

Navigating What's Next :

A Candid Conversation for Government Lawyers Considering Private Practice

Presented by The D.C. Bar's
Practice Management Advisory Service (PMAS) &
Lawyer Assistance Program (LAP)

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Welcome & Program Overview

Normalize the Transition

Understand that many government attorneys successfully make this shift every year —you're in good company.

Address Emotional Shifts

Explore the identity changes and emotional adjustments that come with leaving public service.

Offer Practical Steps

Provide concrete action items to help you navigate the business side of legal practice.

Connect With Support

Introduce you to free resources available to help you through this transition.

Meet Your Facilitators



Kaitlin McGee

Practice Management Advisor (PMAS)

Kaitlin helps lawyers start, grow, and manage law firms in D.C.



Sharon Greenbaum, LICSW

Senior Counselor (LAP)

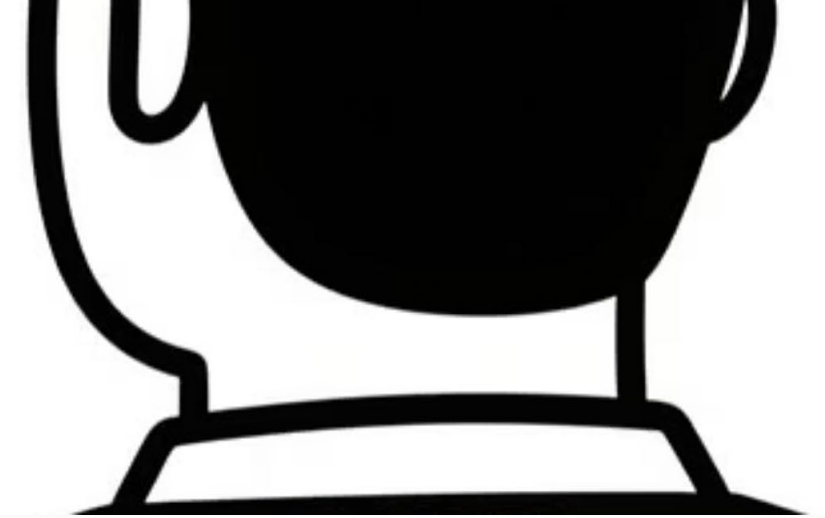
Sharon specializes in supporting lawyers through career transitions and managing the emotional aspects of change.

You're Not Behind

More lawyers are leaving government right now than ever before —some by choice, some not.



- You're part of a significant trend, not an outlier
- Private practice success isn't limited to extroverts or natural risk-takers
- This is a process with defined steps, not a cliff to jump off
- Resources are available every step of the way



Identity Shift & Grief

Leaving a government role means navigating significant personal and professional changes.

Loss of Structure

The predictable framework of government work —title, mission, and daily routines —suddenly changes.

Identity Questions

Your professional identity has been shaped by public service. Who are you as a lawyer outside that context?

Feeling Unmoored

Without institutional backing, you may feel adrift or uncertain about your professional value.

Grief is Normal

These feelings represent a form of grief that deserves acknowledgment and processing time.

Fear & Imposter Syndrome

"I've never had to market. What if no one hires me?"

These fears are universal among transitioning government attorneys:

- Doubt about market value outside government
- Perfectionism preventing action
- Fear of public visibility after working "behind the scenes"
- Worry about learning business skills alongside legal practice

Remember: Your legal expertise didn't develop overnight. Business skills follow the same learning curve—progress comes with practice and support.



From Legal Job to Legal Business

You're not just practicing law anymore

—you're building a business.

■ Mindset Shift

From employee thinking to owner thinking — decisions, responsibility, and vision are now yours.

■ Problem -Solving+

You'll package, price, and deliver your legal expertise in a market -responsive way.

■ Learnable Skills

Business acumen develops with practice, just like legal expertise did during your government career.



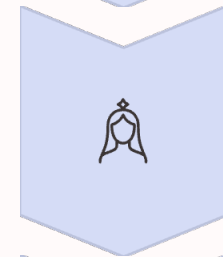
Narrow Your Focus (Not Your Options)

If you're overwhelmed by choices, start with these foundational steps:



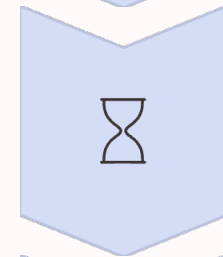
Define Who You Serve

Identify specific client groups whose problems you're uniquely qualified to solve based on your government experience.



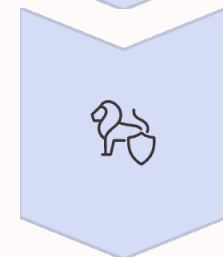
Ideal Client Exercise

Create a detailed profile of your perfect client —their problems, goals, and what they value in legal services.



Start With One Thing

Choose a single service offering to master first —you can expand your practice areas as you grow.



Build From Strengths

Leverage your unique government experience and institutional knowledge as market differentiators.

Remember: Focus creates clarity. You can always expand later.

What to Work on First



- **Business Plan**

A simple roadmap for your first 6 - 12 months with clear goals and success metrics.

- **Intake Process**

A systematic way to evaluate potential clients and cases that align with your focus.

- **Messaging + Marketing**

Clear communication about who you help and how, delivered through 1 - 2 primary channels.

- **Fee Structure**

Transparent pricing that reflects your value while remaining accessible to your target clients.

- **Trust Account + Banking**

Proper financial infrastructure that maintains compliance and business stability.

- **Basic Technology**

Essential tools for client communication, scheduling, and case management.

PMAS is here to help with these steps. We are free and confidential.

Progress > Perfection

The most successful solo attorneys focus on **progress, not perfection**. You don't need:

- The perfect website or logo
- A completely refined niche
- All the answers before you begin

What you *do* need is a **process** and a way to gather **feedback** as you build your practice. The polish comes with time and experience.



You're Not Actually Solo

What new independent lawyers miss most about traditional practice:

Built -in Colleagues

The casual hallway conversations where problems get solved and ideas are born

Support with Hard Cases

Having experienced attorneys to consult with when facing complex legal challenges

Regular Feedback

Structured and informal input on your work and professional development

Someone to Talk To

A trusted colleague who understands when you're stuck or facing ethical dilemmas

Building Your New Support System

Join Peer Groups

Connect with masterminds, networks, and practice area groups to share knowledge and resources

Schedule Regular Check -ins

Set up recurring coffee dates or virtual meetings with other solo practitioners

Leverage LAP Support Groups

Participate in structured groups designed specifically for attorneys facing similar challenges

Consult with PMAS

Take advantage of free and confidential practice management advice from experienced attorneys

The strongest solo practices are built on robust professional networks and support systems.



Where to Start: PMAS + LAP

PMAS

(Practice Management Advisory Service)

- Basic Training & Beyond workshops
- One - on - one consultations on practice issues
- Templates, forms, and technology tools
- Incubator program for new solos

LAP

(Lawyer Assistance Program)

- Confidential counseling services
- Peer support groups
- Mental health resources and referrals
- Work - life balance guidance

Final Thoughts & Contact Info

You're not behind. You don't have to be fearless —just **curious** . Start with what you know and build from there.

Remember to reach out when you need help:

Kaitlin McGee | PMAS@dcbar.org

Sharon Greenbaum | LAP@dcbar.org

Questions?

