Our system of justice is essential to the functioning of a modern democratic society. Today, this
system is confronting daunting and rapidly changing challenges. Courts, the linchpin of the
system of justice, are in crisis due to underfunding and lack of access. The legal profession,
stewards of the system, has reached an inflection point. Technology has both enhanced and
disrupted traditional patterns of serving clients. Globalization has produced new ethical and
practical issues. Unemployment and underemployment of lawyers is changing the face of the
profession. Our system of legal education has not kept up with these challenges.

The American Bar Association is focusing on how the profession must evolve in the future to
meet these challenges.

In the initial action-oriented phase, the ABA is serving as a catalyst for local conversations and
innovations that will create new avenues for access to justice for all and open doors to new
career opportunities for current and future lawyers. These grassroots meetings involve bar
leadership, the judiciary and court personnel, local practitioners, local businesses and clients,
along with innovators who can envision new ways to solve existing blocks to delivery of legal
services in the community. Participants in each grassroots meeting will be charged with
identifying five specific areas in their communities where innovation is needed.

Serving as a broker between traditional providers and innovators, the ABA will act as the
incubator to match the needs of the justice system with projects that can be built to answer
those needs and drive change in the legal profession.

This bar association toolkit will assist you in planning, designing and hosting community
meetings. The Commission is available to consult with grassroots leads and recommends that
its resources be engaged early in the planning stage. Commission volunteers, reporters and
staff can assist in identifying an innovator as well as a Commission member to participate in
your program. It is important to take steps to assure that the planned grassroots event brings to
your state for review and discussion the full spectrum of issues being examined across the
country. The grassroots toolkit includes sample agendas, possible invitation lists and letters,
briefing papers on issues for discussion, moderator and facilitator guides, background and
resource materials for posting to your website, and data collection forms and formats. This is an
excellent opportunity to engage bar leaders and your community in an exciting process to
design answers to pressing challenges facing the profession.

Serving as a broker between traditional providers and innovators, the ABA will act as an
incubator that will match the needs of the justice system with projects that can be built to answer
those needs and drive change in the legal profession.

If your state or local bar would like to host one of these community meetings, please contact
Janet Jackson, Director of the ABA Office of the President at janet.jackson@americanbar.org.