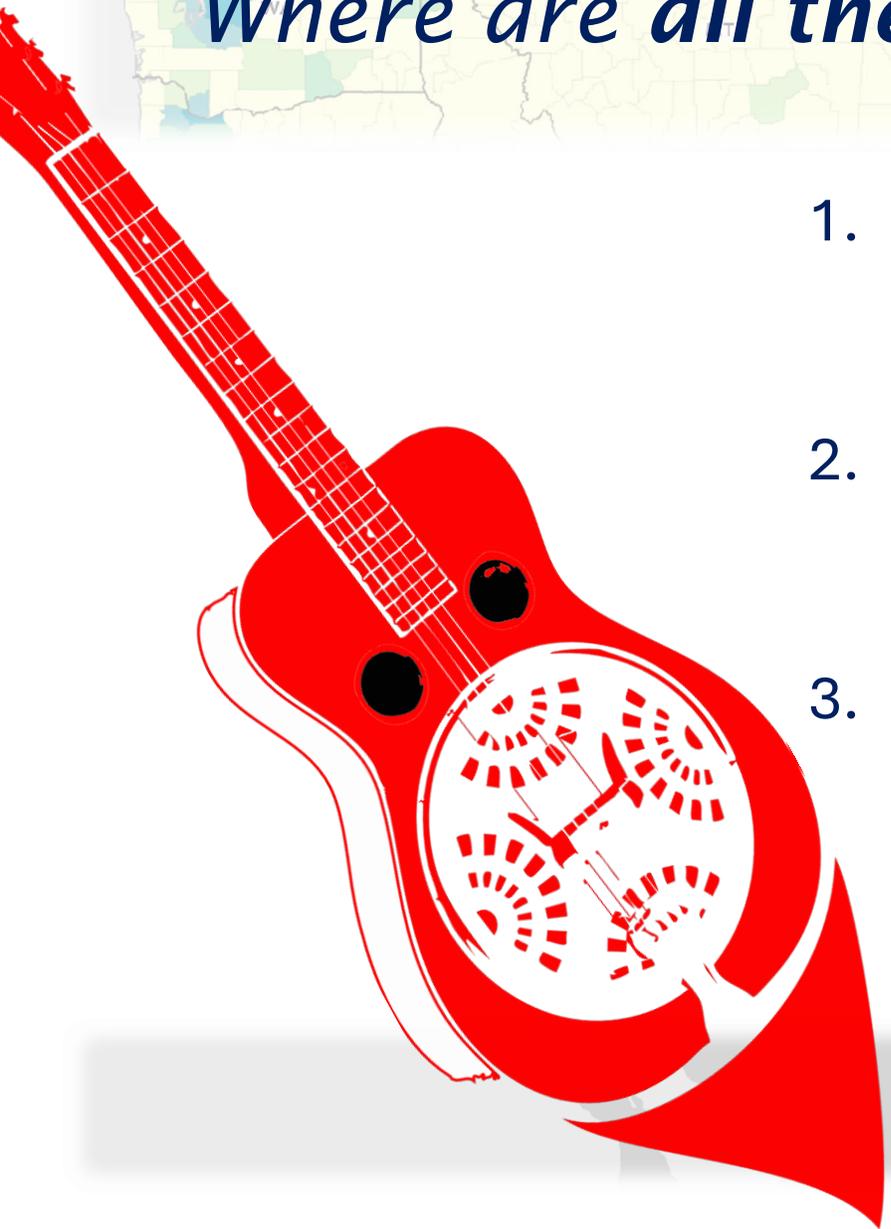


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places!



A quick introduction to Legal Deserts.





Where are all the lawyers?

1. How many attorneys are there in the United States?
 - a) Approximately 1.32M
2. What states are the top ten in lawyers per capita?
 - a) NY, MA, CT, IL, MN, CA, LA, NJ, MD, MO
3. What states are the bottom ten in lawyers per capita?
 - a) NV, MS, IN, IA, SD, AR, AZ, ND, ID, SC



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But what is a legal desert?

- ABA definition – Any county with less than 1 attorney per 1000 residents
- National Conference of State Courts – Any community where there are few to no options for adequate civil or criminal legal representation
- Your alumni – their town, but only when they need a new associate, their kid is not returning home, or they are planning to wind down their firm and can't find a successor



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What factors are at play to create legal deserts?



Practical Pressures

- Perception of the work in rural areas
- Lack of visible recruiting or cohesive recruiting of students
- Under representation of people from rural areas in law school

Reality Pressures

- Ever increasing cost of higher education, especially law school
- Cost of living
- Starting salary increases, and the *perception* created by those salary increases



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What will we talk about today?

- Learning how to build and leverage programs to connect students with legal opportunities in smaller communities.
- A review of programs in place and brainstorming on how you can build those at your school/in your area
- How to cultivate alumni and donors to participate, and build credibility with elected officials.



