

PLAIN-ENGLISH GUIDE

Family Law in Noble County

A plain-English map for divorce, dissolution, custody, support, and adoption in Caldwell and across Noble County. Learn how the court works, what to file, what it costs, and when to get help.

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- 01** See how one Noble County judge handles all family-law divisions.

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

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

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

START HERE

Use this guide like a map, not a rulebook.

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

01

Which division handles this?

Married couples file divorce or dissolution in the General Division. Unmarried parents file custody in the Juvenile Division. Adoptions go to the Probate Division. One judge leads all three.

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 Noble 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.

YOU CAN FILE ONLINE

Noble County's General Division lets you file and pay online through its e-filing portal, or in person at the Clerk of Courts. Check with the Juvenile and Probate offices about how they take filings.

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 division is actually handling your case?

One family can touch more than one part of the court. In Noble County all three divisions sit at the Court House in Caldwell and share one judge. Start with the relationship, and with what you need a judge to decide.

MARRIED OR FORMERLY MARRIED

General Division

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

WHO HEARS IT

Judge Kelly A. Riddle. (740) 732-4408.

PARENTS NEVER MARRIED

Juvenile Division

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

WHO HEARS IT

Judge Riddle. (740) 732-5047.

ADOPTION

Probate Division

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

WHO HEARS IT

Judge Riddle. 320 Court House.

One judge, three divisions

Noble County is small enough that one judge, the Hon. Kelly A. Riddle, hears divorce, juvenile custody, and adoption. The divisions sit in nearby rooms at the Court House in Caldwell: domestic at 350, juvenile at 280, and probate at 320. File with the right one for your case.

PART ONE

Divorce and dissolution go to the General Division.

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

DIVORCE	DISSOLUTION	FILING	RESIDENCY
\$200	\$200	E-file or paper	6 months in Ohio

QUICK PATHFINDER

Do you agree on everything?

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

Dissolution is built on agreement.

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

Divorce is a lawsuit.

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

THE DEPOSIT

A divorce or dissolution costs \$200 to file with personal service. Service by publication, used when you cannot find your spouse, costs \$350. You can ask the court to waive the deposit with a poverty affidavit. One spouse must have lived in Ohio six months.

DISSOLUTION

The dissolution packet, step by step.

Noble County uses the Ohio Supreme Court forms, plus one local form. Sign the Separation Agreement in front of a notary first, then build the rest of the packet around it.

FILE JOINTLY, THEN ATTEND THE HEARING

Both spouses file the joint petition with the signed Separation Agreement and the local Information Sheet, and pay the \$200 deposit. The hearing is held 30 to 90 days later, and both spouses must appear.

FORM	WHERE TO GET IT	WHAT IT'S FOR
Petition for Dissolution (SF 17) https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Both spouses sign; opens the joint case
Separation Agreement (SF 19) https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Your signed terms; notarize this first
Affidavit 1 (Income & Expenses) https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Each spouse's finances
Information Sheet (DR-1) https://noblecommonpleas.org/forms.php	Noble local form	Required at filing; from the Clerk's packet
Parenting plan (SF 20 or 21) https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	With children; shared or sole plan
Standard Orders of Visitation https://noblecommonpleas.org/pdf/standardOrdersVisitation.pdf	Noble parenting-time order	With children; the default schedule

GOOD TO KNOW**Is a class required?**

Noble County does not publish a required parenting class for divorce or custody cases. A judge can still order one in a particular case, and the county may accept an approved online course. Confirm the requirement when you file.

IF YOU STOP AGREEING

A dissolution only works if both spouses agree all the way through the hearing. If you cannot agree, either spouse can file a divorce instead so the court can decide the open issues.

DIVORCE

Filing a divorce when you do not agree.

Divorce is filed with the General Division, online or in person. Noble uses the Ohio Supreme Court forms, plus a local Information Sheet and the county's parenting-time order.

FORM	WHERE TO GET IT	WHAT IT'S FOR
Complaint for Divorce (SF 6 or 7) https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Starts the lawsuit; with or without children
Information Sheet (DR-1) https://noblecommonpleas.org/forms.php	Noble local form	Required at filing under Local Rule 21.03
Affidavit 1 (Income & Expenses) https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Your financial picture
Affidavit 3 (Parenting Proceeding) https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	With children; the UCCJEA affidavit
Motion & Affidavit for Temporary Orders https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	File if you want orders during the case
Standard Orders of Visitation https://noblecommonpleas.org/pdf/standardOrdersVisitation.pdf	Noble parenting-time order	The court's default parenting schedule

The local Information Sheet

Noble County requires an Information Sheet, like a Form DR-1, with any divorce or dissolution. It captures your background and finances. The blank form is part of the court's local-rules packet from the Clerk.

PLAN FOR EXTRA COSTS

An answer or counterclaim costs \$200. A motion to modify or for contempt is \$80, and a court-ordered custody investigation is \$80. Budget for these if they apply to your case.

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.

How you ask

You ask for temporary custody, parenting time, or support in the complaint, or by a motion with a sworn affidavit. The order holds until the final decree. Use the Ohio Supreme Court temporary-orders forms.

Emergencies are handled in person

For an ex parte order, your attorney arranges a personal conference with the judge and brings the full file and a proposed order. The court usually will not give custody to a parent who does not already have the child.

CONFIRM THE TIMING

Noble County does not publish a set response or hearing deadline for temporary orders, so confirm the current timing with the court. If a child is in immediate danger, a protection order may be faster, and you should call 911.

CHILDREN

Custody, parenting time, and child support.

