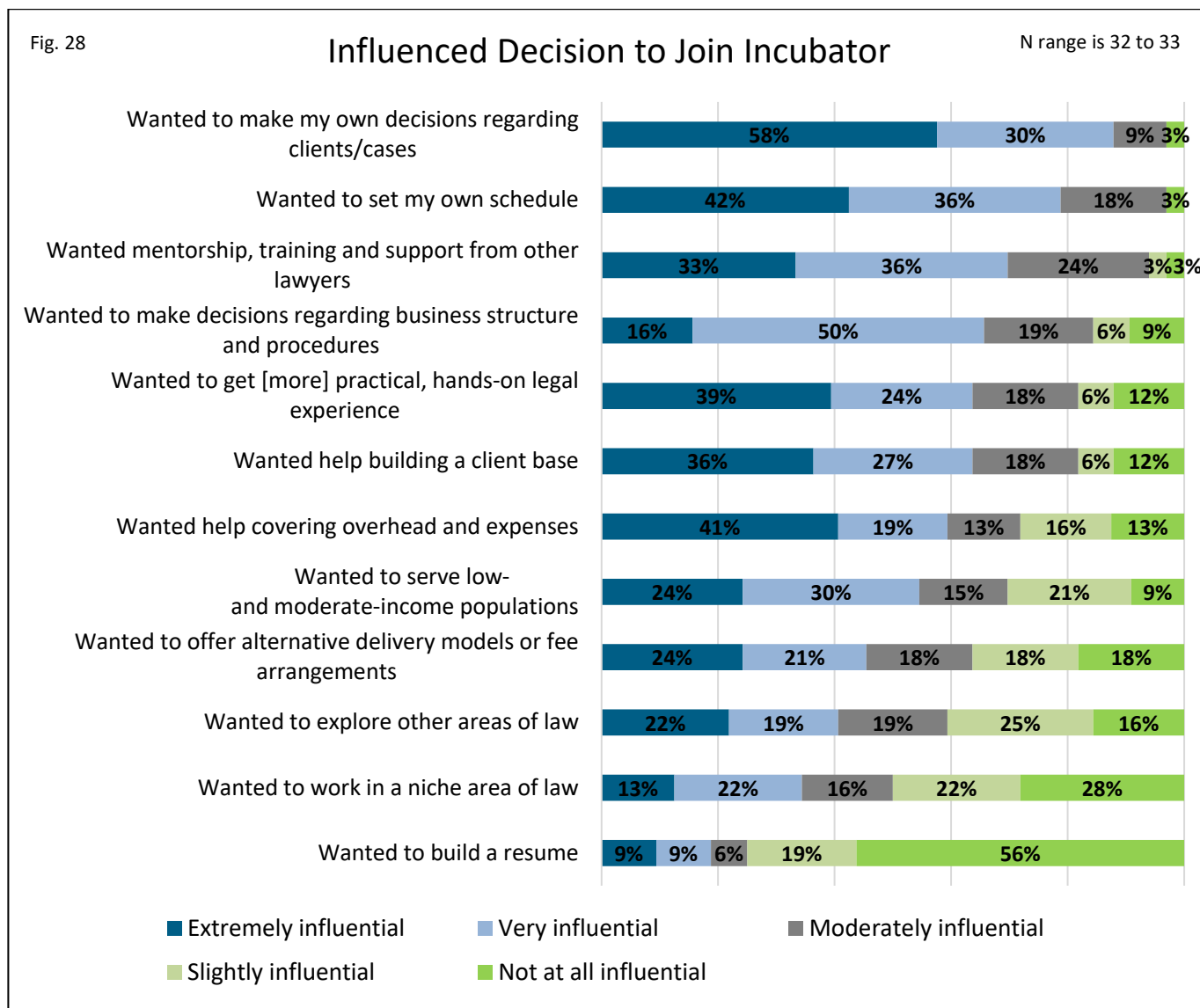
## A. Incubation Period

There were 33 lawyers who responded to this section of the survey. Of those, 97 percent considered themselves to operate independent solo law practices. The majority of respondents indicated they had been in the program for 18 months or less at the time of taking the survey. Only 3 indicated that they were involved for more than 24 months. (Fig. 27)



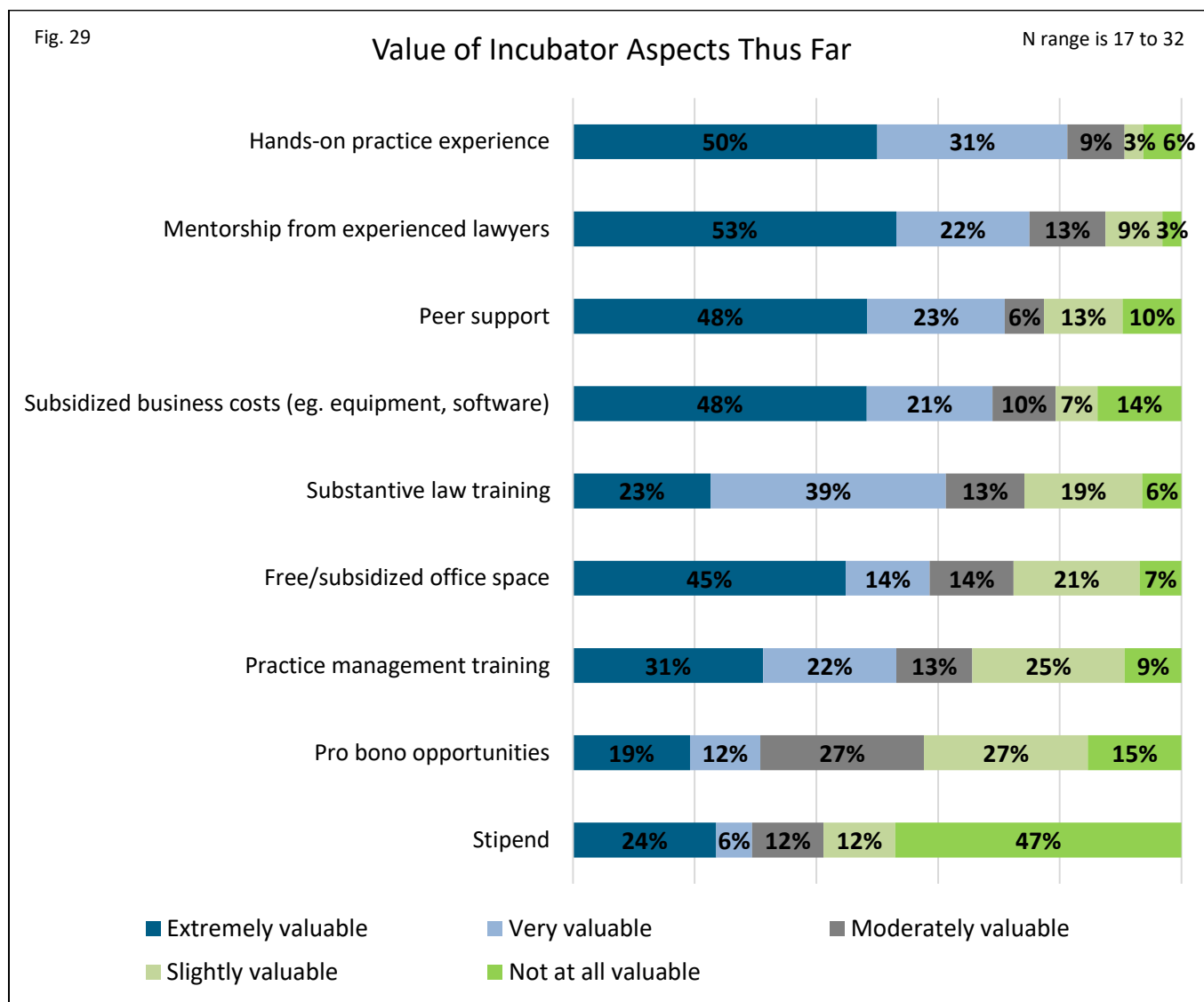
<sup>40</sup> Incubator Program Survey, p. 24-29.

When asked about the factors that influenced their decision to join an incubator on a scale of not at all influential to extremely influential, current participants cited autonomy in choosing clients and cases as the most influential factor. Eighty-eight percent of respondents rated that option as either extremely or very influential. Other highly influential factors were their ability to set their own schedule, needing help covering overhead expenses, and getting hands-on experience. Few respondents identified building a resume and developing a niche practice in an area of law as highly influential factors for joining such a program. (Fig. 28)



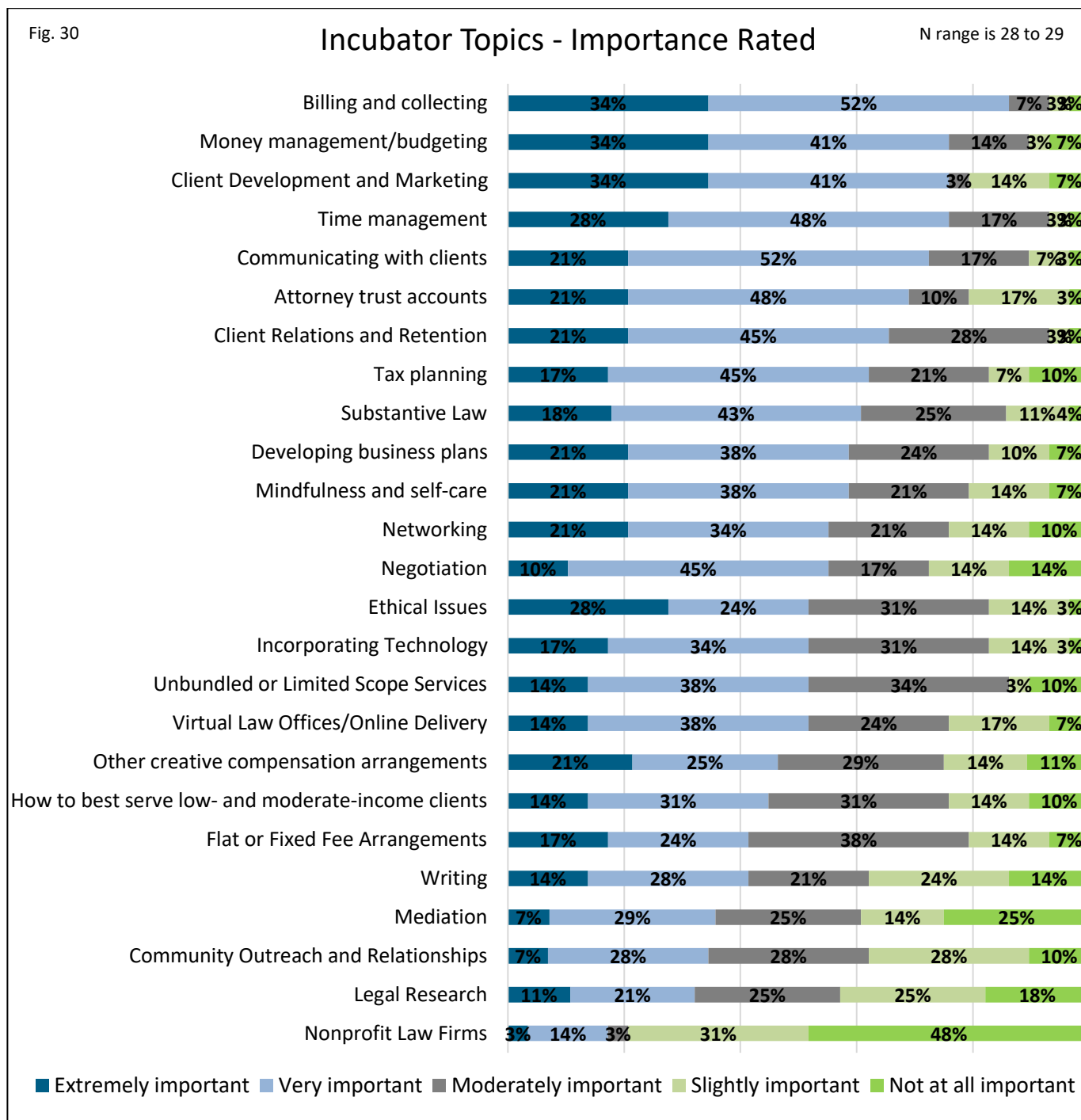
*“The incubator provides resources like speakers on specific topics like accounting and marketing. Things I didn’t learn in law school, but are necessary to opening a law practice.”* - Chlece Neal, Justice Entrepreneurs Project, Chicago Bar Foundation

When asked to rate how valuable various aspects of the incubator were so far on a scale of not at all valuable to extremely valuable, practical training in the form of hands-on experience rated as the most valuable. Eighty-one percent of respondents rated that option as either extremely or very valuable. Mentorship, peer support, and subsidized business costs were also mainly designated as extremely or very valuable, with roughly 50 percent or more of ratings falling into the extremely valuable category. Also worth noting is that forty-five percent of respondents found free or subsidized office space as extremely valuable, and 39 percent of respondents rated substantive law training as very valuable. Program stipends were rated the least valuable (Fig. 29)<sup>41</sup>



<sup>41</sup> NA responses not included. Percentages represent the number of affirmative responses against the total number of non-NA responses received for each item.

The survey also asked the current participants to rate how important they thought it was to learn about some of the most common topics addressed by these programs. Billing and collecting received the highest ratings. Eighty-six percent of respondents rated that option as either extremely or very important. Other highly-rated options were money management and budgeting, client development and marketing, and time management. Respondents rated legal research and creating nonprofit law firms as least important. (Fig. 30) Collectively, these responses indicated that their primary concern is economic sustainability.



The survey next asked current incubator participants how well they thought the incubator experience was preparing them in those same areas. Their responses indicated that they felt they were learning skills to support their sustainability. Over half the respondents indicated that the incubator had prepared them at least moderately well in the area of billing and collecting, which was the option they had rated as most important to learn about in the previous question. In addition, roughly two-thirds felt that the incubator had prepared them at least moderately well in the areas of money management and budgeting, and client development and marketing. However, what they felt most prepared to do was to network and to serve low- and moderate-income populations by learning about limited scope representation, ethical issues, flat fee arrangements, technology, and client relationships. Legal research, writing, mediation, and establishing nonprofit organizations were some of the categories that ranked lowest in terms of what they were prepared to do thus far. (Fig. 31) Notably, these were also considered some of the least important areas to learn about from the previous question.