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**Building a program that
connects students with
legal opportunities in
smaller communities.**



Just the “Stats’ Ma’am

Some things to consider

- Students are less likely to be unemployed and looking for work after graduation
- Students are less likely to become solo practitioners
- Median salaries for small firms (1-10 lawyers) is \$70,000
- Cost of living Differential:

<https://money.cnn.com/calculator/pf/cost-of-living/>

Taken from: Legal Employment Landscape: Perspectives from Career Professionals, Hollis Hanover and Danielle Taylor



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What does that mean for recruiting students to small communities

- Firms in smaller communities need to keep up the pace with firms in bigger cities
- Precruiting happens. Firm should have a plan and know what they need early.
- Students want mentorship and professional development. They will not open their own firm.
- Salaries, although not everything, do matter. Keep up with the median at the very least.
- Firms need to know how to market themselves and their communities.

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Current Programs to guide students into “rural” practice

**Illinois: ISBA Rural Practice Initiative
(Privately funded)**

\$5000 for summer clerks
\$10000 for associates

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Current Programs to guide students into “rural” practice

Kansas: Rural Practice Initiative

Washburn Law and Kansas State (pre-law students): Stipends and externship credit for practice in rural communities in Kansas. 3+3 programs with colleges in less populated areas of Kansas.

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Current Programs to guide students into “rural” practice

Ohio: Rural Practice Incentive Program

\$10000 a year loan repayment, for at least 3 years, for those with less than 8 years of experience who work in government jobs in rural areas

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Current Programs to guide students into “rural” practice

Drake Law: Rural Access to Justice Initiative and Summer Stipend
Stipends to students in summer clerkships in rural Iowa



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Current Programs to guide students into “rural” practice

**Albany Law: Rural Law Initiative
(Grant funded)**
Clinics in rural counties.



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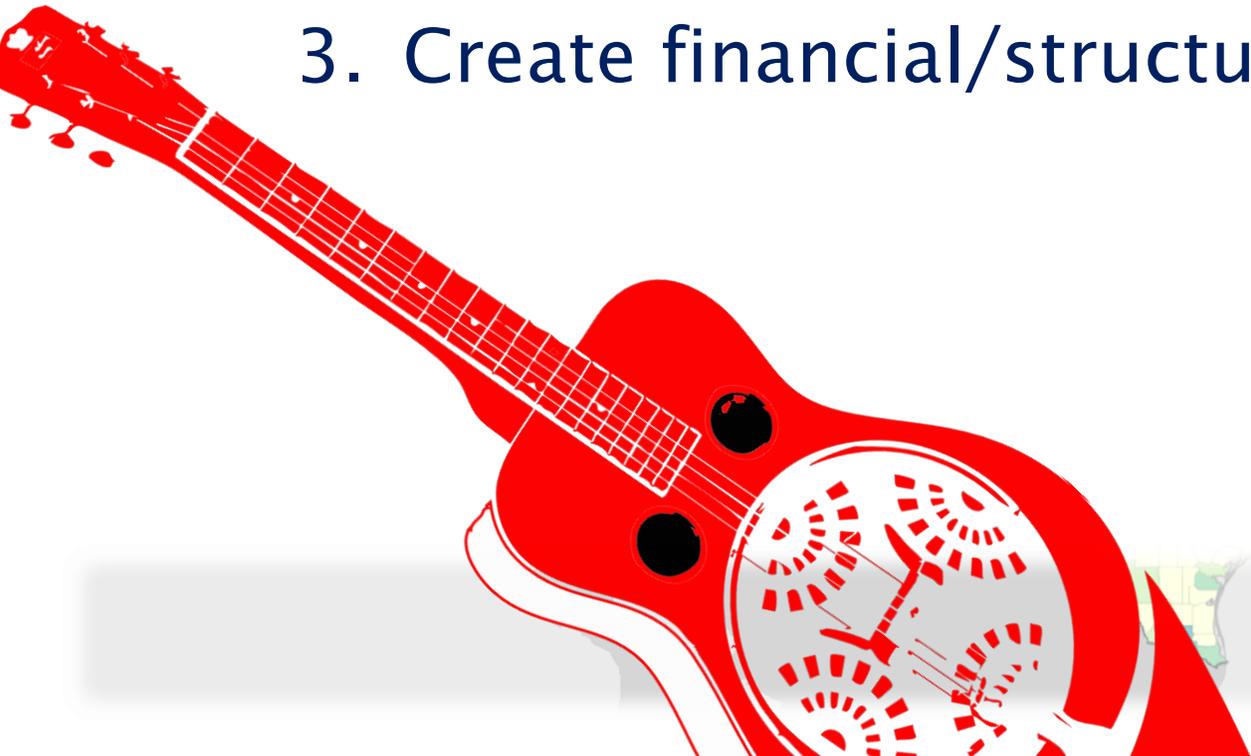
Three actionable strategies!



