

PLAIN-ENGLISH GUIDE

Family Law in Auglaize County

A plain-English map for divorce, dissolution, custody, support, and adoption in Wapakoneta and across Auglaize County: which division handles your case, what to file, what it costs, and when to get help.

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- 01** Auglaize County uses one judge for all of family law. See how that shapes your case.

 - 02** Know the difference between dissolution, divorce, juvenile custody, and probate adoption.

 - 03** Find the right form, the deposit, and the local rules that trip people up.

 - 04** Pick a next step that fits your budget, your timeline, and how much conflict there is.

START HERE

Use this guide like a map, not a rulebook.

Family law gets easier once you name a few things: the court, the path, the paperwork, and your next step. This guide is built on those questions for Auglaize County.

01

Which division handles this?

The Domestic Relations Division hears divorce and dissolution. The Juvenile Division handles custody for parents who were never married. Probate handles adoption. One judge runs all three, in the same suite.

02

Do we agree, or is there a fight?

Agreement changes everything. Dissolution and uncontested filings run on signed paperwork. If someone disagrees, misses deadlines, or safety is a worry, plan for a more protective path.

03

What should I gather first?

Gather any current orders and your income records. Add insurance details, the kids' birth certificates, school and parenting-time notes, and a short list of what you want the court to decide.

THIS GUIDE IS INFORMATION, NOT LEGAL ADVICE

It explains how things usually work in Auglaize County. It cannot cover the facts of your case. Reading it, downloading it, or contacting Gavvl Law does not make you a client. Only a signed engagement agreement does that. For advice about your own case, talk with a licensed Ohio attorney.

BEFORE YOU FILE

Check the current deposit, the required forms, and the copies you need. The court will not accept handwritten final entries, so plan to have them typed. Adoptions require a lawyer here.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Four parts: Domestic Relations (divorce and dissolution), Juvenile Court (unmarried parents), Probate (adoption), and how Gavvl can help. The full contents are on the next page.

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QUESTION ONE

Which division is actually handling your case?

One family can touch more than one division. Auglaize County is unusual: a single judge hears every family-law division. Start with the relationship, and with what you need a judge to decide.

MARRIED OR FORMERLY MARRIED

Domestic Relations

Divorce, dissolution, legal separation, annulment, spousal support, and dividing property and debt.

WHO HEARS IT

Judge Mark E. Spees, (419) 739-6775.

PARENTS NEVER MARRIED

Juvenile Division

Custody, parenting time, parentage, and child support for unmarried parents. Also abuse, neglect, and dependency.

WHO HEARS IT

Judge Spees, (419) 739-6776.

ADOPTION

Probate Division

Stepparent, kinship, and adult adoption, plus name changes and marriage licenses.

WHO HEARS IT

Judge Spees — but adoption needs a lawyer (see Part 3).

One judge, one suite

All three divisions share Suite 119 at 201 Willipie Street in Wapakoneta, under Judge Spees. A separate General Division handles other civil and criminal cases. Each family-law division still uses its own forms and deposits, so file with the right one for your case.

PART ONE

The Domestic Relations Division ends marriages.

If you are married, ending the marriage runs through the Domestic Relations Division. The first real question is simple: can both spouses sign a full agreement?

WHERE YOU FILE	FILING DEPOSIT	DISSOLUTION HEARING	RESIDENCY
Clerk of Courts	\$325	30–90 days	6 months in Ohio

QUICK PATHFINDER

Do you agree on everything?

If yes, dissolution may fit. If no, divorce is the safer or required path. Agreement means more than wanting the case over. It means signed terms on property, debt, support, and parenting. Add child support if you have children.

Dissolution is built on agreement.

Both spouses file together. They ask the court to approve a signed Separation Agreement. The court holds a hearing 30 to 90 days later. Both spouses must appear and confirm the agreement.

Divorce is a lawsuit.

One spouse files against the other. Use it when you do not yet agree. Use it when you cannot find your spouse, or when you need the court to decide something.

ONE FLAT DEPOSIT

Auglaize charges a \$325 deposit for a divorce, dissolution, or annulment. The deposit goes toward your real costs. The balance is billed or refunded at the end. All costs must be paid in full before the final decree is signed. One spouse must live in Ohio six months before filing.

DISSOLUTION

The dissolution packet, step by step.

