

PLAIN-ENGLISH GUIDE

Family Law in Crawford County

A plain-English map for divorce, dissolution, custody, support, and adoption in Bucyrus and across Crawford County. Learn which court handles your case, what to file, what it costs, and when to get help.

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- 01 See how Crawford County handles family law across the Common Pleas Court.

 - 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 Crawford County.

01

Which court handles this?

Married couples file divorce or dissolution in the Common Pleas Court. Unmarried parents file custody in the Juvenile Court. Adoptions go to the Probate Court. One judge leads both Juvenile and Probate.

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 Crawford 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.

FILE IN PERSON

Crawford County does not have e-filing yet, so you file in person at the Clerk of Courts. Fax filing is only for emergencies. You can pay by cash, check, money order, or card; cards add a 3% fee.

WHAT'S INSIDE

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

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QUESTION ONE

Which court is actually handling your case?

One family can touch more than one court. In Crawford County they are parts of the Common Pleas Court at 112 E. Mansfield Street in Bucyrus. Start with the relationship, and with what you need a judge to decide.

MARRIED OR FORMERLY MARRIED

Common Pleas Court

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

WHO HEARS IT

Judge Sean E. Leuthold. (419) 562-5771.

PARENTS NEVER MARRIED

Juvenile Court

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

WHO HEARS IT

Judge Patrick T. Murphy.

ADOPTION

Probate Court

Stepparent, kinship, and adult adoption, plus name changes and guardianships.

WHO HEARS IT

Judge Murphy, same as Juvenile.

One Common Pleas Court, three roles

Divorce and dissolution are heard in the Common Pleas Court before Judge Leuthold. Unmarried-parent custody and adoption both run through the combined Probate and Juvenile Court under Judge Murphy. All sit at 112 E. Mansfield Street. File with the right one for your case.

PART ONE

Divorce and dissolution run through the Common Pleas Court.

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

DIVORCE	DISSOLUTION	FILING	RESIDENCY
\$300	\$200	In person	6 months in Ohio

QUICK PATHFINDER

Do you agree on everything?

If yes, dissolution may fit, and it costs less to file. 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.

Dissolution is built on agreement.

Both spouses file together as co-petitioners. 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.

THE DEPOSITS

A divorce costs \$300 to file and a dissolution \$200. You pay the deposit before the Clerk files the case, unless you file a poverty affidavit to waive it. One spouse must have lived in Ohio six months.

DISSOLUTION

The dissolution packet, step by step.

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

FILE JOINTLY, THEN ATTEND THE HEARING

Both spouses file the joint petition with the signed Separation Agreement and pay the \$200 deposit. The hearing is held 30 to 90 days later, and both spouses must appear and affirm the agreement is what they want.

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
Affidavit of income & property https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Each spouse's finances
Parenting plan + worksheet https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	With children; the plan and support math
Proposal for Temporary Orders https://crawfordcocpcourt.org/local-court-rules/	Crawford DR forms	Only if you need orders before the decree
Decree of Dissolution https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	The judgment the court signs

GOOD TO KNOW**No required class right now**

Crawford County's old parenting-class rule was suspended back in 2010, so there is no automatic class in every case. A judge can still order parenting education in a particular case. Confirm the current practice with the court.

ASPIRATIONAL GUIDELINES

The court publishes Aspirational Guidelines for parents, with sensible rules like not disparaging the other parent. They are encouraged, not binding, unless the court adopts them in your case.

DIVORCE

Filing a divorce when you do not agree.

Divorce is filed with the Common Pleas Clerk of Courts, in person. Crawford uses the Ohio Supreme Court forms plus a few local ones.

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
Affidavit of Income & Expenses https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Your financial picture
Affidavit of Property https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Lists what you own and owe
Parenting Proceeding Affidavit https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	With children; the UCCJEA affidavit
Proposal for Temporary Orders https://crawfordcocpcourt.org/local-court-rules/	Crawford DR forms	File if you want orders during the case

How filing works

You file in person at the Clerk of Courts in Suite 204. There is no e-filing yet, and fax filing is reserved for emergencies. You pay by cash, check, money order, or card, with a 3% card fee.

WHO PAYS THE COSTS

In a divorce that is granted without a contest, the spouse who asked for the divorce usually pays the court costs, unless the court orders otherwise. Budget for that when you plan.

TEMPORARY ORDERS

Getting orders while the case runs.

A divorce can take months. Temporary orders set the rules in the meantime — things like temporary support or a parenting schedule.

The normal route

You file a Proposal for Temporary Orders with a financial affidavit and a child-support worksheet. The magistrate sets temporary orders on the paperwork. Either party can ask for an oral hearing, generally held within 28 days.

Emergencies are narrow

Crawford County treats ex parte orders as an emergency-only tool. You need a sworn affidavit and an attorney certification. After an emergency order, the other party gets a hearing within 10 days.

A WORD OF CAUTION

Because emergency orders are disfavored here, a false statement made to get one can bring sanctions, including dismissal and a fee award. If your situation involves violence, a protection order may be the better tool. If anyone is in danger now, call 911.

CHILDREN

Custody, parenting time, and child support.

Ohio uses specific words for custody. Crawford County uses a standard schedule and handles support through the county agency.

