Small Town and Rural Committee

Small Town and Rural Committee Meeting I Virtual Only
Wednesday, February 21, 2024, | 12:10 p.m. – 1:10 p.m.
Via Zoom | Meeting ID: 815 7000 4025 | Passcode: 684632 | Call-in: 888-788-0099

AGENDA

1. Introductions and Approval of January Meeting Minutes (Gov. Kari Petrasek)
2. WSBA Updates (Gov. Petrasek and Julianne Unite)
3. Subcommittee Report Updates, if any (Subcommittee chairs Laurie Powers, Gov. Petrasek, Betsy Penoyar)
4. Project Team Updates
   a. Job Fair at Gonzaga (Laurie Powers)
   b. Summit Project Team (Laurie Powers)
   c. July Legal Lunchbox (Ashley Cummins, Rachel Matz)
   d. Rural Day of Service (Kathryn Burke, Kari Petrasek)
5. Loan Repayment Assistance (Kari Petrasek)
   Please look at: LRAP – Ohio Access to Justice Foundation (ohiojusticefoundation.org)
6. Announcements
7. Next Steps/Conclusion
8. Next Meeting: March 20, 2024
9. Adjournment
Small Town and Rural Committee Charter

Effective: July 16, 2021
as approved by the
WSBA Board of
Governors

Purpose

The WSBA Small Town and Rural (STAR) Committee is committed to strengthen and support the practice of law in the rural communities throughout Washington state. Members of the STAR Committee will work to ensure that the practice of law in rural communities is present, growing, and thriving.

Practitioners in rural communities are few and far between. Additionally, many of these practitioners are nearing retirement without a clear plan of succession for their clients, leaving a void of access to legal representation and counsel. The STAR Committee will guide policy & program development, serves as ambassadors between the WSBA and these communities, explore and advocate for creative and innovative solutions, and regularly assess the legal landscape in rural communities to determine if WSBA policy, advocacy and program development require further resource for sustainability and improvements.

The STAR Committee aligns with the authorized activities outlined in General Rule 12. More specifically, GR 12.1 (a) articulates the Washington Supreme Court’s regulatory objective to provide, in part, “meaningful access to justice. . .” while GR 12.1(d) strives for “affordable and accessible legal services.” In addition, the STAR Committee aligns with the authorized activities outlined in GR 12.2, in particular by providing “services to members and the public,” and “fostering collegiality among its members and goodwill between the legal profession and the public.”

Further, the STAR Committee furthers the WSBA mission to serve the public and the members of the Bar by providing focused attention on the unique needs of residents and members in rural areas both by improving access to legal practitioners in rural communities and outreach and development of a pipeline of younger rural residents to pursue a legal career and serve their communities.

Definition of “Rural”

For the purpose of the STAR Committee and reflective of Washington’s unique geographic and socio-geographic landscape, the definition of “rural” is as follows:

Based on the definitions produced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service (ERS) and an overview of Washington county population, we focused on counties with populations of less than 50,000 and more than 2,500. These areas are considered ‘urban non-metro areas not part of larger labor markets’ by ERS. As part of the working definition, and for ease, we have termed these counties as ‘rural.’ Based upon WA county population data, we’ve pursued a hypothesis that counties with 30,000 or more as rural, but likely more
adjacent to a labor market and perhaps have a varying set of circumstances that may differ from counties that are less than 30,000.

**Composition**

Members of the STAR Committee should have demonstrated experience and/or interest in a thriving legal practice in Washington’s rural communities. The STAR Committee will consist of 13 members and are outlined as:

- Chair (voting member)
- 2 Current or Former WSBA Board of Governors Members (voting members)
- 1 Active WSBA Member At Large (voting member)
- 4 Active WSBA Members from rural communities - see above for definition of “rural” (voting members)
- 1 Active WSBA Young Lawyer Member, as defined in WSBA Bylaws (voting member)
- 3 Law School Representatives (voting members, must be currently employed with a WA Law School which is not currently represented on the Committee.)
- 1 Active WSBA Lawyer Member currently employed with a Qualified Legal Service Provider (QLSP)(voting member).

WSBA Staff Liaison: Member Services and Engagement Manager or staff member in the Advancement Department, non-voting
Board of Governor Liaison: as assigned annually, non-voting.

