

Washington State Rural Practice Project Prioritized Potential Solutions

In November 2019, the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) formed a project team to explore ways in which WSBA could support rural practice in Washington state. In November 2020, the project team conducted brainstorming sessions with interested participants to identify possible ways in which the WSBA may support rural practice in Washington state. In March 2021, the project team will host feedback sessions with interested participants about the prioritized solutions the project team recommends the WSBA should consider in the more immediate term for further exploration. Those prioritized solutions are:

- **WSBA Committee:** To ensure institutional resources and continuity, establish a leadership group committed to strengthen and support the practice of law in rural communities throughout Washington state. The committee will guide policy and program development, serve as ambassadors between the WSBA and rural 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 need further resource for sustainability and improvements. The project team recommends that the Committee initially focus on the following solutions:
 - **Community Education and Outreach:** Coordinated efforts to educate members and potential members about the unique needs, opportunities, and benefits of rural practice.
 - **Pipeline/Placement Program:** 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.
 - **Job Opportunities¹/Clearinghouse:** Utilizing existing and future WSBA resources to support and highlight job opportunities in rural communities, as well as assisting retiring members with succession planning and buying/selling of a practice.

¹ The project team is currently interpreting this to mean identifying what opportunities exist and connecting people with those opportunities.