

PLAIN-ENGLISH GUIDE

Family Law in Licking County

A plain-English map for divorce, dissolution, custody, support, and adoption in Licking County: which court to use, what to file, what it costs, and where to get help.

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- 01** Find the right Newark court before you fill out a single form.

 - 02** See the real filing fees, forms, and deadlines for each kind of case.

 - 03** Learn how Licking County handles parenting time, paternity, and protection orders — including a few local quirks.

 - 04** Pick a next step that fits your situation, your budget, and your timeline.

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Use this guide like a map, not a textbook.

Family-law problems get easier once you can name the court, the path, the paperwork, and the next decision. This guide is built around those four questions for Licking County.

01

Which court handles this?

In Licking County the Domestic Relations Court (75 E. Main St., Newark) hears divorce, dissolution, legal separation, and annulment. It also hears all paternity cases and protection orders. The combined Probate & Juvenile Court (1 North Park Place) hears custody and support for unmarried parents. It also handles adoptions.

02

Do you agree, or is there a dispute?

If both spouses agree on everything, a dissolution is usually faster and cheaper. If you do not agree, or someone will not sign, a divorce gives the court a process for service, deadlines, and decisions.

INFORMATION, NOT LEGAL ADVICE

This guide is information, not legal advice.

It explains how things generally work in Licking County, but it cannot account for the facts of your case. 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 situation, talk with a licensed Ohio attorney.

THE LOCAL QUIRK TO REMEMBER

Paternity is in Domestic Relations here.

In many Ohio counties paternity is a Juvenile Court matter. In Licking County, the Domestic Relations Court hears all paternity cases.

YOUR COURTS

Where family-law cases are heard in Licking County.

Match your case to the right court and clerk before you file. Confirm current details with the court — numbers and hours can change.

DIVORCE · DISSOLUTION · PATERNITY · DVCPO

Domestic Relations Court

75 East Main Street, Newark, OH 43055
 Phone: (740) 670-5400 · Fax: (740) 670-5419
 Hours: Mon–Fri, 8:00–Noon & 1:00–4:30
 Judges Duke Frost and Richard P. Wright
lickingcounty.gov/depts/domestic

UNMARRIED-PARENT CUSTODY · CPS · ADOPTION

Probate & Juvenile Court

1 North Park Place, Newark, OH 43055
 Phone: (740) 670-5624 · Fax: (740) 670-5881
 Judge Deborah G. Lang (one judge for both divisions)
lickingcounty.gov/depts/probate

FILING · RECORDS · CHILD SUPPORT

Clerk & CSEA

Clerk of Common Pleas:
 Olivia C. Parkinson
 Protection-order packets:
 Clerk's Office, 75 E. Main St. (8:00–4:30)

Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA)
 65 E. Main St., Newark · (740) 670-5998

E-FILING (DR & GENERAL) eFileOH (Tyler)	PARENTING SEMINAR The Woodlands	DV HELP, 24/7 1-800-686-2760	LEGAL AID SEOLS Newark
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GOOD TO KNOW

The Clerk's eFileOH portal (efileoh.tylertech.cloud) covers the General and Domestic Relations Divisions. A few filings can not be e-filed. These must be filed on paper: protection orders, out-of-state orders, garnishments, depositions, and transcripts. Fax filings are not accepted. Ask the Probate & Juvenile Court ((740) 670-5624) about its own e-filing.

PART ONE

Domestic Relations: ending a marriage and everything tied to it.

If you are married, ending the marriage runs through the Domestic Relations Court. The first question is whether you and your spouse agree on everything.

QUICK PATHFINDER

Do you both agree on every term?

“Agree” means signed terms on property, debt, support, parenting, and child support if you have children — not just wanting the marriage to end. If yes, dissolution may fit. If no, divorce is the safer or required path.

Dissolution is built on agreement.

You and your spouse file together and ask the court to approve a signed separation agreement. The court still reviews everything and holds a short final hearing.

Divorce is built for disagreement.

