

# Tips on Getting Your Paperwork Ready So You Can Get Help with Your Family Law Case

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This publication is meant to help you get ready for an appointment with someone who's going to help you with your family law case. That someone might be:

- An attorney
- A family law facilitator
- An advocate at your local Domestic Violence shelter
- A CLEAR advocate who's going over forms with you by phone

Below, we suggest different kinds of paperwork to gather for your meeting or phone call. It's good to have as much information available as possible. It's even better to have that information organized. You and the person helping can then go through it more easily.

## What if I don't have some of the paperwork listed below?

Our lists are just suggestions. It's not absolutely necessary to have the paperwork we suggest. But it does help.

◆ Not all of our suggestions will apply to the unique facts of your case. Use your own best judgment.

You can try on your own to get any suggested paperwork that you don't have. Example: if you don't have your pay stubs from your job, ask your employer for written confirmation of your wages.

◆ Our lists include suggested paperwork for people with children. If you have no children, you can skip those suggestions.

## Organize your paperwork in advance

Try to get some folders or some paper clips and organize your paperwork by category and in the order that events happened.



Example: If you and the other party have shared assets, make one pile for those. Make a different tab for bank accounts,

other accounts (retirement, investment), real property, and personal property. Put the oldest records at the bottom and the most recent ones on the top.

## If you or a child is a domestic violence victim:

- Police records (If you don't have any, contact the police department or the Prosecuting Attorney's office to see if you can get copies. You might not be able to if there's an ongoing investigation.)
- 911 call logs
- Medical records (If you don't have these, contact your medical provider. You might have to pay a fee for copies.)
- School records

- Counselor records (Be careful with notes/records from a counselor. You don't want to damage an ongoing relationship with a counselor by revealing confidential information in your court case.)
- Letters and/or emails between you and the abuser

If you're getting divorced:

- **Financial paperwork**, including:
  - credit card account statements
  - current bills (medical bills, car loan payments, etc.)
  - deeds – to home, rental properties, vacation properties, etc.
  - bank statements
  - statements/letters for retirement and/or pension accounts and benefits
  - title to personal property such as cars, trucks, boats
  - prenuptial or community property agreement
  - mortgage or loan paperwork
  - statements/letters for any non-retirement investment accounts (example: stocks, bonds)
  - tax returns for the past several years

- **Non-financial paperwork**, including:
  - Anything from the “domestic violence” list, above, if you or a child is a victim
  - Any letters or notes received from a child's teacher
  - Child's school records, including attendance records
  - Child's day care records, including attendance records

Other information to bring:

You can have this information written on a piece of paper.

- If you're married: date and place (county) of marriage
- If you're getting divorced: date of separation
- dates of birth for you, the other party, and any children
- addresses: yours, the other party's, the children if they're living somewhere else
- where your children have lived for the last five years,
- any cause numbers of any other court cases involving your children (examples: domestic violence protection order, dependency, etc.).

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