

PLAIN-ENGLISH GUIDE

Family Law in Delaware County

A plain-English map of divorce, dissolution, custody, child support, protection orders, and adoption in Delaware County: which court hears what, which forms you need, what it costs, and what happens next.

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- 01** Find the right court — Delaware County splits family cases across three divisions in two buildings.
 - 02** Download the exact local form packets and checklists, with live links to every form.
 - 03** See verified filing fees and the deadlines that hurt people who miss them.
 - 04** Learn about Delaware County's settlement programs — among the most developed in Ohio.
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START HERE

How to use this guide.

This guide is for people facing a family-law issue in Delaware County, Ohio. It explains the process in plain words, links the real forms, and flags the local rules that trip people up.

01

Married or formerly married?

The Domestic Relations Division handles divorce, dissolution, legal separation, annulment, and anything after a decree. In Delaware County it also handles parentage cases and civil protection orders. Judge Randall D. Fuller leads this division. That is Part 1.

02

A child's case outside a marriage?

The Juvenile Division handles abuse, neglect, and dependency cases, grandparent powers of attorney, and custody requests by non-parents. Judge David A. Hejmanowski leads it. That is Part 2.

03

Adopting a child or an adult?

The Probate Court handles every adoption. It shares Judge Hejmanowski with the Juvenile Division. That is Part 3.

Information, not legal advice.

This guide is information, not legal advice. It explains how things generally work in Delaware County, but it can't account for the facts of your situation. Reading it, downloading it, or contacting Gavvl Law does not make you a client or create an attorney-client relationship. Only a signed engagement agreement does that. For advice about your own case, talk with a licensed Ohio attorney.

IF YOU WERE SERVED PAPERS

Don't wait for the hearing date to act.

Read the first page for a response deadline — in most divorce cases it is 28 days — and save every document. The divorce section of this guide walks you through the answer step by step.

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YOUR COURTS

Delaware County courts at a glance.

Four offices matter for family law here. They sit in two buildings on the same street in downtown Delaware. Note the level numbers — people often walk to the wrong floor.

| COURT | WHERE | CONTACT |
|---|--|---|
| Domestic Relations Division Judge Randall D. Fuller | 117 N. Union St., Level 400, Delaware, OH 43015 Mon–Fri, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. | (740) 833-2025 delawaredrcourt@co.delaware.oh.us domestic.co.delaware.oh.us |
| Juvenile Division Judge David A. Hejmanowski | 145 N. Union St. (Rutherford B. Hayes Building) Mon–Fri, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. | (740) 833-2600 juvenile.co.delaware.oh.us |
| Probate Court Judge David A. Hejmanowski | 145 N. Union St. (Rutherford B. Hayes Building) | (740) 833-2680 probate.co.delaware.oh.us |
| Clerk of Courts Legal Division — where DR cases are filed | 117 N. Union St., Level 300, Delaware, OH 43015 | (740) 833-2500 clerkofcourts.co.delaware.oh.us |

E-FILING AND ONLINE RECORDS

Delaware County runs one online portal, eAccess, for the General, Probate, and Juvenile courts. You can register and e-file there. Domestic Relations filing images are not viewable online by the public — a privacy protection, not a glitch.

[eAccess portal](https://court.co.delaware.oh.us/eservices/home.page.2)

(<https://court.co.delaware.oh.us/eservices/home.page.2>)

[E-filing registration](http://court.co.delaware.oh.us/eservices/register.page?prtICd=PUBLIC) (<http://court.co.delaware.oh.us/eservices/register.page?prtICd=PUBLIC>)

The single most useful local fact

Blank copies of every Domestic Relations form are free on the court's website and at the Clerk's office. The court even bundles them into one ZIP packet per case type, with a matching filing checklist. Start with the packet and checklist for your case — they are linked throughout this guide.

Filing something under seal?

Documents you want sealed must not be e-filed. File them in person at the Clerk's office or by mail, with a motion asking the court to seal them.

PART ONE

Domestic Relations: ending a marriage starts with one question.

If you are married, your case runs through the Domestic Relations Division. The first fork in the road: can you and your spouse sign a complete agreement on everything?

THE PATHFINDER

Do you both agree on everything?

Agreement means more than wanting the case over. It means signed terms on property, debt, support, and — if you have children — parenting and child support. If you have all of that, dissolution may fit. If anything is unsettled, or your spouse won't engage, divorce gives the court a process to move things forward anyway.

Dissolution — built on agreement.

You and your spouse file together. The court reviews your signed separation agreement and holds one short hearing, 30 to 90 days after filing. It is usually the fastest and least expensive path.

Divorce — built for disagreement.

One spouse files against the other. The court provides service, deadlines, temporary orders, discovery, and — if needed — a trial. Most divorces still settle before trial.

“Uncontested divorce” is not a dissolution.

In Ohio, an uncontested divorce is a default divorce — one spouse won't participate or can't be found. A dissolution is a joint filing built on a signed agreement. They are different filings with different forms. This guide covers both.

Where do I file?

To file here, you must have lived in Ohio for at least 6 months and in Delaware County for at least 90 days. If a case between you already exists, file in that case — not a new one. When spouses live in different places, the first proper filing usually controls where the case happens. Custody of a child generally belongs in the child's home state — usually where the child has lived for the last 6 months. Exceptions exist, including emergencies.

DISSOLUTION

Dissolution: ending a marriage by agreement.

A dissolution is a way to end your marriage when you and your spouse already agree on everything. You walk away with a Decree of Dissolution — a court order that ends the marriage and makes your agreement enforceable.

| FILING FEE | COURT | FINAL HEARING | SERVICE |
|---------------|-------------|---------------|---------|
| \$355 / \$455 | DR Division | 30–90 days | Waived |

This path may fit if...

- You both agree the marriage should end.
- Property, debt, and support terms are settled and you can both sign them.
- If you have children: parenting and child support terms are settled too.
- You can both attend one short final hearing.

