

## **OTHER STEPS THAT PAY OFF**

You can take a number of steps while you are still practicing to make the process of closing your office smooth and inexpensive. These steps include (1) making sure that your office procedures manual explains how to produce a list of client names and addresses for open files, (2) keeping all deadlines and follow-up dates on your calendaring system, (3) thoroughly documenting client files, (4) keeping your time and billing records up-to-date, (5) familiarizing your Assisting Attorney and/or Authorized Signer with your office systems, (6) renewing your written agreement with the Assisting Attorney and/or Authorized Signer each year, and (7) making sure you do not keep clients' original documents, such as wills or other estate plans. (See *Checklist for Lawyers Planning to Protect Clients' Interests in the Event of the Lawyer's Death, Disability, Impairment, or Incapacity* provided in Chapter 3 of this handbook.)

If your office is in good order, the Assisting Attorney will not have to charge more than a minimum of fees for closing the practice. Your law office will then be an asset that can be sold and the proceeds remitted to you or your estate. An organized law practice is a valuable asset. In contrast, a disorganized practice requires a large investment of time and money and is less marketable.