One spouse files against the other. A divorce can still settle, but it gives the court a process for service, deadlines, temporary orders, and trial if needed.

BOTH PATHS, SAME COURT

Divorce, dissolution, legal separation, and annulment are all filed in the Domestic Relations Court at 75 E. Main Street, Newark. Most pleadings use the Supreme Court of Ohio Uniform Domestic Relations Forms, linked in the sections that follow.

PATH A

Dissolution: the fully agreed way to end a marriage.

Dissolution works when you and your spouse already agree on everything and neither of you needs the court to force information, service, or temporary orders.

COURT	FILING FEE	FINAL HEARING	SERVICE
Domestic Relations	\$400	30–90 days	Usually waived

This path may fit if...

- You both agree the marriage should end.
- Property, debt, support, and parenting terms are already settled.
- Both of you can sign the paperwork and attend the final hearing.

This is not the right path if...

- × You do not yet agree on every term.
- × Your spouse will not sign or will not share financial information.
- × There are safety concerns or hidden assets. In those situations, file a divorce instead.

COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

- × Treating dissolution as “easy divorce” and skipping the hard part — checking the agreement covers the future.
- × Vague terms on retirement, taxes, real estate, debt, or parenting.
- × Forgetting to sign before a notary where the form requires it.
- × Skipping the required parenting seminar when you have minor children.

IF YOU HAVE CHILDREN

Both spouses must finish the “Helping Children Succeed After Divorce” seminar by The Woodlands — about 90 minutes online or a 2-hour class. Register at thewoodland.org or (740) 349-7066, and keep your certificate.

DISSOLUTION

The dissolution packet, linked.

Licking County uses the Supreme Court of Ohio uniform forms for dissolution. Open each form below; the full web address is printed for a paper copy.

FORM	WHERE TO GET IT	WHAT IT'S FOR
Form 17 — Petition for Dissolution & Waiver of Service https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/docs/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form17.pdf	Supreme Court of Ohio (uniform form)	Starts the case; both spouses sign.
Form 19 — Separation Agreement https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/docs/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form19.pdf	Supreme Court of Ohio (uniform form)	Your full signed deal on property, debt, and support.
Affidavit 1 — Income and Expenses https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/docs/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Affidavit1.pdf	Supreme Court of Ohio (uniform form)	Your basic financial picture.
Affidavit 2 — Property and Debt https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/docs/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Affidavit2.pdf	Supreme Court of Ohio (uniform form)	What you own and owe.
Form 20 — Shared Parenting Plan https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/docs/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form20.pdf	Supreme Court of Ohio (uniform form)	If children and you will share parenting.
<p>▲ Heads up: Pick Form 20 (shared parenting) or name one residential parent in your agreement — not both. With children, also file Affidavit 3 (Parenting Proceeding) and Affidavit 4 (Health Insurance).</p>		
Form 18 — Decree of Dissolution https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/docs/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form18.pdf	Supreme Court of Ohio (uniform form)	The judgment the court signs at the end.

PATH B

Divorce: when agreement is missing or uncertain.

A divorce does not always mean a trial. It means one spouse files, the other is served, and the court sets a structure for deadlines and decisions.

COURT	FILING FEE	COUNTERCLAIM	OHIO RESIDENCY
Domestic Relations	\$400 (flat)	\$250	6 months

IF YOU WERE SERVED

Do not wait for the hearing date to act. Read the first page for your answer deadline, save every document, and list the urgent issues — housing, money, children, safety. If a temporary order is included, get advice quickly.

BEFORE YOU FILE

- Confirm Ohio residency (6 months) and Licking County venue.
- List all property, debt, vehicles, retirement, and real estate.
- Gather income, tax, and health-insurance records.
- Write down what the first court order needs to cover.

1

Complaint filed

One spouse files the complaint and asks the Clerk to issue service. The filing fee is \$400.

2

Service and answer

The other spouse is served and has 28 days to respond (Ohio Civil Rule 12).

3

Temporary orders

If asked, the magistrate can set parenting time, support, and use of the home while the case is pending.

