

[Looking for a Place to Practice With No Competition? Head to the Country](#)

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by **[Stephen Fairley](#)**

A [New York Times article](#) earlier this week focused on something many lawyers are looking for: a place to practice with virtually no competition. That place is rural America.

According to the article, nearly one-fifth of Americans live in rural areas, but less than two percent of law practices are located there. In Bennett County, S.D., Fred Cozad, the lone lawyer that has been serving this county seat for 64 years, is retiring. When he does, the nearest lawyer will be 120 miles away. Last month, South Dakota became the first state to pass a law to incentivize attorneys to practice in rural areas, offering an annual subsidy similar to the ones healthcare providers have enjoyed for years.



Cozad says there is plenty of work and opportunity for lawyers in Bennett County. The county and the city of Martin have to bring in lawyers to handle municipal legal matters, further taxing already slim budgets.

Thomas Barnett, executive director of the State Bar of South Dakota, says that opportunities for highly varied legal work is especially great in rural areas, where help is needed for everything from land law to estate planning to contract law to family law.

The new law designed to attract lawyers to rural areas in South Dakota goes into effect in June, and includes a \$12,000 annual subsidy. A five-year commitment is required, and the pilot program hopes to attract at least 16 participants.

Of course, South Dakota is not the only state facing this problem. If the thought of 6-month winters depresses you, there are other more temperate states with underserved rural areas, including Georgia, Arizona and Texas. If this has piqued your interest, check with your state bar; several have programs already in place to seed attorneys into rural areas.

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Stephen is the CEO of The Rainmaker Institute, the nation's largest law firm marketing company specializing in lead conversion for small law firms and solo practitioners. Over 9,000 attorneys nationwide have benefited from learning and implementing the proven marketing and lead conversion strategies taught by The Rainmaker Institute, LLC.

He works exclusively with attorneys and partners at small and solo law firms to find new clients fast using online and offline legal marketing strategies and to convert more prospects into paying clients using automated marketing and by fixing their follow up systems.

Stephen is a nationally recognized law firm marketing expert and the international best-selling author of 12 books and 10 audio and video training programs.

He is a Registered Corporate Coach (RCC) through the Worldwide Association of Business Coaches, has a Master’s degree in Counseling and a second Master’s in Clinical Psychology. Stephen’s doctoral training is from Wheaton College (IL) in Clinical Psychology and he practiced as a therapist for several years in Virginia and Chicago. After leaving the field of clinical psychology Stephen founded and ran two technology companies, one in the restaurant industry and another in the health sciences field prior to launching Today's Leadership Coaching, LLC, a Chicago-based professional business coaching and consulting firm.





The Rainmaker Institute, LLC grew directly out of his experiences first speaking to, then coaching, consulting with, and training attorneys.

Stephen's work has been noted and quoted in the American Bar Association's Journal, Entrepreneur, Inc., Fortune Small Business, Harvard Management Update, Business Advisor, the Chicago Tribune, Crain's Chicago Business, and on the front covers of AdvantEdge and Choice magazines. He is a member of the prestigious National Speaker's Association and his Rainmaker seminars are sponsored several times every year by some of the largest state and local bar associations in the country.

On a personal note, Stephen loves to travel and has been to 33 countries. He enjoys boating, fishing and his two Bichon Frise dogs, is married to his college sweetheart, Ruth, and loves living in the desert just outside of Phoenix, Arizona.

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