

President's Task Force on GREATER WISCONSIN INITIATIVE

Report & Recommendations

Task Force Members:

Chair: John Danner
Kathy Brost
Will Harris
Megan Heneke
Paige Juel
Paul Katzman
Johanna Kirk
Deanne Koll
Kate Knowlton
Hon. James Morrison
Emil Ovbiagele
Chad Schimmelpfenning
Steve Sorenson
Stefanie Wagner
Staff Liaison: Kim Burns

Greater Wisconsin Initiative

In October, 2019, then President-Elect of the State Bar of Wisconsin, Kathy Brost, recognizing the dwindling numbers of attorneys practicing in rural areas of Wisconsin, created the Greater Wisconsin Initiative. “Greater Wisconsin” is that area of the state outside of Madison, Milwaukee, and the Fox River Valley corridor. Nearly 50 percent of Wisconsin lawyers live in the state’s seven most populous counties: Brown, Dane, Milwaukee, Outagamie, Ozaukee, Racine, and Waukesha.¹ Only about 17 percent of lawyers consider themselves “rural” lawyers.² According to Wisconsin Public Radio, fewer than 40 percent of active lawyers in Wisconsin practice outside urban areas.³

2010 census data indicates that more than 1.6 million persons reside in Greater Wisconsin. Average ages of attorneys practicing in these rural counties often exceed sixty, and current trends indicate that as these attorneys reach retirement age, they are not being replaced, potentially leaving those residents with access to justice issues.

President’s Charge

President Brost charged the Task Force with “evaluating the shortage of legal representation in rural Wisconsin and recommending a new approach that will help address the challenges faced by rural Wisconsin.” She identifies the need and the responsive objective as follows:

Greater Wisconsin is experiencing a growing shortage of attorneys. Twenty-four counties in Greater Wisconsin have two dozen or fewer practicing attorneys. In some of the northern Wisconsin counties, the average age of practicing attorneys is over 60.

So not only is there a growing shortage of attorneys in Greater Wisconsin, the attorneys practicing there are becoming older. Having fewer attorneys is also an access-to-justice issue. As it becomes harder and harder to find a local attorney, more legal needs go unmet.

¹ Christopher C. Shattuck, *Going Rural: Insights from Park Falls to Monroe*, 91 Wis. Law. 8 (Sept. 2018).

² Id.

³ Danielle Kaeding, [Rural Wisconsin Lacking Lawyers, Especially Up North](#), Wisconsin Public Radio (Aug. 23, 2016).

The State Bar of Wisconsin’s Greater Wisconsin Initiative Task Force is looking at this issue – evaluating the shortage of legal representation in rural Wisconsin and recommending a new approach that will help address the challenges faced by rural Wisconsin.

The Task Force has been meeting since October, 2019. Early difficulties included identifying the specific reasons why newly licensed attorneys, young attorneys seeking a different opportunity or even seasoned attorneys seeking a different work environment would not consider relocating to Greater Wisconsin. Was it the ability to earn an acceptable living? Was it the burden of student loans? Was it the lack of affordable housing? Was it attitudinal? The Task Force quickly realized that even though there were plausible reasons why income, debt and housing issues should not be issues, attitudes and perceptions often acted as roadblocks to living and working in Greater Wisconsin.

Because of the intense complexity for the reasons of the measurable and tangible problem (lack of attorneys in number), it must be first acknowledged and respected that there are myriad intangible reasons for where and why people choose to live and work in particular areas, which is simply beyond the scope of this Task Force.

Thus, the Task Force agreed to focus solely on tangible and measurable factors impacting the lack of number of attorneys in Greater Wisconsin. This evolved into subgroups as follows:

SHORT-TERM	LONG TERM
<p><u>Legal Connections/Pipelines to Greater Wisconsin (including Law Student Outreach)</u> <i>Members:</i> Steve Sorenson Judge Morrison Paige Juel Johanna Kirk Stephanie Wagner Megan Heneke Paul Katzman</p>	<p><u>Broadband Access & Video Conferencing</u> <i>Members:</i> Kathy Brost</p>
<p><u>Assessment/Survey</u> <i>Members:</i> Emil Ovbiagele Steve Sorenson</p>	<p><u>Student Loan Forgiveness</u> <i>Members:</i></p>