Not for you if...

Any issue is unsettled. Your spouse won't sign. You can't locate your spouse. Or you need the court's protection while the case is pending. Those facts point to divorce — see the next section. Telling you that now saves you a rejected filing later.

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Core filing | Joint Petition for Dissolution with your signed separation agreement attached |
| Both spouses file | Together — there is no “other side” to serve |
| The hearing | Between 30 and 90 days after filing. Both spouses must attend. Bring your proposed Decree of Dissolution. |
| Changed your mind? | Either spouse may convert the dissolution to a divorce at any time before the decree — with no new filing fee |

What happens at the hearing

The final hearing is brief — roughly 15 minutes. The court confirms your information, checks that the agreement is valid, and confirms you both still want to end the marriage. Delaware County hasn't published whether you may attend by video — ask the court before the hearing date.

DISSOLUTION

The dissolution paperwork, in one packet.

Delaware County bundles every required form into one ZIP packet — one version with children, one without. Download the packet and the matching checklist first.

| FORM | WHERE TO GET IT | WHAT IT'S FOR |
|---|-----------------------|--|
| Dissolution with Children Packet (all forms, ZIP) https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2020/06/Dissolution-with-Children-Packet.zip | DR Court website | Every form for a dissolution involving minor children, in one download |
| Dissolution without Children Packet (ZIP) https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2020/06/Dissolution-without-Children-Packet.zip | DR Court website | Every form for a dissolution with no minor children |
| Dissolution with Children Checklist https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2022/02/Dissolution-with-Children-Checklist.pdf | DR Court website | Step-by-step filing checklist — use it to assemble your packet |
| Dissolution without Children Checklist https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2022/02/Dissolution-without-Children-Checklist.pdf | DR Court website | The no-children version of the checklist |
| Petition for Dissolution / Waiver of Service (Form 17) https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form17.pdf | Supreme Court of Ohio | The joint filing that starts the case |
| <p>⚠ Heads up: Attach everything the petition refers to: the separation agreement, legal descriptions of real estate, any shared parenting plan, and the child support worksheet. Incomplete attachments are a common rejection reason. (Local Rule 7.01)</p> | | |
| Separation Agreement (Form 19) https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form19.pdf | Supreme Court of Ohio | Your signed terms on property, debt, and support |
| Decree of Dissolution (Form 18) https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form18.pdf | Supreme Court of Ohio | The order the judge signs — bring it to your final hearing |
| Affidavit of Basic Information, Income, and Expenses (Affidavit 1) https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Affidavit1.pdf | Supreme Court of Ohio | Each spouse's financial disclosure |

| FORM | WHERE TO GET IT | WHAT IT'S FOR |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| <p>⚠ Heads up: You have a continuing duty to file an amended affidavit if your information changes while the case is pending. (Local Rule 2.02)</p> | | |
| <p>Affidavit of Property and Debt (Affidavit 2) https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Affidavit2.pdf</p> | Supreme Court of Ohio | Lists what you own and owe |
| <p>Party Supplemental Information Affidavit (local form) https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2022/02/Party-Supplemental-Information-Affidavit.pdf</p> | DR Court website | Delaware County's local add-on affidavit — required with every initial filing |
| <p>Domestic Relations Classification Form (local form) https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2023/10/Classification-Form.pdf</p> | DR Court website | Tells the Clerk what kind of case this is |
| <p>⚠ Heads up: Required with every new case and every post-decree reactivation in Delaware County. (Local Rule 2.01)</p> | | |

IF YOU HAVE MINOR CHILDREN, ADD THESE

Cases with minor children need more. Add the Parenting Proceeding Affidavit (Affidavit 3) and the Health Insurance Affidavit (Affidavit 4). Add Delaware County's Parenting Supplemental Information Affidavit. Add a child support worksheet and the JFS 07076 child support services application. If you want shared parenting, you must attach a proposed shared parenting plan — asking alone isn't enough. And if you agree to child support different from the guideline amount, Delaware County requires detailed written findings filed with the petition itself.

[Affidavit 3 — Parenting Proceeding](#) (<https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Affidavit3.pdf>)

[Affidavit 4 — Health Insurance](#) (<https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Affidavit4.pdf>)

[Parenting Supplemental Information Affidavit](#)

(<https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2022/02/Parenting-Supplemental-Information-Affidavit.pdf>)

[Shared Parenting Plan \(Form 20\)](#) (<https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/docs/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form20.pdf>)

[Findings of Fact — Child Support Deviation \(local\)](#) (<https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2022/02/Findings-of-Fact-and-Conclusions-of-Law-for-Child-Support-Deviation.pdf>)

[JFS 07076 — Application for Child Support Services](#) (<http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/num/JFS%2007076/>)

DISSOLUTION

What it costs and what happens next.

You pay the filing fee as a deposit when you file. If you can't afford it, file the county's Fee Waiver Affidavit and ask the court to waive the deposit.

WITHOUT CHILDREN

\$355.00

Filing fee deposit at the Clerk of Courts.

WITH CHILDREN

\$455.00

Filing fee deposit at the Clerk of Courts.

PARENTING SEMINAR

Set by provider

"For the Children" seminar through the OSU Extension Office — call (740) 833-2030 for cost and registration.

Court fees, forms, and procedures change. The information in this guide was verified as of June 11, 2026 from official court sources. Always confirm current fees and requirements with the Delaware County Clerk of Courts before you file. [Fee Waiver Affidavit](#)

(<https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2022/02/Fee-Waiver-Affidavit.pdf>)

How to file

1. Complete the packet and sign where required. Don't sign affidavits until you're in front of the notary.
2. Both spouses sign the petition and separation agreement.
3. File at the Clerk of Courts, 117 N. Union St., Level 300, with the Classification Form on top.
4. Pay the deposit or file the Fee Waiver Affidavit.
5. Register for the parenting seminar right away if you have children — both parents must finish it before the final decree.

