

BarLeader

WEEKLY

ABA

FROM THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION FOR THE LEADERS OF BAR ASSOCIATIONS

Issue 348 | August 2, 2023

Plentiful Work, but Fewer Practitioners Vex Rural Bars

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Practicing law—try that in a small town. In Somerset, Pennsylvania, a town of about 6,000, there's plenty of work for attorneys, but the dearth of new practitioners has some local attorneys concerned. Local bar association membership has declined approximately 20 percent since 2010 in the town about 60 miles southeast of Pittsburgh. Some of the causes mirror national trends: declining population in rural areas, fewer law school graduates, and rural "brain drain." However, the professional benefits of working away from big cities aren't always well-advertised: new lawyers gain experience quickly, bar members are cordial, and there is ample opportunity to make a good living. [New Castle News](#) reports on the subject and how experienced lawyers are working to attract new talent to their towns.

Incivility Could Cost Lawyers in California

Incivility could be a cause for discipline under a new proposal from the State Bar of California. While new lawyers have been required to take a civility oath since 2014, lawyers admitted before then did not have the same requirement. The new proposal would require all attorneys to take the oath annually, and it would amend the rules of professional conduct to note that lawyers could face discipline for, "significantly unprofessional conduct that is abusive or harassing." [The ABA Journal](#) has more on the proposal.

Online Court Gets Approved in Florida

A recommendation for an "online court" from a Florida Bar taskforce has been greenlit by the Florida Supreme Court. The Court has authorized judicial circuits to implement pilot programs for resolving small claims cases completely online. Participation in the program would be voluntary and litigants would be able to opt out. The proposal originally intended to serve litigants with disputes of less than \$1,000, but that proved to be too logistically challenging. The ensuing recommendation is much broader and encourages use of ODR platforms. Read more about the proposal at [The Florida Bar](#) website.

How CEOs Can Encourage, Enable, and Embrace Innovation

Innovation doesn't just happen. According to associations expert Mary Byers, CEOs play a pivotal role in empowering their board to innovate. Leaders must provide a well-defined strategy that can be passed from one board to the next, allow for experimentation, and provide the necessary resources to try new things. [AssociationsNow](#) provides a guide on how association leaders can create an infrastructure for innovation.



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