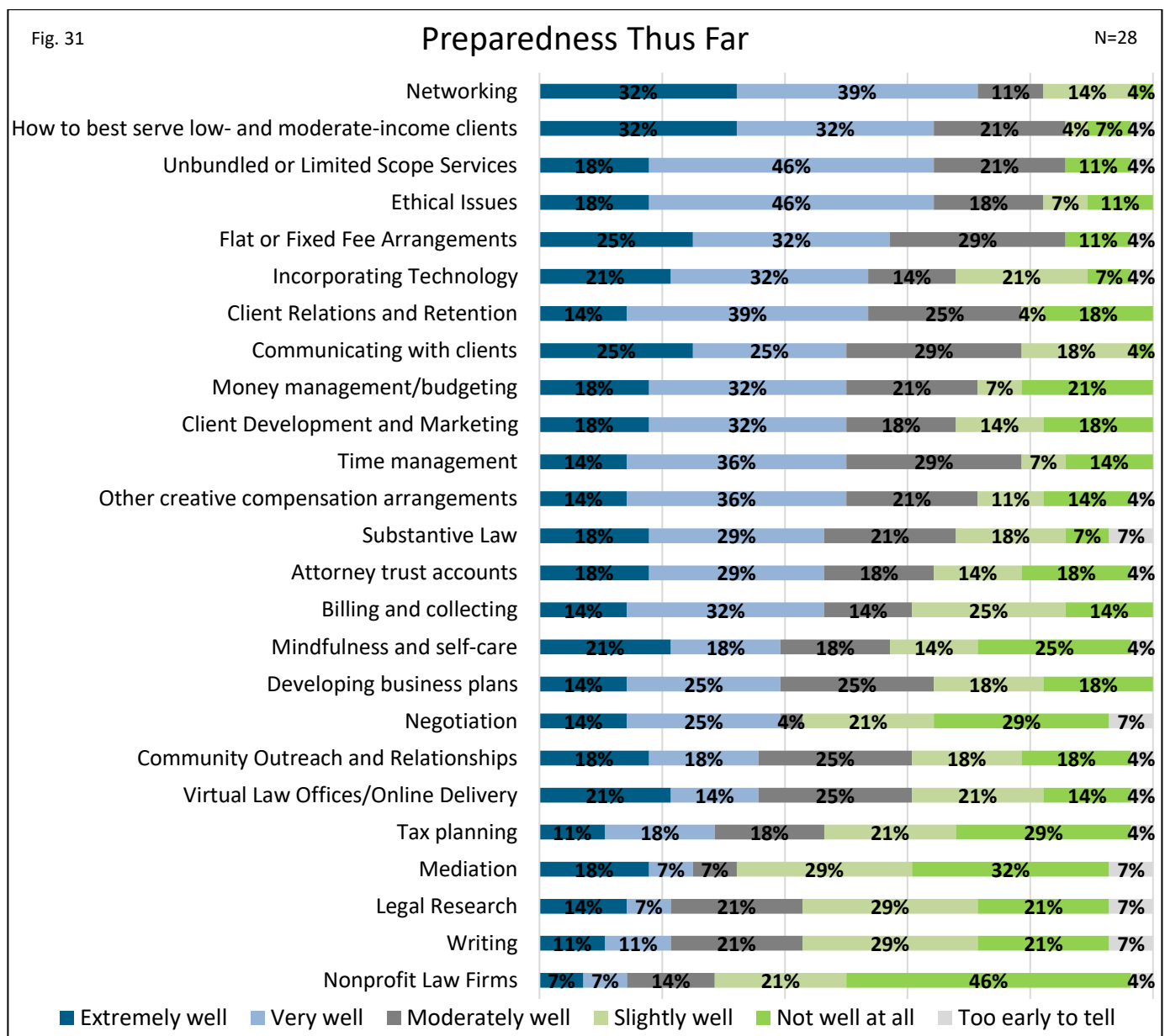
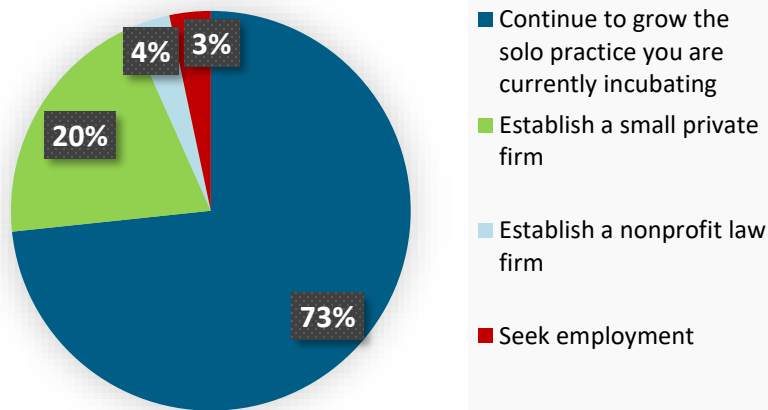


Fig. 32

### Plans for After Incubator



N=30

The questions then turned to plans for after they leave the incubator. Almost two-thirds indicated that they planned to continue to grow the practice they were currently incubating. One-fifth indicated they were planning to establish a small private firm. Another 4 percent indicated they had plans to establish a nonprofit law firm. Only one respondent answered that they would seek employment elsewhere. (Fig. 32)

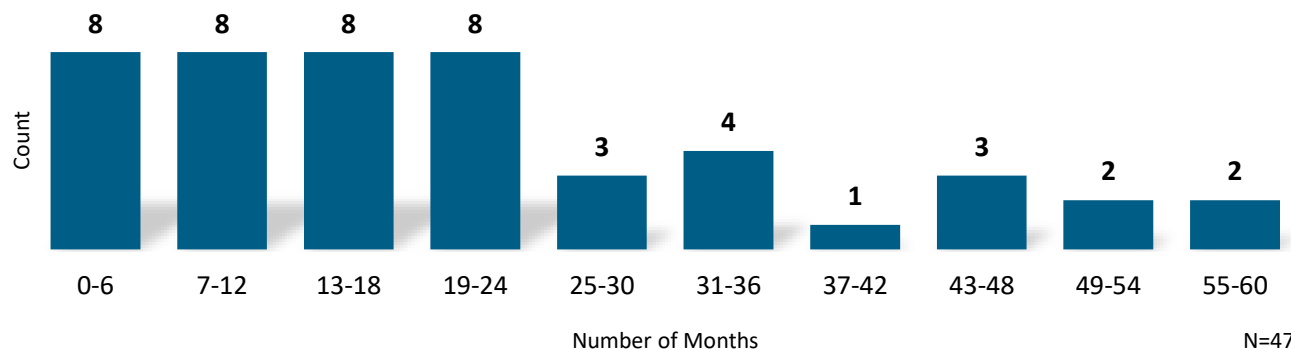
The person who planned to seek employment elsewhere indicated that while they did not think they needed more experience and mentoring, it was too hard to build a client base in the area in which they wanted to practice and, they had too many debts and family obligations. This same respondent explained that having their own practice was not for them, particularly because they did not like charging clients. The respondent indicated that they would be pursuing a job offer in the government sector.

## B. Post Incubator Experience

The survey posed similar questions to participants who had already left their incubator program. Which, given the length of time incubators have been in existence, was a larger subset than the group of current incubator participants. The experience level of this group included individuals who had just left their program and those who exited their program up to five years prior. (Fig. 33)

Fig. 33

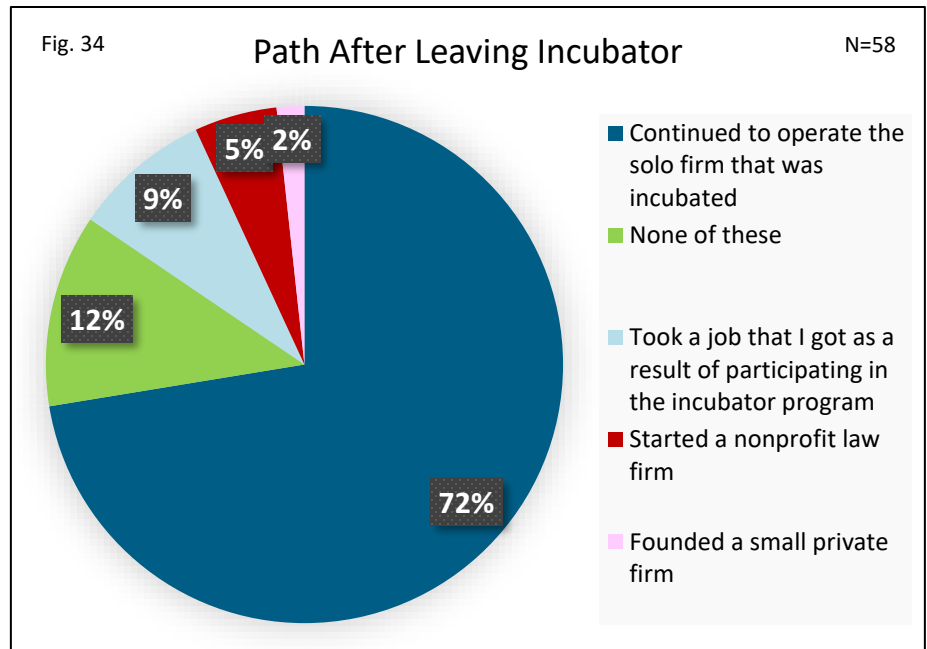
### Months Since Graduation



N=47

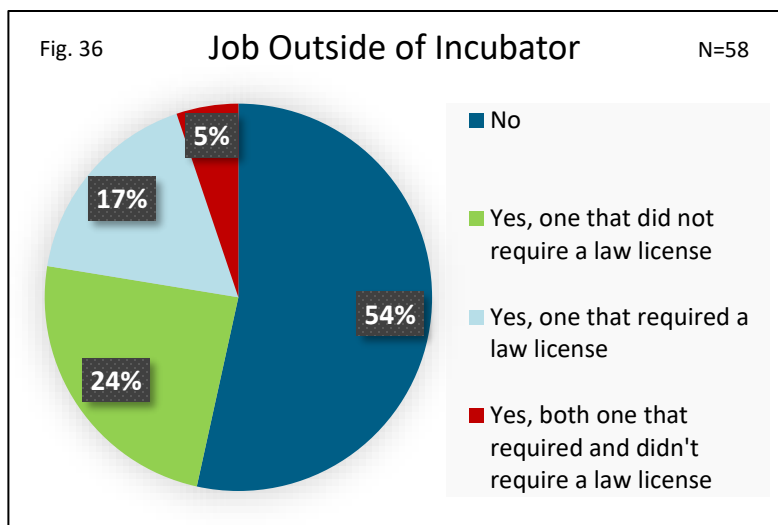


Seventy-two percent of former participants stated that they continued to operate the solo law firm they began in the incubator program. An additional two percent of former participants reported that they had started a small, private firm since leaving the incubator, and five percent reported starting a nonprofit law firm. Nine percent stated that they took a job that resulted from their participation in the incubator program, and an additional twelve percent indicated that none of these options applied to them. (Fig. 34)



Most respondents, 88 percent, stated that the practice setting they were in immediately following their participation in the incubator program continues to be their occupation at the time of taking the survey. Fig. 35 below illustrates the transition in practice setting for the twelve percent that indicated they are no longer in the same practice setting. The two attorneys that listed a private firm as their “current” position reported they were working at small law firms of 2-9 attorneys and 10-49 attorneys, respectively.

Fig. 35 Practice Setting Changes	
Position Immediately After Leaving Incubator	Position at Time of Survey
Continued to operate the solo firm that was incubated	Legal nonprofit
Continued to operate the solo firm that was incubated	Primary occupation isn't law related
Continued to operate the solo firm that was incubated	Legal Aid or Public Defender
Started a nonprofit law firm	Back in Solo Practice
Took a job that I got as a result of participating in the incubator program	Private firm
Took a job that I got as a result of participating in the incubator program	Private firm



Fifty-four percent of former incubator participants indicated that they did not have secondary employment while building their practice in the incubator. For those participants that did engage in additional employment opportunities, 24 percent stated that their secondary employment did not require a law license. An additional 17 percent indicated they held secondary employment that did require a law license. Five percent of former participants said they held legal and non-legal secondary employment while building a practice through the incubator program. (Fig. 36)

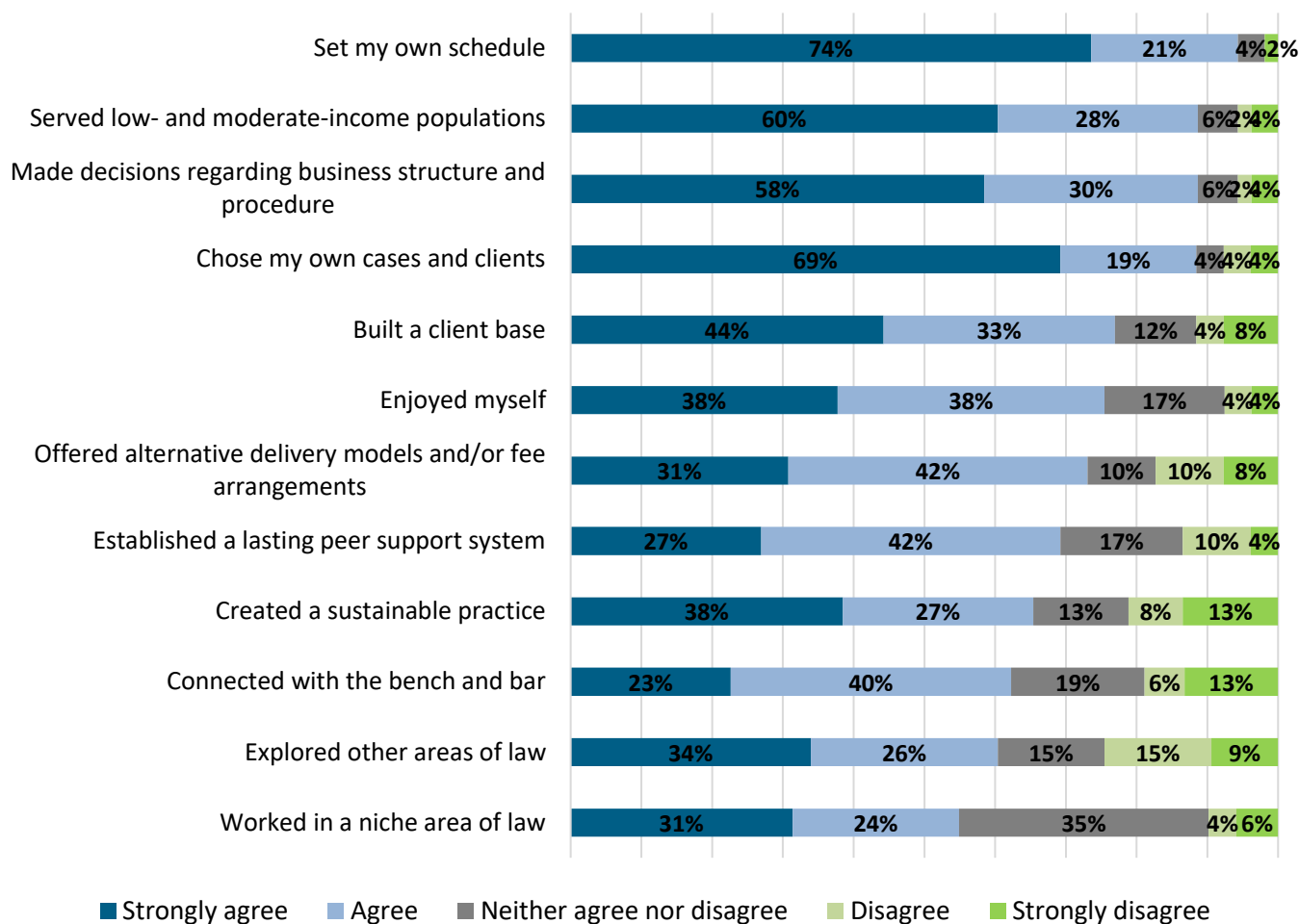
Consistent with the traditional incubator format where lawyer participants do not work “for” the incubator, most former incubator participants reported a great deal of autonomy while in their respective programs. Ninety-five percent agreed that they were involved in setting their own schedules and 88 percent agreed they were able to make decisions about their businesses and choose their own clients. Many also reported building lasting practices and relationships. Seventy-seven percent agreed that they built a client base, 69 percent agreed that they established a lasting peer support system, and 65 percent thought that they had created a sustainable practice, while in the incubator. Consistent with the mission to serve underserved populations, 88 percent of respondents agreed that they served low- and moderate-income individuals and 73 percent agreed that they offered alternative delivery models or fee arrangements while in the incubator. Seventy-six percent of former incubator participants also agreed that they enjoyed themselves while in the program. (Fig. 37)

*“Being a part of [the incubator] gave me the opportunity to learn not only how to be an attorney and the substantive areas of the law, but also how to become a business owner... Without [the incubator], I would not have the career success that I’ve had to date...”* - Jocelyn, Columbus Bar Association

