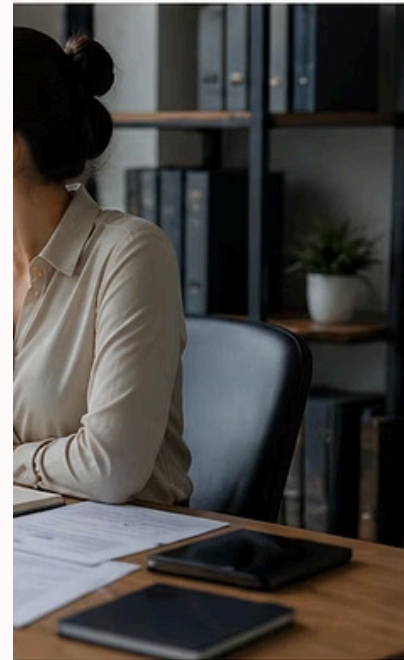
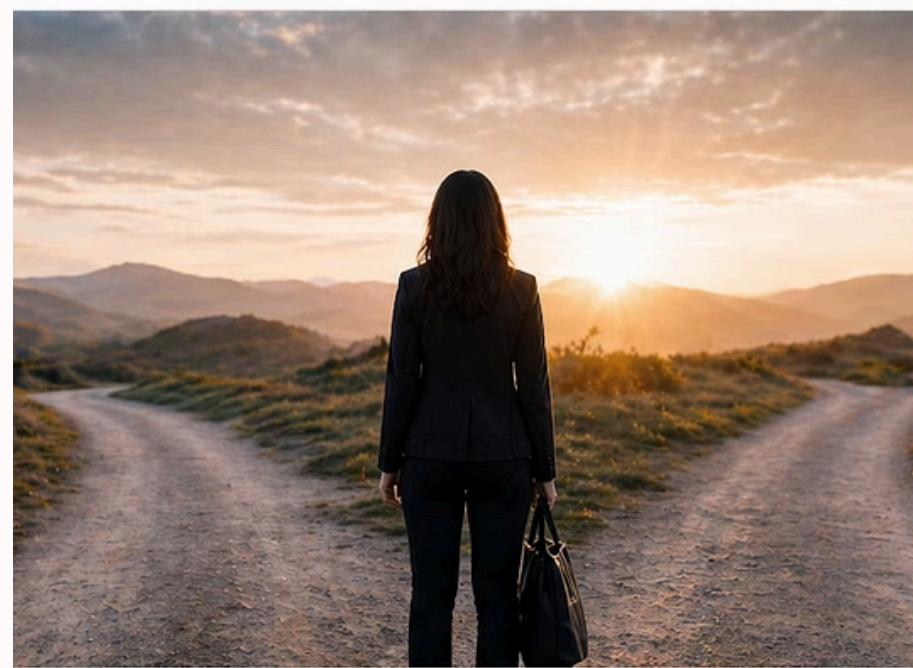


April 2026

Navigating What's Next

Where Lawyers Get Stuck, What Helps, and What to Do Now

D.C. Bar Practice Management Advisory Service · D.C. Bar Lawyer Assistance Program



Why We're Here

Last year, many lawyers joined us to discuss transitions from government to private practice. Since then, we checked back in.

Transitioned

Made the move

Still Considering

Weighing options

Started Firms

Launched solo

Joined Firms

Found a new home

Staying Put

For now

📌 There is no single path.

What We Heard Most Often

Common concerns from lawyers considering a transition — if any of these sound familiar, **you are not alone.**



Income & Benefits

Loss of steady salary, retirement, and benefits



Getting Clients

How to find work and market transferable skills



Isolation

Lack of structure, community, and daily routine



Uncertainty

Not knowing what the next chapter looks like

First Reality Check

You do not need one perfect plan.

1

Smaller Moves

2

Imperfect First Steps

3

Trial & Adjustment

4

Relationships

5

Momentum Over Time

Where Lawyers Often Get Stuck

Waiting for the perfect conditions is the most common trap. Clarity rarely arrives before movement begins.

"I need clarity first."

"I need the right opportunity first."

"I need to know exactly what I'm doing."

"I need to feel ready."

 In reality, clarity often comes **after** movement begins — not before.

There Is No Single Successful Model



Solo Practice

Launching your own firm



Plaintiff-Side Firm

Joining an established practice



Virtual Firm

Remote, flexible structure



Contract / Counsel

Flexible project-based roles

Different paths can work. The right one depends on what you need.

If You're Still Considering a Move

Focus on information that actually matters — speculation is not planning.

i Take conversations seriously. Real information beats speculation.

→ **What work do I actually want?**

→ **What income do I realistically need?**

→ **What experience do I have that is valuable?**

→ **What setting fits me best?**



If You Recently Transitioned

Early friction is normal — it doesn't mean the move was wrong.

Admin Setup

New systems, new workflows

Marketing Discomfort

Visibility feels unfamiliar

Revenue Gaps

Income takes time to stabilize

Identity Shift

New confidence takes time to build

✔ Transitions are real. Friction in the first year is expected, not a warning sign.

If You Started Your Own Firm

Perfection can wait. Focus on what moves the business forward first.



Revenue First

Prioritize billing and cash flow above everything else



Clear Services

Define what you offer and who you serve



Efficient Systems

Build a repeatable intake and workflow process



Weekly Business Development Habits

Consistent outreach beats occasional bursts

Transferable Skills from Government Practice

Many lawyers **underestimate** what they bring to the private market.



Judgment



Writing



Investigations



Negotiation



Litigation



Regulatory Knowledge



Credibility



Process Discipline

✔ These skills have real market value. Don't discount them.

What Business Development Is NOT

- Becoming a salesperson
- Aggressive self-promotion
- Pretending to be someone else

What Business Development Usually Means


- Staying in touch
- Being visible and helpful
- Following up consistently
- Building trust over time

What Business Development Actually Means

The Networking Reality

Opportunities usually come through people — not job boards.

- Talk to lawyers in fields of interest**
- Attend events and reconnect with contacts**
- Let people know what you do**
- Ask thoughtful questions — be consistent**

 No one can do this part for you.



Structure Matters More Than Motivation

Especially for solos and remote lawyers — a weekly rhythm reduces stress and keeps momentum going.



One Step This Month

Small steps count. Pick one and do it this week.

1

Meet one lawyer

In a field that interests you

2

Attend one bar event

Show up and introduce yourself

3

Update LinkedIn

Make your profile reflect your direction

4

Reach out to three contacts

A simple check-in goes a long way

5

Research solo costs

Get real numbers on what it takes

6

Explore contract roles

Flexible work that builds experience

What PMAS and LAP Can Help With

Free and confidential resources available to all D.C. Bar members.

Practice Management Advisory Service

- Law Firm setup
- Fee agreements and trust accounting
- Marketing
- Business planning

pmas@dcbar.org

Lawyer Assistance Program

- Stress and burnout support
- Career transition guidance
- Wellbeing and mental health
- Confidential peer support

lap@dcbar.org

✓ Both services are **free and confidential** — no referral needed.

Closing Thought

You may not feel fully ready before making a move. But you can become more ready through action.

Waiting for certainty is a strategy too — but it is rarely the fastest path forward.



Discussion & Q&A

What stage are you in right now?

1 – Considering

Thinking about a move

2 – Transitioning Now

In the middle of it

3 – Recently Transitioned

Adjusting to the new reality

4 – Staying Put

But still exploring options

What would help most next?