FREE RESOURCE

Florida Divorce Checklist

A practical guide to organizing information before filing for divorce or meeting with a Florida family law attorney

How to use this checklist
Work through only the sections that apply to you. You may not need every document, and you should not delay seeking legal advice while trying to collect everything. Keep copies in a private, secure place and bring questions to your attorney.

1. Confirm the Basics

- ☐ Confirm that either you or your spouse has lived in Florida for at least six months before filing.
- ☐ Write down the legal names, current addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, and dates of birth for both spouses.
- ☐ Locate your marriage certificate and record the date and place of marriage.
- ☐ Note the date you separated, if applicable, and whether either spouse currently lives outside Florida.
- ☐ Identify any prior or pending family-law, domestic-violence, bankruptcy, immigration, or criminal matters that may affect the case.
- ☐ Locate any prenuptial, postnuptial, separation, or other marital agreement.

Helpful note: Florida generally requires one spouse to have been a Florida resident for the six months immediately before the petition is filed. Residency and venue can involve additional facts, so confirm where to file before submitting paperwork.

2. Protect Privacy and Preserve Information

- ☐ Create a private email address for attorney communications if others can access your usual account.
- ☐ Change passwords for your personal email, cloud storage, banking, and device accounts when legally appropriate; enable two-factor authentication.
- ☐ Make lawful copies of important records that you can access. Do not destroy, alter, hide, or improperly obtain information.
- ☐ Save relevant texts, emails, calendars, photographs, and social-media content without editing them.
- ☐ Avoid posting about the divorce, finances, your spouse, the children, or the case on social media.

Gather Financial Information

Financial disclosure is central to many Florida divorce cases. Collect records that show income, expenses, assets, and debts for both the present and the recent past, when available.

3. Income and Employment

- ☐ Recent pay stubs and year-to-date earnings statements.
- ☐ Federal income-tax returns, W-2s, 1099s, K-1s, and supporting schedules for recent years.
- ☐ Employment contracts, offer letters, bonus or commission plans, and records of deferred compensation.
- ☐ Documentation of self-employment or business income, including profit-and-loss statements and business tax returns.
- ☐ Records of unemployment, disability, Social Security, pension, rental, investment, trust, or other income.

4. Monthly Living Expenses

- ☐ Housing costs: mortgage or rent, property taxes, insurance, association fees, repairs, and utilities.
- ☐ Transportation costs: vehicle payments, insurance, fuel, tolls, maintenance, and public transportation.
- ☐ Food, clothing, medical, dental, prescription, insurance, childcare, school, and activity expenses.
- ☐ Credit-card payments, loan payments, subscriptions, memberships, pet care, and other recurring expenses.
- ☐ One-time or unusually high upcoming expenses that should be discussed with your attorney.

> Helpful note: Do not guess if you can verify an amount. Bank and credit-card statements can help you prepare an accurate monthly budget and financial affidavit.

5. Assets

- ☐ Bank, credit-union, money-market, certificate-of-deposit, and cash-account statements.
- ☐ Retirement and investment statements, including 401(k), 403(b), IRA, pension, brokerage, stock-option, and cryptocurrency records.
- ☐ Real-estate deeds, purchase and closing documents, mortgage statements, appraisals, and current tax records.
- ☐ Vehicle, boat, recreational vehicle, and other titled-property records.
- ☐ Life-insurance policies, annuities, trusts, inheritances, valuable collections, jewelry, art, and significant personal property.
- ☐ Business ownership documents, partnership agreements, valuations, and records showing each spouse's interest.
- ☐ Documents showing property owned before marriage or received by gift or inheritance, including records tracing how it was held or used.

6. Debts and Liabilities

- ☐ Credit-card statements and loan documents.
- ☐ Mortgages, home-equity lines, vehicle loans, student loans, personal loans, tax debts, and medical debts.
- ☐ Business debts, personal guarantees, pending lawsuits, liens, and collection notices.
- ☐ A list of debts you believe were incurred before marriage, after separation, or without your knowledge.

If Children Are Involved

Parenting plans, time-sharing, decision-making, child-related expenses, and support may need to be addressed. Focus on accurate information and the children's needs rather than building a case against the other parent.

7. Children's Information

- ☐ List each child's full legal name, date of birth, current address, school, grade, healthcare providers, and insurance information.
- ☐ Prepare a five-year residential history for each child and identify anyone with whom the child has lived.
- ☐ Gather school calendars, report cards, attendance information, medical records, activity schedules, and childcare details when relevant.
- ☐ List regular and special expenses, including childcare, health insurance, uncovered medical costs, tutoring, therapy, extracurricular activities, and transportation.
- ☐ Identify any special medical, developmental, educational, or emotional needs.
- ☐ Locate existing parenting plans, support orders, paternity orders, injunctions, or other orders involving a child or either parent.

8. Think Through a Workable Parenting Plan

- ☐ Outline the children's current routine, including school, childcare, activities, homework, bedtime, and transportation.
- ☐ Sketch a realistic weekly and holiday time-sharing schedule based on the children's needs and each parent's availability.
- ☐ Consider how parents will exchange information and make major decisions about education, healthcare, and activities.
- ☐ Identify safe, practical exchange locations and transportation responsibilities.
- ☐ Note any genuine safety concerns, domestic violence, substance misuse, neglect, or risk of relocation and discuss them privately with an attorney.

> Helpful note: Parents in a Florida dissolution case with minor children are generally required to complete an approved Parent Education and Family Stabilization Course. Statutory deadlines commonly run 45 days from filing for the petitioner and 45 days from service for the other party, unless excused by the court.

9. Immediate Household and Safety Needs

- ☐ Make a list of bills that must be paid now and identify how housing, insurance, childcare, and essential expenses are currently being covered.
- ☐ Document the present balances of joint accounts and joint debts without making unusual withdrawals or transfers.
- ☐ Discuss major financial changes with an attorney before closing accounts, changing beneficiaries, selling property, moving, or relocating a child.
- ☐ If you or a child is in immediate danger, call 911. Ask an attorney or local advocate about safety planning and available protective remedies.

Prepare for Your Attorney Consultation

A clear summary helps your attorney understand the case quickly. You do not need to arrive with every answer; bring what you have and identify what is missing.

10. Create a One-Page Case Summary

- ☐ Write a short timeline: marriage, major moves, children's births, significant financial events, separation, and recent developments.
- ☐ List your most important goals and your most urgent concerns.
- ☐ Identify the issues you and your spouse already agree on and the issues likely to be disputed.
- ☐ List known assets and debts, noting whose name is on each account or title and the approximate current value or balance.
- ☐ Prepare your top questions about the legal process, temporary arrangements, property, support, parenting, fees, and next steps.

11. Bring to the Meeting

- ☐ Photo identification and basic contact information for both spouses.
- ☐ Marriage certificate and any marital agreements.
- ☐ Existing court papers, notices, orders, or scheduled hearing information.
- ☐ Your one-page timeline, goals, questions, and the financial records you have collected.
- ☐ Information about urgent deadlines, safety concerns, planned travel, property transfers, or a possible move involving a child.

Helpful Official Resources

Florida Courts: Dissolution of Marriage (Divorce)
Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Forms
Florida Statutes, Chapter 61

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