Checklist for Starting a Law Practice

Prepare a Business Plan

1. Executive Summary
   a. Mission Statement
   b. Description of Law Firm
   c. Firm Goals and Strategy
   d. Practice Areas
   e. Pro Bono Activity
   f. Financing Requirements

2. Firm’s Description
   a. Name & Ownership
   b. Decision Making and Operation

3. Marketing Strategy
   a. Target Market
   b. Budget
   c. Local Economy
   d. Marketing Plan
   e. Current and Potential Clients
   f. Competition

4. Firm Economics
   a. Start-up Costs
   b. Billing Projections
   c. Expenses
   d. Overhead Review

5. Financial Plan
   a. Budget
   b. Financing Sources
   c. Break-even Analysis
   d. Financial Projections

Choose the Entity & Know Why

1. Sole Proprietorship
2. General Partnership
3. Limited Liability Partnership
4. Professional Service Corporation/Professional Association
5. Professional Limited Liability Company

Office Space Considerations

1. Geographic Location
2. Competition/Cooperation
3. Size
4. Home Office
5. Office Services Suite
6. Space Sharing
7. Lease/Ownership

Accounting

1. Meet with CPA or bookkeeper

Open Bank and Trust Accounts

1. Operating Account
2. IOLTA (DC mandatory)
3. Non-IOLTA Trust Account

Secure Technology

1. Secure Software
   a. Word Processing
   b. Time and Billing
   c. Conflicts Checking
   d. Case Management
   e. Accounting System

2. Secure Hardware
   a. Telephone
   b. Computer
   c. Printer
   d. Scanner
   e. Copier
   f. Fax Machine/eFax

3. Secure Internet
   a. Internet Service Provider
   b. High Speed Internet, Cable vs. DSL

4. Legal Research
   a. Fast case, Westlaw, Lexis-Nexis, Case maker
   b. Free/low cost services

Office Equipment, Services and Supplies

1. Postage Provider & Meter
2. Furniture
3. Telephone System
4. Business Cards & Announcements
5. Office Supplies
6. D.C. Bar Member Benefits for the small firm

Insurance

1. Professional Liability
2. Workers’ Compensation
3. Health Insurance
4. Property, Casualty & Cyber Insurance