Ohio uses specific words for custody. Noble County applies its own parenting-time order and handles support through the county agency.

SOLE CUSTODY

Residential parent and legal custodian

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

SHARED PARENTING

A shared parenting plan

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

The Standard Orders of Visitation

When parents do not agree, the court applies its Standard Orders of Visitation, which include a long-distance schedule. The order sets weekends, holidays, and breaks. Parents can agree to their own plan instead.

CHILD SUPPORT RUNS THROUGH THE CSEA

The Noble County child support agency handles support. Support is set under Ohio's guidelines, collected by income withholding, and paid through the state. Ask the agency to set up your case.

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 General Division. Legal separation sets terms without ending the marriage. Annulment is rare and has narrow grounds.

A note on dividing retirement

If a divorce divides a pension or retirement account, it usually takes a separate order to split it with the plan. Getting the wording right matters, and a mistake can cost real money later, so many people use a lawyer for this step.

AFTER THE DECREE

Changing or enforcing a Noble County order.

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

MODIFY OR ENFORCE AN ORDER**\$80**

Modification or contempt motion

CUSTODY INVESTIGATION**\$80**

When the court orders a home study

ANSWER OR COUNTERCLAIM**\$200**

The other party's own claim

Modifying and enforcing

To change custody or support, or to enforce an order, you file a motion for modification or contempt, which costs \$80 unless the support agency files it. Support changes can also start through the county agency.

MOVING WITH THE CHILDREN

If a parent plans to move, Ohio's relocation rules require notice to the court so parenting time can be reviewed. File the notice ahead of the move and keep a copy.

HELP ALONG THE WAY

Mediation, GALs, and parenting time.

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

Mediation

The court can refer parents to mediation to help them reach an agreement on parenting and other issues. 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, or order a custody investigation for \$80, to look into the children's needs in a contested case.

Parenting-time order

The Standard Orders of Visitation give parents a clear default for weekends, holidays, and distance, which often heads off disputes before they start.

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 Noble County.

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

Get started · gavvl.com/start

Call · (844) 694-2885

Email · support@gavvl.com

PROTECTION ORDERS

When safety comes first.

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

FILING FEE	WHERE	EX PARTE ORDER	FINAL ORDER
\$0 to petitioner	General Division	Same day	Up to 5 years

How it works here

A protection order is filed with the Clerk of Courts under R.C. 3113.31, with no fee. On a showing of immediate danger, the court can issue a same-day ex parte order, then hold a full hearing shortly after.

Three kinds of orders

There is one for a family or household member, one for menacing by stalking, and one for a victim of a sexually oriented offense. No criminal charge is needed for the last two. Use the statewide forms.

IF YOU ARE IN DANGER NOW

If you or your children are in danger right now, call 911. A protection order is a civil court process, not an emergency response. A final order can last up to five years.

PART TWO

The Juvenile Division is for parents who were never married.

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

Proving the father 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
Parentage & Custody complaint https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domes-tic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Sets parentage, custody, parenting time
Parenting Proceeding Affidavit https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domes-tic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Required with a custody filing
Standard Orders of Visitation https://noblecommonpleas.org/pdf/standardOrdersVisitation.pdf	Noble parenting-time order	The default parenting schedule
Application for Child Support https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domes-tic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Juvenile Court or CSEA	Sets up the support case with the agency

THE DEPOSIT

A custody, parenting-time, or parentage filing costs \$80, plus small statutory fees. The Juvenile Division is at 280 Court House, (740) 732-5047. There is no fee for a child support agency case.

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. Support changes can also start through the county child support agency, which charges no filing fee.

Abuse, neglect, and dependency

These CPS cases are heard in the Juvenile Division. The court can appoint a guardian ad litem to speak for the child. To report concerns, call the hotline at 1-855-642-4453, or 911 for danger.

CONFIRM A GAL DEPOSIT

If the court appoints a guardian ad litem, a deposit may be set by court order. The juvenile rules do not fix the amount, so confirm it with the Juvenile Court when your case is assigned one.

PART THREE

Adoption is handled by the Probate Division.

Stepparent and kinship adoptions go to the Probate Division, before Judge Riddle. Here is the basic shape.

WHERE TO FILE, AND THE FEES

Adoptions are filed at the Probate Division, 320 Court House, reached through the Common Pleas office at (740) 732-4408. The court does not post its adoption fees online, so confirm the current deposit when you file.

1

File the petition in Probate

File the Ohio Petition for Adoption of a Minor on the Supreme Court probate forms. Add the child's birth certificate, and a marriage certificate for a stepparent.

2

Address consent

The child's other legal parent usually must consent. A court can excuse consent in some cases, such as a year of no contact or support without good reason. A child 12 or older also consents.

3

Complete the home study

Ohio law usually asks for a home study or assessment. A stepparent or kinship case can be simpler. Ask the Probate office what your adoption type needs.

4

Attend the hearing

If the court finds the adoption is in the child's best interest, Judge Riddle signs a final decree of adoption. A new birth record can follow.

PART FOUR

How Gavvl Law can help in Noble County.

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

FULL REPRESENTATION

An attorney handles the whole case

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

LIMITED-SCOPE (FLAT FEE)

Hire us for specific tasks

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

Ways to pay

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

START IN TWO MINUTES

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

BEFORE YOU GO

Important disclosures.

Please read these notes about how to use this guide.

INFORMATION, NOT LEGAL ADVICE

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FEES AND PROCEDURES CHANGE

The court information in this guide was verified as of June 15, 2026 from official court sources. Court fees, forms, and procedures change. Always confirm current fees and requirements with the Noble 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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