

WASHINGTON STATE
BAR ASSOCIATION

**2ND
ANNUAL**

WSBA SMALL TOWN AND RURAL (STAR) PRACTICE SUMMIT

JUSTICE IN EVERY ZIP CODE

**Challenges, Opportunities and Solutions
in Rural and Small-Town Practice**

THURSDAY, JUNE 26 – FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 2025
At Heritage University in Toppenish

**IN-PERSON
ONLY**



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THURSDAY, JUNE 26 – FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 2025

Heritage University, 3240 Fort Road, Toppenish, WA 98948

The Small Town and Rural Practice Council of the Washington State Bar Association presents the 2nd Annual Washington State Small Town and Rural Practice Summit. Building on the momentum of last year's inaugural gathering, this year's summit will continue to shine a spotlight on advancing justice in every ZIP code across Washington. Bringing together judges, legal professionals, law students, and community leaders from across the state, the summit will explore the unique challenges and promising opportunities in rural and small-town practice. Through keynote presentations and panel discussion, attendees will explore a range of timely issues impacting rural legal communities and consider actionable strategies to strengthen rural legal services and expand access to justice. Topics will include pathways to the profession, immigration, AI and technology in small town practice, and ethical considerations for general practitioners. The Summit will feature Washington State Supreme Court Chief Justice Debra Stephens, Yakima County Superior Court Judge Sonia Rodriguez True as keynote speakers. We will also hear from U.S. District Court Judge Rebecca Pennell along with, prosecutors, public defenders, public interest attorneys, private practitioners, and law school leaders.

The Summit will be held at Heritage University and opens with a hosted reception on the evening of Thursday, June 26 at Cowiche Canyon Kitchen and Icehouse. Lunch is included during the Friday June 27 keynote address and a final hosted reception will close out the event on Friday afternoon.

Join us for this essential gathering of the rural justice community as we work together to build solutions and expand justice in every zip code!

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WSBA CLE – STAR250627TOP

REGISTRATION - ONLINE:

- **#STAR250627TOP: In-Person Only**

6.0 CLE CREDITS:

	Other	L&LP	Ethics
STAR250627TOP	2.75	2.5	0.75

TUITION:

Standard	\$30
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Law Students	\$0
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CO-CHAIRS:

- **Ashley Cummins** – *Seattle University School of Law, Seattle*
- **Merf Ehman** – *Columbia Legal Services, Seattle*
- **Kevin Plachy** – *Washington State Bar Association, Seattle*

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS OF THE CONFERENCE:

Fette Trust

WSBA Solo and Small Practice Section

Umpqua Bank

Larson Griffee and Pickett PLLC

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Lodging Information

There are several hotels located in close proximity to Cowiche Canyon Kitchen and Icehouse and within a short drive to Heritage University. Follow the links below to be taken to the information for each hotel.

- [Hilton Garden Inn Yakima](#)
- [Hotel Maison Yakima Tapestry Collection by Hilton](#)
- [Red Lion Hotel Yakima Center](#)

WASHINGTON STATE
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DAY 1 > THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2025

6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Welcome Reception – Cowiche Canyon Kitchen and Icehouse

202 E Yakima Ave, Yakima, WA 98901

DAY 2 > FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 2025

8:00 a.m.

Check-in • Walk-in Registration • Coffee and Continental Breakfast

8:30 a.m.

Opening Remarks by Assistant United States

Attorney Bree R. Black Horse

8:40 a.m.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Furthering Confidence in the Rule of Law and the Justice System

40 minutes, 0.75 credits Other

Chief Justice Stephens will discuss the vital role of lawyers in shaping the legal system beyond their individual practices and the ethical and professional responsibility of legal practitioners to foster public confidence in the rule of law, advocate for legal reform, and contribute to the advancement of legal education. Q&A to follow.

- **Washington State Supreme Court Chief Justice Debra Stephens** – *Washington State Supreme Court, Olympia*
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9:20 a.m. > BREAK

(DAY 2 CONTINUED NEXT PAGE)

DAY 2 > FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 2025

9:30 a.m.

Navigating the Differences Between State and Federal Practice in Rural Areas

75 minutes, 1.25 credits L&LP

Discussion of the differences between state and federal practice and tips for practitioners who want to make the move from state to federal practice. This topic is particularly relevant to rural practitioners practicing on their own who may not feel like they have the resources to take on a federal case. Speakers will also explore opportunities for counsel to become part of federal court's criminal justice act panel.

- **Judge Rebecca Pennell** – *U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Washington, Spokane*
- **Judge Megan Murphy** – *WA State Court of Appeals, Division III, Spokane*
- **Sarah Wixson** – *Shareholder, Stokes Lawrence, Yakima*
- **Mitchell Crook** – *Attorney, Johnson & Orr Law Firm, Pasco*

10:45 a.m. > BREAK

11:00 a.m.

The Three Cs of Ethics in Rural Practice

45 minutes, .75 credits Ethics

A discussion of the RPCs that cover competence, conflicts, and confidentiality as they relate to general practice in a rural community.

- **Chris Crago** – *Lecturer and Supervising Attorney of the Federal Tax Law Clinic, Gonzaga University School of Law, Spokane*
- **Sandra Schilling** – *Professional Responsibility Counsel, WA State Bar Association, Seattle*

11:45 a.m.

HOSTED LUNCH with KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Rural Practice in the Margins

50 Minutes, .75 credits Other

Judge Rodriguez True will address unique rural practice issues including addressing attorney shortages, getting beyond the “first” by creating innovative opportunities for local students to achieve careers in law, and addressing significant disparities in access to justice given limited resources.

