

BERKS COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

CLIENT DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROGRAM

Questions and Answers

Berks County Bar Association
544 Court Street
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- 1. What are the advantages of using the Berks County Bar Association Client Dispute Resolution Committee?**
 - A prompt and inexpensive resolution of your disagreement. There are no filing or other fees.
 - Use of volunteer, impartial attorneys experienced in resolving disputes.
 - No requirement to hire attorney
- 2. Who are the members of the Client Disputes Resolution Committee?**
 - All Committee members are members of the Berks County Bar Association who have volunteered to serve without compensation in assisting members of the public to fairly and properly resolve their disputes with Berks County Bar Association attorney members.
- 3. When do I have a dispute?**
 - Whenever you disagree with your attorney or former attorney about:

- The fees you have paid already; or
- The amount claimed to be due by the attorney

4. What should I do?

- If your dispute is with a member of the Berks County Bar Association, call the Association office at (610) 375-4591 to obtain a questionnaire.
- Complete this questionnaire and return it to the Berks County Bar Association office at 544 Court Street, Reading, Pennsylvania

5. How does the dispute process work?

- After you complete the questionnaire and submit to the Association, it will be determined whether the dispute qualifies for consideration by the Committee. Some disputes may not qualify, such as those that are already in Court. If it does not qualify, you will be notified. If your dispute does qualify, you will be notified by a Committee attorney who was appointed to address your dispute.
- The Committee attorney will contact you and then contact the attorney

involved separately and discuss a fair resolution with each. Hopefully, at this point, the Committee attorney can help you and the attorney resolve the dispute.

- If the dispute cannot be resolved amicably, the dispute may be submitted to binding arbitration, if both you and the attorney agree.

6. What disputes, other than fee disputes, may be brought before the Committee?

- Generally only fee disputes are considered. Issues involving ethics, or the quality of representation, cannot be decided by the Committee. There are certain other issues the Committee attorney may be helpful in resolving, depending upon the issue itself.

7. Is the Committee the only way I can resolve my dispute with my attorney?

- No. The Committee procedure is voluntary for both the client and the attorney. The client and the attorney may try to reach an agreement between themselves. They each have

the further option of using the court system.

8. Do I give up any rights by participating in the Committee process?

- No. During the mediation stage, you do not give up any rights to have the dispute resolved in Court. If, however, you agree to binding arbitration, you and the lawyer give up the right to have your case heard in the civil court system.