**Terms**

- Chair: two-year term
- Members: three-year term

**Initial Committee Terms**

The first appointments to the STAR Committee should effectuate a staggered rotation of STAR Committee members. Therefore, the following terms are in place for the first appointment cycle only. All subsequent terms should adhere to the term limits stated above. STAR Committee member serving an initial term less than three years, should be considered an incomplete term. Therefore, the member is eligible to serve two subsequent complete three-year terms in WSBA Bylaws.

- 2 Active WSBA Members
  - 1 member with two-year term, 1 member with three-year term.
- 4 Active WSBA Members from rural communities (see above for definition)
  - 1 member with one-year term, 1 member with two years term, 2 members with three-years term.
- 3 Law School Representatives (voting, must be currently employed with a WA Law School)
  - 1 member with one-year term, 1 member with two-years term, 1 member with three-years term.

The following positions will begin as a standard term as set forth in this charter.

- Chair
- 1 Active WSBA Young Lawyer Member
1 Active WSBA Lawyer Member currently employed with a Qualified Legal Service Provider (QLSP).

**Scope of Work**

The scope of the STAR Committee’s work will focus on what the WSBA is uniquely positioned to do in supporting a sustaining and thriving environment for the practice of law in Washington’s rural communities. The STAR Committee will work with all relevant and interested stakeholders to collaborate where needed. The provision of direct legal services and civil legal aid to the public is outside the scope of the STAR Committee.

**Measures of Success**

- Increased awareness of the issues and possible solutions to address any gap in practicing members in rural communities.
- A sustainable pipeline of legal practitioners in rural communities.
- Increased numbers of legal practitioners in rural communities.
- The establishment of funding for programs and initiatives for the practice of law in rural communities.

**STAR Committee Roles**

1. **Community Education and Outreach**
   Coordinated efforts to educate members and potential members about the unique needs, opportunities and benefits of a rural practice. This can include, but should not be limited to, comprehensive information on WSBA’s website, features in WSBA publications, presentations at high schools, law schools and community colleges. Meetings and events, such as a summit or symposium, to highlight the issue, convene interested stakeholders to share their concerns and strategize on possible solutions.

2. **Pipeline and Placement Program(s)**
   Develop WSBA programming, or WSBA supported/partnered programming designed to build a pipeline of practitioners in rural areas as well as an incentive program to encourage members to explore a rural practice on a time-limited or multi-year timeframe. This role should explore a possible collaboration or strategic overlap with WSBA existing and future mentorship program(s). In particular, this role will require extensive strategic planning and identification of external stakeholder support and additional funding sources. Coordinate with law schools and other stakeholders regarding economic incentives to practice in rural areas.

3. **Job Opportunities and Clearinghouse**
   Utilize existing and future WSBA resources to support and highlight job opportunities in rural communities. This role should include making it easier, and perhaps more cost-effective, to add job postings to WSBA’s service. Develop a clearing house to assist retiring members with succession planning and the buying/selling of a practice.

**Committee Evaluation**
The STAR Committee should conduct an assessment within five years from the date of Board of Governors’ approval by 1) conducting a survey of rural practitioners to provide stakeholder feedback regarding the impact of this Committee to effectuate change in these areas, 2) assessing the scope of work to reflect impact and progress in this area and align with trends in the greater legal community, and 3) earnestly examining if the Committee is necessary to continue the scope of work.
Small Town and Rural Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 17, 2024 | 12:12 p.m. – 1:19 p.m.

Virtual meeting via Zoom

Committee Members Present: Ashley Rae Cummins, Elizabeth Penoyar, Jesse Lamp, Governor Kari Petrasek, Judge Kathryn Burke, Laurie Powers, Merf Ehman, Rusty McGuire, Zachary Bryant

Committee Members Absent: Allison Foreman, Erin Lloyd, Hunter Abell, Sunitha Anjilvel

WSBA Staff Present: Julianne Unite – Member Services and Engagement Manager, Chelle Gegax – Member Services and Engagement Administrative Assistant, WSBA Advancement Director – Kevin Plachy, Curtiss Melvin - WSBA Member Engagement Specialist, Rachel Matz – WSBA Education Programs Lead