Fig. 37

## While in the Incubator I...

N range is 51 to 53

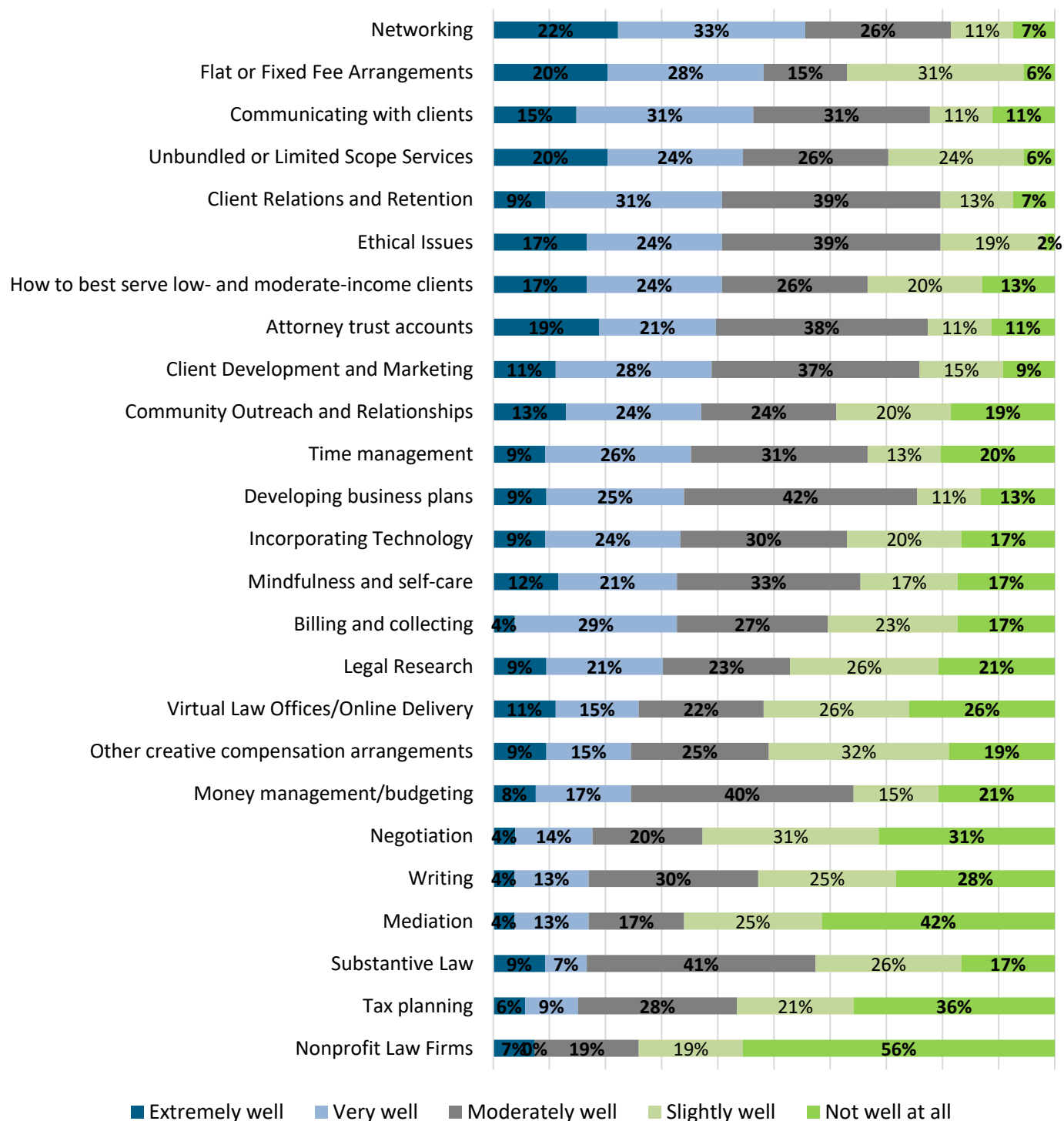


When we asked how well the incubator program prepared them in a variety of areas, respondents indicated that networking was what they felt their programs trained them to do best. Over half this group thought that the incubator prepared them either extremely well or very well in that area. Just under half thought that the program prepared them extremely or very well in learning how to develop fixed or flat fee arrangements. Former participants thought their programs prepared them *at least* moderately well in a number of areas. However, a number of respondents also felt that there were areas where they lacked preparedness, such as in learning about establishing nonprofit law firms, mediation, and tax planning, which ranked among the worst. (Fig. 38)

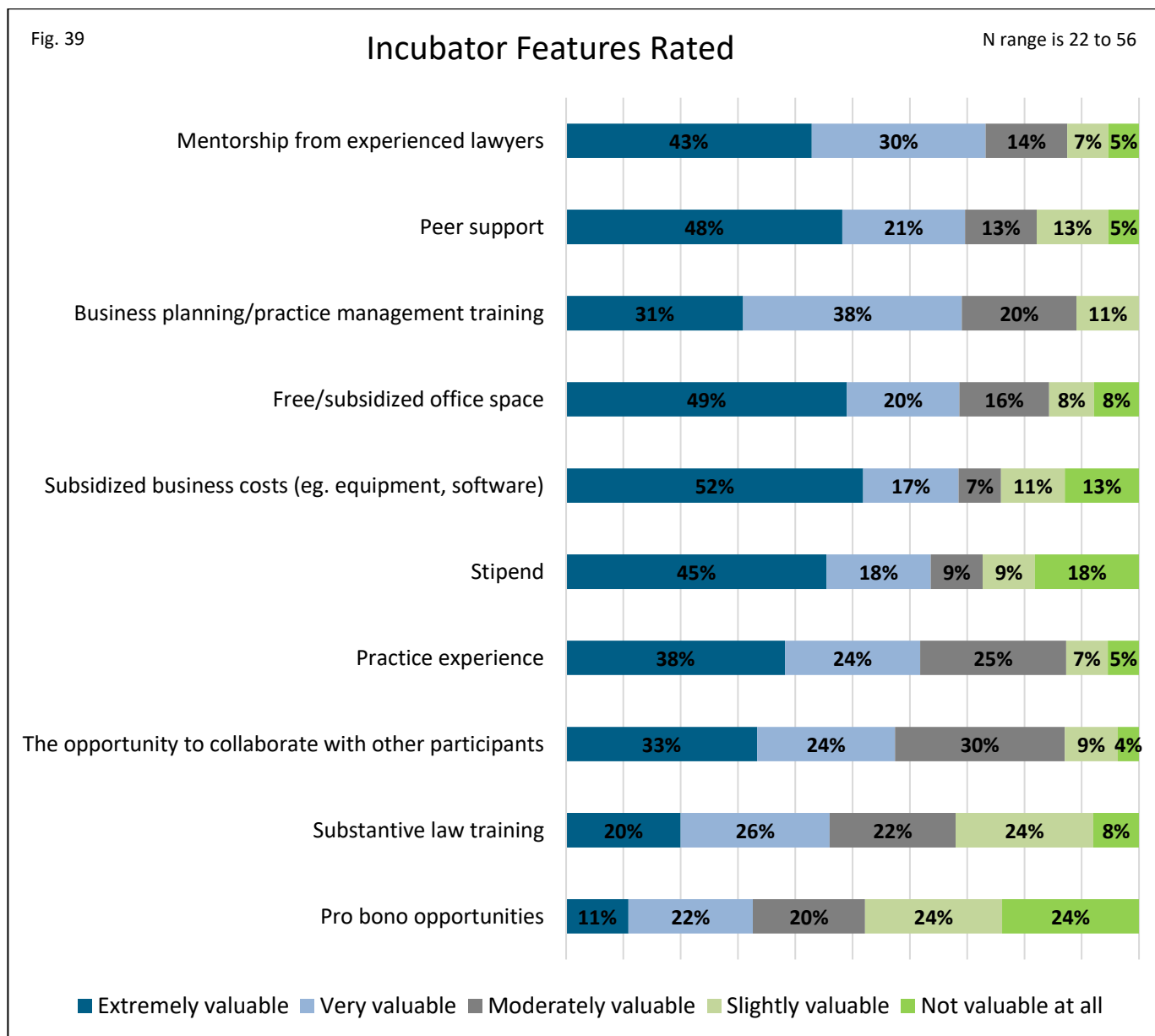
Fig. 38

## Level of Preparedness Rated

N range is 51 to 54

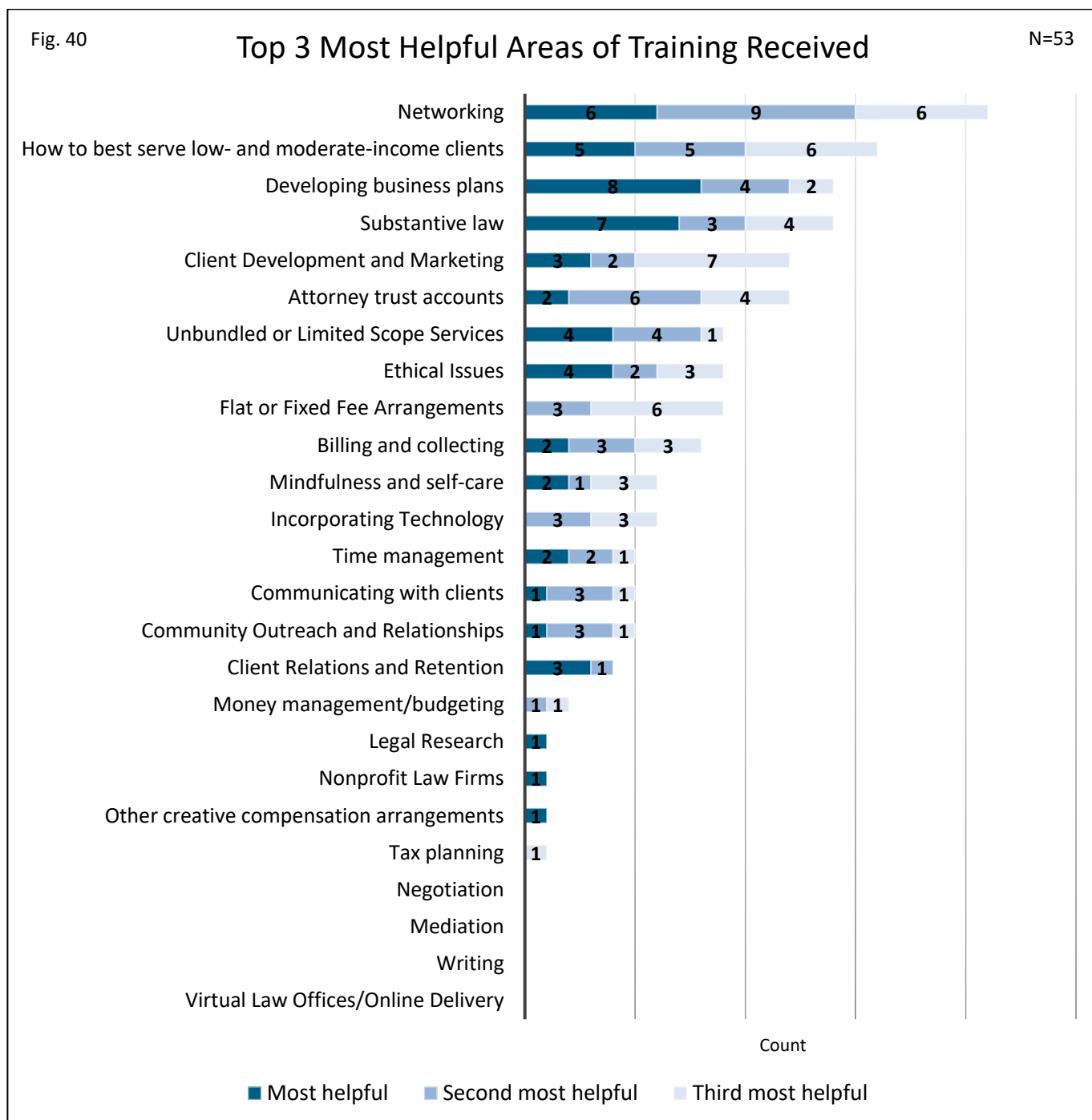


Similar to the opinions of the current incubator participants, former incubator participants found that mentorship, peer support, and subsidized business costs were among the most valuable features of the program. They also highly valued business planning and practice management training, and free or subsidized office space. Of least value to them were the substantive law trainings and pro bono opportunities. Interestingly enough, both current and former incubator participants ranked the stipends as one of the least valuable features. However, even with such a low ranking, former participants valued them more than current participants. (Fig. 39)<sup>42</sup>



<sup>42</sup> NA responses not included. Percentages represent the number of affirmative responses against the total number of non-NA responses received for each item.

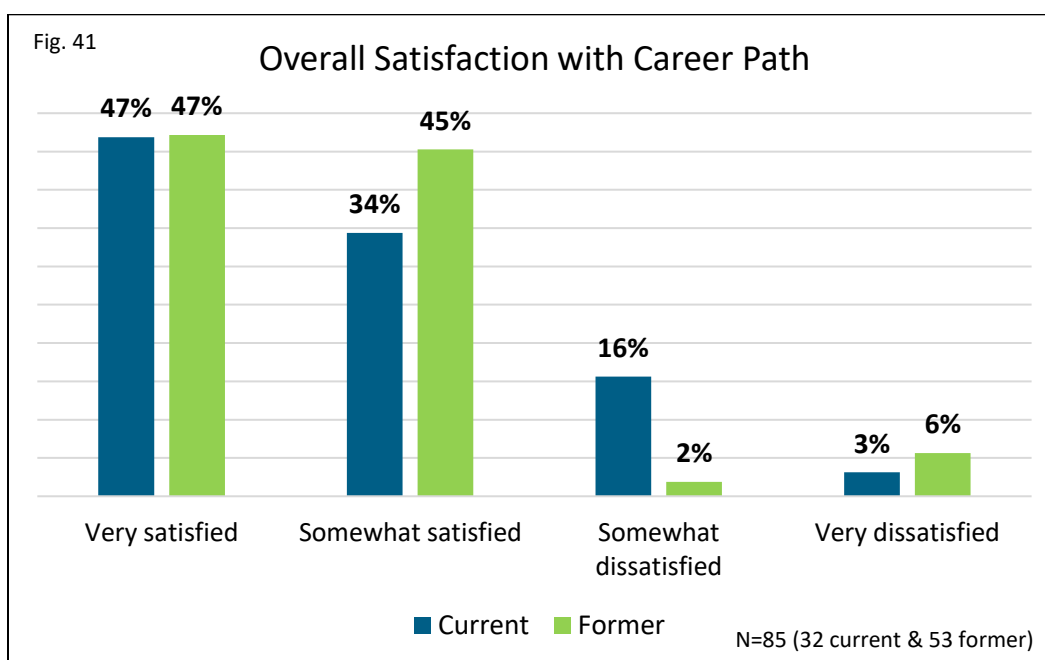
To get a better sense of the most helpful skills training these former incubator participants received, we asked them to rank the top three. Using the total number of times an option was selected as either “most helpful,” “second most helpful,” or “third most helpful,” networking, how to best serve low- and moderate-income clients, and developing business plans were the top three skills they felt they gained from the program. More respondents thought that the training they received in developing business plans was the “most helpful” over any other option. Interestingly, learning substantive law received the second highest number of “most helpful” rankings, despite that option rating on the low end in previous questions. (Fig. 40)



## C. Career Satisfaction

Ultimately, what is important for prospective incubator participants, program directors, and funders who are focused on lawyer career development is how satisfied these lawyers are with their careers post-incubator. The vast majority of current and former lawyers that participated in the programs expressed high levels of career satisfaction.

