

## PLAIN-ENGLISH GUIDE

# Family Law in Lucas County

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

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- 01** See how Lucas County splits family law between the DR Court and a separate Juvenile Court.

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

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

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

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## 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 Lucas County.

01

## Which court handles this?

Married couples file divorce or dissolution in the Domestic Relations Court. Unmarried parents file custody in the separate Juvenile Court. Adoptions go to the Probate Court, a third court.

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 Lucas 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.

### SCHEDULE BEFORE YOU FILE

A Lucas County quirk: you schedule motions and temporary-order requests with the Assignment Commissioner before filing them. Plan for that step so your motion is not delayed.

### 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. Lucas County splits family law by whether the parents were married. Start with the relationship, and with what you need a judge to decide.

**MARRIED OR FORMERLY MARRIED**

## Domestic Relations Court

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

**WHERE**

429 N. Michigan St. Judges Connelly & McGowan.

**PARENTS NEVER MARRIED**

## Juvenile Court

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

**WHERE**

1801 Spielbusch Ave. Judges Knepp & Stoner.

**ADOPTION**

## Probate Court

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

**WHERE**

The separate Lucas County Probate Court.

### Three separate courts in Toledo

In Lucas County the Domestic Relations Court, the Juvenile Court, and the Probate Court are three different courts. Divorce goes to Domestic Relations at 429 N. Michigan Street; unmarried-parent custody goes to Juvenile Court at 1801 Spielbusch Avenue. File with the right one for your case.

PART ONE

# The Domestic Relations Court ends marriages.

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

DIVORCE	DISSOLUTION	WHERE YOU FILE	RESIDENCY
\$300/\$350	\$300/\$325	429 N. Michigan	6 months in Ohio

QUICK PATHFINDER

## Do you agree on everything?

If yes, dissolution may fit, and it costs a little less. 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. 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, legal separation, or annulment costs \$300 without minor children and \$350 with. A dissolution costs \$300 without children and \$325 with. The deposit goes toward your real costs. One spouse must have lived in Ohio six months.

## DISSOLUTION

# The dissolution packet, step by step.

Dissolution uses the Ohio Supreme Court forms plus Lucas County's financial Schedules. Sign the Separation Agreement in front of a notary first. Then build the rest of the packet around it.

## BOTH OF YOU MUST SHOW UP

A dissolution is fully agreed. You file together, and the court sets a hearing 30 to 90 days out. Both spouses must appear and affirm the agreement. The proposed decree is submitted about a week before the final hearing.

FORM	WHERE TO GET IT	WHAT IT'S FOR
<a href="#">Petition for Dissolution</a> <a href="https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1">https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1</a>	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Both spouses sign; opens the joint case
<a href="#">Separation Agreement</a> <a href="https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1">https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1</a>	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Your signed terms; notarize this first
<a href="#">Schedule I — Income</a> <a href="https://courtaccess.co.lucas.oh.us/dr/drefile/">https://courtaccess.co.lucas.oh.us/dr/drefile/</a>	Lucas County DR forms	Each spouse's income affidavit
<a href="#">Schedule III — Expenses</a> <a href="https://courtaccess.co.lucas.oh.us/dr/drefile/">https://courtaccess.co.lucas.oh.us/dr/drefile/</a>	Lucas County DR forms	Monthly expenses
<a href="#">Schedule IV — Property</a> <a href="https://courtaccess.co.lucas.oh.us/dr/drefile/">https://courtaccess.co.lucas.oh.us/dr/drefile/</a>	Lucas County DR forms	Property division and spousal support
<a href="#">Decree of Dissolution</a> <a href="https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1">https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1</a>	Ohio Supreme Court forms	The judgment the court signs

**WITH CHILDREN****The parenting class**

If you have children, take the online Children in Between class before the final hearing. A shared parenting plan carries a \$50 add-on and goes to Court Counseling at least 30 days before the hearing.

**FREE OR LOW-COST HELP**

Court Counseling offers mediation for \$50 to help settle parenting issues. It is never used for a domestic violence case or to decide a protection order, and children do not attend.

DIVORCE

# Filing a divorce when you do not agree.

Divorce is e-filed with the Domestic Relations Clerk. Lucas uses the Ohio Supreme Court forms plus its local Schedules. The financial Schedules go in with the Complaint.

