



## Chandra Apperson, Attorney at Law

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Chandra Apperson not only has deep roots in Mendocino County, she is also heir to family traditions of self-employment and community service. Her father owns and runs Apperson Energy Management and her mother is CFO at the Mendocino Youth Project.

After a decade away from the County pursuing an education and working as an EMT Chandra has returned and “hung out her shingle” as a licensed attorney at law, focusing on consumer bankruptcy assistance.

When asked as a three-year-old what she wanted to be “when she grew up,” Chandra is said to have responded that she wanted to “carry a briefcase and wear high heels.” But this graduate of Deep Valley Christian School and Ukiah High eventually displayed a more serious interest in her future profession, majoring in Human Communications with an emphasis in Pre-Law at CSU Monterey Bay. Completing this course of study in three years and graduating magna cum laude with distinction, Chandra decided she could use a little seasoning before entering law school and spent two years as a 911 Emergency Medical Technician.

Chandra continued working in the emergency medical field as both an EMT and dispatcher while pursuing her legal education. She graduated third in her class at Monterey College and passed the State Bar Exam in 2007. After graduation, Chandra worked for a non-profit organization providing legal services to victims of domestic violence. Now, with a husband and child, Chandra has returned to Mendocino County and opened her law practice.

Why practice in the Bankruptcy field? First there is that family tradition of helping others. Also, Chandra feels that she has a special knack for uncovering the details of a financial mess and organizing those details into a coherent

application for relief. She thrives on this challenge and the fact that the process is finite, with a relatively rapid resolution. Finally, there is a shortage of Bankruptcy attorneys with offices in the County. Chandra is probably the only one in Ukiah, where she will see clients on evenings or weekends and, even, in their homes.

Trying to decide whether to incorporate her newly formed business led Chandra to West Company, where she discovered that there a lot of other issues with which they could help. West Company Chief Operations Officer Loyd Hambrick took the time to help Chandra learn the use of accounting software in order to free up more time for marketing and lawyering.

"Devote equal time to all aspects of the business," advised Hambrick. "Don't spend too much time focusing on any one aspect, because the others will fall apart around you."

Although professions such as law and medicine are not always viewed as "businesses," Chandra has learned that planning and marketing are extremely important if she is to succeed. She confesses to not having a formal business plan as yet, but she has put a great deal of serious thought into what she needs to do to succeed. West Company has given her some of tools and equally important, the encouragement to help her reach her goals.

"I got the uplifting "You can do it, the beginning is always rough" speech one day when I was absolutely ready to throw in the towel," says Chandra. "I am blessed to have the incredible support of my parents and husband. But I am also grateful for the help of West Company and I am proud to have their support."

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West Company/Mendocino SBDC/Women's Business Center have offices in Ukiah (631 S. Orchard St., 462-5931) and Ft. Bragg (760B Stewart Street, 964-7571) and a website at [www.westcompany.org](http://www.westcompany.org). Kathy Brigham is a member of the West Company Board of Directors.

By Kathy Brigham