

Call for Participation in a Discussion Group on *Community Development Law and Economic Justice – Why Law Matters*

Due: August 30, 2016

The Annual Meeting Program Committee introduced a new program format, Discussion Groups, at the 2016 Annual Meeting to facilitate scholarly discussion and engagement. Discussion Groups provide a small group of faculty an opportunity to engage in a sustained conversation about a topic of interest. The objective is to facilitate a lively and engaging real-time discussion among participants. Discussion Group participants will typically be expected to write and share a short presentation summary (2-3 pages) as part of their participation. The Discussion Group sessions, however, will not feature formal presentations. Instead, the written summaries are intended to facilitate a lively and engaging real-time discussion among the participants. Participants in this Discussion Group will consist of a mix of the people identified in the original proposal along with additional individuals selected on the basis of this call for participation. There will be limited audience seating for those not selected in advance to be discussion participants.

The following is a Call for Participation in a Discussion Group on *Community Development Law and Economic Justice – Why Law Matters* to be held at the AALS Annual Meeting, on Wednesday, January 4, 2017, from 10:30 am to 12:15 pm, in San Francisco.

Description

The evolution of community economic development over the past several decades has witnessed dramatic growth in scale and complexity. Indeed, new approaches to local development and related lawyering, and to philosophies underlying these approaches, challenge us to reimagine the framework of community economic development (CED). This Discussion Group will revisit an array of practices, initiatives, and theories fitting for what we might describe as a new “post-CED” era.

From the early days of community development corporations to today’s sophisticated tools of finance and organization, this evolution reflects “why law matters” in pursuit of economic justice and opportunity. For example, new approaches to enterprise development have stretched beyond traditional business forms to include experiments with cooperative structures, “B Corporations” and other hybrid entities. Federal tax incentives such as New Markets Tax Credits and Low Income Housing Credits have created robust private sector financing regimes and have given rise to investment of billions of dollars in disadvantaged communities. Impact investing, crowdfunding and novel grassroots initiatives combine to create a virtual “sharing economy.”

The contexts in which CED intervenes also have undergone changes over time. Cities, for instance, have emerged in the last two decades as sites of gentrification and concentrated low-wage work, both of which have shifted thinking about CED strategies such as low-wage labor organizing in a world of contingent employment. The 2008 recession and its consequences in urban settings have amplified living wage advocacy, community benefits agreements, and efforts to contain runaway housing markets against a background reality of stressed municipal budgets. Rural poverty, too, has been exacerbated by the widespread economic downturn and demands new strategies.

We also have seen a parallel evolution in the legal academy – emergence and maturing of community development clinics, other community engagement initiatives, interdisciplinary programs, and expanded attention in scholarship and teaching. The goal of this discussion group is to give further definition to “community development law” at a fluid moment in its history and to assess an array of new strategies in the field. Are we in a new post-CED era? What are its primary features? Why, how, and to what extent do law schools and law matter in community development?

Call for Abstracts

The Annual Meeting Program Committee invites faculty and administrators who would like to join this Discussion Group to submit **by August 30** a two to three page summary that describes a community development initiative or strategy, with attention to how it fits within the evolution of the field and to how (and if) law matters in the selected initiative. These descriptions will be circulated among the roundtable participants in advance to inform the discussion and will be made available to others who attend. The program organizers will moderate the discussion and ensure balanced participation. Discussion organizers are Peter Pitegoff (University of Maine School of Law), Rashmi Dyal-Chand (Northeastern University School of Law), and Scott Cummings (UCLA School of Law). In addition to the three organizers, currently confirmed discussion participants include Alicia Alvarez (University of Michigan Law School), Michelle Wilde Anderson (Stanford Law School), Alina Ball (University of California, Hastings College of the Law), Susan Bennett (American University Washington College of Law), Patience Crowder (University of Denver Sturm School of Law), Michael Diamond (Georgetown University Law Center), Sheila Foster (Fordham University School of Law), Sushil Jacob (Tuttle Law Group, SF), Lisa Pruitt (University of California Davis School of Law), and Brandon Weiss (University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law).

Space in this Discussion Group is limited; the Committee, along with the faculty who proposed this discussion, will select the remaining discussion participants on the basis of the summaries submitted. At the AALS Annual Meeting in January, selected participants may make a one-two minute presentation during the Discussion Group. The remaining time will be devoted to a moderated, roundtable group discussion.

Online Submission Requirements

- The title of the presentation summary;
- The name and contact information of the applying participant;
- A two- or three-page, double-spaced summary description of a community development initiative or strategy, with attention to how it fits within the evolution of the field and to how (and if) law matters in the selected initiative; and
- The curriculum vitae of the applying participant.

Selection Criteria

- The fit and overall quality of the program for the Discussion Group;
- The diversity that the applying participant may bring in terms of a variety of factors including viewpoint diversity, institutional affiliation and status (tenure-track, non-tenure track, tenured), and areas of expertise.

Summaries are due by **August 30, 2016** and should be submitted using [the online submission form](#).