1

File together

You and your spouse file the petition, agreement, and affidavits. No service is needed — you both waived it.

2

The 30–90 day window

The court sets your final hearing between 30 and 90 days after filing. Finish the parenting seminar in this window if children are involved.

3

The final hearing

Both spouses attend. The court confirms the agreement and that you both still want the dissolution — then signs the decree.

DIVORCE

Divorce: starting a case — or answering one.

A divorce ends your marriage by court order, with or without your spouse's cooperation. Your first step depends on which side of the case you're on.

| FILING FEE | ANSWER DEADLINE | TEMP. ORDERS RULED ON | COUNTERCLAIM FEE |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| \$385 / \$485 | 28 days | 14 days after service | \$150 |

A

I need to start the process.

You file a Complaint for Divorce. The complaint starts the case and tells the court what you're asking for. The Clerk then serves your spouse — formally delivers the papers.

B

I received divorce papers.

You have 28 days to file an Answer. The clock starts the day you were served — formally handed the papers, not the day you first heard about the case. The Answer makes you an official part of the case. A Counterclaim adds your own requests, and it matters: with one on file, the case can't simply end if your spouse dismisses.

IF YOU WERE SERVED

Don't wait for the hearing date to act.

Find the answer deadline. Save the envelope, summons, complaint, and any temporary-order papers. If a request for temporary orders is included, the clock is even shorter — see the next card.

AUTOMATIC FROM DAY ONE**The mutual restraining order**

The moment a divorce, annulment, or legal separation complaint is filed in Delaware County, a mutual restraining order takes effect against both spouses. It blocks bad financial behavior — draining accounts, canceling insurance, moving the children's residence, running up debt. It is standard in every case, not a reflection on either spouse.

[Read the Mutual Restraining Order](https://domestic.c.o.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2022/02/Mutual-Restraining-Order.pdf) (https://domestic.c.o.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2022/02/Mutual-Restraining-Order.pdf)

Temporary orders move fast here.

Temporary orders set the rules for money, the house, and the children while the case is pending. In Delaware County the court can rule 14 days after service, based only on the written affidavits — capped at 10 pages each. If your spouse requested temporary orders and you stay silent, the court can grant them on your spouse's version alone.

DIVORCE

The divorce forms, for both sides of the case.

Start with the county packet and checklist for your situation. The same affidavit set is required whether you file the complaint or the answer.

| FORM | WHERE TO GET IT | WHAT IT'S FOR |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| Divorce with Children Packet (all forms, ZIP) https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2020/06/Divorce-with-Children-Packet.zip | DR Court website | Every form to start a divorce involving minor children |
| Divorce without Children Packet (ZIP) https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2020/06/Divorce-without-Children-Packet.zip | DR Court website | Every form to start a divorce with no minor children |
| Divorce with Children Checklist https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2022/02/Divorce-with-Children-Checklist.pdf | DR Court website | The court's own filing checklist |
| Divorce without Children Checklist https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2022/02/Divorce-without-Children-Checklist.pdf | DR Court website | The no-children version |
| Complaint for Divorce With Children (Form 7) https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form7.pdf | Supreme Court of Ohio | Starts the case when minor children are involved (Form 6 is the no-children version) |
| Answer to Complaint for Divorce With Children (Form 11) https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form11.pdf | Supreme Court of Ohio | Your formal response if you were served (Form 10 is the no-children version) |
| <p>△ Heads up: Your answer or counterclaim must include the same affidavit package as the complaint, served on the other side with it. (Local Rule 2.02(C))</p> | | |
| Counterclaim for Divorce With Children (Form 9) https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form9.pdf | Supreme Court of Ohio | Adds your own requests to the case (Form 8 is the no-children version) — \$150 filing fee |

| FORM | WHERE TO GET IT | WHAT IT'S FOR |
|--|-----------------------|---|
| Motion/Affidavit for Temporary Orders (Affidavit 5) https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Affidavit5.pdf | Supreme Court of Ohio | Asks for orders on money, the home, and parenting while the case is pending |
| <p>⚠ Heads up: Supporting affidavits are capped at 10 pages without advance court approval. (Local Rule 9.01)</p> | | |
| Request for Service (Form 31) https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form31.pdf | Supreme Court of Ohio | Tells the Clerk how to serve your spouse |
| <p>⚠ Heads up: Whoever requests service must file written instructions — every time, in every form. (Local Rule 3.01)</p> | | |
| Domestic Relations Classification Form (local form) https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2023/10/Classification-Form.pdf | DR Court website | Required cover form for every new case |

Common mistakes on these forms

Signing affidavits before you're in front of the notary. Leaving the affidavit package out of an answer or counterclaim. Math that doesn't add up on the income and expense affidavit. Skipping the Classification Form. And know where proposed orders go. In Delaware County, they go by email to the judge's or magistrate's assistant — not to the Clerk.

DIVORCE

What the divorce process looks like.

Most divorces settle before trial. The court's structure exists so the case keeps moving even when one spouse doesn't.

1

Complaint, service, answer

You file; the Clerk serves your spouse; your spouse has 28 days to answer. A random draw assigns your judge or magistrate.

2

Temporary orders

Either spouse may ask. The court can rule on the papers 14 days after service, or hold a short hearing — 20 minutes per side.

3

Status conference and discovery

The court sets trial and pretrial dates and discovery deadlines. Each side may send up to 40 written questions, and discovery closes 45 days before trial.

4

Settlement — or trial

Delaware County pushes settlement hard, with programs most counties don't have (see the dispute-resolution page). If nothing settles, the court decides at trial.

Property: equitable is not equal.

Ohio courts divide marital property fairly — which is not always 50/50. What counts as marital turns on when it was acquired, not whose name is on it. Inheritances and gifts stay separate if you can trace them; mixing them into joint accounts can change that. Retirement accounts divide by special orders (QDRO or DOPO). The Clerk charges \$4 per page, plus \$1 for a certified copy, to process them. A house, a business, or disputed values are signals to bring in an appraiser or an attorney.