WSBA Board of Governors Liaisons: Mathew Dresden

Public Attendees Present: Sophia Byrd McSherry, Michael Chin, Leone Reinbold, Zaida Rivera

Introductions and Approval of November Meeting Minutes (Gov. Kari Petrasek)

STAR Committee Chair, Governor Kari Petrasek, called the meeting to order at 12:12 pm. Kari invited those in attendance for their first time to provide introductions. First time attendees included Leone Reinbold, Michael Chin ATJ Board member, and Zaida Rivera. On motion by Committee Member Rusty McGuire, seconded by Committee Member Merf Ehman, by unanimous vote (9-0-0) the committee approved the November meeting minutes.

WSBA Updates (Gov. Petrasek and Julianne Unite)

Kari provided update on recent Board of Governors (BOG) meeting. Committee Member and BOG Liaison Matthew Dresden advised the committee on the bar licensure task force. Comments on the task force were sent to the supreme court and the BOG supported the recommendations. WSBA Advancement Department Director, Kevin Plachy, commented that BOG approved a task force charter for a Member Well-Being task force. If anyone knows of anyone willing to serve on the task force, to study well-being in the law profession, be better institutionalized in different legal sectors in WA state and how WSBA can better support, please contact Kevin, or email barleaders@wsba.org. Committee Member Merf Ehman asked if members needed to be attorneys, as they felt their Human Resources Director would be a great recommendation. Kevin advised no, and that he would send charter with membership details to anyone interested. Kari commented that one focus of the Bar Licensure work group would be to review licensure types, such as how those who are retired show as “resigned”.

WSBA Member Services and Engagement Manager, Julianne Unite, advised that WSBA license renewal is due on February 1, 2024.

Julianne advised that WSBA will be hosting a MentorLink Mixer on February 8th, 2024, on a virtual platform. The theme for this mixer will be Navigating a Courtroom and held from 4-5.30pm. If anyone is
interested in being a mentor, please contact Julianne or WSBA Member Services and Engagement Administrative Assistant, Chelle Gegax, for the RSVP form.

**July Legal Lunchbox (Juliianne Unite)**

Kari advised that legal lunchbox materials are available in the meeting materials. WSBA Education Programs Lead, Rachel Matz, introduced herself and gave context to the legal lunchbox series. The Legal Lunchbox Series is a free CLE, held the last Tuesday of the month and occasionally as an on-demand product. Rachel would like to collaborate with WSBA CLE and the STAR Committee for the July 2024 Legal Lunchbox. As anyone can attend this CLE, a large mix of practice areas, and wide variety of attendance is usually represented. Rachel stated that CLE is looking for presenters, topics, etc. suggested by the STAR Committee. Committee Member Laurie Powers asked, since already planning full day CLE in June, how the timeline would fall planning so close? Rachel advised that they do not want to repeat content and is not aware of who is involved planning that CLE, but they would only be asking for 1-2 people to assist her in planning the Legal Lunchbox topic. Kevin commented that the marketing for legal lunchbox and Summit will not overlap. Rachel advised that Legal Lunchbox would not appear on CLE store until the end of June. Kevin commented that legal lunchbox is all remote, and tends to have a lot of repeat attendees, but does not anticipate that one event would poach participants from the other. Rachel advised that information on the Legal Lunchbox CLE can be found in the meeting materials on page 15. Rachel would like to identify potential themes for CLE, and/or decide planning team by the end of January. The theme would be close to the work that the identified chair does, and they would help determine the agenda. This CLE largely relies on volunteer faculty and would need faculty coordination and moderators during the event. Rachel will handle the logistics of the event and marketing through WSBA channels. Kevin asked that the committee identify two potential members to serve as chairs. Kari asked the committee if there were any volunteers. Rachel advised that most of the commitment can be done of the volunteers’ time and communication can be through email. WSBA Committee Member Ashley Cummins volunteered to help with the lead up but will not be able to assist day of. Merf commented in the chat and suggested a topic idea for ethics issues in rural practice.

**Subcommittee Report Updates, if any (Subcommittee chairs Laurie Powers, Gov. Petrasek, Betsy Penoyar**

None.

**Project Team Updates**

None.

