



INFORMATION FOR CLIENTS OF TEXAS ATTORNEYS

The information included on this page is for educational and informational purposes only. Please consult an attorney regarding specific legal questions.

Client-Attorney Assistance Program

What is the Client-Attorney Assistance Program?

On Sept. 27, 1999, the State Bar of Texas launched the Client-Attorney Assistance Program (CAAP) as a pilot program to assist the public in resolving concerns, disputes, or misunderstandings with Texas lawyers. A year later, the State Bar approved the statewide expansion of the program. CAAP assists the public and attorneys in resolving minor problems affecting their relationship when issues do not involve cognizable misconduct under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct.

Most problems can be resolved by providing information, applying various self-help options for dealing with the situation, or contacting the attorney either on the phone or by letter. On request, CAAP will send a grievance form and can provide general information about the disciplinary process where professional misconduct appears to be involved. CAAP has fielded approximately 350,000 calls since its inception.

What kind of information does CAAP provide?

CAAP does not provide legal advice. CAAP associates can provide callers with information on the membership status or disciplinary history of individual attorneys licensed in Texas. If an attorney is licensed in another state, CAAP can provide a phone number for the state's licensing agency. Many callers contact CAAP because they don't know where else to turn for assistance. The most common referrals made through CAAP include lawyer referral services, statewide legal services, and other community resources. Members of the CAAP staff also answer frequently asked questions about the legal process.



What are some of the self-help options CAAP may suggest?

The most common reason a client contacts CAAP is because an attorney is not returning phone calls. If an attorney does not return telephone calls for extended periods of time, it is often effective to send a letter to the attorney. Written correspondence often accomplishes two important objectives:

1. Presenting the client's concerns in writing often minimizes misunderstanding about the client's questions and objectives.
2. The letter documents the communication problems that are occurring.

Many clients have successfully used a letter to request an appointment with the attorney, ask questions regarding the case, or request information. Sending the letter by certified mail also documents when

the attorney received the client's letter. Emails and faxes are also effective means of communicating client concerns.

When and how does CAAP intervene?

If an attorney does not respond to a client's efforts by telephone and written correspondence, or if the client is dissatisfied with the attorney's response, the client may request assistance from CAAP. CAAP may be contacted by telephone or the client may fill out a CAAP "Request for Assistance" form. A CAAP associate will contact the client to address the situation and provide other suggestions, strategies, or options that may be appropriate to the particular circumstances. In cases that do not involve misconduct according to the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct, a CAAP attorney will contact the attorney in an effort



to resolve the situation. CAAP makes every effort to help the client and the attorney achieve a result that is acceptable to both parties.

What if I need to file a grievance?

The disciplinary process for attorneys is the appropriate option when an attorney violates one or more of the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct. One does not need to know what rules were violated in order to file a grievance. To initiate an investigation into the attorney's alleged misconduct, a grievance against a Texas attorney must be submitted in writing to the Office of the Chief Disciplinary Counsel. CAAP pro-

vides grievance forms and information about the grievance process on request.

Is CAAP confidential?

All calls to CAAP are handled confidentially. However, if the caller files a bar complaint and the lawyer involved wants CAAP to share information about the caller's concerns with the Chief Disciplinary Counsel, CAAP will provide the information requested. Likewise, if there is a court order compelling CAAP to release information, CAAP may be required to produce the information requested.

Records created by CAAP are retained up to six months in order to assist callers

and attorneys in the dispute resolution process to the greatest extent possible. After six months, the records are destroyed, unless there are other reasons to maintain the file. ⚡

The Client-Attorney Assistance Program can be reached by phone at (800)932-1900 or (800)204-2222, Ext. 1790; by fax at (512)427-4122; by email at caap@texasbar.com; or by mail at CAAP, P.O. Box 12487, Austin, TX 78711-2487.



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