

Washington State Rural Practice Project Outreach Calls Questions

In the summer of 2020, the WSBA's rural practice project team conducted outreach calls to rural practitioners in Washington state as a follow up to a survey launched in spring 2020. Below is the pre-scripted list of questions the project team asked during those calls. The pre-scripted questions fell into four main categories: 1) about your practice, 2) entering/about your community, 3) unmet legal needs and barriers, 4) resources and next steps.

About Your Practice

- How did you go about starting your practice/practicing in a rural community?
- What would have been helpful for you when starting to practice/practicing in a rural community?
- Do you think a general practice is necessary in a rural community?
- What type of staff support do you have for your practice?
- When you graduated from law school, did you have student loans? If so, how did that impact your decision to work in a rural community?

Entering/About Your Community

- Tell us what it's like practicing in your community? What types of conflicts issues do you encounter, if any?
- What does living in community look like? What is family life like? Do you have a partner or spouse, and if so what do they do?
- Have you ever worked in a more metropolitan/urban community?
- What challenges have you faced working in your community?

Unmet Legal Needs and Barriers

- How often have you provided unbundled legal services or have to get creative in providing legal services to members in your community due to financial restraints?
- What do you think are barriers to enter the legal profession in your community, if any?
- How are you preparing your practice for when you retire? Do you plan to pass your practice on to a family member, sell it , or wind it down?

- Have you considered mentoring/have you mentored an attorney who would take over your practice?
- Would you consider working with/have you worked with an intern from one of the three Washington law schools?
- Are you aware of the Rule 6 Law Clerk program at the Bar? Have you mentored or would you be willing to mentor a lawyer under that program?

Resources and Next Steps

- What role, if any, do you see the WSBA playing in addressing legal practice needs in rural communities?
- How, if at all, do you think law schools could assist in supporting and encouraging rural practice?
- Other states have established a placement program that would incentivize and support practitioners to set up a practice in a rural community. Do you think this approach would be helpful? Welcomed in your community? What barriers would you envision someone in the community through a placement program might encounter?
- How can the WSBA better support rural practitioners?
- Have you used any WSBA resources such as free legal research tools, bar news, ethics line, PMA, etc.?
- Would you be willing to continue the dialogue as we move forward in our efforts?