John Danner Kathy Brost Chad Schimmelpfenning	Karen Bauer (on Governor’s Task Force) Chad Schimmelpfenning Megan Heneke
<u>Income/Cost of Living</u> Members: Paige Juel Deanne Koll Will Harris	<u>Marketing Quality of Life in Greater Wisconsin</u> <i>Members:</i> Deanne Koll Kathy Brost Paige Juel Stefanie Wagner
<u>Contract/Collective Work</u> Members: John Danner Joanna Kirk Steve Sorenson Judge Morrison Paige Juel Stephanie Wagner	

I. SHORT TERM

A. Legal Connections/Pipelines to Greater Wisconsin, including Law Student Outreach

Based on the information gathered, more outreach to youth, non-attorneys and non-law students from rural communities is needed in order to increase a sustainable supply of legal professionals to rural areas. The State Bar may attempt this by advertising or incentivizing rural professionals, college students, or even high school students (such as through their mock trial involvement) throughout Greater Wisconsin. This would be a less studied approach than other recommendations by this Task Force, but one supported by the evidence below.

First, student loans and financial concerns cannot completely explain the lack of law student interest in rural practice. The Bureau of Labor Statistics’ information comparing incomes throughout the state show that attorney incomes are comparable to Madison and Milwaukee in many small towns.⁴ In some towns, the income is even higher. According to the 2020 BLS report, in some rural Wisconsin areas,

⁴ https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_wi.htm

for attorneys who are in the lowest 25% of average incomes, their average income is greater than the average income for attorneys in the lowest 25% of more urban areas. For example, the average income for the lowest 25% of attorneys in Dane County was \$78,850, while in Northwest Wisconsin, the average income for that same category of attorneys was \$86,700. These figures do not account for age or recent graduation, however, the lower and/or starting wages of these reports are likely most relevant to new graduates. This also implicates student loan repayment, because the actual statistics demonstrate that by even making the lowest 10-25% salary in most rural areas, a new law graduate is making enough to pay their loans and live “comfortably” barring any other uncommon added debts or expenses. (Attached as Appendix A).

This also does not take into consideration the lower cost of living in rural Wisconsin, including the lower cost of housing. And while some financial programs—such as South Dakota’s program paying new rural attorneys over \$13K/year for their first five years in rural practice—have had several participants, it is difficult to know whether or not these attorneys would have moved to their preferred rural counties regardless.⁵ Of the sixteen annual participants, two were from out of state, but several grew up in rural South Dakota. Also, similar financial incentive programs such as Georgia’s have been disbanded as failures.⁶ In our own taskforce, members have seen low-paying urban jobs attracting much more interest than higher-paying rural positions and have reported law students showing little interest in rural jobs and events, regardless of their financial viability.

Instead of just finances, one major issue for many law students and recent graduates may be a simple lack of interest in living in rural counties. When Maine surveyed its attorneys about rural practice, “Only 17% of respondents had chosen a rural location, and only about a quarter of those who reported choosing not to practice in rural areas had even seriously considered doing so.”⁷ In this survey and one conducted in California, urban attorneys gave several reasons for avoiding rural practice. These reasons include: worrying about not being able to find a partner or not finding work for their existing partner, social isolation, political isolation, and financial concerns.⁸ And regardless of their current plans, law students might be a difficult group to market to in the hopes of changing their minds. For example, the ABA found that 65% of national law students spent at least one year out of school before

⁵ See attached resources.

⁶ Id

⁷ Id

⁸ Id

attending law school, and 34% of all law students delayed law school for at least three years.⁹ The ABA did not ask law students what their regional plans were after law school, but it's reasonable to assume that many entered school with some sort of long-term plan already formed.

