

SERVING THE PUBLIC AND THE MEMBERSHIP  
OF THE STATE BAR OF TEXAS

**— CAAP —**  
**CLIENT—ATTORNEY  
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

*WHAT IT IS AND HOW IT WORKS*



## CAAP Mission Statement:

CAAP's mission is to "facilitate communication and foster productive dialogue between Texas lawyers and their clients in an effort to assist them in resolving minor concerns, disagreements, or misunderstandings that are impacting the Attorney-Client relationship."



## Two Distinct Options

When a client contacts CAAP on the grievance helpline or in writing, CAAP explains the following two distinct options:

### **I. Dispute Resolution Process**

Clients may elect to participate in dispute resolution with their attorney-of-record in order to address concerns or requests they may have. While attorney participation in CAAP's dispute resolution process is not mandatory, our program provides a confidential alternative to the formal grievance process. Many issues regarding misunderstandings over communication and requests for client files are normally resolved using this method.

### **II. Formal Grievance Process**

Clients may release their attorney and file a grievance. A grievance form may be requested from and returned to the Chief Disciplinary Counsel's Office. Upon review of the grievance a letter will be mailed to the client indicating the status of their grievance. Please review the *Attorney Complaint Information* brochure for more details.

## Step 1

# Documenting a Client's Need

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 accomplishes two important objectives:

- (1) the attorney has the client's concerns in writing so there is no misunderstanding about the client's concerns and;
- (2) the letter documents the communication problems that are occurring.

Many clients have used these letters successfully to request an appointment with their attorney, ask questions regarding the case, request information or a copy of their file, etc. Sending letters by certified mail also documents when the attorney received the client's letter. Emails and faxes can also be effective in documenting client concerns.

## Step 2

# Requesting Assistance from CAAP

Should an attorney not respond to their client's letter, the client may contact CAAP and obtain a Request for Assistance Form (*RFA*). The client must complete the RFA and return it with a copy of the letter the client previously sent to their attorney and a copy of the signed certified receipt if available. While CAAP is here to help resolve issues between attorneys and clients, we cannot assist clients with underlying civil or criminal matters, provide legal advice, or remove, replace, or compel your attorney to take action.

## **Step 3**

### **CAAP Contacts the Attorney**

CAAP will send the client's attorney-of-record a letter reviewing the dispute resolution process and request that the attorney contact the client. A copy of the client's letter sent to the attorney will also be enclosed.

Should CAAP's initial letter be unsuccessful, CAAP will send another letter and/or place a phone call to the attorney. In most instances, issues are resolved using this method.

## **Step 4**

### **Closing the Dispute Resolution Process**

Sometimes an attorney may not respond to CAAP, or a client may determine that their attorney's response is unsatisfactory. A client can request a grievance form at the closing of the dispute resolution process. All grievances are reviewed by the Office of the Chief Disciplinary Counsel and not by CAAP.

Please keep in mind the following suggestions when preparing a written grievance:

- Prepare a timeline as a guide.
- Give information on any and all events, provide dates, facts, and explain behavior issues related to the alleged misconduct.
- Organize documents related to your grievance. Give documents reference or exhibit numbers to assist investigators in evaluating the alleged misconduct.

# Client Sample Letter

[Date]

[Attorney Name]

[Attorney Address]

RE: [Client Name]

I am writing in reference to my [type of case] case you are handling for me. I have concerns about: [list and describe your questions or concerns].

I would like the opportunity to discuss these concerns with you [in person, by phone] *or* [I would like a response in writing]. I can be reached at [your name, address, email, and telephone #].

[I look forward to hearing from you] by [reasonable date]. Thank you in advance for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

[Client Name]

**TO REACH CAAP AND THE  
GRIEVANCE INFORMATION HELPLINE CALL:**

**1-800-932-1900**

**(from anywhere in Texas or out-of-state)**



**CAAP mailing address:  
P.O. Box 12487  
Austin, TX 78711-2487  
Fax: (512) 427-4442  
[caap@texasbar.com](mailto:caap@texasbar.com)**

**[texasbar.com](http://texasbar.com)**