

HOW IS YOUR CSF REQUEST HANDLED?

How Is Your Client Security Fund Application Handled?

1 How is my Client Security Fund application processed?

The processing time for an application depends on three factors:

- Whether the lawyer has been disciplined.
- The availability of evidence to prove that you lost money due to a lawyer's dishonesty.
- How many applications were received ahead of yours.

Do not be discouraged by the amount of time required, or if you do not hear from us often. We will monitor your file on a regular basis to assure that your application remains on our active list. Should you change your address, please remember to notify us.

The processing of an application for reimbursement from the Client Security Fund is separate from the handling of any discipline complaint you may have made against the lawyer. The Client Security Fund Unit is responsible for handling your application for reimbursement; the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel is responsible for your discipline complaint. Sometimes we may both ask for the same information or copies of the same documents. Your patience and cooperation are appreciated.

2 What happens in the initial review?

The Client Security Fund reviews your application and gets in touch with you if more information is needed. Keep in mind that the more information you can provide, the faster we can process the application.

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Is discipline of the lawyer needed?

The fund can reimburse you only if a lawyer lost your money or property through an act of theft or an act equivalent to theft, and has been disciplined. So, unless the lawyer resigned from the Bar, died, or was found guilty or liable in court on charges relating to your application, you cannot be reimbursed until the lawyer is disciplined.

If the lawyer is still an active member of the State Bar, the staff will check to see if you have filed a discipline complaint against the lawyer. If you have not done so, they will send you a complaint form to complete and file.

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Who makes the decision?

The Client Security Fund Commission, composed of seven volunteers appointed by the State Bar Board of Governors, decides whether to pay your application, pay part of it, or to deny the application. The Commission has four lawyer members and three non-lawyer members.

The Commission reviews applications on a first-come, first-served basis. It considers your application, the other papers and information that you and the Client Security Fund staff have put together and the results of any disciplinary or other cases relating to your application.

After its review, the Commission issues a “Tentative Decision.” It tells you and the lawyer whether the Commission decided to pay the application and why.

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What if I disagree with the decision?

If you are dissatisfied with the Tentative Decision, you can send your written objections within 30 days to the Client Security Fund.

You must send a copy of your objection to the lawyer; his/her address is listed on the last page of the Tentative Decision, called “Proof of Service.” (The lawyer also has a right to object to the decision.)

However, if you are satisfied with the Tentative Decision, you do not need to do anything. If no one objects, the decision becomes final after 30 days.

If either you or the lawyer sends objections, the Commission will review them at one of its next meetings and issue a “Final Decision.” If you are dissatisfied with this decision, you have a right to ask your county superior court for a review. You may want a lawyer to help you with a court review. If you do not know a lawyer for this purpose, you can call a Lawyer Referral Service in your area. The services are listed on the State Bar’s website.

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How is payment made?

If you qualify for reimbursement from the fund, the State Bar issues a check approximately four weeks after the “Final Decision” takes effect. A check for more than \$10,000 is sent by certified mail. Also, if a lawyer represented you in making the application, the check will be mailed to the lawyer unless the lawyer tells the Client Security Fund office to send it directly to you.

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What if I have more questions?

If you have any questions about your application, please call or write the Client Security Fund office in Los Angeles at:

**THE STATE BAR OF CALIFORNIA
The Client Security Fund
845 South Figueroa Street
Los Angeles, CA 90017-2515
(213) 765-1140**

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Has your address changed?

Please keep us informed of your current address and phone number. If your address and/or phone number has changed since the application was filed we need to be notified in writing of the new address.

Please include the following information.

- Name on the application
- CSF case number
- New street address
- New city, state and zip code
- New area code and phone number
- Old street address
- Old city state and zip code
- Old area code and phone number

Please have all of the applicants listed on the application sign the correspondence and mail it to the Fund at the address listed above or fax it to (213) 765-1158.