THE DEFAULT PATH**When your spouse won't respond — or can't be found**

If no answer is filed, the case proceeds as uncontested. The final hearing happens at least 42 days after service is complete. The divorce can go through without your spouse. But if they show up before it's final, it's no longer uncontested. If you can't locate your spouse, service runs by publication. You file an affidavit listing your efforts to find them. Notice then runs once a week for 6 straight weeks. You pay the newspaper directly. One more local note: if you're the plaintiff and you skip your own uncontested final hearing, the court dismisses the case. Calendar it.

OTHER PATHS

Legal separation and annulment.

Two less-common filings use the same court and most of the same paperwork. Both trigger the automatic mutual restraining order, just like a divorce.

Legal separation

A legal separation does everything a divorce does — divides property and debt, sets support, allocates parenting — except end the marriage. People usually choose it for religious or insurance reasons. Delaware County publishes its own complaint form, and the filing requires the same affidavit package as a divorce.

[Complaint for Legal Separation \(local form\)](https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2022/02/Complaint-for-Legal-Separation.pdf) (<https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2022/02/Complaint-for-Legal-Separation.pdf>)

Annulment

An annulment treats the marriage as if it never legally happened. It applies only in specific situations — and it is rare. Delaware County requires the standard affidavit package with an annulment complaint. But it publishes no annulment forms — and there is no statewide standard form either. This is a filing to discuss with an attorney before drafting.

Filing fee not published

The Clerk's posted fee schedule doesn't list a legal separation or annulment deposit. Call the Clerk of Courts at (740) 833-2500 for the current amount before you file.

A quick flag

Military and international divorces carry their own rules. Military retirement divides under its own federal rules. Overseas service and custody issues add steps. If either applies to you, get experienced help early.

QUICK QUESTIONS

Do we both have to show up? Can I file before I move out?

For a dissolution — yes, both spouses must attend the final hearing. For a divorce, the responding spouse who never answers can be divorced without appearing. And yes, you can file before you move out. Living apart is not required to start a divorce, dissolution, or legal separation in Ohio.

CHILDREN

Custody and parenting time — in Ohio's real vocabulary.

Ohio does not have “primary custody” or “joint custody.” Courts here use different words. Learning them now makes every form and hearing easier to follow.

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Sole custody | One parent is the legal custodian — the major decision-maker for school, health, and religion. |
| Shared parenting | Both parents share decision-making under a written plan. The parent asking for it must file a proposed shared parenting plan — without one, the court can't consider it. |
| Residential parent | Mostly administrative — whose address is used for school enrollment and similar purposes. Not the same thing as legal custody. |
| Parenting time | The schedule. It is not set by custody type — parents can have equal or unequal time under either arrangement. Older forms may say “visitation.” |
| Supervised parenting time | Time that happens with another adult present — used when safety is a real concern, not as a punishment. |

Good to know in Delaware County
 When the court orders its standard parenting time schedule, child support automatically drops by 10% under state law. The standard schedule is published on the court's website.

[Local Parenting Time Schedule](https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2022/02/Local-Parenting-Time-Schedule.pdf) (https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2022/02/Local-Parenting-Time-Schedule.pdf)

Child support is custody-neutral.
 Support is set the same way in sole custody and in shared parenting. It comes from both parents' incomes — not from the label on the arrangement. The next pages show how.

CHILDREN

The required class — and the rule before any move.

Two requirements catch Delaware County parents by surprise. Handle both early.

REQUIRED CLASS

The “For the Children” parenting seminar
Both parents must complete the seminar before any final decree of divorce, dissolution, legal separation, or annulment involving children. The OSU Extension Office runs it — call (740) 833-2030 to register. The court waives it only for good cause, and skipping it can get a case dismissed or court-ordered parenting suspended.

[Seminar information sheet](https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2024/03/FOR-THE-CHILDREN2-2024.pdf) (https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2024/03/FOR-THE-CHILDREN2-2024.pdf)

MOVING?**The 90-day relocation rule**

Does a parenting order apply to you? If you intend to move, Delaware County requires a Notice of Intent to Relocate. File it at least 90 days before the move.

[Notice of Intent to Relocate](https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2022/02/Notice-of-Intent-to-Relocate.pdf) (https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2022/02/Notice-of-Intent-to-Relocate.pdf)

CHILDREN

Child support: how the number is set.

Ohio uses an income shares model. Support is set from both parents' incomes, health insurance costs, and work-related child care. The math is the same in sole custody and in shared parenting.

Run the numbers yourself

The worksheet amount is presumed correct. You can calculate it before you ever file:

[Ohio's official child support calculator](https://ohiochildsupportcalculator.ohio.gov/home.html)

(<https://ohiochildsupportcalculator.ohio.gov/home.html>)

[Gavvl's child support calculator](https://gavvl.com/child-support-calculator)

(<https://gavvl.com/child-support-calculator>)

MEDICAL SUPPORT

Health insurance rules

Every order must address health insurance. Coverage is “reasonable” if it adds no more than 5% of the parent's gross income. It's “accessible” if primary care is within 30 miles of the child. Medicaid plans don't count as private insurance — without affordable private coverage, the court orders cash medical support instead. Uninsured costs are usually split by percentage.

DEVIATIONS

Paying more or less than the worksheet

Only the court — never the child support agency — can order an amount different from the guideline. The parent asking must prove the guideline amount is unjust or inappropriate, and Delaware County requires detailed written findings of fact. 90 or more overnights a year triggers a 10% adjustment; bigger deviations need approved agreement or statutory support.

Pay through the agency — always.

Support is paid through the child support enforcement agency (CSEA). Money handed directly to the other parent counts legally as a gift, not as support. Enforcement is real. License suspensions, tax refund seizure, frozen accounts, liens, passport denial. Contempt can mean up to 90 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

Do we get a lower number if we both agree?

Not automatically. The court orders what it finds is in the child's best interest — even over the parents' agreement.