FORM	WHERE TO GET IT	WHAT IT'S FOR
<a href="#">Complaint for Divorce</a> <a href="https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1">https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1</a>	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Starts the lawsuit; with or without children
<a href="#">Schedule I — Income</a> <a href="https://courtaccess.co.lucas.oh.us/dr/drefile/">https://courtaccess.co.lucas.oh.us/dr/drefile/</a>	Lucas County DR forms	Required income affidavit
<a href="#">Schedule II — UCCJEA</a> <a href="https://courtaccess.co.lucas.oh.us/dr/drefile/">https://courtaccess.co.lucas.oh.us/dr/drefile/</a>	Lucas County DR forms	With children; missing it can dismiss
<a href="#">Schedule IV — Property</a> <a href="https://courtaccess.co.lucas.oh.us/dr/drefile/">https://courtaccess.co.lucas.oh.us/dr/drefile/</a>	Lucas County DR forms	Property division and spousal support
<a href="#">75(N) Request</a> <a href="https://courtaccess.co.lucas.oh.us/dr/drefile/">https://courtaccess.co.lucas.oh.us/dr/drefile/</a>	Lucas County DR forms	File if you want orders during the case

**The 28-day waiting period**  
 A divorce is uncontested unless your spouse answers within 28 days. The court generally will not hold a hearing until at least 42 days after service. So the early weeks are about service and any temporary orders.

**SCHEDULE THE MOTION FIRST**  
 Remember the Lucas rule: schedule any motion or 75(N) request with the Assignment Commissioner at (419) 213-6854 before you file it. Motions are usually not set within 7 days of filing.

## 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 14-day rule

You file a 75(N) request, usually within 90 days after service. The other party files a counter-affidavit within 14 days. The court can decide on the affidavits, or set an oral hearing.

## If a hearing is set

An oral hearing on temporary orders is granted within 28 days. It is short — argument and documents only, 30 minutes per side. You exchange documents 7 days before and deliver originals to the court 3 days before.

## EMERGENCIES AND ASKING A SPOUSE TO LEAVE

True emergency parenting orders are issued only in real emergencies under the rules. A spouse can be restrained from returning to the home after being gone for 30 days or more in a row. For protection from violence, a protection order is the faster tool. If anyone is in danger right now, call 911.

## CHILDREN

# Custody, parenting time, and the class.

Ohio uses specific words for custody. Lucas County has a detailed default schedule and a required online class.

**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 plan must require mediation before going back to court.

## The 150-mile rule

Lucas County has a Local schedule and a Long Distance schedule. If a parent lives closer than or farther than 150 miles from the county, the matching schedule applies. There is also a neutral Parent 1 and Parent 2 version.

**CHILD SUPPORT RUNS THROUGH THE CSEA**

The Lucas County child support agency handles support. Reach it at (419) 213-3001. Support is collected by income withholding and paid through the state, with a small processing charge added.

## THE REST OF A DIVORCE

# Spousal support, property, and other paths.

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

## Spousal support

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

## Property and debt

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

## Legal separation and annulment

Both are filed in the Domestic Relations Court. They use the same deposit as a divorce. Annulment is rare and has narrow grounds.

## A note on full disclosure

Lucas County requires both sides to exchange financial information within about 60 days of the answer: pensions, deeds, vehicle titles, three years of tax returns, and account and debt statements. Gathering these early makes the rest of the case smoother.

## AFTER THE DECREE

# Changing or enforcing a Lucas County order.

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

**CHANGE CUSTODY OR PARENTING****\$200**

To enforce, modify, or set the residential parent or parenting time

**OTHER POST-DECREE MOTION****\$150**

To vacate, revise, or modify another order

**CONSENT JUDGMENT ENTRY****\$75**

When both sides agree to the change

**Modifying and enforcing**

To change custody or parenting time, you file a post-decree motion for \$200. Remember to schedule it with the Assignment Commissioner first. Support changes can also start through the agency at (419) 213-3001.

**MOVING WITH THE CHILDREN**

Because of the 150-mile rule, a move can change your whole parenting schedule. File a relocation notice under Ohio law before moving, and ask the court how the move affects your order.

