



FRESH START SETTLEMENT PROGRAM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the Fresh Start Settlement Program?

The Fresh Start Settlement Program is the State Bar's Offer and Compromise Program authorized by State Bar Rule 3.1000. It is a one-year program enabling the State Bar to allow current and former licensees to settle certain outstanding debt consisting of discipline costs, client security fund reimbursement, and monetary sanctions accrued prior to January 1, 2025 for less than the amount owed. The Board of Trustees determined there is good cause for this program to enhance repayment rates while mitigating the severe consequences of debt for current and former licensees. Eligible debt will be confidentiality listed within the Fresh Start Settlement Program Platform.

2. What happens if I settle through the Fresh Start Settlement Program?

You will be required to enter into a Settlement and Release of Claims Agreement with the State Bar and pay the full settlement amount either immediately in one lump sum or in installments by December 31, 2025. The State Bar will thereafter consider the eligible debt as itemized in the Fresh Start Settlement Program Platform paid in full for all purposes, including for purposes of return to active status or reinstatement to the practice of law. The State Bar will make no further effort to collect on the debt, including but not limited to, referral of debt to the Franchise Tax Board (FTB), credit reporting agencies, entry of a Superior Court money judgment, or pursuing other legal action.

3. Who can participate in the Fresh Start Settlement Program?

Disbarred, resigned, not-eligible, active, and inactive licensees with outstanding debt owed to the State Bar.

4. What specific types of debt are covered under the Fresh Start Settlement Program?

The types of eligible debt included in the Fresh Start Settlement Program are debt accrued prior to January 1, 2025, as follows:

- Disciplinary Costs awarded against you pursuant to Business and Professions Code Section 6086.10, subsection (a). These are costs ordered by the State Bar Court or Supreme Court of California.
- Monetary Sanctions awarded against you pursuant to Business and Professions Code Section 6086.13, subsection (a). These are costs ordered by the State Bar Court or Supreme Court of California.

- Client Security Fund (CSF) reimbursement, including interest and processing costs, owed by you pursuant to Business and Professions Code Section 6140.5, subsection (c).
- Superior Court money judgments entered on any of the above debt.

5. When can I access the Fresh Start Settlement Program's website?

Current and former State Bar licensees will be invited to participate in stages to ensure a smooth process. You will receive an invitation via mail and email when you are eligible. Please wait for your individualized invitation via mail and email for the website link and log-in instructions. Former licensees and suspended licensees or licensees not otherwise eligible to practice law (as of January 1, 2025) will be notified by the end of March 2025.

Licensees on active and voluntary inactive status (as of January 1, 2025) will be invited in May to have the opportunity to settle discipline costs, monetary sanctions and/or CSF reimbursements due with their annual fee renewals in 2026 and beyond. Any portion of the abovementioned debt due with your 2025 renewal fees, or otherwise due in 2025, must be paid in full in 2025, in alignment with the State Bar's Schedule of Charges and Deadlines, as a condition of continued practice. This program does not include any other type of debt owed to the State Bar, included but not limited to, past due license fees, CTAPP and/or MCLE non-compliance penalties.

6. What platform will be used for the Fresh Start Settlement Program?

The State Bar is using eConciliador to administer the Program. eConciliador is a secure online platform that helps settle claims efficiently and quickly.

7. Do I have to participate in the Fresh Start Settlement Program?

Your participation in this program is voluntary to resolve the debt that is owed to the State Bar. If you choose not to take advantage of the Fresh Start Settlement Program, the State Bar reserves all rights to pursue, or continue to pursue, any and all available legal remedies to recover the total owed debt, including without limitation reporting the debt to FTB, credit reporting agencies, entry of a Superior Court money judgment and/or pursuing legal actions.

If you were an active or voluntarily inactive licensee as of January 1, 2025 and do not participate in the Fresh Start Settlement Program, or are not able to reach a settlement, you are required to pay your outstanding discipline costs, monetary sanctions and/or Client Security Fund reimbursements as originally ordered by the Supreme Court of California, State Bar Court and/or the Client Security Fund. If you were granted an extension of time to pay costs, your extension order will still be valid.