For these reasons, recruiting law students from rural locations might be more successful. The same ABA study found that “more than half (55%) of the law students reported that they first considered going to law school before their first year of college. Roughly one-third (35%) first considered pursuing law school before high school.” Also, a study conducted in New York shows, rural attorneys reported that some of the greatest benefits of rural practice were love for and impact on their community; reward of helping their clients in meaningful ways; reward of helping underserved, poor clients.¹⁰ So, if it is important for attorneys to love their community, it makes sense to recruit attorneys from those communities. And these local recruits might have fewer concerns about finding a partner, their partner finding work, and social isolation, because the rural community is less mysterious to them, especially recruits who have already graduated from college and started to put-down roots in rural communities. In practice, one study of California rural practice found that more rural law schools that attracted rural students saw more of their students return to rural communities after graduating.¹¹

It is also worth noting that rural New York attorneys identified one issue being the challenge in finding office help in their rural communities.¹² Wisconsin's Judicare's pro-bono attorneys and director have heard the same complaints from Wisconsin attorneys as well. Of the strategies the Task Force has discussed, marketing to rural citizens is the only solution that may also increase the number of rural legal assistants and paralegals, depending on what those marketing efforts and materials end up looking like.

In Wisconsin, recruiting rural law students has several long-term limitations as well. First, whether the law school recruits are college graduates, in college, or younger, it will take more time for them to enter the workforce as attorneys than it would current attorneys and law students, so it will take several years—at least three—to see any positive effects from any recruiting efforts. Second, unlike California, Wisconsin's two law schools are in urban cities, requiring any rural students to uproot from the

⁹ <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/news/2020/07/potlp2020.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.albanylaw.edu/centers/government-law-center/the-rural-law-initiative/Documents/rural-law-practice-in-new-york-state.pdf>

¹¹ https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ED6eR_Ma3t7i8gBhlOm_tfQWxgS3d2lt

¹² <https://www.albanylaw.edu/centers/government-law-center/the-rural-law-initiative/Documents/rural-law-practice-in-new-york-state.pdf>

communities that we want them to be closely tied to. Prior to the pandemic, researchers in New York recommended increasing remote learning opportunities so that rural students can spend more time at home.¹³ Something similar in Wisconsin post-pandemic may be necessary in order to successfully recruit rural law students. Third, because rural Wisconsin is less racially diverse than Madison and Milwaukee, increasing rural representation among law students in Wisconsin might have the negative effect of decreasing minority representation among law students and eventually the State Bar as well. Finally, there does not appear to be any similar programs throughout the country, so the State Bar would have no direct model to learn from and no data on how effective Wisconsin's program could be.

However, no one type of program throughout the country has had consistent, resounding success. Though the mock trial program has demonstrated success, there needs to be deliberate and consistent encouragement and support of interest and pursuit of professional legal education. Additionally, trying something new might be essential to addressing the rural justice gap. Therefore, while many states, including Wisconsin, continue to incentivize and advertise rural practice to existing attorneys and law students, Wisconsin should also attempt to promote the practice of law to its current rural residents.

B. Assessment/Survey

The Task Force was fortunate to access and be able to rely on information resources which were timely and specific to our region. In addition to the valuable and foundational resource of Judicare's collaboration with Professor Michele Statz of the University of Minnesota-Duluth in a 2018 study, a timely and comprehensive companion law review article, exactly on point, was available to the Task Force as well from the upcoming Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law Policy, speaking directly to this issue. (see resource page herein). Professor Statz has been researching and studying the lack of access to justice in Greater Wisconsin for the past five years.

These resources reinforced the discussion, experience and analysis of the Task Force throughout this process.

C. Income/Cost of Living

One of the many obstacles to recruiting new attorneys to the rural areas is the perception that rural attorneys earn significantly less than their urban counterparts and that rural areas offer a lower

¹³ <https://nysba.org/app/uploads/2020/03/Report-and-Recommendations-of-the-Task-Force-on-Rural-Justice-as-of-3.18.2020.pdf>

quality of life and less opportunities than does the larger metropolitan area. A number of surveys have been conducted on lawyers' perception about income disparities in rural practice as compared to urban legal practice. Overwhelmingly, the perception is that rural attorneys earn less income than attorneys working in urban centers.

In June 2014, the Maine Task Force on Bar Demographics conducted a focused study of the "greying" of the bar and other access-to-justice issues facing Maine and surveyed new lawyers having practiced 5 years or less. When respondents from the survey were asked what influenced their decision not to pursue rural practice, the most selected reason was "lack of professional opportunities for partner," with "income too low" a very close second. The survey also sought to identify whether respondents had considered a solo practice, as many small-town lawyers are solo practitioners. Although two-thirds of respondents had considered solo practice at one time, the vast majority decided against it, citing income instability as the primary reason.

