

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

Should I read this?

We wrote this to help you get ready for an appointment with someone who is going to help you with your family law case. That someone might be:

- A lawyer
- A family law facilitator
- Staff at the local Domestic Violence shelter
- A CLEAR advocate going over forms with you by phone

We suggest gathering different kinds of paperwork for your meeting or phone call. You should have as much info available as possible. Try to have it organized. Then you and the person helping can go through it more easily.

What if I do not have some of the paperwork listed below?

Our lists are just suggestions. You do not need to have everything we suggest. It does help.

❖ Not all our suggestions will apply to your case. Use your best judgment.

Try to get any suggested paperwork you do not have. **Example:** You do not 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, skip those.

How do I get my paperwork together ahead of time?

Use folders or paper clips. Try to organize your paperwork by category and in the order things happened.

Example: You and the other party have shared assets. Make a pile for those. Make different tabs for bank accounts, other accounts (retirement, investment), real property, and personal property. Put the oldest records at the bottom, newest on top.

❖ **Real property** means land, and the buildings on the land.
Personal property means your belongings.

I am a domestic violence victim, or my child is. What paperwork should I have ready?

- **Police records** - If you do not have any, contact the police department or Prosecuting Attorney’s office for copies. You might not get any if there is an ongoing investigation.
- 911 call logs
- **Medical records** - If you do not have these, contact your medical provider. You might have to pay for copies.

- School records
- **Counselor records** - Be careful with these. You do not want to damage an ongoing relationship with a counselor by revealing confidential info in your court case.
- Letters, texts and/or emails between you and the abuser

I am getting divorced. What paperwork should I get ready?

- Financial paperwork, including
 - credit card account statements
 - current bills - **examples:** medical bills, car loan payments
 - deeds – to home, rental properties, vacation properties, and so on
 - bank statements
 - statements or letters for retirement and/or pension accounts and benefits
 - title to personal property such as cars, trucks, boats, and any info about make, model, year, and Vehicle Identification Number
 - prenuptial or community property agreement
 - mortgage or loan paperwork
 - statements or 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 from a child’s teacher
 - Child’s school records, including attendance records
 - Child’s day care records, including attendance records

What other info should I have handy?

Write this info down to bring with you.

- **If you are married:** date and place (county) of marriage
- If you are 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 live 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

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