

'No Place Brings Solo and Small Firms Together Like This'

The author, this year's Solo & Small Firm Conference chair, explores why so many lawyers return to the conference every year.

BY ERIN R. OGDEN

Wisconsin is home to nearly 2,500 solo practitioners. Nearly 3,000 other attorneys work at firms with 10 attorneys or fewer. That means more than 60% of lawyers working in Wisconsin law firms are solo or small firm attorneys.

For decades, the Wisconsin Solo & Small Firm Conference (WSSFC) has been a gathering place for lawyers across the state. This year, Oct. 16-18 at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells, attorneys will once again gather to share stories, discuss pain points, reconnect with colleagues, and meet new ones. They'll also have a chance to talk with exhibitors offering technology, practice management, and other tools to create efficiencies for their firms.

Why do many solo and small firm lawyers come back to WSSFC every year? "Because no place brings solo and small firm lawyers together like this," said Erin Ogden, this year's conference chair and a longtime attendee. "We are all dealing with many of the same challenges. Every year, we get to help each other find solutions."

In a Q&A format, Ogden expands on the benefits of WSSFC to solo and small firm attorneys in Wisconsin and those coming from out of state.

This is a multiday event. How do I justify the time away from my practice?

I look at it the other way. How do I justify not attending? With practice management, quality of life and ethics, and technology CLE tracks, I get ideas that I can implement immediately as well as ones to work toward, all in just two days away from work.

I've never been to WSSFC. Why would I start now?

The future is rarely less busy or complex. We have some great presentations this year – from how to use artificial intelligence in real life to maintaining boundaries to succession planning.

What is your favorite thing about WSSFC?

Connecting with new people and reconnecting with those we see every year. We get to exchange ideas and build trusted relationships, ones that we use throughout the year for those times when "I just need that one person." And I know that person!

What kinds of CLE can I get at WSSFC?

That's the great part – all kinds! But most importantly, we have practical sessions that come from suggestions and experience from Wisconsin solo and small firm owners saying, "This is what I need."

It's Not Too Late to Register

When: Oct. 16-18, 2025

Where: Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells

Schedule and Register: wisbar.org/wssfc

Is WSSFC fun?

I have found that it is what you want it to be. We use it as a firm event. Everyone at our firm, staff and lawyers, come, and we use it as a chance to talk to each other not about work. We take advantage of the dine-arounds and other events to build connections with other attendees. It can be as low-key or as jam-packed as I want. I've stayed up too late, and I've gone to bed early. It's built to let attendees choose the experience they need. **WL**



Erin R. Ogden, Chicago-Kent 2003, is a partner at Odgen Glazer + Schaefer in Madison. She is a member of the State Bar of Wisconsin's Business Law, Intellectual Property & Technology Law, and Solo Small Firm & General Practice sections and the Continuing Legal Education Committee. She is also the 2025 WSSFC chair. Access the digital article at www.wisbar.org/wl.

erogden@ogs.law