Similar concerns regarding "low-pay" in rural practice surfaced in a 2014–15 survey of Arkansas lawyers and law students as well as in a closed-door discussion between South Dakota's Chief Justice and a group of USD law students. In the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Law Review, in the case study titled *Justice in the Hinterlands*, it reported that UA Fayetteville students choosing between "yes," "no," or "don't know" to the question of whether they planned to practice in a rural county, 60% ranked "perception that I would earn a lower income" and 52% ranked "perception that rural areas offer fewer career and economic opportunities" as their top two most discouraging factors. Among 221 respondents at the University of Arkansas Little Rock Bowen School of Law, the factors "most discouraging" of rural practice were the "perception that I would earn a lower income;" "perceived inability to find clients/perceived lack of career and economic opportunities;" and "relative lack of entertainment, restaurant and other similar amenities associated with cities." However, despite the perception that rural attorneys make less income, the reality is that rural attorneys actually make comparable salaries that result in greater wealth due to a lower cost of living.

In Wisconsin, if we look at the average mean of Attorney Salaries in Wisconsin Cities, both urban and rural using information gathered from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (See Appendix A), it is clear that the belief that rural attorneys make less money is not accurate. Information from 2019 shows Attorney Annual Mean Wages were as follows:

Location	Attorney Annual Mean Wage	Lowest 10% Wage
Wausau	\$128,910	\$58,520
Eau Claire	\$94,990	\$56,180
Fond du Lac	\$108,160	\$60,750
Green Bay	\$112,720	\$46,750
Janesville-Beloit	\$96,160	\$51,850
Sheboygan	\$106,990	\$51,830
Lacrosse-Onalaska	\$86,930	\$52,280
Madison	\$120,700	\$55,480
Milwaukee/Waukesha	\$146,710	\$59,510
Racine	\$113,470	\$58,230
Oshkosh/Neenah	\$99,390	\$48,930
Northwestern Metropolitan Area	\$98,880	\$63,120
Northeastern Metropolitan Area	\$108,020	\$60,330
South Central Non-metropolitan Area	\$79,540	\$54,990

Attorneys on the task force living in rural Wisconsin shared anecdotal information that indicates the cost of living in rural areas of Wisconsin is less than living in the urban areas such as Milwaukee/Madison/Fox Valley. There can be great advantages and cost savings living in Wisconsin and the rural areas.

Additionally, where costs have gone up such as law school tuition, the current legal market thus invites a shift toward rural practice, as aging small-town practitioners await new attorneys to whom they can pass off books of business.

Many lawyers may be attracted to the rural areas because they have a desire for a simpler life, safety, more affordable housing and outdoor recreation. However, they may be deterred, due to perceptions about making less income and ultimately by huge law school debt and fear that they will have less resources and opportunities to pay off that debt.

To combat these perceptions, the Task Force recommends that the State Bar provide education through factsheets and other publications about the true numbers regarding income and cost of living in rural areas, offer mentoring arrangements, provide free continuing legal education classes that equip lawyers for rural practice, and create a regional attorney network. The State Bar could offer incentives to rural lawyers who contribute to activities that support other attorneys in rural practice. The State Bar could also lobby and work with the federal and state governments to expand the current loan repayment/forgiveness programs to include lawyers who practice in rural areas, or to provide some

basic funding or stipend directly to rural lawyers. The federal government could also offer grants to the states to operate their own loan repayment programs for rural lawyers, much like the federal government does for medical professionals, or could provide an incentive payment or stipend to cover a fixed cost, e.g., rent for office space or a subscription to a legal research database.

The State Bar could consider adopting a program similar to those used by other institutions like Harvard Law and South Dakota State Bar both of which have a Rural Attorney Recruitment Program that relies on contributions from the state bar, the legislature, and local communities to provide five years of funding to qualifying attorneys who move to eligible rural areas, funding amount should allow participants to make student loan payments and cover basic operating expenses.

The Task Force recommends the State Bar create Fact Sheets which highlight the actual cost of living of Greater Wisconsin's cost of living as compared with Milwaukee/Madison/Fox Cities cost of living. These Fact Sheets should provide examples of comparable annual costs and also specific real estate listings; and provide total amounts of lakes in area and lake properties along with prices. The State Bar should also develop and implement a distribution plan for the Fact Sheets.