WHEN IT ENDS

Support ends when the child turns 18 and graduates high school, or turns 19 — whichever comes first. It can run longer by agreement, or for a child with special needs.

Changing a support order later

Support changes are prospective only — never backdated. Every 36 months you can ask the CSEA for an administrative review. Sooner than that, you need a substantial change. That means a recalculation that moves the number more than 10%, health care the order no longer covers, or an unforeseen event. Bring proof — current pay statements, three years of tax returns, and daycare and insurance costs.

UNMARRIED PARENTS

Parentage: Delaware County hears these in DR Court.

In many Ohio counties, never-married parents go to Juvenile Court. Delaware County is different: parentage and the allocation of parental rights are filed in the Domestic Relations Division.

| FILING FEE | COURT | DEFAULT RULE | STEPS FOR FATHERS |
|------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| \$200 | DR Division | Mother has sole custody | Two |

The two-step rule for unmarried fathers

1. Establish paternity — by signed Acknowledgment of Paternity, a court-ordered DNA test (an at-home kit won't work), or court order. This triggers child support.
2. Separately ask the court for custody or parenting time. Paternity alone grants neither — this second step is the one most people miss.

The default until you act

An unmarried mother has sole custody by default. Nothing changes until a court order says otherwise — no matter what the parents have worked out informally. If you want shared parenting, you must file a proposed shared parenting plan with your request.

THE PAPERWORK

Delaware County bundles the forms into one packet, with a checklist. A parentage complaint needs the income and expense affidavit and the county's supplemental affidavits. It also needs the parenting and health insurance affidavits. Add the JFS 07076 if you ask for genetic testing or child support. In a contested case, the CSEA may cover testing costs if parentage was never determined; otherwise the contesting parent prepays. Support for unmarried parents can reach back in time under Ohio law.

[Parentage / Allocation of Parental Rights Packet \(ZIP\)](https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2020/06/Parentage-Allocation-of-Parental-Rights-Packet.zip)

(<https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2020/06/Parentage-Allocation-of-Parental-Rights-Packet.zip>)

[Parentage filing checklist](https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2022/02/Parentage-Allocation-of-Parental-Rights-Checklist.pdf)

(<https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2022/02/Parentage-Allocation-of-Parental-Rights-Checklist.pdf>)

[Complaint for Parentage / Allocation / Parenting Time \(Form 23\)](https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CF/C/DRForms/Form23.pdf)

(<https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CF/C/DRForms/Form23.pdf>)

AFTER THE DECREE

Changing an order that already exists.

A decree is not forever-fixed. But what you're changing matters — custody, parenting time, child support, and spousal support each follow a different path and a different burden.

| REACTIVATION FEE | CUSTODY / TIME MOTIONS | CHILD SUPPORT MOTIONS | SPOUSAL SUPPORT MOTIONS |
|------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| \$200 | 5 affidavits | 4 affidavits | 2 affidavits |

Custody and parenting time

File a motion in your original case. It stays with your original judge or magistrate. Include the full five-affidavit package and the Classification Form. The county's Modification of Parenting Orders packet bundles everything. The court decides at a status conference whether the motion is contested.

[Modification of Parenting Orders Packet \(ZIP\)](https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2020/06/Modification-of-Parenting-Orders-Packet.zip) (https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2020/06/Modification-of-Parenting-Orders-Packet.zip)

[Modification checklist](https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2022/02/Modification-of-Parenting-Orders-Checklist.pdf) (https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2022/02/Modification-of-Parenting-Orders-Checklist.pdf)

[Motion for Change of Parental Rights \(Form 27\)](https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form27.pdf) (https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form27.pdf)

[Motion for Change of Parenting Time \(Form 26\)](https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form26.pdf) (https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form26.pdf)

Support

Child support has the administrative path described on the child support page — or a court motion with proof of a substantial change. Spousal support can be modified only if your decree allows it and circumstances have changed under the statute.

[Motion for Change of Child Support \(Form 28\)](https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form28.pdf) (https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form28.pdf)

Already agree on the change?

Delaware County has a shortcut. File the motion with the required affidavits and an Agreed Judgment Entry signed by both parties — and counsel, if represented. No fight required.

Heads up on every post-decree filing

Reactivating a closed case costs \$200 and requires a new Classification Form. Post-decree motions must be formally served, like a new case. For contempt, serving the other side's lawyer alone is not valid service.

ENFORCEMENT

Contempt, objections, and out-of-state orders.

Before you file anything, triage: does your decree require mediation first? Have you tried to fix it in writing? Is the fight worth its cost? Honest answers here save real money.

Contempt — when the other person won't follow the order

Contempt asks the court to enforce its own order. Your motion needs an affidavit with specific facts — dates, amounts, what was violated. If the court finds contempt, it usually issues a purge order: specific conditions the other person can meet to avoid the penalty. Attorney's fees can be awarded too. Can't afford a lawyer to defend a contempt charge? File the indigency affidavit within 3 business days of getting the summons. It carries a \$25 fee.

[Motion for Contempt / Affidavit \(Form 24\)](https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form24.pdf) (https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form24.pdf)

[Show Cause Order and Notice \(Form 25\)](https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form25.pdf) (https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form25.pdf)

Objections — not a second trial

Most hearings here are heard by magistrates. Disagree with a magistrate's decision? You have 14 days to file objections — and 10 days to move to set aside a magistrate's order. An objection is review for error. It can use only the evidence presented at the hearing — no new witnesses, no new documents, no do-over. The deadlines are short and unforgiving.

Out-of-state decrees

An order from another state can be registered here for enforcement under Ohio's interstate support and custody laws. The filing gets a Delaware County case number. Changing another state's custody order is possible only in the narrow cases state law allows. Confirm your filing with the Clerk — counties handle details differently.

QUICK QUESTIONS

Can I just stop parenting time if support isn't paid?

No. Parenting time and support are separate orders, and withholding one over the other can put you in contempt yourself. Enforce support through the CSEA or a contempt motion — and keep the schedule running.

