



10-STEP ROADMAP TO DIVORCE

GENERAL TIPS BEFORE YOU START

- This Roadmap can be used to help you complete all the steps to obtain a divorce Judgment. It provides general information. Contact the Self Help Center through e-Correspondence for more detailed instructions and information regarding workshops.
- The legal process is complicated. If you are representing yourself, then you are your own attorney. If you need advice about your case, then you will need to ask an attorney.
- **Warning:** You are not divorced until you receive a filed Notice of Entry of Judgment from the Court and the “effective date of termination” has passed. Nothing will happen automatically in your case. It is your responsibility to move your case forward.

STEP 1: Initial Filings

- **PETITIONER:** Start your case by completing, copying, and filing a Petition (FL-100), Summons (FL-110), and UCCJEA Declaration (FL-105) (if you have minor children). You can download “How to Start a Dissolution (Step 1) Packet” on the Court’s website.
 - The clerk will stamp each form, keep the original, and return the stamped copies to you. One copy is for your records and the other is to serve your spouse.
- **RESPONDENT:** If you have been served with divorce paperwork and you wish to be an active participant in the case, your first step is to complete a Response (FL-120). You can download “How to Serve and File a Response Packet” on the Court’s website.
 - A Response is not required. If you agree with what the Petitioner requests, you may choose not to respond. It will be up to the Petitioner to finish the case. You will be giving up certain legal rights which you should discuss with an attorney.

STEP 2: Serve Your Spouse

- **PETITIONER:** Once your forms are filed, you must then have your spouse served by someone other than you who is over 18 years old. You can download “Step 2: Service Packet” and “Documents to be Served on your Spouse Packet” on the Court’s website.
 - Once your spouse has been served, have your server complete and sign a Proof of Service of Summons (FL-115). File it with the Court.
- **RESPONDENT:** If you choose to file a Response, a copy must first be served by someone other than you who is over 18 years old. It can be served by mail.
 - Once your spouse has been served, have your server complete and sign a Proof of Service By Mail (FL-335). File it with the Court along with your Response.

STEP 3: Declarations of Disclosure (Preliminary and Final)

- Each party that appears in the case **MUST** complete this step even if you have no property/income or have agreed on how to divide your assets/debts.
- You can download the “Financial Disclosures Packet” on the Court’s website.
- Have your spouse served with copies of all of your completed forms.
- Only the Declaration Regarding Service of Declaration of Disclosure (FL-141) must be filed with the Court. This form lets the Court know that you have served the required forms on your spouse.

- STEP 4: Finding the Right Path to Judgment (Choose One: A, B, C, or D)**
 - If no Response filed and 30 days have passed since Respondent was served...
 - and you want a Judgment without a court hearing, go to Step 5 (Option A)
 - and you want a Judgment with a court hearing, go to Step 6 (Option B)
 - If Response filed...
 - and you and your spouse agree on all issues, go to Step 7 (Option C)
 - and you and your spouse do not agree on all issues, go to Step 8 (Option D)

- STEP 5 (OPTION A): Default Judgment without a Court Hearing**
 - You can download “Request to Enter Default Packet” and “Judgment of Dissolution or Legal Separation by Declaration Packet” on the Court’s website.
 - Submit all of your paperwork by mail or in the Drop Box for the Judge’s approval. Your case will be decided based upon your paperwork without a hearing. If any forms are missing or incomplete, your request will be denied and returned to you for correction.

- STEP 6 (OPTION B): Default Judgment with a Court Hearing**
 - You can download “Request to Enter Default Packet” on the Court’s website.
 - You will have a hearing at which you can request that the Judge grant your divorce and make orders. You will then need to have a Judgment prepared that reflects those orders. You can request that the Self Help Center prepare it for you.

- STEP 7 (OPTION C): Uncontested or Stipulated Judgment**
 - If a Response was filed and you both agree on all issues in your case, you can submit the final divorce paperwork for the Judge’s approval without a court hearing.
 - You can use the Judicial Council form Judgment Checklist—Dissolution/Legal Separation (FL-182) as a guide for all of the forms that must be completed and submitted.

- STEP 8 (OPTION D): Contested Judgment**
 - If a Response was filed and you cannot agree on all issues in your case, you will need to set your case for trial so that a Judge can decide your case. You can download “Memorandum to Set Packet” (to set dates) and “Statement of Issues Packet” (after dates set) on the Court’s website.
 - You will then need to have a Judgment prepared that reflects your agreement (if you settle) or the orders the Judge made at trial. You can request that the Self Help Center prepare it for you.

- STEP 9: Service of the Judgment**
 - Once you receive the Judgment back from the Court, you may then have someone 18 years or older, other than you, mail a copy of the Judgment to your ex-spouse. Have your server complete the Proof of Service By Mail (FL-335) and file it with the Court.

- STEP 10: Things To Do After Divorce Judgment Finalized**
 - After your Judgment is entered, remember to change the beneficiaries on your insurance; update your will or trust; change titles pursuant to any orders in the Judgment; and change your name with any other agencies (e.g., DMV, Social Security), if applicable.