The Task Force recommends the State Bar work with attorneys who currently practice in Greater Wisconsin to create blogs and articles which state the benefits of working in Greater Wisconsin and provide currently practicing attorneys' contact information. . The State Bar could utilize these cost of living statistics in conjunction with the quality of life ideas outlined above.

D. Contract/Collective Work

There are currently practicing Wisconsin attorneys who are interested in practicing in Greater Wisconsin, but may need assistance on getting started. These attorneys generally fall into three different types of business models. The Task Force recommends that the State Bar assist these attorneys (along with the existing attorneys who currently do practice in Greater Wisconsin), as follows:

- 1) The fully virtual/e-working attorney (someone not located in Greater Wisconsin area but willing to do some practice there);
 - i. To support this type of attorney's extension into rural/Greater Wisconsin, it is necessary to develop a connection between local court personnel and interested

attorneys for public defender and guardian ad litem appointments. This should include helping the attorney find and access county/judicial-specific training on what technology is expected to be known/understood, what counties are allowing and expecting in regard to e-appearances.

- ii. For transactional attorneys – they may need training or assistance with effective marketing in rural areas and how to manage an e-practice. Training should include education on common technologies that will be easy for clients to use, ethical issues with technology used in sharing information, effective marketing methods, time management strategies.
 - iii. If possible to pinpoint particular areas of law that the Greater Wisconsin area is desperate for attorneys to practice in, such as probates, the Task Force recommends that the State Bar create and provide a handbook, video, CLE, some sort of “how-to” program that will address some of the basic nuts and bolts of the substantive and procedural law but also tips for how to e-represent in that particular area. For example, with regard to probates – provide a start to finish timeline for probates, a checklist for the forms needed for different types of probates, tips for how to get forms signed electronically and e-filed with the court system.
 - iv. Increase awareness and use of current State Bar listservs or State Bar website for referrals. Each specialty area of the State Bar has a listserv but rural attorneys may not be using them effectively for referral purposes. When current rural attorneys have work they want to refer out there needs to be an effective place to send it.
 - v. Use LRIS type of a platform to get contacts to do work for firms or attorneys in Greater Wisconsin. The work remains with the firm/attorney, but the work is outsourced in accordance with Wisconsin’s limited scope representation laws.
- 2) The full time attorney (re) locating to a rural area attorney (a new or seasoned attorney willing to start a practice or relocate to a rural area);
- i. State Bar should develop and provide training on how to start a firm – and make it available for FREE. The Considerations for Starting a Practice CLE would be an example but lawyers starting in a rural area need more. It should include a step-by-step plan with timelines, budgets, and connections to outside resources (Small Business Admins, local Chambers, Business Loan/Grant options). The system needs to walk an

attorney through every step – find an office, sign up for internet, shop for a house/apartment, computers, file cabinets, staff, marketing, banking, disaster planning, ALL OF IT – but tailored specifically to an attorney looking to start up in a rural area. This programming needs to be developed with the input and participation of attorneys who currently practice in Greater Wisconsin.

- ii. State Bar should activate local and specialty bar associations, BOG members, and State Bar volunteers to integrate attorneys into the communities. Most counties have a local bar association which can be used to welcome and assist new attorneys, but some basic direct contact information is not updated or maintained.
 - iii. State Bar should work with the Senior Lawyers Division to connect experienced attorneys with those starting out in a new town. The State Bar has a mentorship program, but it seems restricted to “new” or “young” attorneys. The mentorship program should be expanded to include attorneys relocating to rural areas. Expanding the program would provide training to the experienced attorney who will then be better able to assist the new attorney.
- 3) The co-op approach (a dedicated physical work space that permits attorneys to come and go and practice locally on their schedule):
- i. State Bar needs to review and confirm the ethical requirements and best practices for sharing/ownership of space and work assets such as desks, computers, etc.
 - ii. Once confirmed, funding could be explored for a pilot program through the Law Foundation or local communities to secure, for example, a six-month lease for an office space north of Highway 8 that will provide a co-op opportunity (could likely be less than \$6,000), to provide six-months of utilities, phone, internet, property insurance, and basic operations costs for the co-op;
 - iii. State Bar could then develop a co-op agreement for attorneys who want to participate, market and secure six to ten attorneys willing to participate in and launch the co-op.
 - iv. If ethically secure, everyone involved understands that after six-months the funding will go away and the co-op needs to function independently.

