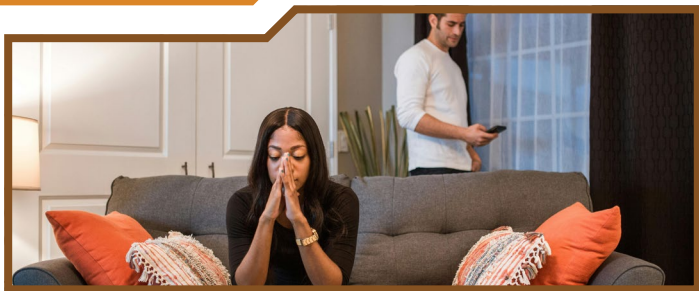


Your Guide to Filing a Legal Separation or Dissolution



Different Ways to Legally Separate in the State of Ohio

- Legal Separation
- Dissolution (Settlement)
- Divorce (see rack card, *Your Guide to Filing a Divorce*)

Legal Separation

Legal Separation allows the court to issue orders concerning property, spousal support, parental rights and responsibilities (including child support)

- Spouses live separately, but remain married, and follow the court orders of the separation

Dissolution

Dissolution is a mutual agreement by the parties to end a marriage

- Grounds for divorce do not need to be stated
- The spouses must sign a separation agreement stating their plans for:
 - Division of all property
 - Spousal support
 - Allocation of parental rights and responsibilities
 - Authorization for the court to modify the terms as needed
- Occasionally, courts may deny a dissolution if the filing is one-sided

Dissolution petition is filed jointly after a separation agreement is signed

- At least 30 days from the date of filing, and no more than 90 days, the court will hear the case for Dissolution
 - Court will review the associated separation

agreement, assets, liability, parenting concern, and determine if the parties understand the settlement before them

- If approved, dissolution is granted and the separation agreement becomes a court order

Restraining Orders

Restraining orders, including mutual restraining orders, may be issued to restrict or prohibit one or both of the spouses (or others) from certain behaviors including:

- Harassment or abuse of a spouse
- Transfer or disposition of marital funds or assets
- Moving any shared children to another state

Definitions

Pro Se: representing oneself; no attorney present to represent you

Serve: to give notice of the pending action

- Methods of service:
 1. Certified mail
 2. Personal delivery
 3. If no known residence: by publication in a newspaper

Summons: informs the defendant that they are required to appear in court

For information about free legal assistance please contact the Ohio Legal Services at 866-lawohio (866-529-6446) or www.ohiolegalhelp.org.

The Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) is a statewide coalition of domestic violence programs, supportive agencies, and concerned individuals working together to stop domestic violence through education, information and training for those who are affected by domestic violence, and by promoting social and systems change.

This publication was supported by grant number 2019-VOCA-132133375 awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, through the Ohio Attorney General's Office. Victims of federal crimes will be served.



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