Time and Billing Checklist

- Put your fee agreement in writing, and explain how expenses will be paid. Consider adding in the letter that withdrawal may occur for nonpayment.
- Consider a cloud service for tracking time and billing.

Tracking Time

- Track all time, even if time is unbilled later.
  - Whether hourly, contingent, shared fee arrangement or retainer, record your time.
- Record contemporaneously, if possible.
  - Use mobile apps to capture time on the run.
- If unable to record time contemporaneously, email yourself time entries.
- Include complete description of services rendered.
- Get a thesaurus.
- Develop time entry vocabulary.
  - Avoid saying "research," consider analyzing instead.
- Tell a story of your service through time entries.
- Avoid billing large amounts of time with long narratives.
- Don't charge for clerical time, five minute phone calls or calls about your bill.
- Avoid abbreviations and legalese.
- Document everything – best evidence in the event of a dispute.

Billing

- Bill regularly and accurately (not three months after work performed).
- Consider sending bill before trial or mediation to foster productive settlement discussion.
- Keep accurate records about expenses and costs (filing fees, expert witness fees, mailing costs, deposition costs, etc.)
- Account to client regularly regarding funds in trust.
- Resolve slow or no payment quickly.
  - If you need to part ways for nonpayment, do so before bill gets too high.
- Send bill to the right person.
- Don't charge for inquiries regarding your bill.
- Consider not charging for copies or messenger services.
- Don't send a bill when client is unaware that you have done anything in the case.
- Consider discounted bills when appropriate, indicating value of the services that you are discounting or comping.
- Put a due date on your bill.
- Consider LSBA Fee Dispute Arbitration program to resolve disputes about fees.