II. LONG TERM

A. Broadband Access and Video Conferencing

The physical distance and time required to travel to circuit courthouses is a factor for attorneys. Even for attorneys that live in the Greater Wisconsin area, because of the physical distance and type of roads, it can take a considerable amount of driving time to physically attend hearings in the Greater Wisconsin area. One of the benefits from the pandemic has been the ability of Wisconsin court system to use Zoom and other remote video conferencing technology to hold hearings and trials. Using video conferencing, it is no longer necessary for all parties to be physically located in the courthouse for the hearing. As long as all parties have access to high speed broadband service, they are able to attend hearings from anywhere. The continued use of video conferencing technology for hearings enables any attorney who is licensed in Wisconsin to effectively and efficiently represent Greater Wisconsin clients regardless of their actual physical location. It also enables the more effective use of court reporters and translators by the court system.

The Task Force recommends that the State Bar petition and support any petitions to the Supreme Court which allow for, or require, the continued and on-going use of video conferencing technology by the Wisconsin court system.

Additionally highlighted during the pandemic was the increased use of video conferencing technology, exposing the dependency on high speed internet capabilities (“broadband”). Much of Greater Wisconsin suffers from a lack of access to broadband services.

The Task Force recommends that the State Bar actively support any legislative or regulatory actions or funding proposals which serve to increase the availability of broadband services throughout Greater Wisconsin.

B. Student Loan Forgiveness

The State of Wisconsin currently has several student loan forgiveness programs enacted through legislation which benefit certain sectors of employment for individuals who choose to practice in rural areas. Given these programs already have a framework in place, including defining rural areas and

duration of commitment, the Task Force recommends that the State Bar support and lobby for updating the existing legislation to allow for the inclusion of lawyers in these programs. One such program, the Wisconsin Primary Care Program, is administered through the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and focuses on aid to medical professionals. Another program focuses on teachers who provide services for five academic years at low-income schools. Additional research would be necessary to target specific pieces of legislation as several attempts have been made in the past several years to expand on these programs. Additionally, the State Bar could work with the American Bar Association to understand the existing federal programs and how those programs are applicable to Wisconsin and existing rural initiatives (i.e. get ideas).

State Bar Student Loan Assistance Program. One issue that seems to face each graduating lawyer with student debt is how to appropriately take advantage of existing federal student loan assistance programs and the implications of using such programs. There are many tools available to assist these lawyers, however, a consolidated effort by the State Bar may have greater impact. This service would not provide financial assistance to students, rather it would be a resource to help recent law school graduates better understand their options. This could include a State Bar staff member who would be available to provide consultative services with respect to applications for payment plans, recertifications, verifying calculations, etc. Alternatively, the State Bar could establish a peer to peer network of attorneys who have successfully navigated some of these issues to provide a second set of eyes on documentation, applications, etc. This program could be advertised by the State Bar as a member benefit on its landing page and could be included in initial and recurrent membership mailings, specifically those mailings designed directed to the Young Lawyer Division.

C. Marketing Quality of Life

The Task Force recommends that the State Bar develop and implement a quality of life marketing campaign as follows:

1. Law Schools. Marketing to law students relating to the quality of life you can maintain if you choose rural practices versus an urban practice. This could include an annual “rural practice initiative” panel discussion at the law schools. This should include out-reach to the Minnesota law schools, as their knowledge of and interest in western and northwestern Wisconsin is likely greater than Milwaukee and Madison law grads. Minnesota law schools should be a specific target.

2. Conventions & Institutes. At least one of the larger State Bar conferences and/or institutes, there should be a quality of life seminar on rural practice. This could be a re-work of the law school seminar, but for already-practicing lawyers. Or, a luncheon at these conferences/institutes to match up lawyers that are in rural practice to discuss with lawyers who may be interested in learning more about rural practice.

3. Material Development. Create marketing materials on the quality of life for rural areas. This could include annual billable hours, quotes and stories from up-north lawyers, or other information that speaks to why a lawyer would consider moving out of Milwaukee and Madison to practice out-state. Materials could also be a compilation of local tourism and chamber flyers, to highlight the natural joys of living in rural areas. Possibly compile total ATV / Snowmobile trails in an area or public hunting lands or total lake acreage in an area, to highlight the great advantages of being in rural Wisconsin. These materials should then be used and pushed out by the YLD and possibly through the Solo, Small Firm, General Practice Section.