A 2019 study of lawyer career satisfaction found that 77 percent of lawyers who participated expressed career satisfaction.<sup>43</sup> In the present study, the percentages are higher. Ninety-two percent of former participants expressed some degree of satisfaction, while 81 percent of current incubator participants stated they were very or somewhat satisfied with their career path. Only 8 percent of the former participants expressed some degree of dissatisfaction. (Fig. 41)



The survey proceeded to asked these attorneys to allocate satisfaction levels to different aspects of their career. For both current and former incubator participants who indicated satisfaction, much of it came from the flexibility to determine their schedule and their clients, their ability to serve underserved populations, and opportunities to build skills. Also for both groups, compensation, particularly as it relates to their ability to pay their bills, job security, and opportunities for career advancement were the areas that garnered the least satisfaction. (Fig. 42 and Fig. 43)

I. <sup>43</sup> John Monahan, *Lawyers at the Peak of Their Careers: A 30-Year Longitudinal Study of Job and Life Satisfaction*, Journal of Empirical Legal Studies, January 8, 2019, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/jels.12207#:~:text=Finally%2C%20both%20career%20satisfaction%20and,w ith%20their%20lives%20more%20broadly.>

Fig. 42

### Satisfaction with Aspects of Career Current Incubator Participants

N range is 31 to 32

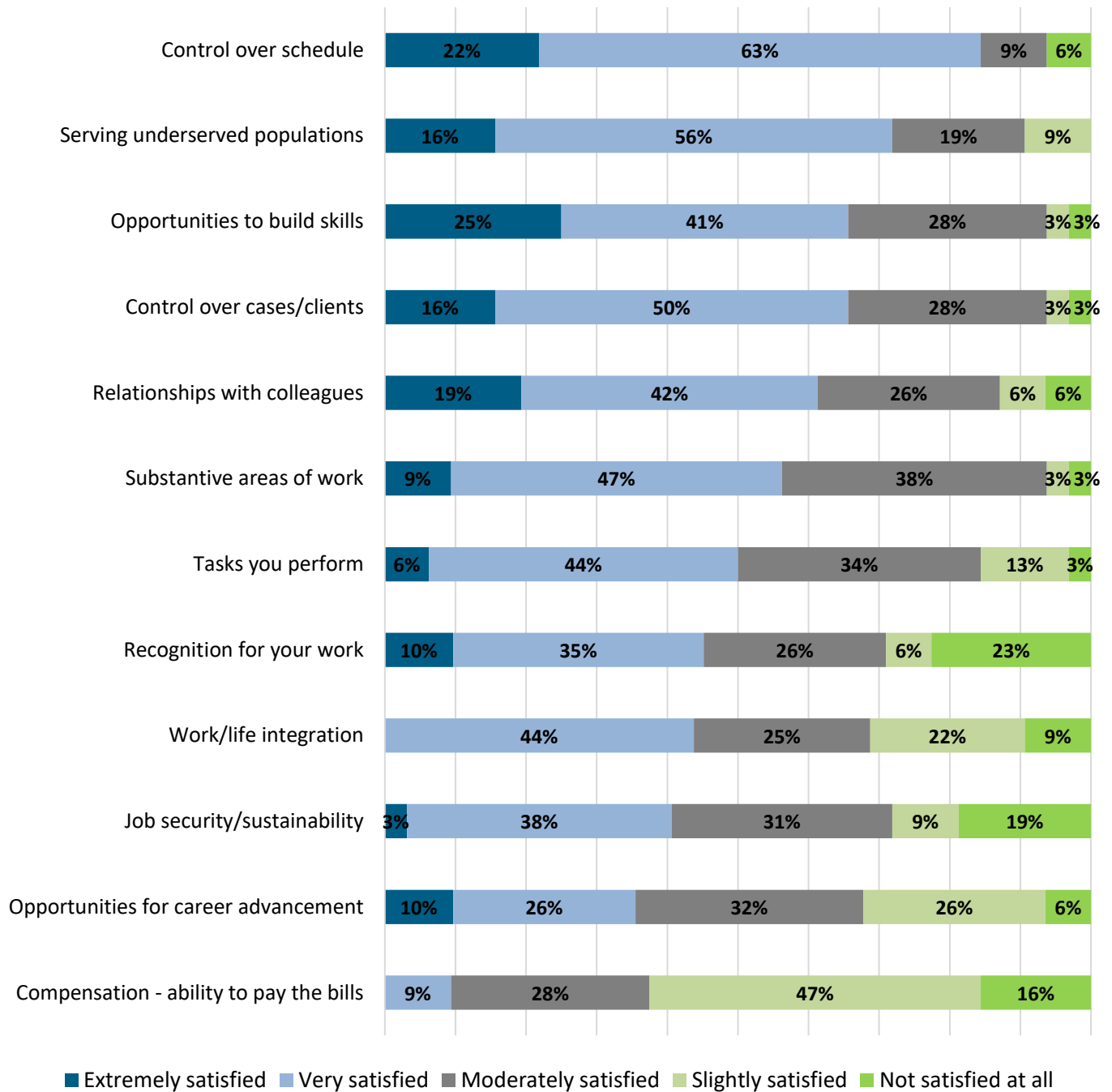
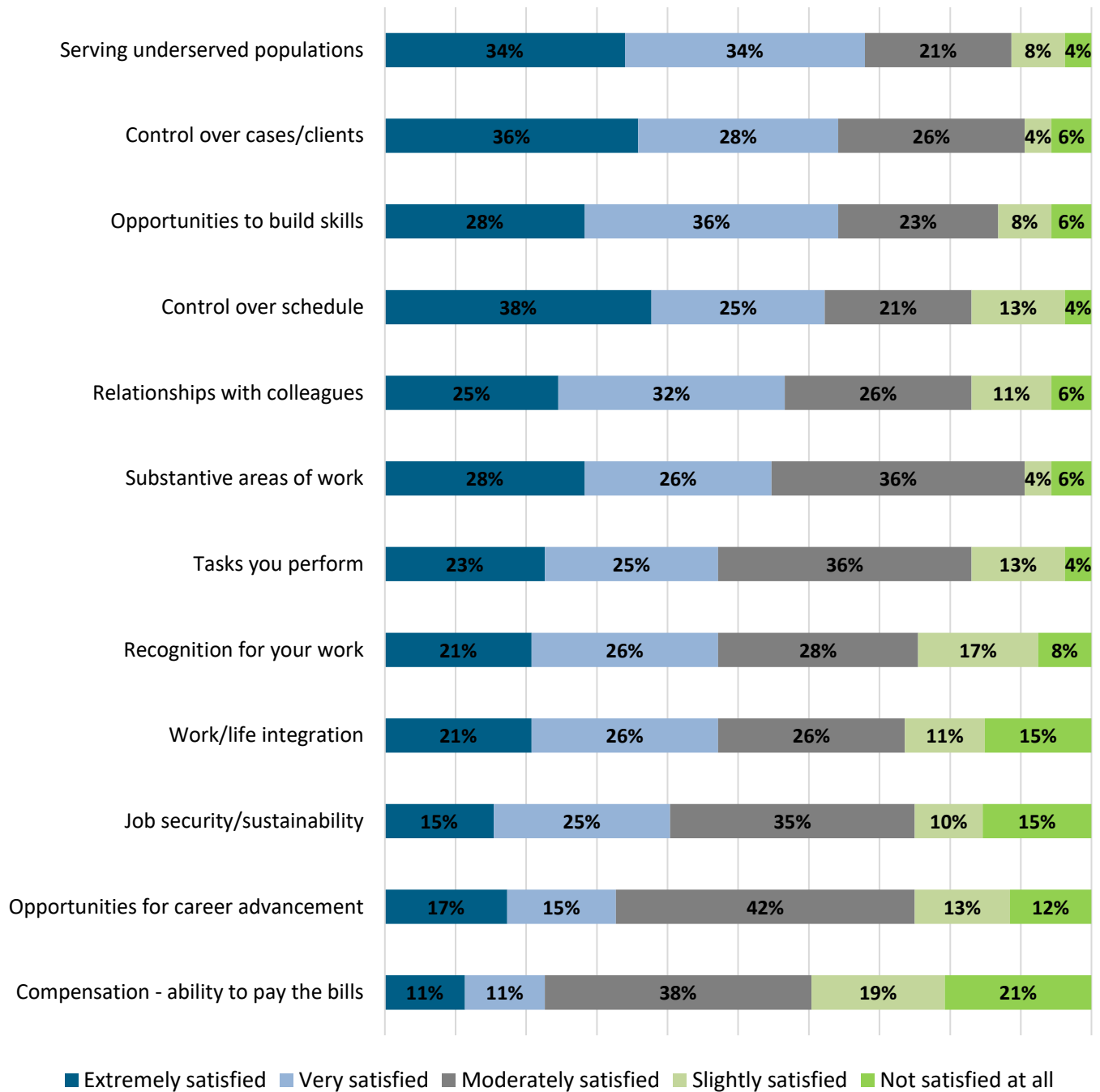




Fig. 43

## Satisfaction with Aspects of Career Former Incubator Participants

N range is 52 to 53



# III. Client and Community Services

Legal incubator programs claim that they help inculcate an ethos of service that encourages attorneys to provide affordable legal services to underserved populations. The 2016 Incubator Program Survey Report provides a snapshot at the impact by giving us a glimpse at the number of consultations, referrals, and opened cases of 29 legal incubator programs.<sup>44</sup> This survey asked lawyers to describe their practice areas, the client bases they served, and the types of legal services they provided. It also asked about their fee and billing arrangements, including their provision of pro bono services. The survey did not engage the client population, but we can learn a great deal about the type of clients that benefit from legal incubator programs from the lawyers' responses about who they served and how they delivered services.

## A. Practice Areas

The survey asked participants to assign an approximate percentage to a series of practice areas to represent its share of 100 percent of their total practice. Given that most legal needs studies consistently identify family law as the largest area of civil legal need, it is no surprise that on average, nearly a quarter of respondents' practices consisted of family law. The survey found that for attorneys currently in the legal incubator programs, family law practice made up an average of 26 percent of their practice compared to 22 percent for former participants. Criminal law made up the second largest share as reported by former incubator program participants, while current incubator participants reported criminal law as constituting only an average of 5 percent of their practices. Wills and estate planning constituted the third most common practice area for the combined groups of lawyers. It was the second most common area of practice for current participants, making up an average of 13 percent of their total practice, and the third most common area of practice for former participants, making up an average of 10 percent of their total practice. Both groups indicated that some of their practice focused on entertainment law, juvenile justice, domestic violence, personal injury, elder law, housing/landlord-tenant, consumer debt or consumer protection, IP, tax, and education. The Incubator Program Survey states that immigrants are the third most common target group of clients their program serves;<sup>45</sup> however, only 7 percent of current participants' and 9 percent of former participants' practices, on average, are reported as being dedicated to this area of law. One area of notable difference between the groups is real estate, which made up only 3 percent of former incubator participants' total practice but made up an average of 10 percent of current participants' total practice. Neither group indicated much engagement with practice areas that dealt with securities, disability rights, military, medical malpractice, health care or banking – all practice areas that are highly regulated and niched in the general legal arena. (Fig. 44 and Fig. 45)

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<sup>44</sup> There were 29 programs that collectively reported 10,500 consultations; 5,359 clients; 5,9554 case files; and 2,338 referrals from the time of inception of their program. See Incubator Program Study, p.29.

<sup>45</sup> Incubator Program Study, p. 33

*“The incubator project is helping me to explore different areas of practice and helping me to figure out what type of law is best for me.”* - Vanessa Brown, Vermont Lawyer Incubator Project, The Vermont Bar Association and Vermont Law School

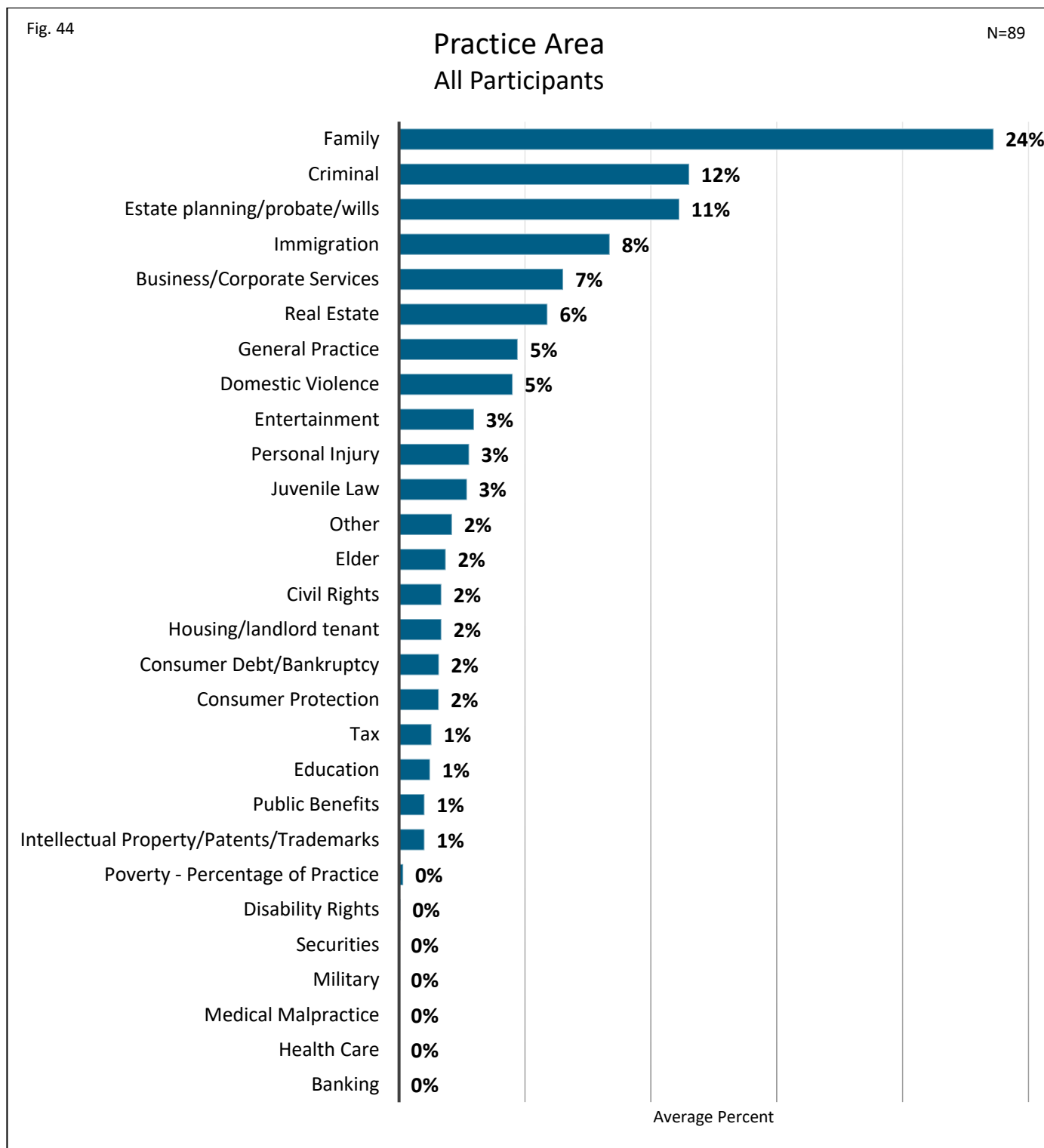
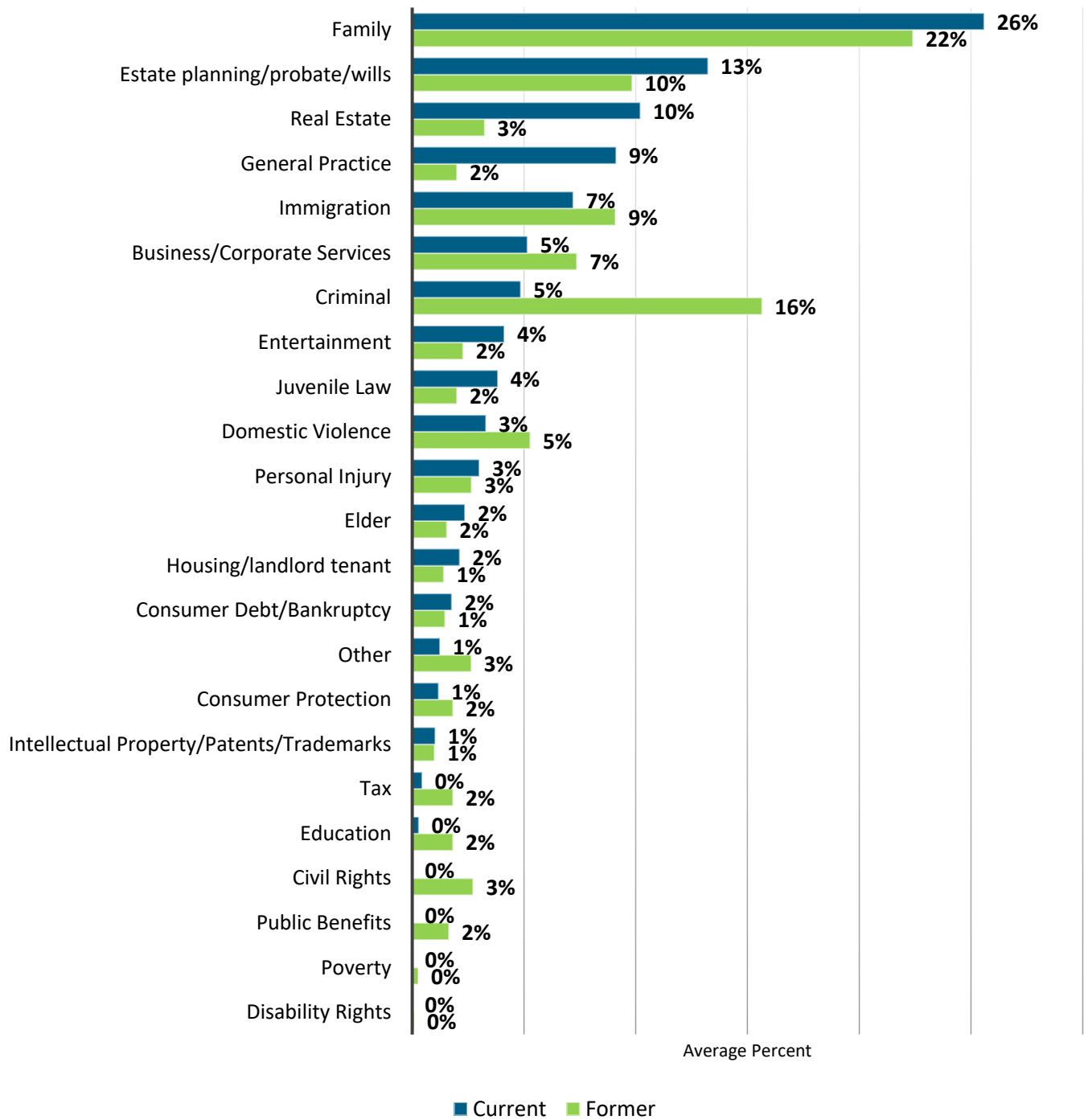