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 standard schedule

When parents cannot agree, the court applies its standard parenting-time schedule as the default. Parents are free to agree on their own plan instead, which the court will usually approve if it fits the children.

CHILD SUPPORT RUNS THROUGH THE CSEA

The Crawford County child support agency handles support. Reach it at (419) 562-0773. Support is set under Ohio's guidelines, collected by income withholding, and paid through the state.

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 Common Pleas Court. Legal separation sets terms without ending the marriage. Annulment is rare and has narrow grounds.

A note on dividing retirement

If a divorce divides a pension or retirement account, it takes a separate order called a QDRO, which costs \$50 to file here. Getting the wording right matters, and a mistake can cost real money later, so many people use a lawyer for this step.

AFTER THE DECREE

Changing or enforcing a Crawford County order.

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

REOPEN A CLOSED CASE**\$200**

The deposit for a post-decree motion

FILE A QDRO**\$50**

To split a retirement account after the decree

AGREED JUDGMENT ENTRY**\$50**

When both sides agree to the change

Modifying and enforcing

To change custody or support, or to enforce an order, you file a motion to reopen the closed case for a \$200 deposit. Support changes can also start through the county agency at (419) 562-0773.

TELL THE COURT IF YOU SETTLE

If a matter set for a hearing settles, the parties must promptly tell the court. Failing to do so can bring a contempt citation, so send word as soon as you reach an agreement.

HELP ALONG THE WAY

Mediation, GALs, and parenting guidelines.

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

Mediation

A judge or magistrate can order mediation, counseling, or conciliation in a case to help parents reach an agreement. It 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 in a contested case.

Aspirational Guidelines

The court publishes parenting guidelines it encourages, covering things like never disparaging the other parent. They guide conduct but are not binding unless the court adopts them.

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 Crawford 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 can order someone to stay away. It can also set temporary custody and support. Your safety drives the timeline.

FILING FEE	WHERE	EX PARTE ORDER	FINAL ORDER
\$0 to petitioner	Common Pleas Court	Same day	Up to 5 years

How it works here
 A protection order is filed with the Common Pleas Clerk under R.C. 3113.31, with no fee. The court runs a dedicated protection-order docket. It can issue a same-day ex parte order if you show immediate danger.

Who can file and what it covers
 Family or household members, and people in a dating relationship, can file. A full hearing follows in about 7 to 10 court days. A final order can last up to five years and can cover custody, support, and firearms.

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

The 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 Court, before Judge Murphy.

Parentage comes first

In Ohio, the mother of a child born outside marriage is the only legal custodian until a court says otherwise. So a father usually has to prove he is the father first. You can do that by a signed form, through the child support agency, or by a court case.

Filing for custody as an unmarried parent

FORM	WHERE TO GET IT	WHAT IT'S FOR
Complaint for Parentage and Custody https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domes-tic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Crawford Juvenile Court	Sets parentage, custody, parenting time
Parenting Proceeding Affidavit https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domes-tic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Required with a custody filing
Child support worksheet https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domes-tic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Required when support is at issue
Application for Child Support https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domes-tic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Juvenile Court or CSEA	Sets up the support case with the agency

A FLAT DEPOSIT, CONFIRMED BY PHONE

The Juvenile Court confirmed a deposit of about \$250 for any new filing, like custody or parentage, and about \$200 for a modification. It is not a posted schedule, so verify the exact amount when you file at (419) 562-1896.

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, with a deposit of about \$200. Support changes can also start through the county agency at (419) 562-0773.

Abuse, neglect, and dependency

These CPS cases are heard in the Juvenile Court. The court can appoint a guardian ad litem to speak for the child. To report a concern about a child's safety, call (419) 563-1570, which runs 24 hours. For danger, call 911.

VERIFY THE DEPOSIT WHEN YOU FILE

Because the Juvenile Court does not post a fee schedule, the deposit for your exact filing can vary with the timeframe and circumstances. A fee waiver is available if you cannot afford the deposit.

PART THREE

Adoption is handled by the Probate Court.

Stepparent and kinship adoptions go to the Probate Court, before Judge Murphy, who also leads the Juvenile Court. Here is the basic shape.

THE DEPOSIT AND A REQUIRED HOME STUDY

An adoption deposit is \$170, filed on the Probate side at Suite 103, (419) 562-5876. A home study is required for both stepparent and kinship adoptions; the court can give you the evaluator's contact and you confirm that cost with them.

1

File the petition in Probate

File the Ohio Petition for Adoption of a Minor. Add the child's birth certificate. For a stepparent, add the marriage certificate too. Plan for publication and mailing costs.

2

Address consent

Each living birth parent usually must consent. A court can excuse consent in limited cases, such as a year of no contact or support without good reason. A child 12 or older also consents.

3

Complete the home study

A home study is required for both stepparent and kinship cases here. The court's evaluator visits and interviews the family before the hearing.

4

Attend the hearing

If the court finds the adoption is in the child's best interest, it signs a final decree of adoption. A new birth certificate follows.

PART FOUR

How Gavvl Law can help in Crawford 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. 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 15, 2026 from official court sources. Court fees, forms, and procedures change. Always confirm current fees and requirements with the Crawford 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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