

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

Small Town and Rural Committee

Small Town and Rural Committee Meeting | Virtual Only

Wednesday, November 30, 2022 | 12:10 p.m. – 1:10 p.m.

Via [Zoom](#) | Meeting ID: 879 0573 6111 | Passcode: 811616 | Call-in: 888-788-0099

AGENDA

1. Introductions, October Meeting Recaps, and Approval of October 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. CLE/Webinar (Karen Duncan)
 - a. CLE Chair
5. Career Center Discount Updates and Discussion (Julianne Unite)
6. Board of Governors Priorities Discussion (Gov. Petrasek)
7. One America Volunteer Request Discussion (Gov. Petrasek)
8. University of Washington Representative Update (Gov. Petrasek and Julianne Unite)
9. Other Business
10. Next Steps/ Conclusion
11. Next Meeting: January 25, 2023
12. Adjournment

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

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.

Chelle Gegax

From: Julianne Unite
Sent: Monday, November 28, 2022 2:08 PM
To: Chelle Gegax
Subject: FW: [External]STAR Committee meeting - can't be there

Chelle.

Please include this email in the materials packet for the STAR Committee meeting this week. Many thanks!

Regards,
Julianne

From: Powers, Laurie <powersl2@gonzaga.edu>
Sent: Monday, November 28, 2022 1:41 PM
To: Kari Petrasek <kari@petraseklaw.com>; Julianne Unite <julianneu@wsba.org>
Cc: Merf Ehman <merf.ehman@columbialegal.org>; Byrd McSherry, Sophia (OPD) <Sophia.ByrdMcSherry@opd.wa.gov>; Erin Lloyd <elloyd1@uw.edu>; Fullner, Erin <fullnere@seattleu.edu>; kiburke@co.ferry.wa.us
Subject: [External]STAR Committee meeting - can't be there

Hi there,

I am very sorry to report that I can't be at Wednesday's meeting. I think it will be a great time to celebrate our successes and plan for next year. Unfortunately, I will be out all day for a family funeral.

I have cc'd the other members of the Pipeline Subcommittee in case they have anything to add to what I list below.

The report from the Pipeline Committee is:

- Many thanks to Merf for getting our Governor's Proclamation!!
- Successful first STAR networking and info event! We will debrief more at our next Pipeline Committee meeting about what worked/what didn't, how to improve, etc. Overall, I thought it went very well.
- We have set the date for the virtual STAR job fair for March 31, hosted by Gonzaga. All three law schools signed off on that date. We will start working on those logistics after the first of the year.

Thanks all,
Laurie

LAURIE A. POWERS, JD
Assistant Dean, Gonzaga University School of Law
Professional Development and Externships
Pronouns: she/her/hers



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ZagLAW (the Gonzaga Legal Applicant Window) is available for [employers to post jobs](#) and for Gonzaga Law students and alumni to [schedule an appointment with me](#).

The State of Washington



Proclamation

WHEREAS, the rule of law is fundamental to our democracy, and access to justice is the right of all Washingtonians; and

WHEREAS, lawyers are necessary to represent the interests of all people in the justice system at every level; representation is crucial to ensure fairness and justice for all; small town and rural lawyers play an indispensable role in this system; and

WHEREAS, in Washington there are rural areas and counties with few lawyers in them, or no lawyers at all; and

WHEREAS, many residents of small towns and rural communities in Washington must travel significant distances to appear in court or meet with a lawyer; and

WHEREAS, many Washingtonians can access legal services online, but do not have sufficient broadband access in their area or would be better served by in-person service; and

WHEREAS, people in rural areas and small towns have important legal needs such as wills, family law matters, business needs, discrimination, domestic violence, or a criminal or other civil cases; and

WHEREAS, while about 20 percent of our nation's population lives in rural communities, only 2 percent of America's small law practices are located there in rural areas; and

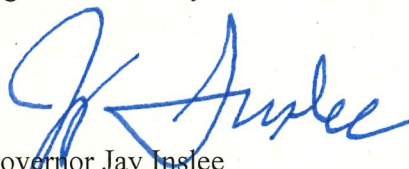
WHEREAS, increasing opportunities for and support of rural attorneys and the communities they service will increase access to justice across Washington state;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jay Inslee, Governor of the state of Washington, do hereby proclaim November, 15, 2022, as

Rural and Small-Town Practice Day

in Washington, and I encourage all people in our state to join me in this special observance.