4

Disclosure, mediation, pretrial

Both sides exchange financial information. Contested parenting issues may go to mediation.

5

Final hearing or trial

Most cases settle. If not, the judge decides the disputed issues and signs the decree.

DIVORCE

The divorce packet, linked.

Use the “with children” or “without children” version that matches your case. The forms below are the Supreme Court of Ohio uniform set.

FORM	WHERE TO GET IT	WHAT IT'S FOR
Form 6 / Form 7 — Complaint for Divorce (without / with children) https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/docs/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form7.pdf	Supreme Court of Ohio (uniform form)	Starts your divorce case.
Affidavit 1 & 2 — Income, Expenses, Property, Debt https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/docs/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Affidavit1.pdf	Supreme Court of Ohio (uniform form)	Required financial affidavits.
Affidavit 3 — Parenting Proceeding (UCCJEA) https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/docs/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Affidavit3.pdf	Supreme Court of Ohio (uniform form)	If you have children.
<p>▲ Heads up: With children, also file Affidavit 4 (Health Insurance) and the child support computation worksheet.</p>		
Form 31 — Request for Service https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/docs/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form31.pdf	Supreme Court of Ohio (uniform form)	Tells the Clerk how to serve your spouse.
Form 8 / 9 — Counterclaim; Form 10 / 11 — Answer https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/docs/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form10.pdf	Supreme Court of Ohio (uniform form)	If you are the spouse who was served.
Notice of Intent to Relocate (county form) https://lickingcounty.gov/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=109591	lickingcounty.gov (county form)	File before a planned move of the children.

CHILDREN

Custody and parenting time in Licking County.

Ohio law uses “allocation of parental rights” instead of “custody.” Parents share rights under a shared parenting plan, or one parent is the residential parent and legal custodian.

Two ways rights get allocated

Shared parenting divides decision-making between both parents under a written plan (Form 20). Otherwise the court names one residential parent and legal custodian, and the other parent gets parenting time (Form 21 is the parenting plan).

IF PARENTS CAN'T AGREE ON A SCHEDULE

The court uses its Rule 19.0 standard schedule.

Licking County's standard parenting-time order sets a default routine when parents don't agree. Several versions have been posted over the years; the one in effect when your order was entered is the one that governs your family.

WORDS MATTER

A parent's time is parenting time. A grandparent or other relative seeks companionship or visitation instead. That is a different request, set by R.C. 3109.11 and 3109.12.

Forms	Form 20 (shared parenting) or Form 21 (parenting plan)
Schedule rule	Local Rule 19.0 standard parenting time
Set support too	Child support worksheet is required

PARENTING TIME

What the standard schedule looks like.

This is the May 1, 2009 standard order (authorized by R.C. 3109.051). Confirm which posted version applies to your decree on the court's forms page.

LOCAL · PARENTS UNDER 150 MILES APART**Weekends and midweek**

Alternate weekends, Friday 6:00 p.m. to Monday 9:00 a.m., plus a midweek overnight, Wednesday 6:00 p.m. to Thursday 9:00 a.m. The non-residential parent handles transportation for this time.

HOLIDAYS**Odd-year / even-year rotation**

Holidays alternate each year. Christmas is split into two blocks; Thanksgiving runs Wednesday evening to Thursday evening. Mother's Day and Father's Day go to the celebrated parent. Birthdays alternate by year.

SUMMER**Choose one of four options**

One-week rotating, two-week rotating, summer split at the midpoint, or keep the school-year schedule with vacation time. A parent taking vacation gives 30 days' notice and a travel itinerary.

LONG DISTANCE (OVER 150 MILES)

Do parents live more than 150 miles apart? Then the far parent gets longer holiday blocks, extra vacation, and half the summer. Two rules help everyone. Pickup has a 15-minute grace period (30 minutes if the drive is over 30 miles one way). And each parent gets one phone call a day, from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

SUPPORT

Child support and spousal support.

Child support follows Ohio's statewide guideline based on both parents' income, parenting time, health-insurance cost, and child-care. The Licking County CSEA administers the order.