4. Digital Outreach. Create and maintain a Facebook or LinkedIn page for rural practice. This could be a way to drum-up organic conversations on the topic and provide a way for in-state lawyers to connect with out-state lawyers and could provide a platform to push the content outlined above.

5. Testimonials. Solicit and compile testimonials for rural attorneys about the quality of life they enjoy being in Greater Wisconsin. Utilize these testimonials in the above areas.

Conclusion and Recommendations Summary

This issue is a much more nuanced and complex issue than the over-simplified conclusion that there aren't enough attorneys in certain parts of the state. Clearly, this issue has developed over time and is impacted by influences both inside and outside of the legal profession. But the reality is stark and looming: the current status and trend towards less availability to legal professionals is a direct threat to the access, quality and fundamental processes and outcomes of our courts and judicial systems. This diminishing access to justice must be addressed, and there are real supports that can assist.

After evaluation and analysis, examining numbers, obstacles and factors, this Task Force recommends exploration and investment in some tangible strategies to address this on-going problem. By identifying and arranging the Task Force sub-groups into "short" and "long" term issues and

approaches, we provide prioritization and below summarize the recommendations supported by the narrative above, to move forward.

ISSUE	Recommendations	Action
Legal Connections/Pipelines to Greater WI (including Law Student Outreach)	Start promoting EARLY (mentoring/awareness outreach in high schools)	Increase awareness/access to high school mock trial program (already in place)
Income/Cost of Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Directed education (factsheets, etc.) with true numbers of income/cost of living in rural areas * mentoring arrangements/networking * free/reduced CLE specific to rural practice * incentive pay/stipend for fixed costs (e.g., rent, legal research database/forms, etc.) 	Allocate staff and/or resources
Contract/Collective Work	Support 1) fully virtual expansion, 2) re-location of full time attorneys, and 3) co-opted/shared resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Continue and secure use of e-appearances * expand/enhance listserv/LRIS-type platform for referrals and contract work * develop and provide specific rural (free) CLE for rural practice start-up * activate local and senior bar members to connect and expand access * pilot program for co-opted resources/space
Broadband Access and Video Conferencing	Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * petition and support any petitions to the Supreme Court which allow for, and/or require, the continued and on-going use of video conferencing technology by the Wisconsin court system * actively support any legislative or regulatory actions to increase the availability of

		broadband services throughout Greater Wisconsin.
Student Loan Forgiveness	* Review/replicate other state and federal programs (5 years of work = some forgiveness) * consolidated effort by the State Bar for greater impact to educate about loan options/resources.	Allocate resources and/or staff
Marketing/Quality of Life	* Use in-community resources (local Bars, chambers, businesses, organizations, testimonials) as partners in info-gathering and publishing to law schools and lawyers * digital outreach	Allocate space (dedicated rural practice “page”/resources; also reserved space in <i>Wisconsin Lawyer</i>), staff and resources

RESOURCES

1. *"They had access, but they didn't get justice": Why Prevailing Access to Justice Initiatives Fail Rural Americans*, Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law Policy, Forthcoming; 57 Pages Posted: 9 Mar 2021; authors: Michele Statz, University of Minnesota Medical School, Duluth campus; University of Minnesota Law School, Robert Friday (affiliation not provided), and Jon Bredeson, University of Minnesota Medical School, Duluth campus; Written: March 1, 2021. Electronic copy available at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3800215
2. Lisa R. Pruitt, Amanda L. Kool, Lauren Sudeall, Michele Statz, Danielle M. Conway, & Hannah Haksgaard, *Legal Deserts: A Multi-State Perspective on Rural Access to Justice*, 13 Harv. L. & Pol'y Rev. 15 (2018).
3. *Lack of lawyers in Wisconsin 'legal deserts' impedes justice*, Wisconsin Law Journal, November 3, 2020; author: Michaela Paukner, mpaukner@wislawjournal.com. Electronic copy available at <https://wislawjournal.com/2020/11/03/lack-of-lawyers-in-wisconsin-legal-deserts-impedes-justice/>
4. Wolf, Jordan and Michele Statz. (2018). Wisconsin Judicare, Inc. Community Needs Assessment. Duluth: Minnesota.