- **Sonia Rodriguez True** – *Yakima County Superior Court Judge, Yakima*

(DAY 2 CONTINUED NEXT PAGE)

DAY 2 > FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 2025

12:50 p.m. > BREAK

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

1 p.m. > OPTION A

Leveraging Technology to Increase Access to Justice in Rural Communities

75 Minutes, 1.25 credits Other

This panel will explore how technology and AI can be used to expand access to justice, increase service capacity, and overcome geographic barriers in rural communities, while also addressing the practical limitations of tech-based solutions.

- **Adrián Palma** – *AI For Justice Strategist, Former Global Pro Bono Manager & Digital Strategist, Microsoft, Redmond*
- **Jacqueline Schafer** – *Founder and CEO, Clearbrief, Seattle*
- **Margeaux Green** – *Practice Management Advisor, WA State Bar Association, Seattle*

1 p.m. > OPTION B

Expanding Pathways to the Legal Profession

75 Minutes, 1.25 credits Other

The legal field is evolving, and so are the routes to becoming a lawyer. This panel discussion explores alternative pathways to practice beyond the traditional bar exam, including the Rule 6 Law Clerk Program and options for law graduates who choose not to take the bar. Panelists will examine how these diverse entry points can broaden participation in the legal profession, increase accessibility, and strengthen justice for underrepresented communities. An overview of the pilot for entity regulation will also be provided.

- **Terra Nevitt** – *Executive Director, WA State Bar Association, Seattle*
- **Renata Garcia** – *Chief Regulatory Counsel, WA State Bar Association, Seattle*
- **Katherine Skinner** – *Law Clerk Program Lead, WA State Bar Association, Seattle*
- **Gordon Edgar** – *Douglas County Prosecutor's Office, Waterville*

(DAY 2 CONTINUED NEXT PAGE)

DAY 2 > FRIDAY, JUNE 27, 2025

2:15 p.m. > BREAK

2:30 p.m.

Immigration Law in Rural WA—Challenges and Considerations

75 minutes, 1.25 credits L&LP

Immigration law presents unique challenges in rural communities, where access to legal services, social support systems, and infrastructure can be limited. This panel brings together experienced practitioners to discuss the realities of immigration practice in non-urban areas, addressing both legal and logistical issues faced by attorneys and their clients, and offering an innovative solution with a collaboration of law school, pro bono attorney, and community organization partnerships that can lead to lasting increases in local legal resources. Come and hear how this partnership arose in response to an urgent need but provides lessons that can be used in a variety of practice areas.

This nonpartisan session is designed for legal professionals, policymakers, and advocates seeking creative solutions for expanding access to legal services. Whether you're a seasoned attorney or new to this area of practice, this panel will offer concrete insights into developing collaborations to grow resources while upholding the principles of fairness and justice.

- **Mirta Laura Contreras** – *Directing Attorney, Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, Granger*
- **Gillian Dutton** – *Associate Professor of Lawyering Skills, Seattle University School of Law, Seattle*
- **Paul Rodgers** – *Rising 3L Seattle University School of Law, Granger Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, Seattle*
- **Dilnoza Chorlieva** – *Rising 2L Seattle University School of Law, Seattle*
- **Alicia Kikuchi** – *Attorney, Alicia Kikuchi Law Firm, PLLC, Edmonds*
- **Kelsey Armstrong-Hann** – *Managing Attorney, Detained Programs, KIND, Seattle*

3:45 p.m.

Closing Remarks • Adjourn

- **Kari Petrsek** – *STAR Committee Chair, Petrsek Law PLLC, Mukilteo*

4:00 p.m.

Closing Reception

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REGISTRATION

ONLINE > Go to www.wsba.org and enter **STAR250627** in the search box. Payment by credit card.

PHONE > Call **800-945-9722** or **206-443-9722** with credit card and registration/order form in hand. Our service provider will charge you a separate, non-refundable transaction fee of 2.5% on all bank card transactions.

MAIL > Please fill out this registration form and mail to WSBA seven business days prior to the program along with your check payable to WSBA. Credit card payments by mail or fax are no longer accepted.

Name: _____ WSBA #: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: () _____ Email: _____

☐ Please omit my name from the networking list made available to exhibitors and/or attendees.

Registrations received less than 48 hours before a seminar are not guaranteed a coursebook or other presentation materials on-site. If special accommodations are needed, please email cle@wsba.org or call toll-free at **800-945-9722**.

PRICING AND PAYMENT

☐ **STAR250627TOP, attend in Toppenish**
6/26/25 through 6/27/25

☐ **\$30** Standard

☐ **\$0** Law Students*

*After adding seminar to cart, enter promo code LSNN and click checkout

Registration Transfers, Refunds & Cancellations:

In most circumstances, if you cannot attend the live event, we can transfer your registration to the on-demand product, once available (8-10 weeks from the program delivery date). For in-person registrations, tuition fees may be refunded, less \$25 for processing, for written cancellations postmarked, emailed, or faxed by 5 p.m. up to three business days before the event. No refunds will be provided after the dates specified. You may also send a substitute in lieu of canceling. When applicable, specific exceptions to these policies will be noted on individual event registration pages. Please email cle@wsba.org with any requests or questions.

☐ **Check enclosed**, payable to "WSBA" for the amount of _____

MAIL TO: Washington State Bar Association, 1325 Fourth Ave, Suite 600, Seattle, WA 98101-2539

OFFICE USE ONLY Date _____ Check # _____ Total _____