8. How do I access the Fresh Start Settlement Program's website?

You will be sent a letter and an email, which will include the website link and your login details (your State Bar Number and a personal PIN). After logging in, you can create your own password or continue using the provided PIN.

9. What if I cannot find my PIN for the website?

Call 1-855-394-5084. They will help you recover your PIN after authenticating your identity.

10. What can I expect when I go online to the Fresh Start Settlement Program website?

You will enter your State Bar Number and PIN, and you will see how much you owe the State Bar. Click "Settlement Offer" to receive an offer to settle your debt.

11. How is the settlement offer calculated?

The offer considers several factors, including the type of debt, the licensee status of the individual, and the amount of debt.

12. How long does the settlement process take?

For most individuals, it takes less than five minutes from logging in to signing the Settlement Agreement.

13. What happens if I reject the State Bar's settlement offer?

If you reject the State Bar's settlement offer you will have the opportunity to provide feedback as to why you rejected the offer and submit a counteroffer. If your counteroffer is not accepted and you would like to return to the original State Bar offer, please email collections@calbar.ca.gov to reset your original offer.

14. Do I need to provide proof of my financial situation to receive a settlement offer?

No, you don't need to provide any financial documents to receive an offer to settle for less than what you owe. For attorneys not allowed to practice law as of January 1, 2025 and who cannot afford the settlement offer, the State Bar will ask for more information to determine if extreme financial hardship should be considered in accepting a lower settlement for collections purposes only.

15. I am not allowed to practice law as of January 1, 2025, and am experiencing extreme financial hardship, and cannot settle for the amount offered. What can I do?

If you reject the settlement offer and are experiencing extreme financial hardship, please enter an amount you would be able to pay on the feedback form or indicate in the comments that you are experiencing financial hardship. You will receive an email with a link to a questionnaire about your financial situation. All information and attachments will be kept securely and confidentially. The State Bar will review the answers in your questionnaire and email a response from eConciliador.

16. What if I want to speak to someone in person?

We want to make this process as easy as possible for you. Call 1-855-394-5084 and please have your State Bar Number ready.

17. After I sign the Settlement and Release of Claims Agreement, when do I have to pay?

You can elect to pay immediately in one lump-sum payment or choose to pay in installments. If you chose to pay in installments, full payment must be received by December 31, 2025.

18. What's the benefit of paying the settlement in one lump-sum payment?

Paying the settlement all at once entitles you to an additional five percent reduction in the amount owed.

19. If I pay in installments, are there additional fees or interest?

No, there are no additional fees or interest for choosing the installment payment option. If you opt for an installment plan of four or less payments, your monthly installments will be of equal value. If you opt for an installment plan of five or more payments, the first installment will be 25% of the settled value and subsequent installments will be of equal value.

20. How long do I have to pay?

The entire settlement must be paid by December 31, 2025. No exceptions. If you do not pay the new settlement amount by December 31, 2025, the Settlement Agreement will be terminated. You will owe the original amount of the debt (less what you have paid) and the State Bar reserves all rights to pursue, or continue to pursue, all available legal remedies to recover the total owed debt, including without limitation reporting the debt to FTB, credit reporting agencies, entry of a Superior Court money judgment and/or pursuing legal actions.

21. When can I expect my billing record to be updated once I complete the Fresh Start settlement payment?

Upon completion of your Fresh Start settlement payment, please allow two weeks for your billing record to be updated. This applies to nondisbarred and nonresigned attorneys only. Disbarred and resigned attorneys do not have active billing records.

22. What happens to my payment plan with FTB, or my garnishments through FTB, if I settle through the Fresh Start Settlement Program?

When you sign the Settlement Agreement, the State Bar will recall your debt from FTB within two weeks. Any payments already in transit from FTB to the State Bar at that time belong to the State Bar and will not be refunded to you.