One occupation for multiple geographical areas

Occupation: Lawyers (SOC Code 231011)
 Period: May 2019

Area Name	Employment ⁽¹⁾	Employment percent relative standard error ⁽³⁾	Hourly mean wage	Annual mean wage ⁽²⁾	Wage percent relative standard error ⁽³⁾	Hourly 10th percentile wage	Hourly 25th percentile wage	Hourly median wage	Hourly 75th percentile wage	Hourly 90th percentile wage	Annual 10th percentile wage ⁽²⁾	Annual 25th percentile wage ⁽²⁾	Annual median wage ⁽²⁾	Annual 75th percentile wage ⁽²⁾	Annual 90th percentile wage ⁽²⁾	Employment per 1,000 jobs	Location Quotient
Appleton, WI(0011540)	230	14.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.865	0.42
Eau Claire, WI(0020740)	140	15.3	45.67	94990	5.9	27.01	30.14	42.00	50.90	73.50	56180	62690	87350	105880	152870	1.707	0.38
Fond du Lac, WI(0022540)	50	25.0	52.00	108160	10.2	28.97	35.91	43.60	49.65	79.08	60250	74700	90700	103270	164480	1.163	0.26
Green Bay, WI(0024580)	360	18.4	54.19	112720	17.0	22.48	27.45	48.98	73.34	91.69	46750	57100	101870	152540	190700	2.054	0.46
Janesville-Beloit, WI(0027500)	80	13.5	46.23	96160	4.0	24.93	30.65	43.28	54.93	69.73	51850	63750	90020	114260	145040	1.157	0.26
La Crosse-Onalaska, WI-MN(0029100)	110	10.7	41.79	86930	6.8	25.13	28.60	36.25	51.59	65.23	52280	59490	75410	107310	135670	1.438	0.32
Madison, WI(0031540)	1680	7.4	58.03	120700	8.7	26.67	37.91	48.19	68.83	-	55480	78850	100240	143170	-	4.241	0.95
Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI(0033340)	3820	8.3	70.54	146710	7.9	28.61	37.91	59.81	90.17	-	59510	78860	124410	187550	-	4.457	1.00
Northeastern Wisconsin nonmetropolitan area(5500002)	230	12.2	51.93	108020	9.9	29.00	32.89	42.38	56.74	94.18	60330	68420	88160	118020	195890	1.133	0.25
Northwestern Wisconsin nonmetropolitan area(5500001)	60	48.2	47.54	98880	4.0	30.35	41.68	45.83	49.75	54.61	63120	86700	95330	103490	113590	1.278	0.29
Oshkosh-Neenah, WI(0036780)	190	13.6	47.79	99390	15.0	23.52	27.21	33.94	53.15	94.43	48930	56600	70600	110540	196420	2.021	0.45
Racine, WI(0039540)	130	8.9	54.55	113470	10.4	28.00	30.67	47.44	70.45	86.85	58230	63780	98680	146540	180650	1.647	0.37
Sheboygan, WI(0043100)	70	19.9	51.44	106990	10.2	24.92	28.30	40.91	63.29	92.22	51830	58860	85100	131640	191820	1.100	0.25
South Central Wisconsin nonmetropolitan area(5500003)	240	27.0	38.24	79540	3.3	26.44	29.47	35.64	45.40	54.98	54990	61290	74130	94430	114360	1.126	0.25
Wausau, WI(0048140)	190	5.9	61.97	128910	15.7	28.13	34.91	44.89	70.76	-	58520	72610	93360	147190	-	2.655	0.59
Western Wisconsin nonmetropolitan area(5500004)	160	18.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.121	0.25

(1)Estimates for detailed occupations do not sum to the totals because the totals include occupations not shown separately. Estimates do not include self-employed workers.
 (2)Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the corresponding hourly wage by 2,080 hours.
 (3)The relative standard error (RSE) is a measure of the reliability of a survey statistic. The smaller the relative standard error, the more precise the estimate.
 (4)This wage is equal to or greater than \$100.00 per hour or \$208,000 per year.
 (5)Estimate not released.

SOC code: Standard Occupational Classification code -- see <http://www.bls.gov/soc/home.htm>
 Date extracted on :Sep 24, 2020