**Summit Project Team (Laurie Powers)**

Laurie advised the committee that she has secured keynote speaker, Judge Sal Mendoza, for the Summit in June. She is currently looking at other options from OPD and WAPA to volunteer speakers for other sessions. The afternoon session still needs planning work and finalization. Currently, Laurie is looking at having breakout sessions from 1 – 2:15 p.m. and then 2:30 – 3:45 p.m. Proposed topics include myths and stereotypes about rural practice, attracting lawyers to rural practice, how to advocate for funding from local governments, effectively addressing LGBTQIA, disability, immigration status, and racial bias, and effectively onboarding and supervising legal interns and new attorneys. Kari commented that the topic “Effectively Onboarding and Supervising Legal Interns and New Attorneys” might be a CLE that is in the works but wouldn’t hurt to have it at both events and could be discussed in different manners at both CLE’s. Laurie commented that there are five topics currently and is seeking the committee’s
involvement in narrowing that down to four. Merf commented that people have been very interested in their area in the law clerk program and what that entails, and that it may be helpful to have someone speak on what it is like to be a mentor in that program inclusive of someone who has successfully completed the program, as well as a representative from the WSBA. Public attendee, Leone Reinbold, commented that she is a graduate of the law clerk program and would be happy to be involved to support that topic. Kevin commented that the law clerk program might fit well into the “How to Find and Keep Attorneys” topic. Rusty commented that he would drop the funding topic and replace with the Rule 6 law clerk program as a topic. Laurie asked for additional support from the committee for topic development, and that interested parties reach out to her to assist. Laurie also commented on potential sponsorships for the event but isn’t sure of what that looks like. Kevin commented that it can come from a few different sources, and that WSBA has connections for larger events that they work with annually and can reach out to those. Kevin also suggested that law firms would be a great potential resource for this event. WSBA typically reaches out to vendors that provide some kind of support to legal profession, and that law firms might be better suited to sponsor lunches and/or alcohol at a reception. The law firms name would be attached to marketing materials and agenda, providing them an opportunity for marketing. Kevin commented that advertising typically starts about one month in advance and approximately six weeks in advance for mid-year CLE events. He would like to have sponsors identified by 8 weeks prior to the event to have them built into promotional materials. Rusty asked how much Laurie was anticipating for a sponsorship amount. Kevin advised that WSBA outreach usually begins at $500 for advertising and a table at the event, and top level is roughly $2500-3000. Rusty commented that he could commit to the food and alcohol sponsorship out of a trust fund that is dedicated to rural students. Kari commented that law firms may be willing to commit to a higher level of $5000 which could be the platinum level sponsorship.

Job Fair at Gonzaga (Laurie Powers)
Laurie gave an overview of the Virtual Interview Program (VIP). The event will host scheduled interviews in the morning, and a drop-in session in the afternoon with employers in their own breakout rooms. The first year of this event provided a great learning experience as to what did and did not work, and Laurie plans to build off that for this year’s event. Laurie is proposing a date of Friday April 5th, 2024. A tentative timeline is as follows: 1/23 – Microsoft forms registration available to employers and applicants; 1/24-25: flyer updated with links and ready for marketing; 1/25-3/15: tentative employer registration period; 2/15-3/1: applicant registration period; 3/18: applications packets sent to employers for review; 3/25: employers send GU LAW of their interview decisions; 3/28: GU Law sends employers their interview schedules, notify applicants and provides video links.; 4/5: 9am -12pm scheduled video interviews; 12-2pm: Drop-in virtual sessions for employers to talk about their practices and connect with additional candidates.

Rural Day of Service (Kathryn Burke, Kari Petrasek)
Committee Member, Judge Kathryn Burke, is looking for feedback from the committee on when this would be a good project to launch. The suggestion was made to hold a CLE for the volunteers working on this project and providing services. To accomplish this, there would need to be assistance from WSBA/CLE in planning and development for a CLE prior to the event. Kevin commented that topics that would work best would be those that are not time sensitive, to accommodate necessary timelines. Kevin also advised that WSBA cannot handle client files directly and to do so, must partner with a legal service
provider. WSBA will be involved with the volunteer coordination, marketing of the event and CLE development.