## HELP ALONG THE WAY

# Mediation, GALs, and the parenting class.

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

## Mediation

Court Counseling offers mediation for \$50 to help parents agree on a parenting plan. The court screens for safety first. 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. A party motion for one usually requires a deposit. The GAL files a report before the final hearing.

## The online class

The online Children in Between class is required before custody orders. It teaches parents how separation affects children and how to lower the stress on 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 Lucas County.

Find My Service · [gavvl.com/find-my-service](https://gavvl.com/find-my-service)

Get started · [gavvl.com/start](https://gavvl.com/start)

Call · (844) 694-2885

Email · [support@gavvl.com](mailto:support@gavvl.com)

PROTECTION ORDERS

# When safety comes first.

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

<b>FILING FEE</b>	<b>FULL HEARING</b>	<b>LEAVE THE HOME</b>	<b>FINAL ORDER</b>
\$0 to petitioner	Within 10 days	Within 7 days	Up to 5 years

**How it works here**  
 A protection order is filed under R.C. 3113.31. There is no fee for the petitioner. The court can issue a same-day ex parte order, which is filed in person, not e-filed. The Domestic Violence Resource Center can help you.

**The hearing windows**  
 If an ex parte order is granted, a full hearing is held within 10 days. If the order tells someone to leave the home, that hearing is within 7 days. A final order can last up to five years.

**HELP AND EMERGENCIES**  
 The Domestic Violence Resource Center is at 429 N. Michigan Street, 2nd Floor, (419) 213-2700. 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 separate Juvenile Court on Spielbusch Avenue.

## 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
<a href="https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domes-tic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1">Complaint for Custody</a> <a href="https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domes-tic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1">https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domes-tic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1</a>	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Sets custody and parenting time
<a href="https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domes-tic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1">Complaint for Parentage</a> <a href="https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domes-tic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1">https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domes-tic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1</a>	Ohio Supreme Court forms	When fatherhood is not yet established
<a href="https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domes-tic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1">Parenting Proceeding Affidavit</a> <a href="https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domes-tic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1">https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domes-tic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1</a>	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Required with a custody filing
<a href="https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domes-tic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1">Application for Child Support</a> <a href="https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domes-tic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1">https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domes-tic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1</a>	Juvenile Court or CSEA	Sets up the support case with the agency

### COSTS AND FILING

The Juvenile Court is at 1801 Spielbusch Avenue, (419) 213-6722. A custody, visitation, or parentage case costs \$193 to file, with \$25 for each additional child. A third-party custody case is \$282.

## 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. An emergency or ex parte filing is \$100. Support changes can also start through the agency at (419) 213-3001.

## Abuse, neglect, and dependency

These CPS cases are heard in the Juvenile Court. Lucas County Children Services takes reports at (419) 213-2273, around the clock. The court can appoint a CASA volunteer to speak for the child. For immediate danger, call 911.

## A NOTE ON CASA

Lucas County has a Court Appointed Special Advocate program at (419) 213-6753. CASA volunteers are trained to investigate and speak to a child's best interests in abuse, neglect, and dependency cases. Ask the court if a CASA is involved in your case.

## PART THREE

# Adoption is handled by the Probate Court.

Stepparent and kinship adoptions go to the separate Lucas County Probate Court. It is its own court. Here is the basic shape.

## CONFIRM THE LUCAS PROBATE DETAILS

Adoption is handled by the Lucas County Probate Court. That is a different court from the other two. Check its address, forms, and fee with that court before you file.

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. Ohio uses the same forms in every county.

2

### Address consent

The other parent's consent is usually needed. So is the child's, if they are 12 or older. A court can waive a parent's consent for a year of no contact or support.

3

### Complete the home study

Ohio law usually asks for a home study. A stepparent case can be simpler. Ask the Lucas Probate Court what your case needs.

4

### Attend the hearing

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

## PART FOUR

# How Gavvl Law can help in Lucas 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](https://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**

This guide explains how things generally work in Lucas 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.

**FEES AND PROCEDURES CHANGE**

The court information in this guide was verified as of January 2026 from official court sources. Court fees, forms, and procedures change. Always confirm current fees and requirements with the Lucas 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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