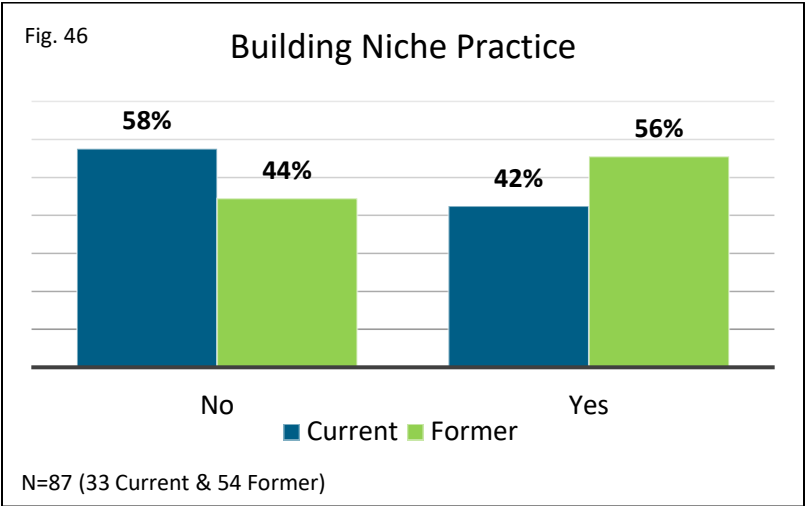
Fig. 45

## Practice Areas

N=89 (34 Current & 55 Former)

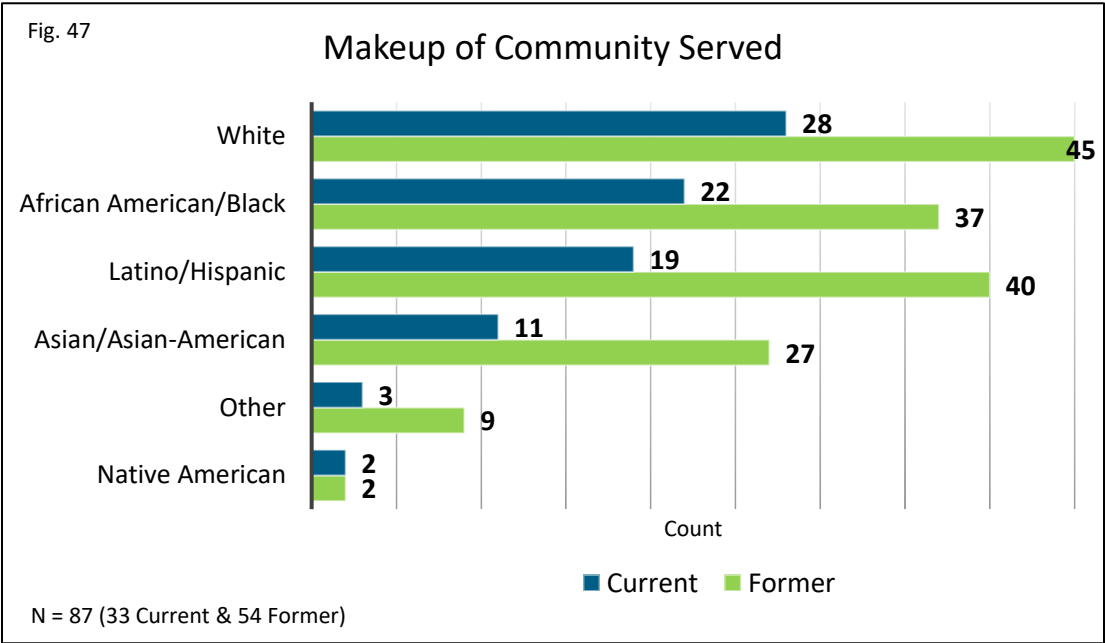


Only 42 percent of current incubator participants and 56 percent of former incubator participants reported building a niche practice. (Fig. 46)



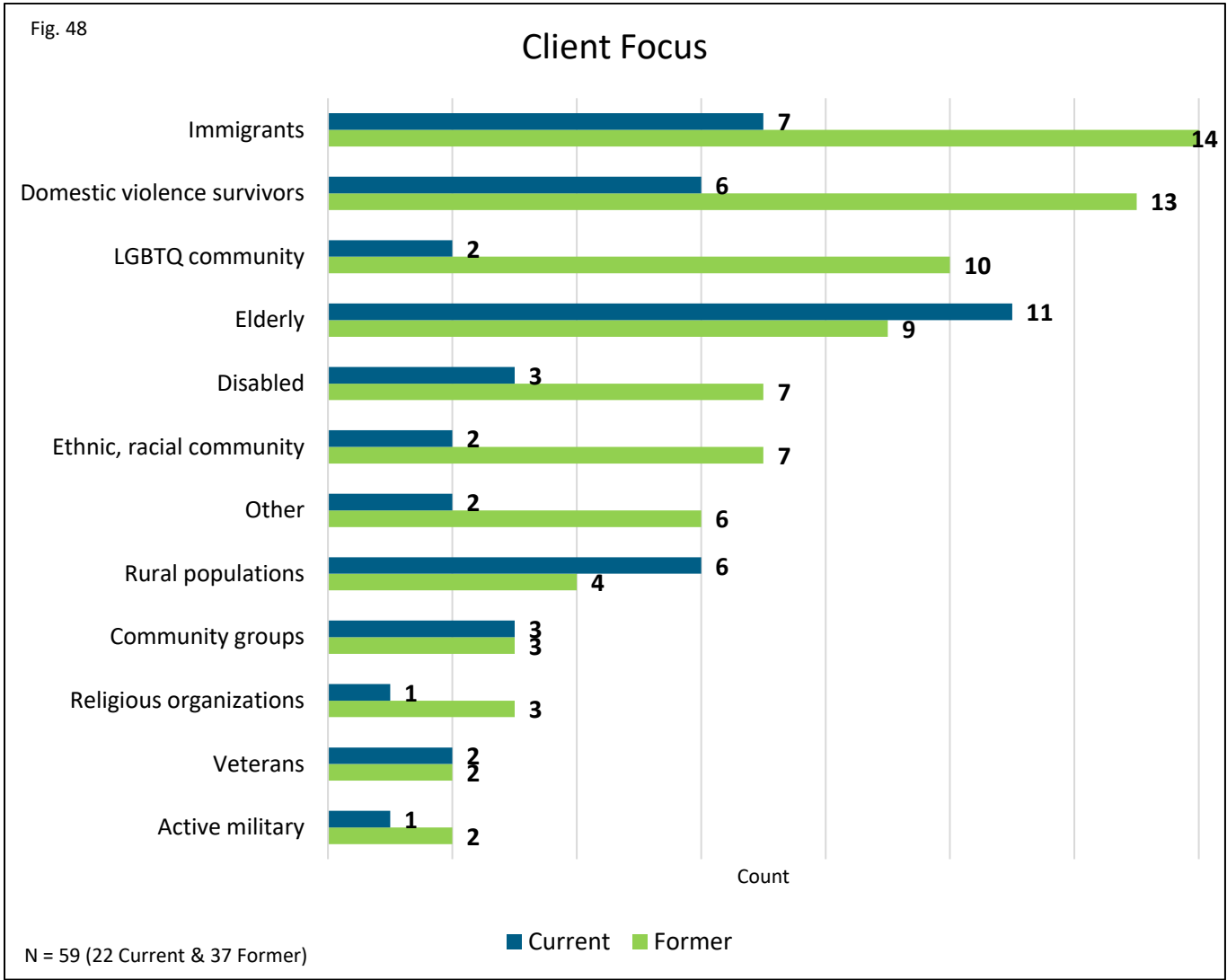
**B. Client Sectors**

The survey asked current and former incubator participants to describe the clients that make up the communities they serve. Much like the population at large, a majority of respondents reporting serving communities consisting of White clients, followed by Black and Latino communities. (Fig. 47)



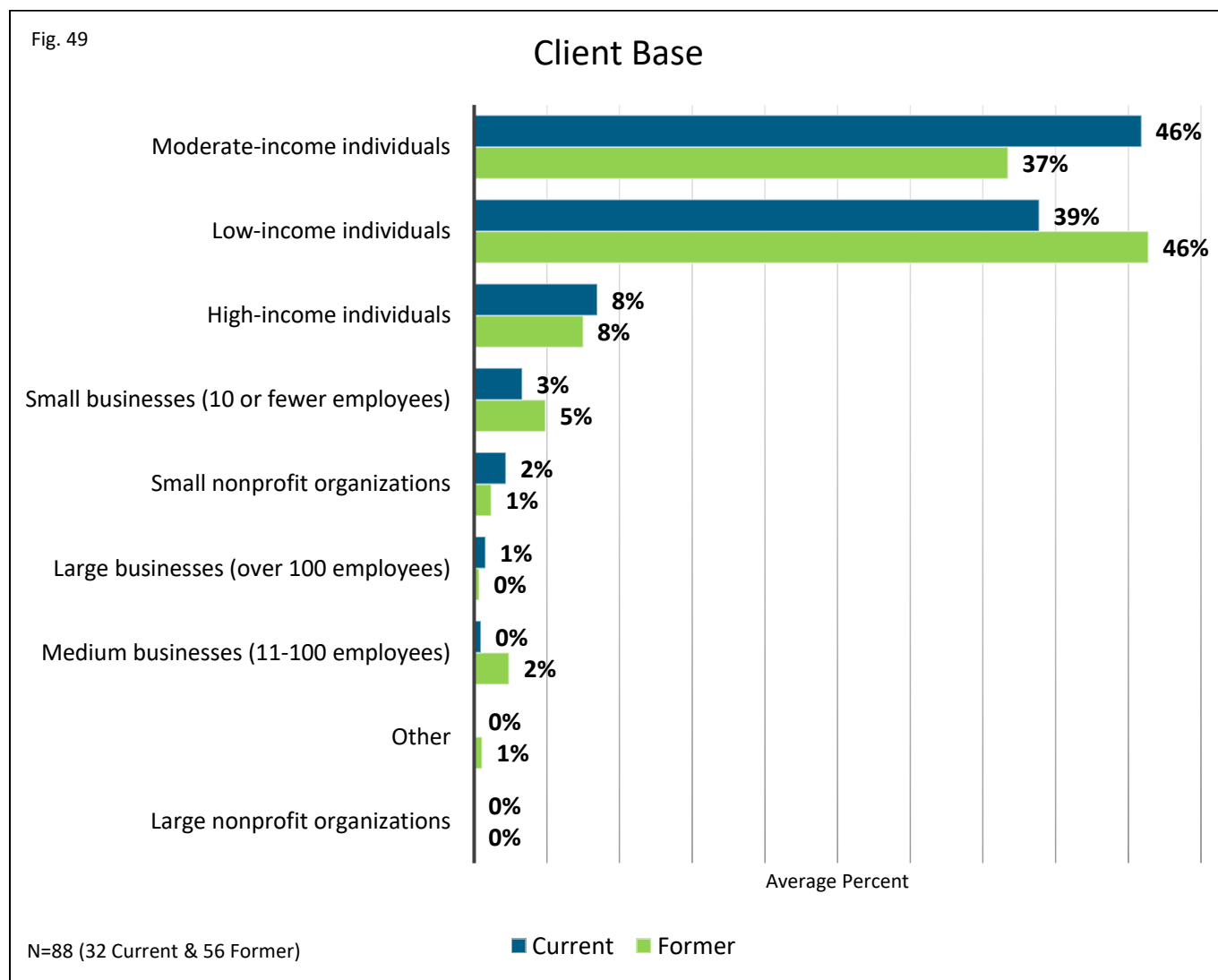
The survey also asked respondents if their practice focused on serving any specific groups of clients. For current incubator participants, the top three most reported groups were the elderly, immigrants, and tied for third, survivors of domestic violence and rural populations. For former participants, the top three were immigrants, survivors of domestic violence, and the LGBTQ community. The least reported groups were veterans, active military,

religious organizations, and community groups. Because the survey didn't provide a response that allowed applicants to identify if their practice did not have a focus, and because the number of responses decreased by 11 current participants and 17 former participants from the previous question, we surmise that those respondents did not have a client focus to report. (Fig. 48)



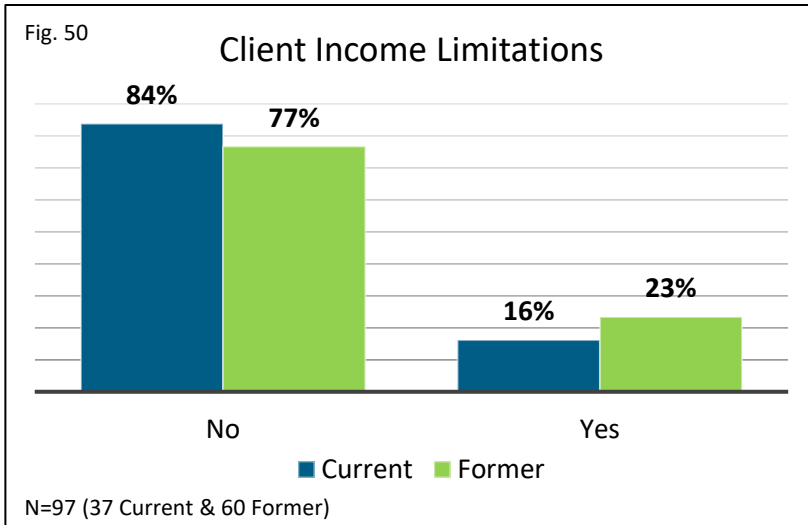
Participants were also asked to assign an approximate percentage to different types of clients to represent their share of their total client base. Most described their clients as a mix of low- and moderate-income individuals. On average, current incubator participants reported that moderate-income individuals made up 46 percent of their client base and low-income individuals made up 39 percent of their client base. For former participants, those numbers were 37 percent for moderate-income individuals and 46 percent for low-income individuals. Both current and former incubator participants identified high-income individuals as only 8 percent of their client base. Current incubator participants identified only 5 percent of their client base as small businesses or small nonprofit organizations, while former incubator participants only attributed the same group to 6 percent of their client base. None of the respondents identified large businesses or nonprofits as part of their client base. The responses that

identified “other” included blue collar workers/retirees, children, consumers, Department of Children & Family Services, farming and food entrepreneurs, indigent defendants in criminal cases, the arts community, and U-visas and VAWA. (Fig. 49)



