

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

Preliminary Summary: WSBA Legal Practice in Washington's Rural Communities

May 4, 2020

Survey Overview:

Survey Launch Email:	April 2
Reminder Email:	April 30
Survey Closed:	May 4 @ 8:00am
Number of Survey Recipients:	141
Number of Survey Respondents:	48 (34% return)
<i>San Juan County</i>	21%
<i>Asotin County</i>	17%
<i>Lincoln County</i>	14%

Practice Areas:
Estate Planning – probate (52%)
Real Property (48%)
Criminal (35%)
Landlord Tenant (27%)
Real Property – land use (27%)

Summary:

When asked the reasons for working in their community, 75% of respondents indicated that they are from the community where they practice. Additionally, most respondents lived in a rural community because that is where they wanted to raise a family or there was little desire to work in a larger city.

Overwhelmingly, respondents enjoyed working in their communities.

A large majority of the respondents indicated that they do pro bono but do not do so through a qualified legal service provider.

When asked to address conflicts of interest, the responses varied but at initial review, it appears that while this issue is prevalent – it is manageable. It should be noted, however, that there was a wide range of responses from 'no problem at all' to 'this is the single biggest issue.'

When asked what can the WSBA do or what advice should WSBA consider when addressing this issue, respondents generally cited a need to better understand and reach out to rural communities, promote the WSBA resources more directly to rural practitioners, provide financial incentives to encourage members to practice in rural communities, improve support or financial assistance to legal service providers or create a mechanism by which members from around the state can serve clients in the rural communities, perhaps through remote technology.