Child support basics

The court (or CSEA) calculates support using the Ohio child-support worksheet. After an order exists, support can be reviewed and changed when there is a substantial change — often a 10%+ swing in the guideline amount.

Spousal support

In a divorce or dissolution the court can order spousal support based on the statutory factors in R.C. 3105.18. After the decree, spousal support can be changed only if the decree reserved the court's power to modify it.

CSEA	65 E. Main St., Newark
Phone	(740) 670-5998 / 1-800-513-1128
Role	Enforces the order; does not represent either parent

CHANGING A CHILD-SUPPORT ORDER

Use Form 28 (Motion for Change of Child Support). A post-decree motion in Domestic Relations carries a \$200 deposit.

AFTER THE DECREE

Changing or enforcing an order.

The Domestic Relations Court keeps continuing jurisdiction over the orders it issued, so post-decree motions go back to that court.

<p>MODIFY</p> <p>Change custody or support Changing the residential parent or shared parenting needs a change in circumstances and the child's best interest (R.C. 3109.04). Use Form 27 (custody) or Form 28 (support).</p>	<p>ENFORCE</p> <p>Contempt (motion to show cause) If the other person ignores a parenting-time, support, or property order, file a motion to show cause. Use Form 24 (Motion for Contempt) and Form 25 (Show Cause Order).</p>	<p>REGISTER</p> <p>Out-of-state orders Register a foreign custody order under the UCCJEA and a support order under UIFSA before Ohio can enforce or change it. This needs originals and must be filed on paper — it cannot be e-filed (\$150).</p>
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<p>POST-DECREE MOTION</p> <p>\$200</p>	<p>REGISTER FOREIGN DECREE</p> <p>\$150</p>	<p>QDRO (PROPERTY ORDER)</p> <p>\$50</p>	<p>RELOCATION</p> <p>File the county notice</p>
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FEES CHANGE

Court fees, forms, and procedures change. The amounts here were verified on June 17, 2026 from official Licking County sources. Always confirm current fees with the Licking County Clerk of Courts before you file.

SAFETY

Domestic-violence protection orders.

A Domestic Violence Civil Protection Order (DVCPO) under R.C. 3113.31 protects family or household members. In Licking County these are handled by the Domestic Relations Court.

How to file

1. Get a protection-order packet from the Clerk's Office, 75 E. Main Street, Newark (8:00–4:30).
2. There is no filing fee for a DVCPO petition.
3. If you allege immediate danger, ask for an ex parte order the same day.
4. The court then sets a full hearing (generally within about 7–10 days).

FILED ON PAPER ONLY

Protection-order petitions cannot be e-filed — they are filed in person at the Clerk's Office. Where the respondent is a minor, the Probate & Juvenile Court handles the petition.

FREE, CONFIDENTIAL HELP

The Center for New Beginnings can help right now.

They provide the forms and information to get a protection order, plus free confidential housing and other services.

(740) 345-4498 · (740) 349-8719
Toll-free 1-800-686-2760

FEELING OVERWHELMED?

Not sure whether you need a divorce, a protection order, or both? The 2-minute Find My Service quiz at gavvl.com/find-my-service points you to the right path — or call (844) 694-2885.

PART TWO

Juvenile Court: parents who were never married.

Custody, parenting time, and support for unmarried parents are decided by the Probate & Juvenile Court. The first question is whether an order already exists.

START HERE

Is there already a court order?

Establishing a first order is different from changing one that already exists. Either way, the court needs parentage settled, a proposed schedule, and support information.

THE LICKING COUNTY QUIRK

Paternity is filed in Domestic Relations.

Custody and support for unmarried parents are in Juvenile Court. But paternity itself is heard by the Domestic Relations Court here (a Parentage filing is \$400). When in doubt, call both courts: (740) 670-5400 (DR) and (740) 670-5624 (Juvenile).

Complaint for Custody	\$250 (Juvenile Court)
Motion for Further Hearing	\$50
Parentage (in DR)	\$400

UNMARRIED PARENTS

Parentage, custody, and parenting time.