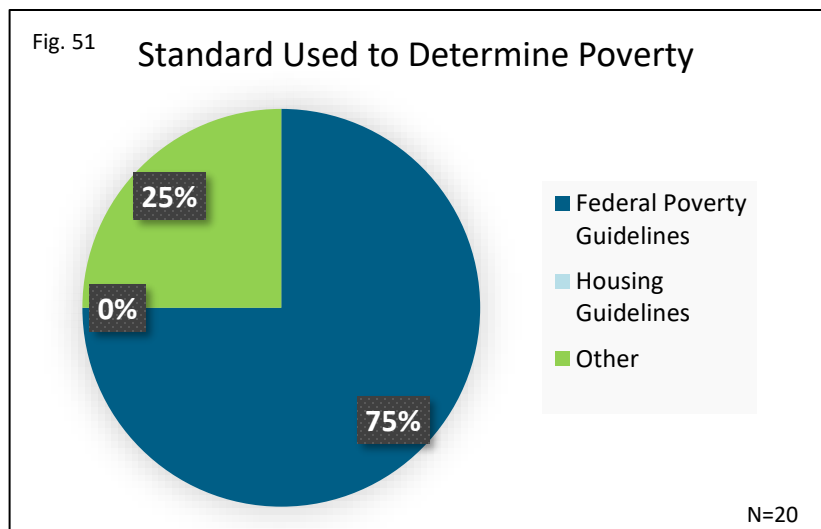
*“We focus on helping people who fall in the justice gap, between where traditional lawyers can help people through traditional means that have already been existing for a long time, and where legal aid organizations help people. So, like low to moderate income people who don’t qualify for legal aid, who need help but aren’t able to get help because they are either afraid of what fees are going to cost, or they can’t afford them.”*

- Darren Perconte, Justice Entrepreneurs Project, Chicago Bar Foundation



We know that many legal incubator programs require or strongly encourage their participants to provide pro bono representation. But it is important to note that these programs generally do not prohibit participants from only representing low or moderate-income clients. When asked if they only serve clients below a certain income, 16 percent of current participants indicated that they only serve clients below a certain income, while 23 percent of former incubator attorneys reported the same. (Fig. 50)

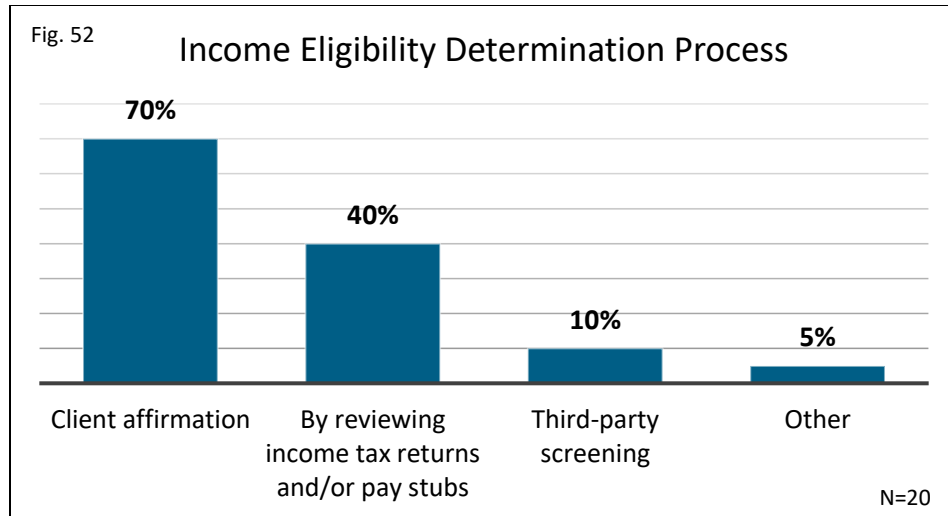
Of those who indicated they limit their services to people of specific incomes, 75 percent use federal poverty guidelines to establish their guidelines for income eligibility and the other 25 percent said they used some other method, with text responses including “common sense,” “life circumstances,” and “take them at their word.” None of them indicated that they use the housing guidelines, which tend to be higher and account for moderate-income populations.<sup>46</sup> (Fig. 51) To determine eligibility for their services,



70 percent of the group stated they determined income eligibility by client affirmation of income, 40 percent said they reviewed income tax returns or pay stubs, 10 percent stated they used a third-party for screening, and the remaining respondents indicated that eligibility was determined through a court appointment. (Fig. 52)

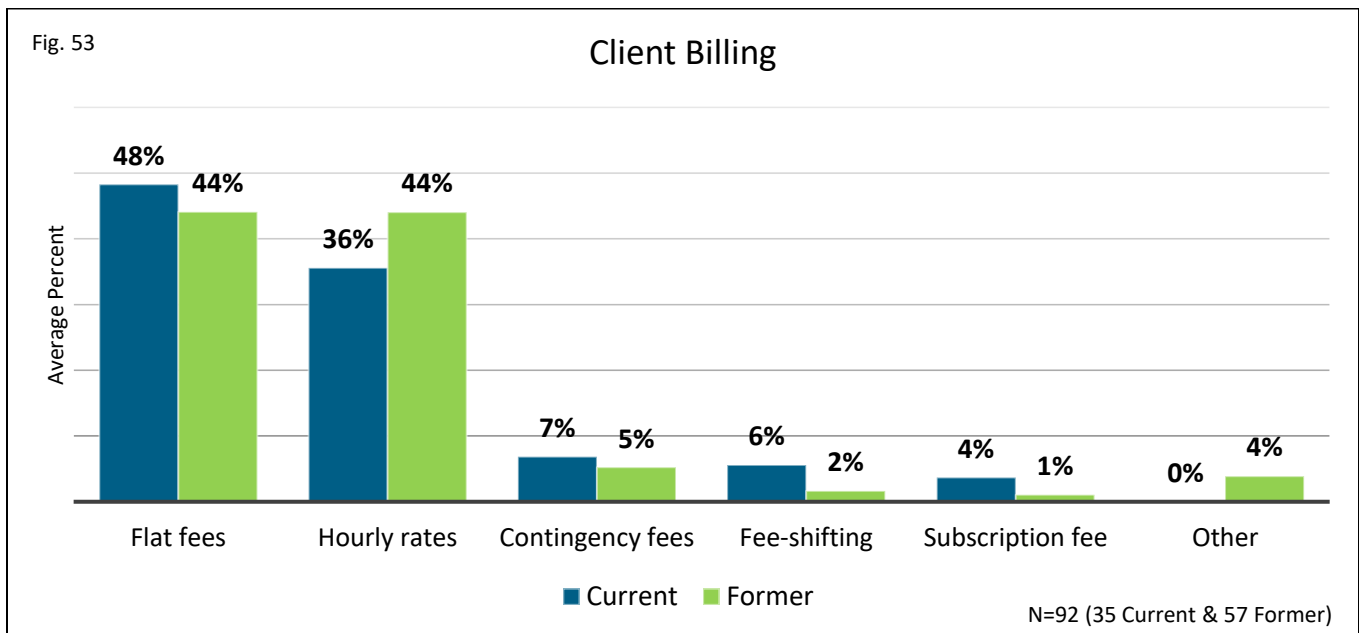
<sup>46</sup> The federal poverty guidelines are used to determine financial eligibility for federal programs and are published each year by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (“HHS”). For the most recent guidelines, please see HHS website at <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>.



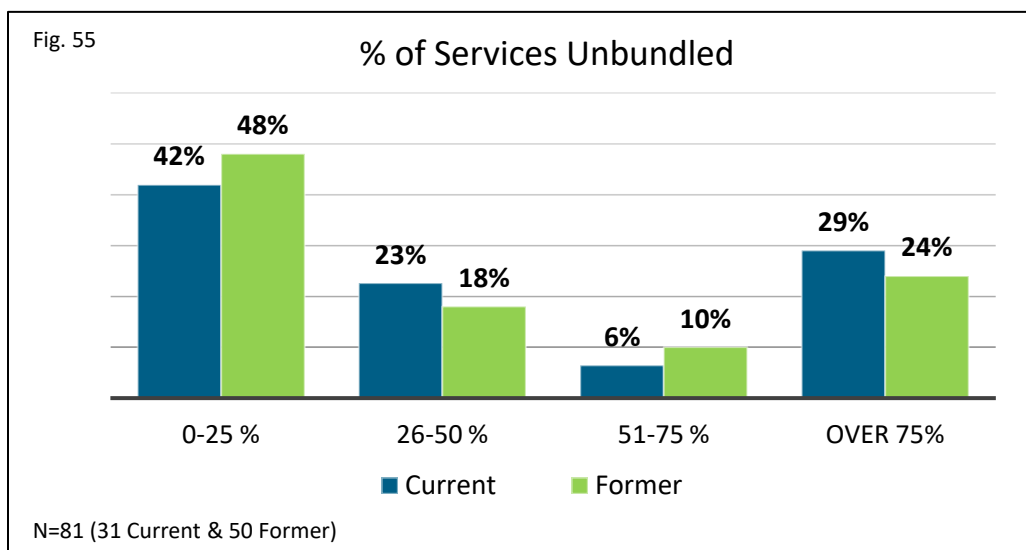
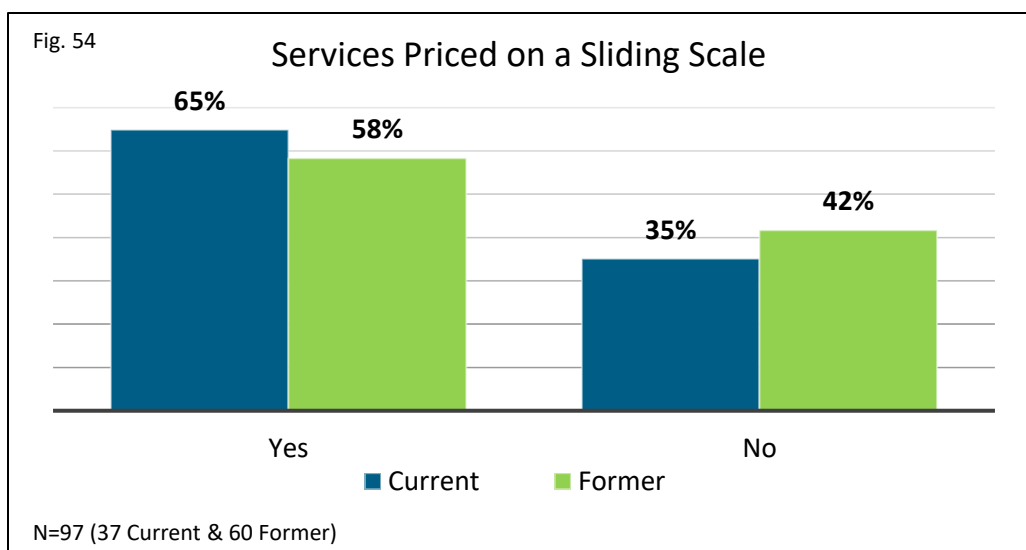


## C. Billing and Collection Practices

While analyzing the delivery of legal services and financial practices, respondents were asked to assign an approximate percentage to a number of billing type options that needed to ultimately represent 100 percent of their law practice. Researchers found that many of the incubator participants were willing to employ alternative delivery systems and fee structures in their legal practice, including the use of limited scope services, sliding scale fees, and flat fee billing practices. On average, flat fees made up 48 percent of current incubator participants', and 44 percent former incubator participants', total billing. The rest of their billing primarily consisted of hourly rates. (Fig. 53)



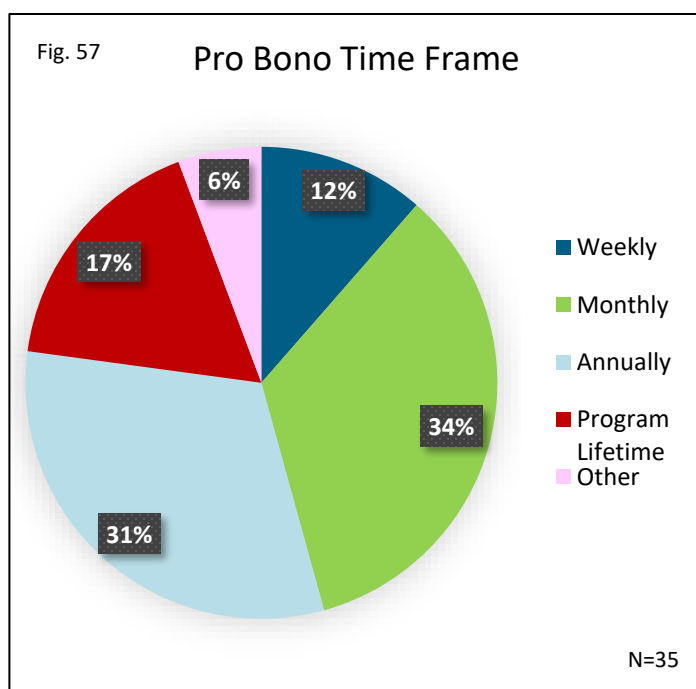
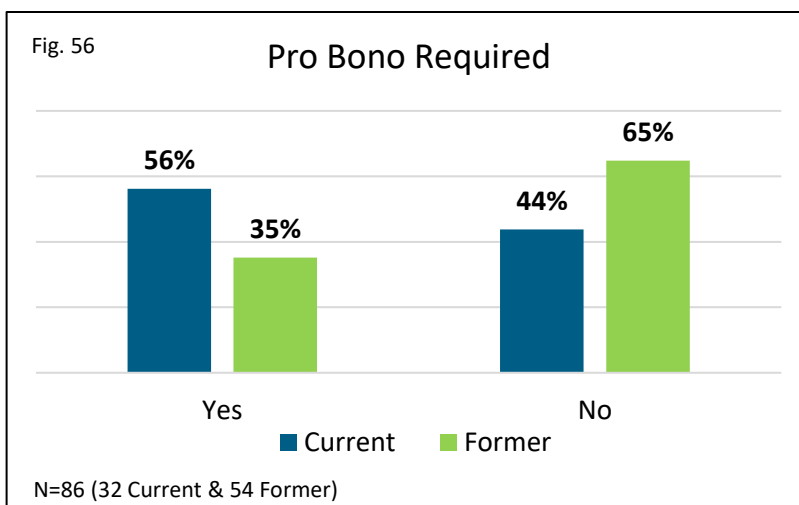
Sixty-five percent of current incubator participants and 58 percent of former incubator participants stated they priced their services on a sliding scale. (Fig. 54) In addition, more than half of both groups reported that more than 25 percent of their services were unbundled. Forty-two percent of current incubator attorneys said that a quarter or less of their services were unbundled; 29 percent stated that at least three-quarters of their services were unbundled. Similarly, 48 percent of former incubator attorneys responded that a quarter or less of their services were unbundled; and 24 percent stated that at least three-quarters of their services were unbundled (Fig. 55)



*“For me, I wanted to provide affordable help to real people. That means, choosing to be able to work with clients that share my same settlement-minded approach to family disputes, as well as being able to charge flat fees that are based on results instead of hourly rates that are based on effort.”* - Nora Endzel, Justice Entrepreneurs Project; Chicago Bar Foundation

## D. Pro Bono

Since the programs themselves highlighted pro bono as a critical activity that their attorneys engaged in, we asked the lawyers about the pro bono requirements of their programs. Fifty-six percent of current incubator respondents and 35 percent of former incubator respondents indicated that pro bono was a requirement for participation in the incubator program. These responses were lower than the 69 percent of programs that reported pro bono as a requirement in 2016.<sup>47</sup> (Fig. 56)



Those who indicated that pro bono was required by their program were also asked the number of hours required and the time frame for the pro bono commitment. Of the vast majority of participants in programs where pro bono was required, 94 percent indicated they had a time-bound pro bono commitment that was a requirement for their program with the majority of respondents reporting a monthly or annual commitment. (Fig. 57)