SETTLING WITHOUT TRIAL

Delaware County's settlement programs are the local advantage.

This court has built one of Ohio's most developed dispute-resolution systems. Knowing these programs exist — and asking for them — can shorten your case by months.

SETTLEMENT WEEKS**76% full settlement**

Twice a year the court clears its docket for an entire week. Private mediators run 3-hour sessions at a reduced fee. Attorneys attend with their clients. Judicial officers stand by to put agreements on the record the same day. Court funds can cover the fee for parties who can't pay. In the November 2023 week, 76.47% of cases fully settled.

NEUTRAL EVALUATION**82.76% full settlement**

A private, non-binding preview of your trial. A panel hears both sides: an unassigned magistrate plus an outside expert, such as a forensic accountant. You get an honest read of strengths, weaknesses, and likely outcomes. Nothing said there can be used as evidence. Of the first 29 evaluations, 82.76% fully settled.

CO-PARENT COACHING**Conflict, coached down**

A structured coaching program. Individual intro sessions, up to 6 joint sessions in person or by Zoom, and up to 2 closing sessions. It shows measured gains in conflict reduction and parent confidence.

MEDIATION**Available in any DR case**

The court can order mediation — or you can request it — in any case, including post-decree. Everything said in mediation is confidential and privileged. Screening for domestic violence happens before and during, and DV cases are not referred.

GUARDIANS AD LITEM

In contested parenting cases the court may appoint a guardian ad litem. That's an attorney who investigates and speaks for the child's best interest — not for either parent. The GAL interviews both parents and the child, visits homes, and reviews records. Fees are set in the appointment order based on the parties' ability to pay; an indigent parent may not be required to pay. The GAL's written report is due at least 7 days before the final hearing and stays out of the public file.

PARENTING COORDINATION

After a parenting order exists, the court can appoint a parenting coordinator for up to 48 months to resolve day-to-day plan disputes. A coordinator cannot change custody, move a child's school, or modify support. You have 14 days to object to any written decision.

One phone number to remember

The court's Family Resource Coordinator, Amy Armstrong, connects families to these programs: (740) 833-2009.

SAFETY

Civil protection orders: free, fast, and heard here.

If someone in your household or a dating partner has threatened or hurt you, you can ask the Domestic Relations Division for a civil protection order. There is never a filing fee.

| FILING FEE | EX PARTE HEARING | FULL HEARING | ORDER CAN LAST |
|--------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| \$0 — always | Same day, if filed by 2:30 p.m. | 7–10 court days | Up to 5 years |

How it works

1. File the petition at the Clerk of Courts, 117 N. Union St., Level 300. You can file on your own, with a lawyer, or with help from the Prosecutor's Office of Victim's Services.
2. If you file before 2:30 p.m., a judge or magistrate hears your sworn statement the same day — without the other person present. After 2:30, it's the next business day.
3. If granted, the ex parte order takes effect immediately. The sheriff serves the other person.
4. A full hearing follows within 7 court days if the other person was ordered out of a shared home. Otherwise it's within 10 court days. Both sides testify.
5. A final order can last up to 5 years and can cover the home, vehicles, children, support, weapons, and counseling.

THE FORMS

Protection order forms are statewide Supreme Court of Ohio forms. Delaware County also bundles them into packets with checklists — one for domestic violence, one for dating violence.

[Supreme Court protection order forms](https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/courts/services-to-courts/domestic-violence-program/domestic-violence-protection-order-forms/) (https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/courts/services-to-courts/domestic-violence-program/domestic-violence-protection-order-forms/)

[Domestic Violence CPO Packet \(ZIP\)](https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2020/06/Domestic-Violence-Protection-Order-Packet.zip) (https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2020/06/Domestic-Violence-Protection-Order-Packet.zip)

[Domestic Violence CPO Checklist](https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2022/02/Domestic-Violence-Protection-Order-Checklist.pdf) (https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2022/02/Domestic-Violence-Protection-Order-Checklist.pdf)

[Dating Violence CPO Packet \(ZIP\)](https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2020/06/Dating-Violence-Protection-Order-Packet.zip) (https://domestic.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/44/2020/06/Dating-Violence-Protection-Order-Packet.zip)

If the order is violated

Violating a protection order is a crime. Call the police — don't wait for a court date. The order stays in effect even if a divorce or custody case starts later. Its parenting and support terms end when another court issues new ones.

If you're in danger right now

Call 911. The National Domestic Violence Hotline is available around the clock at (800) 799-7233.

PRACTICAL CONDUCT

What helps your case — and what quietly hurts it.

Family cases are won and lost on conduct as much as paperwork. None of this is judgment. All of it is experience.

Do

- Put things in writing, and save the evidence: texts, emails, posts, bank records.
- Keep the children's routine steady — school, activities, exchanges.
- Finish the parenting seminar early, not the week before your hearing.
- Ask about Settlement Weeks, mediation, and Neutral Evaluation — they exist for you.

Don't

- Post about the case — or your spouse — on social media.
- Put the children in the middle: no messages carried, no logistics fights through them.
- Drain accounts, cancel insurance, lock your spouse out, or destroy property — these violate the automatic mutual restraining order and they backfire.
- Hand support money directly to the other parent — it counts as a gift, not support.

Your well-being matters too

The hardest part of most cases isn't a form — it's the months of uncertainty. If safety, money, or stability are shaky, use the resources in this guide. The protection order process. The fee waiver. The court's coaching and mediation programs. And the people in your corner.

NOT SURE WHICH PATH FITS?

The 2-minute quiz will tell you.

Answer a few questions and get a personalized read on the service — and the level of help — that fits your situation. No pressure, no obligation.

gavvl.com/find-my-service (<https://gavvl.com/find-my-service>)

Or call (844) 694-2885.

PART TWO

Juvenile Court: when a child's case sits outside a marriage.