Dissolution uses the Ohio Supreme Court forms plus a few Auglaize County forms. Sign the Separation Agreement in front of a notary first. Then build the rest of the packet around it.

TWO WAIVERS, AND A TYPED DECREE

At filing, both spouses sign a Waiver of Service of Summons, and anyone without a lawyer signs a Waiver of Counsel too. Have the final decree typed and ready on the hearing day — the court does not accept handwritten entries. Both spouses must appear at the hearing.

FORM	WHERE TO GET IT	WHAT IT'S FOR
Petition for Dissolution https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Both spouses sign; opens the joint case
Separation Agreement https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Your signed terms; notarize this first
Standing Orders (DR-SO) https://www2.auglaizecounty.org/courts/domestic-relations-court	Auglaize forms	The mutual restraining order, filed with the petition
Marital History Information Sheet https://www2.auglaizecounty.org/courts/domestic-relations-court	Auglaize forms	Required local cover sheet
Affidavits 1–4 https://www2.auglaizecounty.org/courts/domestic-relations-court	Auglaize forms	Income, property, parenting, and insurance
Child support worksheet https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	With children; signed by both spouses

WITH CHILDREN**Parent class applies**

If you have children, both spouses take the A-OK parenting class unless excused. It is a 4-hour online course that costs \$30. You also file a child support worksheet signed by both spouses and the support application.

STANDING ORDERS START AT FILING

When you file, the court's Standing Orders take effect. Neither spouse may move the children out of the county to relocate, harass the other, dispose of property, or open a safe-deposit box. They bind both of you.

DIVORCE

Filing a divorce when you do not agree.

Divorce is filed with the Clerk of Courts. Auglaize uses the Ohio Supreme Court forms plus its own local forms. The financial and parenting affidavits go in with the Complaint.

FORM	WHERE TO GET IT	WHAT IT'S FOR
Complaint for Divorce https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Starts the lawsuit; with or without children
Standing Orders (DR-SO) https://www2.auglaizecounty.org/courts/domestic-relations-court	Auglaize forms	Served with the summons; binds both parties
Marital History Information Sheet https://www2.auglaizecounty.org/courts/domestic-relations-court	Auglaize forms	Required local cover sheet
Affidavits 1-4 https://www2.auglaizecounty.org/courts/domestic-relations-court	Auglaize forms	Income, property, parenting, and insurance
Request for Service https://www2.auglaizecounty.org/courts/domestic-relations-court	Auglaize forms	Tells the Clerk how to serve your spouse

If you cannot find your spouse
 When you cannot find the other spouse, service can be by publication or posting. Auglaize posts notices at the Sheriff's Office and the St. Marys Police Department. The extra security deposit for publication is \$600.

WANT ORDERS DURING THE CASE?
 To set temporary support or parenting orders while the divorce is pending, file a separate motion with a sworn affidavit on the Supreme Court forms. See the temporary orders page next for how the 14-day rule works.

TEMPORARY ORDERS

How Auglaize decides them — and the 14-day rule.

A divorce can take months. Temporary orders set the rules in the meantime. Auglaize has a clear timeline for how they are decided.

The 14-day rule

You ask by a separate motion and a sworn affidavit on the Supreme Court forms. The court does not rule for 14 days after the motion is served. The other party has those 14 days to respond. If no one responds, the court takes your affidavit as correct.

Asking for a hearing

After a temporary order issues, either party can ask in writing for an oral hearing. The court sets it within 14 days. Asking for a hearing does not pause the order, so it stays in effect in the meantime.

EMERGENCIES

A true ex parte order, decided without the other side first, is granted only in unusual and extreme situations. The court then automatically sets a priority hearing within 14 days. The court will not repeat orders the Standing Orders already cover. If anyone is in danger right now, call 911.

CHILDREN

Custody, parenting time, and child support in a divorce.

Ohio uses specific words for custody. The right words help you read the forms and talk to the court.

SOLE CUSTODY

Residential parent and legal custodian

One parent is the residential parent and legal custodian. The other parent usually has parenting time. Ohio does not use the words “full” or “primary” custody.

SHARED PARENTING

A shared parenting plan

Both parents share rights and duties under a written plan. Shared parenting is not the same as equal time. The schedule is whatever the plan or order says.