Signed this 3rd day of November, 2022


Governor Jay Inslee



Chelle Gegax

From: Bonnie Stern Wasser <bonnie@weareoneamerica.org>
Sent: Wednesday, November 16, 2022 10:43 AM
To: Kari Petrasek
Cc: Ashlen Olmsted
Subject: STAR & OneAmerica - recruiting volunteers

Hi, Kari: I understand you are chairing the new Small Town and Rural Attorney section of WSBA. Congratulations! It's exciting to see there is such a committee. I wanted to introduce our program to you. OneAmerica is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit located in Seattle and is the largest immigrant rights organization in Washington. We also have a national reputation. We build power in immigrant and refugee communities. One of our programs is the Washington New Americans program (WNA), which is a partnership between the State of Washington, OneAmerica, and the American Immigration Lawyers Association Washington Chapter (AILAWA). We provide pro bono naturalization application preparation services for people capable of representing themselves pro se. We get funding from the state and re-grant about half of it to about 13 other nonprofits around Washington State that also provide naturalization services. Back in 2003, AILAWA started the original citizenship days to help permanent residents apply for naturalization. AILAWA formed a partnership with OA in 2008 to provide logistics, planning and outreach. Our state funding began in 2009. We host two Citizenship Days at 2-3 sites per event per year (April and September/October): usually one or two sites in central/eastern Washington and in greater Seattle, Vancouver or Tacoma. These clinics usually attract about 60-90 people. We also have several smaller clinics during the year in various locations in the Seattle area and around the state.

We are always looking for volunteers in a range of capacities: attorney/DOJ Rep screeners (evaluating eligibility for natz); also, for Quality Review to review prepared applications; paralegals to prepare forms; interpreters; and general volunteers for other logistics. In particular, we have a need to recruit lawyers in the smaller towns across the state for our clinics that have been held in Yakima, Ellensburg, Pasco, and Wenatchee for example. While I would expect most of the lawyers in STAR not to be immigration lawyers, they could participate as form fillers initially to get an idea of what's involved with naturalization, or to be general volunteers. If they can develop some immigration law experience, they can transition to screeners. We use our most experienced attorneys for quality review. Of course, we strongly recommend joining AILAWA for more intensive training and networking in the immigration space. (www.aila.org) We also welcome paralegals and bilingual legal staff to participate as form fillers and/or interpreters.

Ashlen Olmsted, who is cc'd here, is our volunteer organizer. I wanted to connect you both to discuss volunteer outreach further. Also, OneAmerica/WNA is a Qualified Legal Services Provider with WSBA for purposes of earning CLE credits through pro bono service. We require volunteers to watch our training videos and to check in and out at each clinic and to attend the day of event orientation. They then self-report for their credits.

Let me know if you have any questions. We would be happy to chat with you further about how STAR could help us recruit some new people to our program. Our two websites are below in my signature. Thank you in advance for your consideration and time.

BONNIE STERN WASSER (she/her) | STAFF ATTORNEY | OneAmerica | weareoneamerica.org |
Washington New Americans | wanewamericans.org
1225 S. Weller Street, Suite 430 | Seattle, WA 98144 | P: 206-723.2203 M: 206.778.2570

Build immigrant power and collective change with OneAmerica.

[Read about our legislative priorities and take action](#) for unemployment, language access, and democracy for all. We are growing our work to build power in communities - [visit our hiring page](#) and apply to join our movement. Read our immigration platform and vision, '[Our Thriving Home](#)' and [sign on](#) to make it real.

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