

Filing an Unauthorized Practice of Law (UPL) Complaint

If you feel that you have been the victim of fraud by someone who offered or provided you legal assistance but is not authorized to practice law, please file a complaint with the State Bar. Filing a complaint helps the State Bar stop legal services fraud and may prevent others from becoming victims of fraud. You do not have to be a U.S. citizen and there is no charge to file a complaint.



FILING

Submit your complaint online or by mail or fax. Include any documents that support your claim.



REVIEW

*Time required:
At least three weeks;
up to 60 days.*

An attorney will review your complaint to determine if it warrants investigation. During this review, you may be contacted for additional information.

NO

If your complaint DOES NOT indicate UPL, the State Bar will send you a letter explaining why your complaint is being closed.

YES



INVESTIGATION

If your complaint DOES indicate UPL, the State Bar will investigate it. You will be notified about the attorney and investigator assigned to your complaint.

NO

If the investigation DOES NOT indicate UPL, the State Bar will send you a letter explaining why your complaint is being closed.

YES



ACTION

If the investigation DOES indicate UPL, the State Bar may issue a notice to the individual to cease and desist engaging in UPL.

The State Bar may ask the Superior Court to assume jurisdiction over the nonattorney's office. This will allow the State Bar to shut down the nonattorney's unlawful practice and seize all client files and funds, which will be returned to the appropriate clients.

PLEASE NOTE

The unauthorized practice of law is criminal conduct. The State Bar refers complaints about nonattorney unauthorized practice of law to appropriate law enforcement agencies, which will decide whether to pursue criminal prosecution.

The State Bar cannot represent you on your legal matter, but it can help you find legal representation.

If you have questions about the complaint process, or want to know the status of a complaint you have filed, call the State Bar at 800-843-9053.



The State Bar
of California

[More information on UPL](#)