

PLAIN-ENGLISH GUIDE

Family Law in Summit County

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

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

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

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

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

START HERE

Use this guide like a map, not a rulebook.

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

E-FILING AND ONLINE CLASSES

The Clerk offers e-filing for Domestic Relations cases. Summit County also runs its parent classes online through the court's own learning site. Check the deposit and forms before you file.

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. Summit 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

205 South High St. Judges Cook & Hightower.

PARENTS NEVER MARRIED

Juvenile Court

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

WHERE

650 Dan St. Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio.

ADOPTION

Probate Court

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

WHERE

The separate Summit County Probate Court.

Three separate courts in Akron

In Summit County the Domestic Relations Court, the Juvenile Court, and the Probate Court are three different courts. Divorce goes to Domestic Relations at 205 South High Street; unmarried-parent custody goes to Juvenile Court at 650 Dan Street. 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
\$370/\$420	\$370/\$400	Clerk, e-file	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. 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 \$370 without children and \$420 with. A dissolution costs \$370 without children and \$400 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. Sign the Separation Agreement in front of a notary first. Then build the rest of the packet around it.

FINISH THE CLASS BEFORE SCHEDULING

A dissolution is fully agreed. If you have children, you must finish the Remember the Children class before you call the bailiff to schedule the hearing. The hearing is held 30 to 90 days out, and both spouses must appear.

FORM	WHERE TO GET IT	WHAT IT'S FOR
Petition for Dissolution https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Both spouses sign; opens the joint case
Separation Agreement https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Your signed terms; notarize this first
Affidavit of Income and Expenses https://drcourt.org/wp/forms/	Summit DR forms	Each spouse files one
Parenting plan (Form 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 parenting
Child support worksheet https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	With children; the support math
Decree of Dissolution https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	The judgment the court signs

WITH CHILDREN**Remember the Children**

This online class is required in a divorce or dissolution with children before the final hearing. You take it through the court's own learning site, in pieces if you like, and bring the certificate.

HELP WITH THE CLASS

Family Court Services can help with the class at (330) 643-2355. If you have a login problem on the learning site, email info@drcourt.org. Start early so it is done before your hearing.

DIVORCE

Filing a divorce when you do not agree.

Divorce is filed with the Clerk of Courts, and can be e-filed. Summit uses the Ohio Supreme Court forms plus local affidavits. The financial affidavits go in with the Complaint.

FORM	WHERE TO GET IT	WHAT IT'S FOR
Complaint for Divorce https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Starts the lawsuit; with or without children
Affidavit of Income and Expenses https://drcourt.org/wp/forms/	Summit DR forms	Filed with the Complaint
Health Insurance Affidavit https://drcourt.org/wp/forms/	Summit DR forms	With children; insurance details
Parenting Proceeding Affidavit https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	With children; the UCCJEA affidavit
Instructions for Service https://drcourt.org/wp/forms/	Summit DR forms	Tells the court how to serve your spouse

Want orders during the case?
 You can ask for temporary support or a parenting schedule while the divorce is pending. You file a motion with at least 7 days' notice. See the next page for how Summit handles the hearing.

IF YOU CANNOT FIND YOUR SPOUSE
 Service can be by publication if you cannot find the other spouse, with the court's approval. Ask the Clerk at (330) 643-2202 about the steps and the extra service request.

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.

A one-hour oral hearing

You ask for temporary orders by motion with at least 7 days' notice. Summit decides them at a short oral hearing, about one hour total, where each side gives statements and exchanges financial and property affidavits.

Confirm the response timing

Summit County does not publish a fixed deadline for the other party to file a written response to a temporary-order motion. Confirm the current timing with the Clerk at (330) 643-2202 so you know what to expect.

IF A HEARING NEEDS TO MOVE, AND ON EMERGENCIES

If a temporary-orders hearing has to be reset, the court generally resets it within 14 days. For protection from violence, a protection order has no fee and can be filed right away. If anyone is in danger right now, call 911.

CHILDREN

Custody, the class, and child support.

Ohio uses specific words for custody. Summit County also runs its parent class online and handles support through the prosecutor's child support 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, filed as Form 20. Shared parenting is not the same as equal time. The schedule is whatever the plan or order says.