Until a court orders otherwise, an unmarried mother is the sole residential parent and legal custodian by law (R.C. 3109.042). Either parent can ask the court to change that.

FORM	WHERE TO GET IT	WHAT IT'S FOR
Form 23 / JF 2 — Complaint for Parentage, Parental Rights & Parenting Time https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/docs/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form23.pdf	Supreme Court of Ohio (uniform form)	Asks the court to set custody and parenting time.
Parenting Proceeding Affidavit (county form) https://lickingcounty.gov/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=110971	lickingcounty.gov (county form)	Required background on the children.
Form 31 / JF 10 — Request for Service https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/docs/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form31.pdf	Supreme Court of Ohio (uniform form)	Tells the court how to serve the other parent.
Form 27 / JF 6 — Motion for Change of Custody https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/docs/JCS/CFC/DRForms/Form27.pdf	Supreme Court of Ohio (uniform form)	Change an existing custody order.

△ Heads up: A parentage step may need to come first. Paternity itself is filed in the Domestic Relations Court — call (740) 670-5624 to confirm the order for your filing.

RELATIVES & CAREGIVERS

When a child lives with someone other than a parent.

A relative or other suitable adult can ask the Juvenile Court for legal custody, but usually must first show the parents are unsuitable.

Legal custody to a non-parent

A Complaint for Custody in Juvenile Court costs \$250. A grant of legal custody to a relative leaves the parents' residual rights in place, including possible companionship and a duty of support.

COMPANIONSHIP FOR GRANDPARENTS

Non-parents seek companionship or visitation, not parenting time. Ohio allows it in defined situations: after a parent's death, in a parentage case, or in a divorce. The test is the child's best interest.

QUICKER TOOLS SHORT OF A CUSTODY CASE

Two county forms for caregivers

For day-to-day care without a full custody case, Licking County offers the [Caretaker Authorization Affidavit](https://lickingcounty.gov/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=110215) (school and medical decisions by a relative caregiver) and the [Grandparent Power of Attorney](https://lickingcounty.gov/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=110970) (a parent grants a grandparent authority to act). These are not the same as a custody order, but they are often the right first step for a relative caregiver.

JUVENILE FOLLOW-UP

Changing orders, enforcement, and child-safety cases.

The Juvenile Court keeps power over the orders it made. It also hears abuse, neglect, and dependency cases.

Modify or enforce a juvenile order

Changing custody or parenting time needs a change in circumstances and the child's best interest. A Motion for Further Hearing — the vehicle for most post-decree motions — costs \$50. To enforce an order, file a motion to show cause.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Licking County JFS: (740) 670-8888.

Report suspected abuse or neglect to Licking County Job & Family Services, 74 South Second Street, Newark (weekdays 8:00–4:30). After hours, call the Sheriff at (740) 670-5500 and ask for the on-call social worker.

IF YOU CAN'T AFFORD A LAWYER

In an abuse, neglect, or dependency case, parents have a right to a lawyer. If you cannot afford one, ask about the county Court Appointed Attorney Application.

NOT SURE WHERE TO START?

Custody between unmarried parents can be confusing here because paternity sits in a different court. The Find My Service quiz at gavvl.com/find-my-service sorts it out in about two minutes.

PART THREE

Probate Court: stepparent and kinship adoption.

Adoptions are filed in the Probate Court (part of the combined Probate & Juvenile Court), 1 North Park Place, Newark; (740) 670-5624.

FIRST QUESTION

Will the other legal parent consent?

Consent of the child's other legal parent is normally required. It can be excused in limited situations — for example, where a parent failed without justifiable cause to support or contact the child for at least one year (R.C. 3107.07). A contested consent case needs careful legal review before filing.

How a stepparent adoption moves

1. The stepparent files a Petition to Adopt the minor in Probate Court.
2. Consent is obtained, or the court decides whether it is excused.
3. The court reviews the petition and may require an assessment.
4. At the final hearing, if adoption is in the child's best interest, the court signs the decree and a new birth record issues.