23. What happens to my installment plan granted by State Bar Court, if I settle through the Fresh Start Settlement Program?

Settlements made through the Fresh Start Settlement Program will supersede any existing installment order from State Bar Court.

24. What methods of payment does the Fresh Start Settlement Program accept?

We strongly encourage online payment via credit card or ACH. All credit cards are accepted. Click on the link on the Fresh Start Settlement Program website to pay through Wells Fargo.

If for some reason you are unable to pay online, we also accept mailed check payments made payable to State Bar of California, mailed to:

State Bar of California
Attn: Collections
180 Howard St
San Francisco, CA 94105

Your check **must** include your State Bar Number in the memo line. Please do not mail a check until you have signed the settlement agreement. Please include a signed copy of your settlement agreement with your check.

25. Are there any ACH or credit card transaction fees?

No, the State Bar is covering all transaction fees.

26. Why does the State Bar report debt to the Franchise Tax Board (FTB)?

The State Bar is authorized to participate in the FTB tax intercept program pursuant to Business and Professions Code section 6034. Section 6304 provides that the State Bar is authorized to participate in this program for the “collection of any unpaid amount owed to the State Bar of California, including any fine, penalty, assessment, cost, or reimbursement imposed under sections 6806.10, 6140.5c, and any other applicable law.”

- Under this program, FTB collects money from tax, refunds, lottery winnings, or unclaimed property. Additional information can be found on the [FTB’s webpage about the interagency intercept program](#).

The State Bar is also authorized to participate in the FTB Court Ordered Debt program pursuant to Revenue and Taxation Code section 19280 (as revised in January 2019). Revenue and Taxation Code section 19280 provides that the State Bar is authorized to participate in this program for “any amounts due pursuant to Section 6086.10 or 6140.5 of the Business and Professions Code.”

- Under this program, FTB collects money from sources such as wage garnishment and bank levies. Additional information can be found on the [FTB's webpage about the Court Ordered Debt program](#).

27. Why is there interest included in my total debt balance?

Business and Professions Code section 6140.5 authorizes the State Bar to collect interest on CSF payments due. The interest rate is approved annually by the Board of Trustees (CSF Rule 3.45), and has been set at 10 percent per year, calculated from the date of disbursement. Judgments with underlying CSF debt also accrue interest on the CSF payments at the same rate.

28. I have settled or plan to settle debt from a judgment. Will the State Bar file an Acknowledgment of Satisfaction of Judgment?

Yes, upon receipt of the full settlement amount, within two weeks the State Bar will file appropriate documentation to satisfy the judgment and remove any property liens.

29. What do I do if I don't recognize the cases listed in my account?

Please email collections@calbar.ca.gov to request copies of judgments, Supreme Court Orders and Client Security Fund documents.

30. Why were these debts not discharged in my bankruptcy proceeding?

Please email collections@calbar.ca.gov for information on how the outcome of your bankruptcy proceeding affected debt owed to the State Bar.

31. How will settling through Fresh Start affect my potential for reinstatement? What is the process for reinstatement?

If you reach a settlement and complete payment through the Fresh Start Settlement Program, the State Bar will thereafter consider the eligible debt as itemized on your Fresh Start Settlement Program account paid in full for all purposes, including petitioning for reinstatement to the practice of law. This is not to imply reinstatement is automatic or guaranteed; standard reinstatement petition procedures would be required. Further, settlement through Fresh Start will not resolve outstanding probationary obligations or other outstanding costs, such as unpaid annual licensee fees and penalties, unpaid compliance fee and penalties, payments due to LAP, restitution due directly to individuals, etc. The program's settlement authority is limited to debt; we do not have legal authority to change other legal requirements for reinstatement to the practice of law.

For further information regarding reinstatement, please visit the [State Bar Court website](#) and see the [FAQs](#). If you have a specific question about the court's reinstatement procedures that is not answered on the website, please call the court's main lines: 213-765-1400 in Los Angeles and 415-538-2050 in San Francisco. However, the court cannot provide specific advice on whether you are eligible for reinstatement.