Internship Program CLE’s (Kari Petrasek, Erin Lloyd, Laurie Powers)
Kari commented the first of this type of CLE was being planned and suggested was by committee members to discuss the benefit of having a legal intern. Laurie commented that she felt it would be best to have employers talk about why legal interns are helpful. Kari commented that they are looking at either February or March to launch this. Rusty commented that his office typically has 1-2 interns at his office, and they are involved in client meetings, etc. and very hands on. Kevin commented that he was under the impression that the June event was the one that was going to be accredited for CLE and that the earlier (internship program) was not going to be credited for CLE. Kari commented that Kevin was correct in that. Laurie commented that STAR Committee Member Allison Foreman, who was not present today, also had a law student and may be an additional resource. Kari will circle back with those involved to finalize date.

Loan Repayment Assistance (Kari Petrasek) Please look at: LRAP – Ohio Access to Justice Foundation (ohiojusticefoundation.org)
Kari advised that the meeting materials included a link to Ohio Access to Justice Program and asked committee members to review in advance of next meeting. Committee Member, Zachary Bryant (Zach) commented that he has seen this on several committees now but has never seen a proposal as to where the money is coming from. Kari advised that she would be speaking with a representative from Ohio on how their program works, but it is her understanding that this program is state funded. Kari hopes to have more information available before the next meeting.

Announcements
None.

Next Steps/Conclusion
None.

Next Meeting: February 21, 2024

Adjournment
Kari adjourned the meeting at 1:19 p.m. Kari invited all committee members to stay on for optional WSBA Community training led by Paris Eriksen.

Optional: WSBACommunity Training User Instructions (PDF)
RURAL PRACTICE: Small Towns, Big Opportunities

2\textsuperscript{nd} ANNUAL VIRTUAL HIRING EVENT

FRIDAY, APRIL 5, 2024

\begin{itemize}
  \item MORNING: Pre-Scheduled Virtual Interviews
  \item AFTERNOON: Drop-In Information Session
\end{itemize}

\textit{This FREE event} connects attorneys and law students with Washington State legal employers with offices more than 40 miles from Spokane, Seattle/Tacoma, or Vancouver/Portland urban areas. This event is hosted by Gonzaga University School of Law, in partnership with the WSBA Small Town & Rural Practice Committee, Seattle University School of Law, and University of Washington School of Law.

This two-part event features pre-selected and scheduled interviews for open positions (AM segment) and “drop-in” sessions to connect participants informally (PM segment). You may register to participate in either one, or both, segments of the event.

**EMPLOYERS**

Please complete \textcolor{blue}{this form} if you are a small town or rural Washington employer with open attorney or law student job opportunities or are interested in speaking with attorneys and law students who want to learn more about rural practice in Washington State.

Employer Registration Closes on March 1, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.

**JOB SEEKERS**

Please complete \textcolor{blue}{this form} if you are an attorney or current law student seeking job opportunities in small town or rural communities throughout Washington State.

Job Seeker Registration Closes on March 10, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.

**QUESTIONS?** Email: \textcolor{blue}{lawcareers@gonzaga.edu}
July Legal Lunchbox™ CLE Collaboration with STAR Committee
Overview and Timeline

Seminar date/time/location: Tuesday, July 30, 2024, 11:55am-1:30pm Pacific, online only (login remotely)

WSBA Contact: CLE Education Programs Lead Rachel Matz (she/her)
rachelm@wsba.org / 206.733.5984

What is Legal Lunchbox™?

The Legal Lunchbox™ series of webcasts is a member benefit that provides easily accessible, free continuing legal education (CLE) programming to Washington State Bar Association members in subject areas aligned with the WSBA mission, such as diversity, mentorship, member wellness, public service and access to justice, ethics, and 21st-century skills.

The Legal Lunchbox™ series is delivered via live webcast (online only) the last Tuesday of each month from noon to 1:30 p.m. (opening remarks at 11:55am), with the exception of two predetermined months per year when we offer an on-demand product for free for the entire month. Each program is 1.5 hours long and provides 1.5 CLE credits.