A map of Minnesota is shown in the background, with the state's outline and county boundaries visible. The text is overlaid on this map.

Promoting Rural & Small-Town Legal Careers

1. Help rural employers market themselves effectively
2. Build a culture that values rural legal careers
3. Create financial/structural support

A small map of Florida is located in the bottom right corner, behind the text.

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1. Help rural employers market themselves

- Develop long-term thinking (develop pipelines)
- Push Attendance at “Meet The Employers” Programs
- Develop Clear and Compelling Job Postings



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Develop long-term thinking (develop pipelines)

Rural Employer Thought Process

- I need an attorney-*yesterday!*
- I will only hire an attorney
- I don't have time for a clerk

Reality

- It's difficult to attract graduates who are unfamiliar with your city, your practice, and you.
- Even if a candidate accepts, they are unfamiliar, and chances of leaving is higher.
- Easier to attract students looking for a summer experience. If they return, they will know what they are getting.



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Push Attendance at “Meet The Employers” Programs



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Develop Clear and Compelling Job Postings

Original Job Posting:

Johnson and Smith LLC,

- North Platte, NE
- Lawyer (entry-level)
- Join small general practice firm and work on a variety of cases. Resume and cover letter.

CDO Message to Employer:

- The more complete your job description - the more interested candidates will become.
- Think about appealing to students where they are. What are they worried about? Start by engaging the students with a question.
- Provide specific information: about the town, practice areas, housing assistance, mentorship
- Don't ask for too much in the initial contact – main goal is to start a conversation



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Develop Clear and Compelling Job Postings

Revamped Job Posting: Johnson and Smith LLC,

- **Are you ready to start using all that you learned in law school?** Are you looking for a law firm that will take a chance on you, providing the mentoring you need to be successful?
- North Platte is a **vibrant community**....
- As an associate, you'll have the opportunity to engage in **diverse areas of law**, including...
- Our firm is committed to providing hands-on experience and one-on-one **mentorship** to help you grow into a well-rounded legal advocate. We offer a **competitive pay** package compared to firms in Eastern Nebraska, including retirement and health insurance. We also have a **fast track to partner** in which many of our past associates receive revenue bonuses after one year and ownership in the firm in less than 4 years. If you work hard, you can make a considerable amount of money in a short period of time at our firm!
- **Housing Assistance and Next Steps:** Send us an email with your resume and let us know when you have time to chat about your interest. We'll handle the details from there.



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2. Build a culture that highlights and values rural legal careers

- Dedicated Student Organization
 - GNC: “Greater Nebraska Connections”
- Include rural attorneys on general career panels
- Incorporate rural interviews into regular OCIs so they are considered with all the others and not after the fact



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3. Create Financial/Structural Support

- **Housing & Relocation Support:**
Work with alumni, local bar associations, and economic development offices to create short-term housing options for students considering rural internships or jobs.
- **Student Loan Forgiveness & Incentives:**
Partner with state or local governments to help students access loan repayment assistance for rural practice.



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3. Create Financial/Structural Support



RLOP (Rural Law Opportunities Program)

- Four rural colleges in Nebraska identify Students who seek to attend law school and return to rural Nebraska
- Those who are accepted into the program receive **FREE undergraduate tuition** and automatic admission to UNL with basic LSAT/GPA

Rural Practice Loan Repayment Assistance Fund

- Created in 2008. Not funded until 2014.
- All NE rural attorneys in counties designated as underserved are eligible.
- Up to \$6,000 awarded to rural attorneys toward loan principal each year eligible



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**Cultivating alumni &
donors to participate and
engaging elected
officials.**



Alumni development for jobs and funding

Alumni Cultivation Challenges

- Far away
- Limited jobs
- Limited ROI for development team
- Lack of faculty interest in rural issues

Alumni Cultivation Response

- Make the time – it will be recognized
- Every job is a job, and if you do not find them you cannot fill them
- You can be the bridge to whole new set of donors that are often undervalued
- You can step into the gap, offering CLE and encouraging faculty to join you once you have started



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Elected official development cultivation



Elected Official Cultivation Challenges

- Universities seen as remote
- View higher education as a cost center not a value center
- Feel distant from those who teach and attend

Elected Official Cultivation Response

- Engaging communities makes them into friends and neighbors
- Actively working to place grads in rural areas makes case for higher education as a resource, not a burden
- Personal one-to-one connections matter, and can override cultural, political, or social differences



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How to do it? Make it a big deal!

- 
- Invest in a program, and repeat it year on year
 - Make it fun
 - Celebrate rural jobs, do not just fill them
 - Visit, just to say high and not ask for anything in return
 - Involve the whole community



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