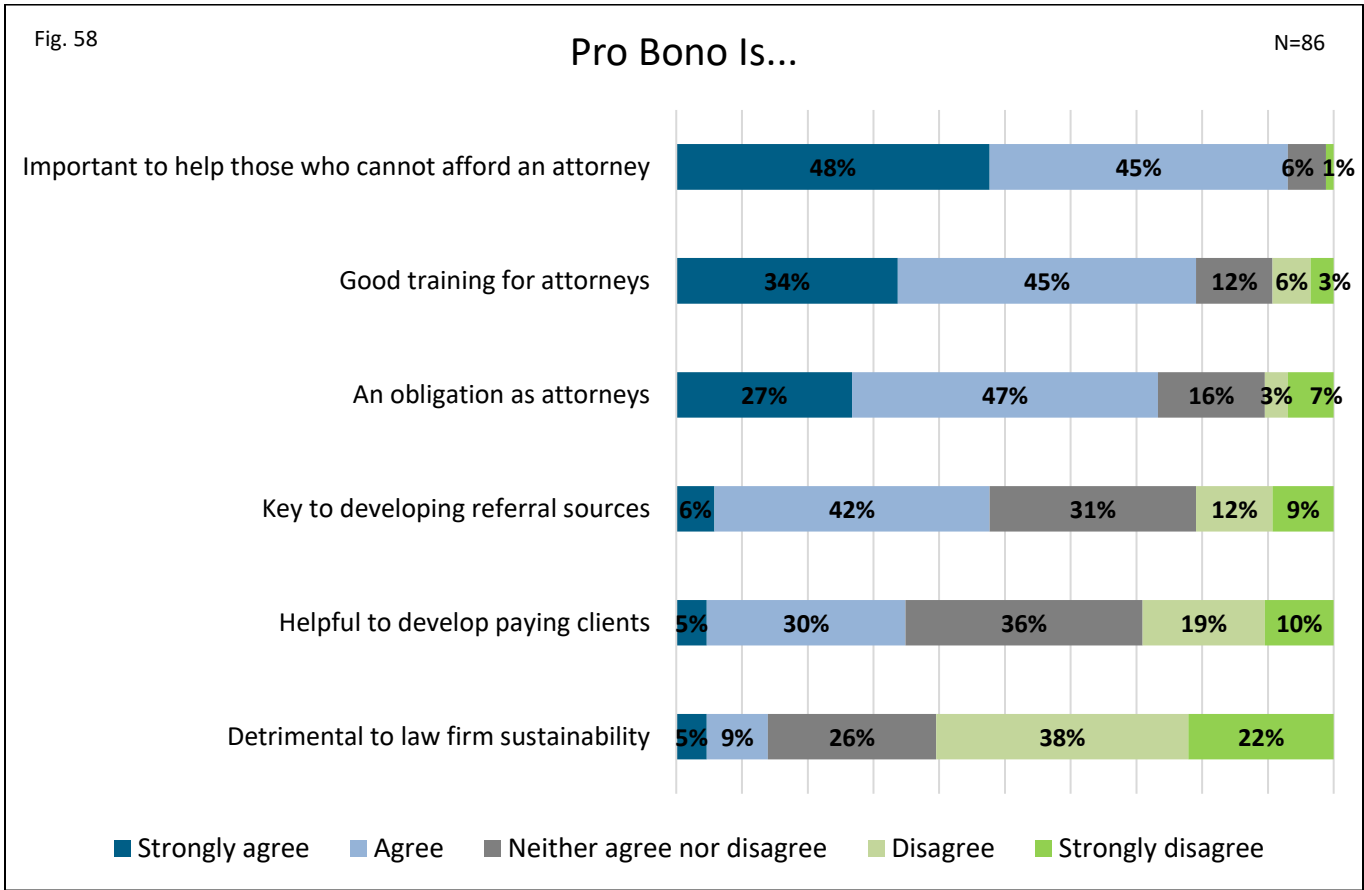
On average, participants with weekly obligations were required to do 12 hours of pro bono, those with monthly obligations were required to do 28 hours of pro bono, and annual obligations were roughly 90 hours of pro bono. The former participants also reported engaging in an average of 10 hours of pro bono per month since leaving the incubator.

When asked about their opinions regarding pro bono work, over 90 percent of former and current participants expressed a belief that pro bono is important to help those who cannot afford an attorney. The majority also indicated a belief that pro bono work provides good training for attorneys and that it is an obligation of attorneys to provide pro bono work. That is consistent with national studies that indicate that 81 percent of attorneys believe pro bono work is somewhat or very important.<sup>48</sup> Most do not believe that pro bono is detrimental to law firm

<sup>47</sup> Incubator Program Survey, p. 30.

<sup>48</sup> Pro Bono Report, p. 19.

sustainability, but do not necessarily agree that it is helpful for client development. There is some ambivalence expressed to whether or not pro bono helps develop referral sources. (Fig. 58)

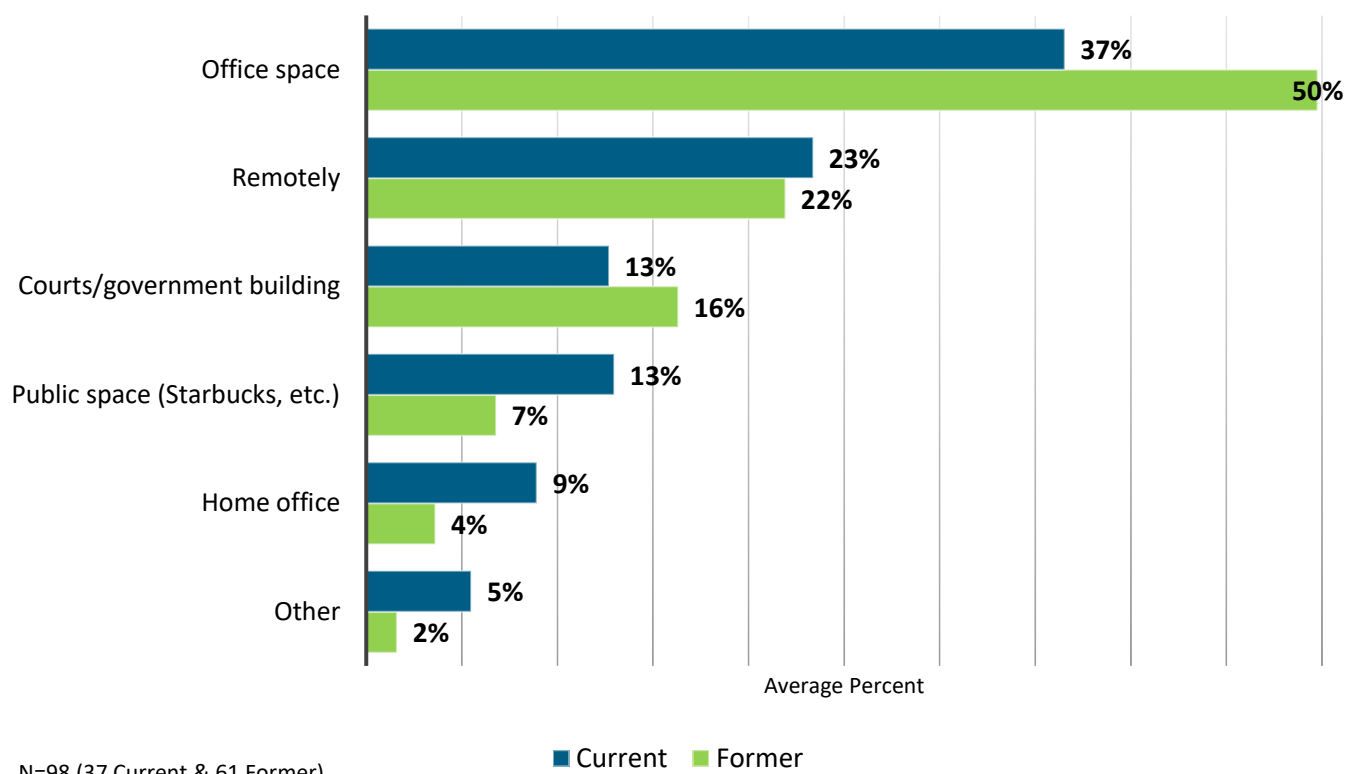


### E. Other Client-Related Matters

When asked to delineate the locations where they interact with clients by assigning an approximate percentage to represent its share of the whole, both current and former incubator participants indicated that office space was the primary site for interaction; this represented, on average, 37 percent of current participants' interactions with clients and 50 percent of former participants' interactions with clients. Remote interaction through email and online platforms followed in second, representing an average of 23 percent and 22 percent of current and former participants' interactions with clients, respectively. Current incubator participants indicated they met with clients in public spaces or in courts and government offices as a third option. Former incubator participants also listed courts and government buildings as a third place for interaction but were less likely than current participants to use public space for client interactions. An average of nine percent of client interactions took place in a home office for current participants' and only 4 percent of client interactions took place in a home office for former incubator participants. Those who responded "other" specified that incubator spaces, homes, shared offices, libraries, a client's farm/business, or a friend's offices were the locations in which they interacted with clients. (Fig. 59)

Fig. 59

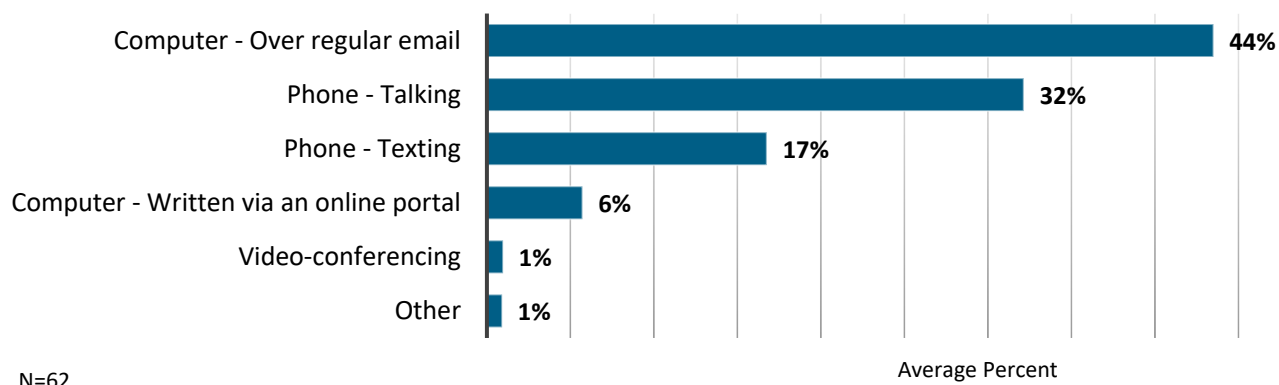
### Where They Interact with Clients



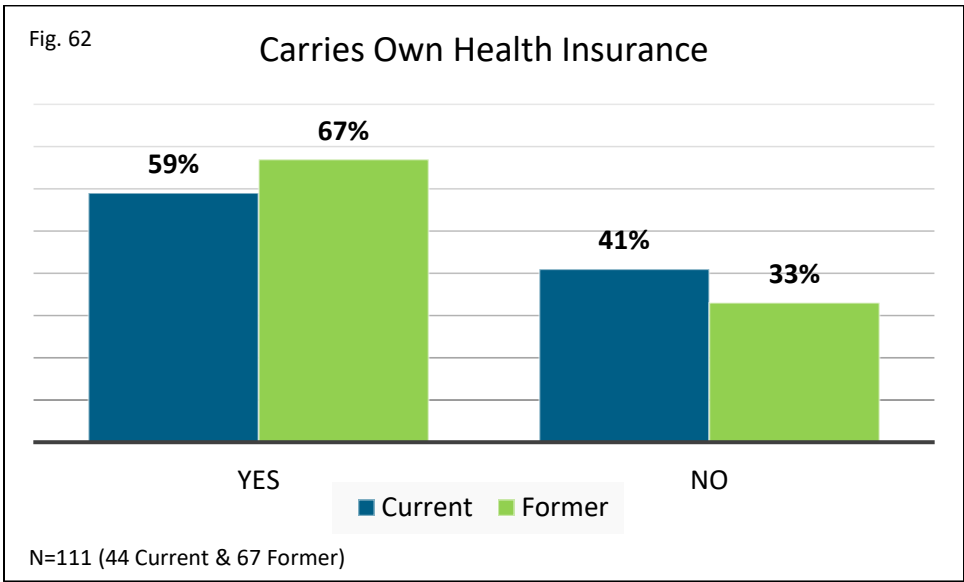
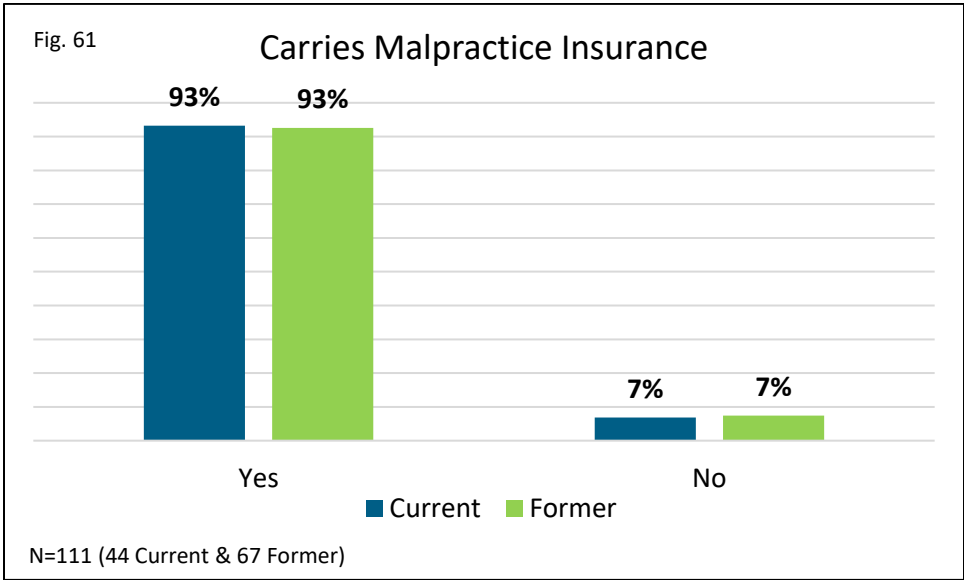
Those who identified remote interactions cited email as the main form of remote communication, this method making up an average of 44 percent of all remote communications. Talking by phone represented an average of 32 percent of remote communications and texting represented an average of 17 percent of remote communications. Online portals represented an average of only 6 percent of remote communications. At the time of the survey, video conferencing received an allocation of only 1 percent. (Fig. 60)

Fig. 60

### Remote Communications



The majority of all respondents, 93 percent, carried malpractice insurance, but fewer indicated they carried their own health insurance. (Fig. 61 and Fig. 62) Former incubator attorneys reported health care coverage at a slightly higher rate (67 percent) than current incubator participants (59 percent). (Fig. 62)



# Lessons Learned And Future Outlook

The survey was conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore does not capture the pandemic's impact on how lawyers practice or the impact on their viability. We know that several legal incubator programs shuttered or went on hiatus as a result of the pandemic. While the number of legal incubator programs that remain is uncertain, the need for affordable legal services is only increasing. Tenants are evicted for not knowing to assert their legal rights under eviction moratoriums. Many members of our society are facing end of life decisions without health care directives, wills, and estate planning documents. The pandemic has caused millions of Americans to lose their jobs, experience furloughs, or be underemployed as a result of government-ordered shutdowns.<sup>49</sup> The economic condition of the poor, the near poor, and moderate-income individuals has only worsened.<sup>50</sup>

Legal incubators grew after the Great Recession because new lawyers, in the absence of jobs, needed more opportunities for training and mentorship after law school. Law schools began to invest in legal incubator programs as a way to support their alumni and increase their reporting of graduates who were employed ten months after graduation (the "Graduate Employment Status Date").<sup>51</sup> However, because it takes time for attorneys to develop their law practices and generate sufficient income to support themselves, many attorneys take on part-time employment to supplement their income. Some graduates in legal incubator programs, therefore do not indicate they are solo practitioners but instead indicate that they have part-time employment. Part-time employment is not as favorable as full-time employment in terms of law school placement success measures. While this initially led some career services personnel to not view legal incubator programs as good investments of their resources, the National Association of Law Placement clarified that a "graduate's position can be classified as long-term if they have established a law firm on/before the Graduate Employment Status Date."<sup>52</sup> A graduate who is employed as a solo practitioner can be reported as employed full-time even if that graduate does not have enough client work to fill the 35 hour per week minimum.<sup>53</sup> Career services offices cannot presume full-time employment for a solo

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<sup>49</sup> LAUREN BAUER, ET AL, TEN FACTS ABOUT COVID-19 AND THE U.S. ECONOMY, BROOKINGS INSTITUTE (SEPT. 2020).

<sup>50</sup> CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES, TRACKING THE COVID-19 RECESSION'S EFFECT ON FOOD, HOUSING, AND EMPLOYMENT HARDSHIPS, (JAN. 28, 2021).

<sup>51</sup> ABA law school accreditation standards require that law schools annually disclose their employment outcomes. ABA STAND. 509(b)(7). The National Association of Law Placement (NALP) asks law school career services office to survey their recent graduates to complete an Employment Report and Salary Survey every year to determine how many of their graduates were employed within 10 months of graduation. See NALP 2020 Letter to Law School Career Services Offices, [https://www.nalp.org/uploads/ERSS/1\\_ERSS\\_CoverMemo\\_2020.pdf](https://www.nalp.org/uploads/ERSS/1_ERSS_CoverMemo_2020.pdf).

