

# The Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection

of the State of New York

119 Washington Avenue + Albany, New York 12210

Telephone: 518/434-1935 + 800/442-FUND • Fax: 518/434-5641

www.nylawfund.org



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Dear Claimant:

Enclosed are materials to acquaint you with the Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection, and to help you file a claim for reimbursement.

You should fully complete and return the enclosed application for reimbursement. To prevent delay in processing your claim, you should send us copies of all evidence that proves your loss.

Theft by an attorney must also be reported to the District Attorney and the Attorney Grievance Committee in your area. Because our Trustees do not generally make awards of reimbursement until attorney disciplinary and criminal proceedings are completed, it is important that you report your loss and cooperate with the investigation of your complaint. Please submit copies of these complaints with your application.

If you feel you need legal help in processing your claim, you should consult an attorney. Court rules in New York State do not permit attorneys to charge legal fees for helping clients process claims with our Fund, and most attorneys will be glad to help you.

We hope very much that our Fund, which is financed by the legal profession of New York State, will be able to help you. If you have any questions, please telephone or write us.

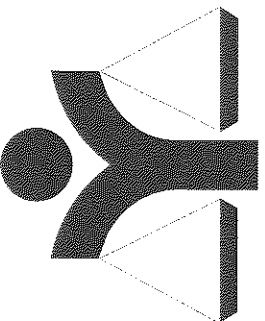
Very truly yours,

Enclosure



NY State Bar Association

# The New York State Bar Association Client Protection Fund



## Helpful Telephone Numbers

### Attorney Grievance Committees

*(For complaints of lawyer misconduct)*

Manhattan & Bronx.....	212/401-0800
Brooklyn, Staten Island, Queens....	718/923-6300
Nassau & Suffolk.....	631/231-3775
Westchester area.....	914/824-5070
Albany area.....	518/285-8350
Syracuse area.....	315/401-3344
Rochester area.....	585/530-3180
Buffalo area.....	716/845-3630

### Office of Court Administration

*(For lawyer licensing information)*

Official Register of Attorneys.....212/428-2800

### Lawyer Referral Services

Contact your local county or city bar association;  
or call the New York State Bar Association at  
800/342-3661.

### Fee Dispute Services

Contact the county bar association in the county  
or borough where the lawyer's office is located for  
information about the bar association's fee concili-  
ation committee.



## The Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection

of the State of New York

## What is the Lawyers' Fund?

The Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection was established in 1982 to provide reimbursement to law clients who have lost money or property because of a lawyer's dishonest conduct in the practice of law. The Fund is a remedy for law clients who cannot get reimbursement from the lawyer who caused the loss, or from insurance or other sources.

## Why was the Fund Established?

The legal profession depends upon the trust of clients. Very few lawyers violate that trust. Nonetheless, it's important to protect the profession's reputation for honesty, and help injured clients recover their losses.

## How is the Fund Financed?

No tax dollars are used. The Fund is financed by registration fees and contributions from more than 325,000 members of the New York bar. Since 1982, more than \$215 million in awards have been paid to eligible law clients.

## Who Administers the Fund?

A Board of Trustees appointed by the Court of Appeals, New York's high court. The seven Trustees, both lawyers and nonlawyers, serve as a public service and without compensation.

## What Losses are Covered?

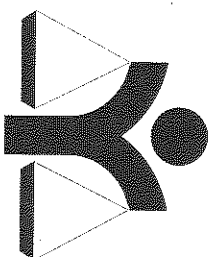
The Trustees may reimburse losses caused by the dishonest conduct of lawyers admitted to the practice of law in New York, up to a maximum of \$400,000 for each client loss.

Dishonest conduct means the wrongful taking of clients' money or other property, *in the practice of law*, after June 1, 1981. Clients must apply for reimbursement within two years after they discover their loss.

Typical losses covered by the Fund include the theft of money from estates; escrow funds in real property transactions; and settlements in personal injury actions.

The Trustees cannot discipline lawyers for professional misconduct, resolve fee disputes, or determine legal malpractice claims. Fee disputes and complaints of misconduct or malpractice should be pursued by notifying an Attorney Grievance Committee or by civil lawsuit against the lawyer.

County bar associations also have fee conciliation committees to resolve disputes over legal fees. The client should contact the county bar association in the county or borough where the lawyer's office is located.



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119 Washington Avenue ♦ Albany, NY 12210  
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E-mail: [info@nylawfund.org](mailto:info@nylawfund.org)  
Web Site: [www.nylawfund.org](http://www.nylawfund.org)

## Where Does a Client File a Claim?

Application forms and other information and help is available from the Fund's office at 119 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12210. Telephone 518/434-1935 or 800/442-FUNID. Theft by a lawyer must also be reported to the local District Attorney and Attorney Grievance Committee.

## Are there any Fees Involved?

No. The Fund charges no fees, and claimants are not required to be represented by lawyers to process claims. But, if you feel you need legal help, you should consult counsel.

Court rules in New York State do not permit lawyers to charge legal fees for helping clients process claims with the Fund.

## How are Claims Processed?

Each claim is screened to see if the loss is eligible. Ineligible claims are dismissed promptly with an explanation why the loss cannot be reimbursed. Eligible claims are investigated and reports prepared for the Trustees. The Trustees meet four times each year to evaluate claims, and determine the amount of reimbursement that will be allowed.

Losses are not generally reimbursed until disciplinary or other court proceedings involving the accused attorney have been completed. It's important, therefore, that clients cooperate fully in all official investigations involving dishonesty in the practice of law. Once a claim is approved, payment of the award follows in about six weeks.