

# Transitioning In and Out of Government Service

Andrew Dornburg  
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# Entering Government Service

## What Can I Expect?

- Steady and endless work
- Independence in day-to-day activities
- Opportunities to learn more about other parts of the law

# Winding Down a Private Practice

## “Considerations When Closing Your Law Practice”

- February 2013 Bar Journal
- No new work
- Conclude representation
- Pay yourself earned fees and distribute unearned fees.
- Final bills.
- Handle files
- Complete substitutions.

# Winding Down Your Practice

## What to do???

- DON'T REINVENT THE WHEEL
  - There are always people that have done what you are doing now.
  - Find them and talk to them!!!
  - Dodging landmines and pitfalls
- Clients
  - Remember that they come first and they chose you!



# Winding Down Your Practice

What to do???

- Unforeseen Happenings
  - THEY WILL COME.
  - Leave some money in your office account to handle any business expenses that come after your close.
  - Keep your mailbox open.
- YOU HAVEN'T THOUGHT OF EVERYTHING

# Transitioning Out of Government Service

## Joining an Established Law Firm/Office

- Transition will be simpler than it will be to a sole practitioner's office.
- People will be there to help you with that transition.
- The Billable Hour System

# Transitioning Out of Government Service

## What to Expect?

- Your work ratios are different.
  - ADA – 85% Attorney, 10% Politician, 5% Social Worker
  - Sole Practitioner – 20% Attorney, 25% Politician, 25% Social Worker, 20% Office Manager, 10% Marketer

# Transitioning Out of Government Service

## What to Expect?

- Chaos
  - Any given day, you will be:
    - In court
    - Evaluating new cases
    - Meeting with clients
    - Processing all your paperwork
    - Keeping up your accounting
- You have to change your mindset.



# Transitioning Out of Government Service

## What to Expect?

- You will not know how much income you will bring home at the end of the month.
- You will not know exactly how much your expenses will be at the end of the month.
- Budgeting and planning will not just be important. It will be absolutely necessary.

# Transitioning Out of Government Service

## What to Expect?

- It will be all you (at the beginning).
- You will be tasked with not only keeping your clients serviced, but also with keeping your business maintained.
- You will also have to choose exactly what kind of law you want to practice, and where you want to practice it.

# Transitioning Out of Government Service

## What to Expect?

- It's also very exciting!
- Always something new to handle or address.
- While you don't know how much you'll make, the potential for earning will always be higher in the public sector.
- Again, it's all you! (But in a good way)

# Transitioning Out of Government Service

## Things to Do If You're Starting Your Own Office

- Find a Mentor
  - Find several.
  - No single mentor will have all the answers.
  - However, they all will have done this before.
  - DON'T REINVENT THE WHEEL
- Get Involved in Local Groups



# Transitioning Out of Government Service

## Things to Do If You're Starting Your Own Office

- Purchase your own equipment
- Market the law firm
- Make payroll
- Decide on office space
  - Do you need it?
  - How much do you need?

# Transitioning Out of Government Service

## Things to Do If You're Starting Your Own Office

- Use the Law Practice Management Program
  - [www.texaslawpracticemanagement.com](http://www.texaslawpracticemanagement.com)
- Ten Minute Mentor
  - [www.texasbarcle.com/CLE/TYLA/Home.asp](http://www.texasbarcle.com/CLE/TYLA/Home.asp)
- Office in a Flash
  - [www.tyla.org/tyla/assets/Flash/officeinaflash.html](http://www.tyla.org/tyla/assets/Flash/officeinaflash.html)

# Transitioning Out of Government Service

Remember – You're Now a Businessman!!

- There are arguments you can't make.
  - Client won't pay for them
  - Client wants to take another avenue.
- You are limited on how long you can take on a project.
- You are ALWAYS on display.

# Questions???

- [adornburg@dornburglaw.com](mailto:adornburg@dornburglaw.com)