CONFIRM WITH THE COURT

Call (740) 670-5624 for the Probate Court's adoption filing fee, required forms, and any home-study or assessment step. Use the Supreme Court of Ohio adoption (ADOPT) forms for the standardized pleadings.

PART FOUR

You don't always need the same kind of legal help.

Some people want a lawyer for the whole case. Others need help with one hard part — a strategy session, document review, a motion, or a hearing.

LIMITED-SCOPE (FLAT FEE)

Hire a lawyer for the specific task you need.

Good fit for uncontested matters, simple modifications, document drafting and review, advice, or one hearing — at a flat fee per service. Not the right fit for complex or high-conflict cases that need ongoing advocacy.

FULL REPRESENTATION

Have a lawyer manage the whole case with you.

An attorney handles strategy, every filing, and all court dates from start to finish. This is best when the case is contested, the stakes are higher, or safety is involved. It is billed as a retainer plus hourly.

Divorce & dissolution

Strategy, settlement terms, filing packets, temporary orders, and final hearings.

Custody & parenting

Parenting schedules, shared parenting plans, modifications, and hearing preparation.

Child support

Calculations, income documentation, deviations, modifications, and enforcement.

Adoption

Stepparent and kinship adoption planning, consent review, and finalization.

A MATTER CAN SWITCH

A case that starts limited-scope can often move to full representation if it becomes contested.

WORKING TOGETHER

Ways to pay, and how to start.

Court costs in this guide are the county's fees. Gavvl's own service fees depend on the work; the options below depend on whether the matter is flat-fee or full representation.

Ways to pay

- Pay in full by secure card (Confido Legal).
- Affirm monthly payments, with a soft credit check that does not affect your score.
- For flat-fee services: Klarna and PayPal Pay Later options as well.
- Gavvl Direct — an in-house plan with no credit check. The financed amount carries 19% annual interest, compounded monthly; exact amounts are set at enrollment.

A NOTE ON CONSULTATIONS

Gavvl offers low-cost consultations (not free). A consultation does not create an attorney-client relationship until there is a signed agreement.

WHY FAMILIES CHOOSE GAVVL

A modern Ohio family-law firm serving all 88 counties, with 50+ years of combined experience and a 4.8+ average across 90+ verified Google reviews. Founded by attorneys who have personally navigated divorce and custody.

How to start

- Take the 2-minute Find My Service quiz at gavvl.com/find-my-service.
- Call (844) 694-2885 or email support@gavvl.com.
- Start online at gavvl.com/start.
- Financing questions: financing@gavvl.com.

YOUR PRIMARY NEXT STEP

The 2-minute quiz points you the right way.

Answer a few questions. You will get a service match and payment options in about two minutes, at gavvl.com/find-my-service.

IMPORTANT

Disclosures.

Please read these before relying on anything in this guide.

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ACCURACY AND CHANGES

Court fees, forms, and procedures change. The information in this guide was verified as of June 17, 2026 from official court sources. Always confirm current fees and requirements with the Licking County Clerk of Courts before you file.

ABOUT AWARDS AND REVIEWS

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.

RESPONSIBILITY & JURISDICTION

Advertising material. Gavvl Law LLC, 1677 Old Henderson Road, Columbus, Ohio 43220. Attorney responsible for this content: Stephanie Green, Esq., Managing Partner. Gavvl Law attorneys are licensed to practice in Ohio. This guide describes Ohio law and Licking County procedure only.

PRIVACY

Read our privacy policy at gavvl.com/privacy-policy. For free or low-cost local help, contact Legal Aid of Southeast and Central Ohio (SEOLS), Newark: (740) 345-0850 or 1-888-831-9412.

READY WHEN YOU ARE.

Start with the 2-minute Find My Service quiz.

It points you to the right Licking County path and the level of help that fits — then connects you with the firm if you want company on the road.

(844) 694-2885

support@gavvl.com

gavvl.com/find-my-service

1677 Old Henderson Road, Columbus, OH 43220