<sup>52</sup> See Example No. 10 for Data Protocol 301, ABA Employment Protocols for the Class of 2020 ("ABA Employment Protocols"), [https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/legal\\_education\\_and\\_admissions\\_to\\_the\\_bar/Questionnaires/employment-protocol-class-of-2020.pdf](https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/legal_education_and_admissions_to_the_bar/Questionnaires/employment-protocol-class-of-2020.pdf).

<sup>53</sup> See ABA Employment Protocols, Data Protocol 305 (Example 5) (explaining that if a law graduate reports they are in solo practice, the minimum of 35 hours per week required to constitute full-time employment may include client work, development and other administrative tasks involved in establishing a law practice).

practitioner graduate they cannot reach, however, a graduate who passes the bar exam, and takes steps to establish a law practice and advertise his/her services can be considered full-time employed.<sup>54</sup>

Today, in the midst of a COVID-19 recession, recent law school graduates are again facing limited or delayed employment opportunities.<sup>55</sup> While the Incubator Program Report tells us that law schools were key players in building more than 70 legal incubator programs the U.S., some law schools have closed, suspended or are uncertain if their programs will continue post-pandemic. Bar leaders can ask law schools to continue to do more to train lawyers who seek to establish law practices and they can acknowledge that the task of preparing lawyers to practice is not one for law schools alone. In fact, some of the most successful legal incubator efforts are traced to significant bar support.<sup>56</sup> Law schools can and should continue to play a key role in developing these programs, however, bar groups – who have a great stake at both ensuring legal needs are met in the community and having lawyers who are employed – must also consider how to incentivize and support the development of solo and small firm lawyers who serve low- and moderate-income populations.

The last national legal services survey revealed that 75 percent of low-income respondents contracted with a private lawyer and that 68 percent of them actually paid a fee for those services.<sup>57</sup> The survey results reveal that these programs not only provide career development support for the lawyers who participate but also that a significant number of clients that may not otherwise have legal services receive legal assistance. The difficulty with collecting client experience data is that confidentiality obligations restrict attorneys from providing researchers with client information unless the client consents. In addition, attorneys who are working on building viable practices and the program directors that are supporting them, do not have incentives to spend time helping to collect this data. Most legal incubator programs are focused on supporting the attorneys to establish their own practices and do not have access to the attorney's client database.

This survey has affirmed the need to develop more structured systems of data collection that offer greater insight into the solo and small firm bar and their role in addressing legal needs. Recommendations for future research include:

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<sup>54</sup> See ABA Employment Protocols, Data Protocol 401 (Example 1) (explaining that career services offices must document and date activities that demonstrate the graduate set up a law practice, including maintaining a website, having a business license, obtaining insurance, and/or employing staff).

<sup>55</sup> Gabriel Curtis, "The Impact of the Coronavirus on Legal Education," U.S. News, Aug. 24, 2020 9:24 AM (discussing the immediate impact of COVID19 on the legal job market and predicting greater work opportunities for law graduates in the long-term as a result of the pandemic).

<sup>56</sup> Justice Entrepreneurship Project is primarily funded and supported by the Chicago Bar Foundation, see <https://info.jepchicago.org/category/profile/>. The Texas Opportunity & Justice Incubator is funded and supported by the State Bar of Texas. See <https://txoji.com/>. The California State Bar was also instrumental in providing seed funding for a successful legal incubator that continues to operate with the support of the Alameda County Bar Association. See Bay Area Legal Incubator, <https://www.bayarealegalincubator.org/>.

<sup>57</sup> Legal Needs and Civil Justice: A Survey of Americans, ABA 9-11 (1994); see also Access Across America: First Report of the Civil Justice Infrastructure Mapping Project, AMERICAN BAR FOUNDATION 3 (October 7, 2011) (stating that evidence suggests that low-income ho seek out legal assistance have most of their contacts with private attorneys in fee-based arrangements rather than with legal aid or pro bono attorneys), <http://www.americanbarfoundation.org/research/PursuingLaw-sPromise.html>).



► ***Compile More Data on Solo and Small Firm Lawyers.*** The last Lawyer Statistical Report was published by the American Bar Foundation in 2012 and it was based on 2005 data. At that point, solo practitioners constituted 49 percent of all attorneys in private practice and another 28 percent of lawyers in private practice were in firms of 2 to 5 lawyers.<sup>58</sup> Without more updated data that includes information about solo and small firm practice, it is difficult to adequately contextualize the need and market for legal incubators.

► ***Create templates for data collection.*** Since solo and small firm lawyers are small operations that, like other small business, struggle with financial sustainability, it would be helpful to have templates available for legal incubator programs and attorneys who wish to collect data about their practices. In addition to number and characteristics of clients served, information about the legal services provided, referral sources, and collecting information about their involvement in community legal education or advocacy work would provide a more complete picture of these lawyers' contributions. Templates for data collection would also be helpful for gathering data of the clients who receive services from these lawyers. Ultimately, the impact of these programs must also be measured by the quality and reach of the legal services they provide.

► ***Impact of COVID19 on Law Practice.*** The survey closed just as COVID-19 began spreading in the United States and the legal profession was forced to practice virtually. The lawyers in this study reported less than a quarter of their client interactions taking place remotely. Of those who engaged in remote client interactions, only six percent of client communications occurred via an online portal, and only 1 percent were conducted via video-conferencing. Since then, most lawyers had to quickly adopt technology that would permit them to meet clients and attend court hearings online. In December 2020, the ABA recognized the need to issue an ethics opinion that permits lawyers to practice virtually from another jurisdiction where they are not licensed so long as they “do not hold themselves out as being licensed to practice in the local jurisdiction, do not advertise or otherwise hold out as having an office in the local jurisdiction, and do not provide or offer to provide legal services in the local jurisdiction.”<sup>59</sup> Additional states published similar opinions, and several others actually amended their rules of professional conduct to allow such remote work. Further study of solo and small firm lawyers, whether or not they participate in legal incubator programs, will be critical to understand how lawyers adapted to virtual practice and how this shift is impacting the delivery of legal services to low and modest-income populations.

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<sup>58</sup> CLARA N. CARSON, ET AL, THE 2005 LAWYER STATISTICAL REPORT: THE U.S. LEGAL PROFESSION IN 2005 5-6, AMERICAN BAR FOUNDATION (2005).

<sup>59</sup> ABA STANDING COMMITTEE ON ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY, FORMAL OPINION NO. 495: LAWYERS WORKING REMOTELY 1 (DEC. 16, 2020).

# Conclusion

This survey of incubator lawyers and the Incubator Program Survey tell us that legal incubator programs are both preparing lawyers to establish law practices and serving an unaddressed legal need. Legal incubator programs support the career development of lawyers interested in starting solo and small firm law practices. While these lawyers are generally satisfied with their professional lives, many indicate significant concern about their financial instability. These lawyers report they provide personal legal services primary to low- and moderate-income clients. More investment in these programs and longitudinal research about them is required to understand the long-term impact of these programs on lawyer participants and the clients they serve.

## APPENDIX A: List of Incubators and their Operating Entities by Launch Date

	PROGRAM	Launch Date	Status
1	Incubator for Justice: The City University of New York School of Law (CUNY)	September 2007	Closed
2	Tulsa Immigrant Resource Network; University of Tulsa College of Law's Boesche Legal Clinic	2008	Converted to clinic only
3	UMKC Solo and Small Firm Incubator; University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law	January 2011	Operational
4	Columbus Bar, INC	April 2011	Operational
5	LawBridge Legal Residency Program at Florida International University College of Law	Fall 2011	Closed
6	University Law Group; S. J. Quinney College of Law, University of Utah	February 2012	Closed
7	Access to Law Initiative (ALI); California Western School of Law	June 2012	Operational
8	Pace Community Law Practice; Pace University School of Law	September 2012	Operational
9	Small Practice Center; Charlotte School of Law	October 2012	Closed
10	Center for Solo Practitioners; Thomas Jefferson School of Law	November 2012	On hiatus since January 2020.
11	Solo & Small Practice Incubator; IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law	November 2012	Operational
12	Lawyer Entrepreneur Assistance Program (LEAP): Legal Aid Society of Orange County, University of California Irvine School of Law, Whittier Law School, Western State College of Law, and the Dale E. Fowler School of Law at Chapman University	January 2013	Operational
13	Justice Entrepreneurs Project; Chicago Bar Foundation	June 2013	Operational
14	Sustainable Economies Law Center Fellowship Program	August 2013	Operational
15	Richmond Legal Development Center	September 2013	Closed
16	Community Justice Center of Long Island (CJCLI); Touro College Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center	November 2013	Closed
17	Open Legal Services	November 2013	Operational

	<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>Launch Date</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>18</b>	Cleveland-Marshall Solo Practice Incubator; Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, Cleveland State University	January 2014	<b>Operational</b>
<b>19</b>	Seattle University School of Law Incubator Program;	January 2014	<b>Operational</b>
<b>20</b>	Legal Innovators for Tomorrow (LIFT) Fellowship Program; Louisiana State Bar Association	February 2014	<b>Operational</b>
<b>21</b>	Associates Fellowship Program; Rutgers School of Law - Newark	February 2014	<b>Operational</b>
<b>22</b>	Access to Justice Incubator; Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University	February 2014	<b>Closed</b>
<b>23</b>	ASU Alumni Law Group	March 2014	<b>Operational</b>
<b>24</b>	Midwest Center for Law and Justice	April 2014	<b>Operational</b>
<b>25</b>	Fair Shake Environmental Legal Services	April 2014	<b>Operational</b>
<b>26</b>	Family Law Fellowship; Eastside Legal Assistance Program (ELAP)	April 2014	<b>Operational</b>
<b>27</b>	Centro Comunitario de Servicios Legales (Community Legal Services Center) CECSEL, Dominican Republic	April 2014	<b>Operational</b>
<b>28</b>	ASU Alumni Law Group, Arizona State University	March 2014	<b>Closed</b>
<b>29</b>	Vermont Lawyer Incubator Project; The Vermont Bar Association and Vermont Law School	May 2014	<b>Operational</b>
<b>30</b>	Symbiosis Law School, Symbiosis International University, Pune, India	May 2014	<b>Operational</b>
<b>31</b>	Modest Means Incubator Program; California Lawyers for the Arts	August 2014	<b>Operational</b>
<b>32</b>	Justice Bridge – Legal Residency and Incubator Program; University of Massachusetts School of Law	August 2014	<b>Operational</b>
<b>33</b>	The New Solo Practitioner Incubator; Monterey College of Law	September 2014	<b>Operational</b>
<b>34</b>	Solo & Small Firm Incubator Program; University of Detroit Mercy School of Law	October 2014	<b>Operational</b>
<b>35</b>	James E. Rogers Community Law Group; University of Arizona, James E. Rogers College of Law	November 2014	<b>Operational</b>

	<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>Launch Date</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>36</b>	Public Interest Advocacy Clinic	January 2015	<b>Operational</b>
<b>37</b>	Whittier Legal Access Program; Whittier Law School	January 2015	<b>Closed</b>
<b>38</b>	Incubator Program; Loyola University New Orleans College of Law	January 2015	<b>On hiatus since January 2021</b>
<b>39</b>	Widener University/Dauphin County Bar Association Incubator Program	January 2015	<b>Closed</b>
<b>40</b>	Los Angeles Incubator Consortium; Southwestern, Pepperdine University and UCLA law schools; Los Angeles County Law Library; and five legal aid organizations: Bet Tzedek, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, Community Legal Services, Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles and Public Counsel	March 2015	<b>Operational</b>
<b>41</b>	Northern California Lawyer Access, Inc. (NCLA)	July 2015	<b>Closed</b>
<b>42</b>	RoyseLaw Community Legal Services; Royse Law Firm, PC	Fall 2015	<b>Closed</b>
<b>43</b>	Incubator Residency Program; Mississippi College School of Law	Fall 2015	<b>Closed</b>
<b>44</b>	Maine Community Law Center	September 2015	<b>Closed</b>
<b>45</b>	Akron Bar Association Incubator Program	September 2015	<b>Closed</b>
<b>46</b>	Elon Law Legal Incubator; Elon Law School	October 2015	<b>Operational</b>
<b>47</b>	Hawaii Emerging Legal Practitioners (HELP) Access to Justice Project; William S. Richardson School of Law, University of Hawaii / Legal Aid Society of Hawaii / Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii	October 2015	<b>Closed</b>
<b>48</b>	BALI - Bay Area Legal Incubator; Volunteer Legal Services Corporation; the Alameda County Bar Association	January 2016	<b>Operational</b>
<b>49</b>	Lawyers for Family Justice; Family Justice Center	January 2016	<b>Operational</b>
<b>50</b>	Law Entrepreneurs for Access Program (LEAP); Civil Justice, Inc., the University of Baltimore School of Law, and the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law	January 2016	<b>Operational</b>
<b>51</b>	Lawyers for Affordable Justice; Boston College Law School, Boston University School of Law, and Northeastern University School of Law	January 2016	<b>Operational</b>
<b>52</b>	Pitt Legal Services Incubator; The University of Pittsburgh School of Law	January 2016	<b>Operational</b>

	<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>Launch Date</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>53</b>	Court Square Law Project; New York City Bar Association and the City University of New York School of Law	February 2016	<b>Closed</b>
<b>54</b>	Insaf Centre for Legal Excellence, Islamabad, Pakistan	February 2016	<b>Operational</b>
<b>55</b>	Nova Southeastern University   Shepard Broad College of Law Legal Incubator	March 2016	<b>Operational</b>
<b>56</b>	Lawyers for Equal Justice, Inc.; State Bar of Georgia, Supreme Court of Georgia, Atlanta Legal Aid Society, Georgia Legal Services Program, Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation, Georgia State University College of Law, Emory University School of Law, John Marshall Law School, University of Georgia School of Law, Mercer University Law School	March 2016	<b>On hiatus since Fall 2020</b>
<b>57</b>	ACTL/YLD/SCLS Incubator Pilot Program; South Carolina Access to Justice Commission	March 2016	<b>Operational</b>
<b>58</b>	Texas Apprenticeship Program; Texas A&M School of Law	September 2016	<b>Operational</b>
<b>59</b>	Community Law Practice Incubator (CLPI); Bar Association of San Francisco & The Justice and Diversity Center	September 2016	<b>Closed</b>
<b>60</b>	TU Law Co Op; University of Tulsa College of Law	October 2016	<b>Closed</b>
<b>61</b>	Entrepreneurs in Community Lawyering; New Mexico State Bar Foundation	October 2016	<b>Operational</b>
<b>62</b>	Collaborative Legal Incubator Program (CLIP); East River Legal Services	October 2016	<b>Operational</b>
<b>63</b>	Collaborative Community Law Initiative (CCLI)	November 2016	<b>Operational</b>
<b>64</b>	Justice Legal Center at the Center for Family Justice	January 2017	<b>Operational</b>
<b>65</b>	The Legal LABB, Inc.	February 2018	<b>Operational</b>
<b>66</b>	Toledo Bar Association Fellowship Collaborative	March 2018	<b>Operational</b>
<b>67</b>	Middle Georgia Access to Justice, Inc.	June 2018	<b>Operational</b>
<b>68</b>	Tennessee Law Lab	July 2018	<b>Operational</b>
<b>69</b>	Rural Incubator Project for Lawyers with Montana Legal Services Association	August 2018	<b>Operational</b>
<b>70</b>	Rural Practice Incubator Project	September 2018	<b>Operational</b>

	<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>Launch Date</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>71</b>	The Legal Empowerment Accelerator Program	Winter 2018	<b>Operational</b>
<b>72</b>	CoLaw	April 2019	<b>Unknown</b>
<b>73</b>	Legal Entrepreneurs for Justice	June 2019	<b>Operational</b>
<b>74</b>	Holistic Legal Incubator	July 2019	<b>Operational</b>
<b>75</b>	Entrepreneurs in Community Lawyering; Dallas Bar Association	Fall 2019	<b>Operational</b>

\*This list contains self-identified incubator programs, the operational status of which was confirmed by the research team.