The A-OK parenting class

In any divorce, dissolution, or legal separation with children, both parents take the A-OK class, short for Assisting Our Kids. It is a 4-hour online course that costs \$30. You only need it once every two years.

CHILD SUPPORT RUNS THROUGH THE CSEA

The Auglaize County child support agency handles support. Reach it at (567) 242-2700. Support is collected by income withholding, and paid through the state, not directly between parents.

THE REST OF A DIVORCE

Spousal support, property, and other paths.

Beyond custody and child support, a divorce sorts out spousal support and divides what you own and owe.

Spousal support

The court can order one spouse to support the other for a set time. Ohio weighs income, the length of the marriage, health, and other factors. There is no fixed formula.

Property and debt

Ohio divides marital property and debt fairly. Fair does not always mean a 50-50 split. Property you brought into the marriage may count as separate.

Legal separation and annulment

Both are filed in the Domestic Relations Division. Annulment is rare and has narrow grounds. The deposit for legal separation may differ, so confirm it with the Clerk.

A note on investigations

In a contested custody case, the court can order a custody investigation. The deposit is \$150 if it stays in the county, or \$200 if it reaches out of county. The court can also appoint a guardian ad litem, with a \$1,000 deposit, to look into the children's needs.

AFTER THE DECREE

Changing or enforcing an Auglaize County order.

Life changes after a case ends. Post-decree motions stay in the same Domestic Relations case that issued your decree.

POST-JUDGMENT MOTION**\$200**

To raise a new issue after the decree

MOTION TO MODIFY**\$200**

Plus any past court costs you were ordered to pay

REOPEN A CASE**\$150**

For example, to correct a confirmation entry

Modifying and enforcing

To change custody or support, you file a motion to modify in your original case, and pay any past costs you owe. Support changes can also start through the child support agency. Both parents may need the A-OK class again if it has been over two years.

MOVING WITH THE CHILDREN

A parent who plans to move should follow Ohio's relocation notice rules before moving. Ask the Domestic Relations Court at (419) 739-6775 which form your decree needs and how far ahead to file it.

HELP ALONG THE WAY

Mediation, investigations, and GALs.

Auglaize County offers ways to settle disputes. It also offers ways to give the court good information about the children.

Mediation

The court can send a parenting dispute to mediation to help parents reach an agreement. Mediation is never used for a domestic violence case or to decide a protection order.

Guardians ad litem

The court can appoint a guardian ad litem to look into the children's needs and speak to their best interests. The deposit is \$1,000, and the court decides who pays in the end.

Home studies

The court can order a home study to learn about a child's living situation. The deposit is \$500. The report helps the court make parenting decisions.

NOT SURE WHERE TO START?

Two minutes to a clear next step.

Gavvl's Find My Service quiz gives you a recommendation and your payment options. Or talk with our team about full or limited-scope help in Auglaize County.

Find My Service · gavvl.com/find-my-service

Get started · gavvl.com/start

Call · (844) 694-2885

Email · support@gavvl.com

PROTECTION ORDERS

When safety comes first.

A domestic violence civil protection order (DVCPO) can order someone to stay away. It can also set temporary custody and support. Your safety drives the timeline.

FILING FEE	FILED	AFTER FILING	FORMS
\$0 to petitioner	On paper	Report for a hearing time	County DV packet

How it works here

DVCPO petitions are filed on paper in the Domestic Relations Division under R.C. 3113.31. There is no filing fee. When you file, the Clerk tells the court right away, and you report to the court to get a hearing time. The court can issue a same-day ex parte order.

What the petition needs

Auglaize asks for a physical description of the other person: height, weight, hair color, eye color, race, and sex. Have that ready. A full hearing follows the ex parte order, and a final order can last up to five years.

IF YOU ARE IN DANGER NOW

If you or your children are in danger right now, call 911. A protection order is a civil court process, not an emergency response.

PART TWO

Juvenile Court is for parents who were never married.

Were the parents never married? Then custody, parenting time, and child support are decided in the Juvenile Division, before Judge Spees.

Parentage comes first

Before the court can set custody or support, it usually must establish who the legal father is. You can do that by a signed form, through the child support agency, or by a court case. A child-support-only case can only be filed by the agency.