Delaware County's Juvenile Division shares the Rutherford B. Hayes Building — and Judge Hejmanowski — with the Probate Court. Remember: parentage cases between parents go to DR Court here. Juvenile Court takes the rest.

NON-PARENT CUSTODY

Grandparents and other caregivers

A non-parent — often a grandparent — can ask the Juvenile Court for custody of a child. In an abuse, neglect, or dependency case, a complaint or counterclaim costs \$200. A motion to intervene costs \$20. A custody change costs \$200. The court hasn't posted a fee for a standalone non-parent custody complaint. Call (740) 833-2600 before you file.

SHORT-TERM CARE

The grandparent power of attorney

Sometimes a parent needs a grandparent to handle school and medical choices for a while. A grandparent power of attorney does that without a custody fight. The court posts a complete filing packet — one per child.

[Grandparent POA Filing Packet](https://juvenile.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2022/06/Power-of-Attorney-Filing-Packet-for-Each-Child.pdf) (https://juvenile.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2022/06/Power-of-Attorney-Filing-Packet-for-Each-Child.pdf)

EMERGENCIES

Emergency custody: two filings, a high bar

Emergency custody takes two filings. One is the emergency ex parte motion. The other is an underlying motion for custody or a change. The bar is high — a real and immediate risk of harm to the child, not a schedule dispute. If granted, the ex parte hearing happens fast, often the same day. A full hearing follows, while the underlying motion runs on its own track. In the DR Division, emergency motions about a child's health, safety, or removal get a 20-minute hearing per side.

Out-of-state custody orders

Delaware County hasn't posted a local juvenile process for this. Registering another state's custody order follows Ohio's statewide UCCJEA process and standard Supreme Court forms. Always confirm with your local court — counties handle details differently.

PART TWO

Abuse, neglect, and dependency cases — and how this court works.

If a children's services case touches your family, you have rights, deadlines, and real chances to be heard. These cases move fast. Showing up matters more than anything else.

If you're part of a CPS case

Abuse, neglect, and dependency (AND) cases exist to protect children. Parents in them have the right to counsel — a public defender if you qualify. The court hands every party a rights sheet, in English and Spanish. A guardian ad litem speaks for the child's best interest. Attend every hearing. Work the case plan. Ask questions, in writing when you can.

[AND Rights Sheet](https://juvenile.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2018/04/AND-Rights-Sheet-Revised-2018-DAH-.docx) (https://juvenile.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2018/04/AND-Rights-Sheet-Revised-2018-DAH-.docx)

A second chance, built in

Delaware County runs a Family Treatment Court for parents in AND cases when the root issue is substance abuse or mental health. The path: treatment, stable housing, and a job — with getting your children back as the goal.

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Filing | In person, by mail, by email or fax (under 26 pages), or e-filing through eAccess |
| After-hours filings | Stamped the next business day |
| Responding to a motion | Written responses are due within 14 days; replies within 7 |
| Subpoenas | Request at least 2 days before the hearing |
| Mediation | Available by court order or request; agreements stay sealed unless confidentiality is waived |
| Certified copies | \$2.00 each; plain copies \$0.10 |

One building rule

No concealed handguns in the Rutherford B. Hayes Building — even with a license. Plan for security screening and arrive early.

PART THREE

Adoption runs through Probate Court — and the paperwork is exacting.

In Ohio, only Probate Court can grant an adoption. In Delaware County it sits at 145 N. Union St. under Judge Hejmanowski. Adoption is permanent. It fully ends the prior legal parent-child bond — which is exactly why courts check every box.

STEPPARENT ADOPTION**\$456.00**

Initial deposit. An attorney is required.

ADOPTION OF AN ADULT**\$105.00**

Initial deposit. No attorney required.

PRIVATE / PREPLACEMENT**\$1,433.00**

Initial deposit, plus \$135 for each additional child. Attorney required.

Court fees, forms, and procedures change. The information in this guide was verified as of June 11, 2026 from official court sources. Always confirm current fees and requirements with the Delaware County Probate Court at (740) 833-2680 before you file.

Custody is not adoption.

Custody lets an adult make decisions for a child. The legal parents stay parents. Adoption ends the old parental bond for good and creates a new one. And in Ohio, unmarried people cannot adopt together. Be sure adoption — not custody or guardianship — is the tool you need.

Where you can file

File in the Probate Court where the child was born or where the adopting person lives. A service member can file where they are stationed. A private adoption can also be filed where the birth parent lives. Stepparent filers must live in Delaware County to file here.

ADOPTION

Stepparent adoption: the consent question comes first.

Most stepparent adoptions rise or fall on one question: will the other birth parent consent? Answer that before anything else.

THE THRESHOLD

Is consent required — or excused?

Both birth parents normally must consent. So must a child over 12, and any adult being adopted. But consent can be excused. The most common path: a full year of no contact and no support from the other parent. Whether that applies is a legal judgment with permanent results. If consent may be contested, get counsel before filing — an attorney is required in these cases anyway.

The home study isn't scary

Every adoption includes a home study by a court-assigned assessor — background checks, a home visit, references. It verifies what you already know: that your home is safe and ready.

1

Gather the threshold documents

Photo ID and a certified “book copy” birth certificate. That's the long form showing the city and county of birth — not the short abstract.

2

File the petition

Your attorney files the Petition for Adoption of Minor with the consents. If consent is excused, they file the entry asking the court to find it not needed.

3

Home study and notice

The court-assigned assessor completes the home study. Anyone entitled to notice is formally notified — by publication if needed.

4

The hearing

The petitioner and the children attend. If approved, the court signs the final decree.

5

The new birth certificate

The typed Certificate of Adoption goes to the Bureau of Vital Statistics. The original birth certificate is sealed and a new one is issued.

ADOPTION

The adoption forms — and the other paths.

