

Locating Your Client File, Documents, or Will

If your attorney has died, closed their office, or is otherwise not able to be located, here are some suggestions for locating your client file or documents, like a will.

1. If the attorney has disappeared, check to see if the attorney has relocated:

- Check the State Bar of Texas [Find A Lawyer](#) page, input your attorney's name, and see if the attorney's address has changed. If so, contact the lawyer at the new location.
- If the information listed on the State Bar of Texas Find A Lawyer page has not changed, contact the State Bar of Texas Law Practice Management department at lpm@texasbar.com to find out if your attorney named another attorney to assume responsibility for contacting clients to return the files or client funds in the event that they became unable to practice law.
- If the attorney has not provided the State Bar of Texas with new contact information, contact the building supervisor or landlord of the attorney's office building to determine if the attorney left a forwarding address.
 - If the building supervisor or landlord does not know where the attorney is but the attorney has not moved out, ask to retrieve your file or have them retrieve your file from the attorney's office.
 - As the attorney's client, you own your file and are entitled to receive your property if it's in the attorney's former office or if the landlord has possession of the file.
- Also send a letter, certified mail return receipt requested, to the attorney's office. If the attorney has left a forwarding address with the United States Postal Service (USPS), it will be delivered to the attorney's new address. If not, it will be returned to you as undeliverable. You may need to check the USPS website for the location of the delivery.

2. If the attorney has died or become incapacitated:

- Contact the State Bar of Texas Law Practice Management department at lpm@texasbar.com to determine if your attorney named another attorney to close the office and agreed to assume responsibility for contacting clients to return the files or client funds,
- Determine who is the executor or administrator of the estate, or
- Contact the building supervisor, landlord, or other tenants in the attorney's office building.

3. If the attorney has been suspended or disbarred:

- An attorney who has been suspended or disbarred is normally ordered to notify clients and return any client files and unearned fees. If the attorney does not notify you, then follow procedures suggested in other sections of this checklist.

4. If you are unable to obtain your file or locate the attorney:

- You can file a petition in the district court in the county of the attorney's residence asking the court to assume jurisdiction over the attorney's law practice. A petition is a written request asking the court to take action.

5. **If you are looking for an original will and have not been able to locate the attorney or client file that has the will:**
 - Contact the county clerk in the county in which the person lived to see if it was recorded with the county clerk, which is allowed under Section 252.001 of the Texas Estates Code. It is not commonly done, but it is worth checking.