Filing for custody as an unmarried parent

FORM	WHERE TO GET IT	WHAT IT'S FOR
Juvenile Pro Se Packet https://www2.auglaizecounty.org/courts/domestic-relations-court	Juvenile Division	Covers custody, parentage, support, and visitation
Uniform DR forms https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Required in juvenile parentage and custody cases
Affidavits 1, 3 & 4 https://www2.auglaizecounty.org/courts/domestic-relations-court	Juvenile Division	Income, parenting proceeding, and insurance
Application for Child Support Services https://www2.auglaizecounty.org/courts/domestic-relations-court	Juvenile Division	Sets up the support case with the agency

COSTS AND PARENTING TIME

The Juvenile Division is at Suite 119, (419) 739-6776. Juvenile filings are not itemized, so the deposit follows the court's catch-all of \$250, and the clerk may set more. Confirm the exact amount when you file. The standard parenting-time schedule in Local Rule 28 applies unless the parents agree otherwise.

AFTER A JUVENILE ORDER

Changing orders and CPS cases.

Juvenile orders can change as children grow. Some cases move fast.

Modifying a juvenile order

To change custody, parenting time, or support, you file a motion in the existing case. The post-judgment deposit is \$200. Support changes can also start through the child support agency at (567) 242-2700.

Abuse, neglect, and dependency

These CPS cases are heard in the Juvenile Division. To report concerns about a child's safety, call Auglaize County Children Services at (567) 242-2700. For immediate danger, call 911.

CONFIRM WITH THE COURT

Some juvenile deposits are set under the court's catch-all rule rather than a fixed table, and Juvenile payments cannot be made online. Call the Juvenile Division at (419) 739-6776 to confirm the amount and how to pay before you file.

PART THREE

Adoption is handled by the Probate Division.

Stepparent and kinship adoptions go to the Probate Division, before Judge Spees. Auglaize has one firm rule that sets adoption apart.

ADOPTIONS REQUIRE AN ATTORNEY

Adoption is the one family-law case Auglaize County does not let you handle on your own. A licensed attorney must prepare the petition, the consents, and the decree. Plan for that before you start.

1

Hire an attorney and file the petition

Your attorney files the Petition for Adoption in the Probate Division at Suite 119, (419) 739-6778. The deposit follows the court's catch-all rule, so confirm the amount when you file.

2

Address consent

The other parent's consent is usually needed. The court can waive it if a parent had no contact, or gave no support, for the year before filing.

3

Complete the home study

The court usually orders a home study or assessment. The scope is often smaller for a stepparent case than for others.

4

Attend the hearing

If the court says yes, it signs a final decree of adoption. A new birth record can follow.

PART FOUR

How Gavvl Law can help in Auglaize County.

Gavvl is a modern Ohio family-law firm serving all 88 counties. We pair skilled lawyers with easy-to-use tech and clear pricing. You choose how much help you need.

FULL REPRESENTATION

An attorney handles the whole case

From the first consult through final orders: strategy, every filing, all court dates, and negotiating. Best for contested, complex, or high-conflict cases, and required for adoptions here. Billed as a retainer plus hourly fees.

LIMITED-SCOPE (FLAT FEE)

Hire us for specific tasks

Pay a flat fee per service — drafting and filing, one hearing, advice, or document review. Best for uncontested cases and tighter budgets. Not built for high-conflict cases that need steady advocacy.

Ways to pay

Your options depend on the service model. Limited-scope work has the widest range: pay in full, Affirm, Klarna, or PayPal Pay Later. Gavvl Direct is an in-house plan with no credit check. Financed amounts carry 19% annual interest, compounded monthly. We work out your exact payment when you enroll.

START IN TWO MINUTES

Take the Find My Service quiz at gavvl.com/find-my-service. You get a recommendation and your payment options. Or call (844) 694-2885. Consultations are low-cost.

BEFORE YOU GO

Important disclosures.

Please read these notes about how to use this guide.

INFORMATION, NOT LEGAL ADVICE

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FEES AND PROCEDURES CHANGE

The court information in this guide was verified as of June 11, 2026 from official court sources. Court fees, forms, and procedures change. Always confirm current fees and requirements with the Auglaize County courts before you file.

AWARDS AND REVIEWS

Any awards, ratings, and reviews reflect the experiences of other clients and the opinions of rating organizations. They are not a guarantee or prediction of the outcome of your case. Every case is different.

JURISDICTION AND RESPONSIBILITY

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