Delaware County publishes its adoption forms by type. The core minor-adoption set is below; adult adoption uses its own parallel set.

| FORM | WHERE TO GET IT | WHAT IT'S FOR |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| Petition for Adoption of Minor (Form 18.0) https://probate.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/04/18_0.pdf | Probate Court website | Starts a stepparent or private adoption |
| Consent to Adoption (Form 18.3) https://probate.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/04/18_3-1.pdf | Probate Court website | The birth parent's (and older child's) written consent |
| Judgment Entry Finding Consent Not Required (Form 18.4) https://probate.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/04/18_4.pdf | Probate Court website | Used when consent is legally excused |
| Final Decree of Adoption (Form 18.7) https://probate.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/04/18_7.pdf | Probate Court website | The order that finalizes the adoption |
| Certificate of Adoption — Vital Statistics https://probate.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/04/Bureau-of-Statistics-Adoption-Form-2020-1.pdf | Probate Court website | Triggers the new birth certificate |
| <p>⚠ Heads up: This form must be typed before it goes to the Bureau of Vital Statistics.</p> | | |
| Petition for Adoption of Adult (Form 19.0) https://probate.co.delaware.oh.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/04/19_0.pdf | Probate Court website | Adult adoptions — the one type with no attorney requirement |
| Full adoption forms library https://probate.co.delaware.oh.us/formsservice/adoptions/ | Probate Court website | Every type — stepparent, private, adult, agency, and foreign refinalization |

PRIVATE AND KINSHIP ADOPTION

A private adoption runs through a private attorney with a \$1,433 deposit. Most kinship adoptions outside an agency work this way too. A petition can even be filed before a child is placed. One deadline matters most. A putative father must sign up with Ohio's Putative Father Registry before the birth or within 30 days after — (888) 313-3100.

ADULT ADOPTION

Ohio allows adult adoption in set cases, with consent. A stepchild. A former foster or kinship child. A person with a lasting disability. Or someone who was in permanent custody at 18. No attorney is required and the deposit is \$105. For an Ohio-born adoptee, the new birth certificate arrives in about 4 months.

ADOPTION QUESTIONS?

Consent and notice mistakes can derail an adoption.

Is consent likely to be contested? Not sure notice was handled right? A short consultation before filing is the cheapest insurance there is.

gavvl.com/find-my-service (<https://gavvl.com/find-my-service>)

Or call (844) 694-2885.

PART FOUR

How Gavvl Law can help — if you want company on the road.

This guide gave you the map. Everything in it works whether or not you ever call us. If you do want help, here is honestly what that looks like.

FULL REPRESENTATION

An attorney manages the whole case.

From the first meeting through final orders. Strategy, every filing, every hearing, negotiation, and trial if it comes to that. You have attorney access the whole way. Best for contested or complex cases, high-conflict situations, and anything that may reach trial. Billed as a retainer plus hourly fees.

LIMITED-SCOPE, FLAT FEE

Hire a lawyer for the part you actually need.

One task, one flat fee. Drafting and filing papers, one hearing, an advice session, or a document review. Best for uncontested matters, simple changes, and tight budgets. Honestly, we don't suggest it for complex or high-conflict cases that need steady help. And if a limited-scope matter turns contested, it can usually move to full representation.

What we handle in Delaware County

- Divorce and dissolution — strategy, packets, temporary orders, settlement, hearings.
- Custody and parenting time — plans, changes, moves, and hearing prep.
- Child and spousal support — the math, deviations, changes, and enforcement.
- Protection orders — petitions and defense.
- Stepparent and kinship adoption — consent review, packets, finalization.

ABOUT THE FIRM

Gavvl Law is a modern Ohio family law firm. It serves all 88 counties, with deep roots in the Columbus metro area — which includes Delaware County. The firm pairs seasoned family-law attorneys with practical tools: secure messaging, video meetings, and e-signatures. It was co-founded by attorneys who have been through divorce and custody themselves. Clients rate the firm 4.8+ across 90+ verified Google reviews. Best Lawyers named Gavvl a “Firm to Watch” for 2026.

PART FOUR

Ways to pay — and how to start.

Payment options depend on the service model. Ohio's rules treat retainers differently from flat fees. Exact amounts are set at enrollment.

Full representation

Pay in full by card through Confido Legal. Or finance with Affirm — monthly payments, instant approval, and a soft credit check that won't touch your score.

Limited-scope flat fees — the widest range

Pay in full by card. Or finance through Affirm (0–30% APR over 3, 6, or 12 months), Klarna, or PayPal. There's also Gavvl Direct — the firm's in-house plan with no credit check. Start with 60% down and finance the rest. Or finance the full fee and begin once 60% is paid. The financed amount carries 19% annual interest, compounded monthly. Questions: financing@gavvl.com.

Three ways to start

1. Take the 2-minute Find My Service quiz. It tells you which service fits: gavvl.com/find-my-service
2. Book a low-cost consultation at gavvl.com/start
3. Call (844) 694-2885 or email support@gavvl.com

A note on those numbers

Awards, ratings, and reviews reflect other clients' cases and the raters' opinions. They do not promise or predict your outcome. Every case is different.

READY WHEN YOU ARE

Start with the quiz — or just call.

We'll help you find the right court, the likely path, and the level of help that fits right now.

(844) 694-2885

support@gavvl.com

gavvl.com/find-my-service

1677 Old Henderson Road, Columbus, Ohio 43220

REQUIRED READING

Important disclosures.

Information, not legal advice

This guide is information, not legal advice. It explains how things generally work in Delaware County, but it can't account for the facts of your situation. Reading it, downloading it, or contacting Gavvl Law does not make you a client or create an attorney-client relationship. Only a signed engagement agreement does that. For advice about your own case, talk with a licensed Ohio attorney.

Accuracy and change

Court fees, forms, and procedures change. The information in this guide was verified as of June 11, 2026 from official court sources. Always confirm current fees and requirements with the Delaware County Clerk of Courts — (740) 833-2500 — before you file. Where Delaware County has not published a local procedure, this guide describes Ohio's statewide process and says so.

Results and recognition

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

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