Typically, 1,500 to 2,000 attendees from all different practice areas log in each month to take advantage of this valuable member benefit. If attended consistently, the Legal Lunchbox™ series satisfies an attorney’s entire CLE requirements for a three-year period (45 credits in three categories). Around 8 weeks after the live program airs, an on-demand version of the program is available for a fee.¹

What does collaboration with WSBA CLE look like?

WSBA CLE frequently collaborates with other entities within WSBA to both provide relevant, important content to our members and to cross-promote the work of those entities. For example, WSBA CLE frequently collaborates with the WSBA Equity & Justice team to create new DEI-themed CLE seminars.

As a WSBA entity partnering with WSBA CLE, we need volunteers from your entity to serve as program chairs. The program chair(s) then assist WSBA CLE in the following ways:

1. **Choosing a topic for the CLE.** What issues that are relevant to your entity’s work would you like the general membership to know about? What would be most timely and educational? For example, the WSBA Pro Bono and Public Service Committee recently collaborated with us on a CLE on Special Immigrant Juvenile Classification.

2. **Recruiting faculty.** As practitioners close to the topic of the CLE, you can help us by using your professional and personal network to personally reach out to
potential faculty members. Rachel Matz, your WSBA CLE contact for this collaboration, can prepare template invitation language (if desired).

3. **Developing the agenda and content.** Once faculty have been recruited, Rachel will schedule a meeting with the chair(s) and faculty to discuss the educational content of the CLE. Once we agree what the CLE should cover, Rachel will advise on logistics such as due dates and course materials.

4. **Delivering opening remarks and moderating the CLE.** On the day of the seminar, the chairs will introduce the faculty and topic, and will help moderate the Q&A, curating which questions to address and reading the questions aloud to faculty (and providing comments, if appropriate). The chairs can take time during the opening remarks to introduce their entity and the work that they do.

If there are multiple chairs, each of the chairs can decide which of the above roles they’d like to fill.

**What is the timeline for this CLE?**

6 months out (Jan.): Identify potential themes for the CLE. This may involve sending surveys to members to get feedback, looking at what topics have recently been covered (we try not to repeat *Legal Lunchbox™* topics within 3 years), and/or meeting as a group to discuss what they feel would be the most beneficial and relevant to the general membership and is also connected to the entity’s work and mission.

5-6 months out (Jan.-Feb.): Recruit faculty via email and/or phone invitations.

4-5 months out (Feb.-Mar.): Once faculty are confirmed, the chairs, faculty, and Rachel will meet as a group to discuss the direction of the content.

3-4 months out (Mar.-Apr.): Faculty begins to work on presentation materials, consulting with chairs for help with content. Rachel will assist with logistical questions and will send faculty reminders about due dates.

6 weeks out (mid-June): Agenda is finalized, including faculty, a title and description for marketing, and which chair(s) will be participating as moderators/opening remarks.

4 weeks out (late June/early July): Faculty’s final course materials are due. Rachel will collect.

2-3 weeks out (mid-July): Faculty and chairs appearing on camera conduct a tech test with Rachel.

Seminar date (July 30): Login 10-15 minutes prior to start time. Enjoy!

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1 Select on-demand products are available for free to members that volunteer with QLSPs. More information: https://www.wsba.org/connect-serve/pro-bono-public-service/volunteer-with-a-qlsp
Loan Repayment Assistance Program

The Foundation’s Loan Repayment Assistance Program (LRAP) strengthens and expands civil legal aid by supporting the recruitment and retention of exceptional attorneys by alleviating the burden of student loan payments. The Foundation provides student loan repayment assistance to attorneys employed by the following grantee organizations:

- Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc.
• Community Legal Aid Services, Inc.
• Ohio Justice Bus, LLC
• Legal Aid of Western Ohio, Inc.
• The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland
• The Legal Aid Society of Columbus (Ohio State Legal Services Association)
• Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati
• Legal Aid Society of Southwest Ohio, LLC
• Ohio Legal Help
• Ohio Poverty Law Center, LLC (Ohio State Legal Services Association)
• Southeastern Ohio Legal Services (Ohio State Legal Services Association)
• Pro Seniors, Inc.

Since 2007, the Foundation has helped eliminate debt for 70 attorneys totaling:

$0

The LRAP program has been so amazing and has helped me remain in legal services.

ABLE Participant