Two online parent classes

Summit runs parent education online through its own learning site. Divorcing or dissolving parents take Remember the Children. Never-married parents take Working Together. Your court order says which one applies.

CHILD SUPPORT RUNS THROUGH THE CSEA

In Summit County, the child support agency runs through the Prosecuting Attorney at (330) 643-2765. Support is collected by income withholding and paid through the state, not directly between parents.

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 for the same \$370 deposit, or \$420 with children. 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 Summit County order.

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

POST-DECREE MOTION**\$240**

To modify or enforce an order after the decree

MODIFY LEGAL CUSTODY**\$240**

To change a legal custody order

RELIEF FROM JUDGMENT**\$240**

A Civil Rule 60(B) motion

Modifying and enforcing

To change custody or support, or to enforce an order, you file a post-decree motion for \$240. Support changes can also start through the prosecutor's child support agency at (330) 643-2765.

MOVING WITH THE CHILDREN

A parent who plans to move must follow Ohio's relocation notice rules. In Summit County, the other parent then has 14 days after service to respond. Plan a move well ahead and file the notice on time.

HELP ALONG THE WAY

Mediation, GALs, and the online classes.

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

Mediation

The court can refer a parenting dispute to mediation or a family services evaluation to help parents reach an agreement. It is never used for a domestic violence case or to decide a protection order.

Guardians ad litem

The court can appoint a guardian ad litem to look into the children's needs and speak to their best interests in a contested case. The fee is usually split between the parents.

Online parent classes

Remember the Children and Working Together run online through the court's own learning site. You can take them in pieces, and a certificate is sent to the court when you finish.

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 Summit County.

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

Get started · gavvl.com/start

Call · (844) 694-2885

Email · support@gavvl.com

PROTECTION ORDERS

When safety comes first.

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

FILING FEE	WHERE	DATING VIOLENCE	FINAL ORDER
\$0 to petitioner	DR Court	Also covered	Up to 5 years

How it works here
 A protection order is filed with the Clerk and handled by the Domestic Relations Court under Ohio law. There is no fee. It can include child custody and support terms, and a final order can last up to five years.

Dating violence too
 Summit also offers a dating-violence protection order for a partner who does not live with you, if the relationship existed within the last year. Casual friends or business contacts do not qualify.

FREE HELP AND EMERGENCIES
 The Victim Assistance Program offers free, confidential help at (330) 376-0040, and a shelter legal advocate can help you file at (330) 375-2247. If you or your children are in danger right now, call 911.

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, before Judge Teodosio.

Parentage comes first

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

Filing for custody as an unmarried parent

FORM	WHERE TO GET IT	WHAT IT'S FOR
Complaint for Parentage and Custody https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domes-tic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Uniform Form 23	Sets parentage, custody, parenting time
Parenting Proceeding Affidavit https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domes-tic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Required with a custody filing
Child support worksheet https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domes-tic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Required when support is at issue
Application for Child Support https://drcourt.org/wp/forms/	Juvenile Court or CSEA	Sets up the support case with the agency

COSTS AND THE CLASS

A private parenting case between unmarried parents costs \$420 to file. Never-married parents take the online Working Together class instead of Remember the Children. The Juvenile Court is at 650 Dan Street, (330) 643-2900.

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 prosecutor's child support agency at (330) 643-2765.

Abuse, neglect, and dependency

These CPS cases are heard in the Juvenile Court. In the most serious cases, the court can grant permanent custody to the county and end parental rights. The court can appoint a guardian ad litem for the child. For immediate danger, call 911.

A NOTE ON LEGAL CUSTODY TO A RELATIVE

Sometimes a relative seeks legal custody of a child without ending the parents' rights. That is different from adoption, which is permanent. A legal custody complaint costs \$420 and is decided on the child's best interest.

PART THREE

Adoption is handled by the Probate Court.

Stepparent and kinship adoptions go to the separate Summit County Probate Court. Here is the basic shape.

CONFIRM THE PROBATE DETAILS

Adoption is handled by the Summit County Probate Court, a different court from the other two. Check its current 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 too. 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 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 Summit 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 April 2026 from official court sources. Court fees, forms, and procedures change. Always confirm current fees and requirements with the Summit 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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