

THE STATE BAR OF CALIFORNIA

# The Client Security Fund Can Help You



## 1. What is the Client Security Fund?

This is a discretionary fund that can reimburse clients who have lost money or property due to theft or dishonesty by a California lawyer. It is a State Bar program funded entirely by California lawyers.

## 2. What losses qualify?

The fund can reimburse up to \$100,000, depending on when the loss occurred. It does not reimburse a loss if the lawyer acted incompetently or failed to take a certain action.

Typical losses include:

- theft of personal injury settlement funds or other funds entrusted to the lawyer
- failure to refund fees when the lawyer performed no services
- borrowing money from a client without the intention or the ability to repay it
- obtaining money or property from a client by saying it would be used for investment purposes when no investment is made.

The fund does not reimburse interest, expenses, or incidental or consequential losses caused by the attorney, such as fees paid to another attorney or damages caused by the attorney's malpractice, negligence or incompetence. You must show that the attorney received the money or property.

## 3. Who can apply?

You do not have to be a United States citizen to apply.

Certain applicants are excluded. If you are the spouse or close relative or the lawyer's business partner, employer or employee, or a business controlled by the lawyer, the fund cannot reimburse you.

Also, the fund cannot reimburse for losses suffered by government entities or agencies.

## 4. Who decides whether an application will be paid?

The Client Security Fund Commission decides if you qualify for reimbursement and whether part or all of the application will be paid. The commission is made

up of seven volunteers – four lawyers and three non-lawyers – appointed by the bar's Board of Trustees.

## 5. How can I apply?

Application forms are available online at [www.calbar.ca.gov](http://www.calbar.ca.gov) or you may write or call:

**The State Bar of California**  
Client Security Fund  
845 S. Figueroa St.  
Los Angeles, CA 90017-2515  
213-765-1140

Filing an application is free. You do not need a lawyer to apply.

## 6. What other steps should I take?

If you have not already done so, you need to file a discipline complaint against the lawyer. The form is available online at [www.calbar.ca.gov](http://www.calbar.ca.gov) or you may write or call toll-free:

**The State Bar of California**  
Intake Unit  
845 S. Figueroa St.  
Los Angeles, CA 90017-2515  
800-843-9053

The purpose of this pamphlet is to provide general information on the law, which is subject to change. It is not legal advice. Consult a lawyer if you have a specific legal problem.

**The State Bar of California**  
Office of Communications  
180 Howard St.  
San Francisco, CA 94105-1639  
415-538-2000  
415-538-2280 (for pamphlets)  
[pamphlets@calbar.ca.gov](mailto:pamphlets@calbar.ca.gov)  
[www.calbar.ca.gov](http://www.calbar.ca.gov)

© 2015 The State Bar of California. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any medium without prior written permission.



**The State Bar of California**  
Office of Communications  
180 Howard St.  
San Francisco, CA 94105-1639

Place  
stamp  
here

CB-1001-47