

PLAIN-ENGLISH GUIDE

Family Law in Tuscarawas County

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

-
- 01** See how Tuscarawas County handles family law across the Common Pleas 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 Tuscarawas County.

01

Which court 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. All are part of the Common Pleas 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 Tuscarawas 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.

NO SEPARATE DIVORCE COURT

Tuscarawas County has no separate domestic relations court. Divorce and dissolution are filed in the General Division of the Common Pleas Court, with the Clerk of Courts.

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.

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

Use this guide like a map, not a rulebook.	2
Which court is actually handling your case?	4
Divorce and dissolution run through the General Division.	5
The dissolution packet, step by step.	6
Filing a divorce when you do not agree.	8
Getting orders while the case runs.	9
Custody, parenting time, and child support.	10
Spousal support, property, and other paths.	11
Changing or enforcing a Tuscarawas County order.	12
Mediation, GALs, and parenting orders.	13
When safety comes first.	14
The Juvenile Division is for parents who were never married.	15
Filing for custody as an unmarried parent	15
Changing orders and CPS cases.	16
Adoption is handled by the Probate Division.	17
How Gavvl Law can help in Tuscarawas County.	18
Important disclosures.	19

QUESTION ONE

Which court is actually handling your case?

One family can touch more than one court. In Tuscarawas County, all three are parts of the Common Pleas Court in New Philadelphia. 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.

WHERE

125 E. High Ave. Clerk: (330) 365-3243.

PARENTS NEVER MARRIED

Juvenile Division

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

WHO HEARS IT

Judge Adam W. Wilgus.

ADOPTION

Probate Division

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

WHERE

101 E. High Ave., Rm. 203.
Judge Wilgus.

One Common Pleas Court, three divisions

Divorce and dissolution are heard in the General Division. Unmarried-parent custody goes to the Juvenile Division. Adoption goes to the Probate Division. The same judge, Adam W. Wilgus, leads both the Juvenile and Probate Divisions. File with the right one for your case.

PART ONE

Divorce and dissolution run through the General Division.

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

WITH CHILDREN	WITHOUT CHILDREN	HEARD IN	RESIDENCY
\$365	\$270	General Division	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. The fee is the same either way.

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, BY CHILDREN

A divorce or dissolution costs \$365 to file if you have minor children and \$270 if you do not. The with-children packet may not be used if there are no minor children, and the reverse is true too. One spouse must have lived in Ohio six months.

DISSOLUTION

The dissolution packet, step by step.

Tuscarawas County posts gender-neutral self-help packets and how-to videos. Sign the Separation Agreement in front of a notary first. Then build the rest of the packet around it.

USE THE RIGHT PACKET

The court offers a Dissolution with Children packet and a Dissolution without Children packet. Use the one that matches your family. The hearing is 30 to 90 days out, and both spouses must appear and confirm the agreement.

FORM	WHERE TO GET IT	WHAT IT'S FOR
Dissolution packet https://www.co.tuscarawas.oh.us/government/court_of_common_pleas_court_general_division/index.php	Tuscarawas General Division	With or without children; the full set
Separation Agreement https://www.co.tuscarawas.oh.us/government/court_of_common_pleas_court_general_division/index.php	Tuscarawas General Division	Your signed terms; notarize this first
Parenting order https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Standard or Long Distance	With children; the schedule that fits your distance
Health Care Determinations https://www.co.tuscarawas.oh.us/government/court_of_common_pleas_court_general_division/index.php	Tuscarawas General Division	With children; who covers the kids
UCCJEA Declaration https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	With children; the custody jurisdiction form
Case Designation + Identifier https://www.co.tuscarawas.oh.us/government/court_of_common_pleas_court_general_division/index.php	Tuscarawas General Division	Filed with every DR case

CHANGED YOUR MIND?**Converting to divorce**

If a dissolution stops being fully agreed, you can convert it to a divorce for a \$35 motion fee. The case then moves onto the divorce track, where a judge can decide the open issues.

WATCH FOR OUTDATED FORMS

The court notes that, after a website change, some posted forms may be out of date. Confirm you have the current form with the Clerk before you file. How-to videos are on the court's YouTube channel.

DIVORCE

Filing a divorce when you do not agree.

Divorce is filed in the General Division. The court offers gender-neutral full packets through the county Bar Association and legal aid, and you can file several ways.

FORM	WHERE TO GET IT	WHAT IT'S FOR
Divorce packet https://www.co.tuscarawas.oh.us/government/court_of_common_pleas_court_general_division/index.php	Tuscarawas General Division	With or without children; complaint and support forms
Parenting order https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Standard or Long Distance	With children; the schedule that fits your distance
Health Care Determinations https://www.co.tuscarawas.oh.us/government/court_of_common_pleas_court_general_division/index.php	Tuscarawas General Division	With children; who covers the kids
UCCJEA Declaration https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	With children; the custody jurisdiction form
Answer packet https://www.co.tuscarawas.oh.us/government/court_of_common_pleas_court_general_division/index.php	Tuscarawas General Division	If you were served and want to respond

Five ways to file

You can file in person, by mail, by email to the Clerk, through the e-filing portal, or by fax. Service is arranged through the Clerk, by sheriff or certified mail, with publication available if you cannot find your spouse.

REAL ESTATE OR A PENSION?

The court's self-help packets warn that if either spouse owns real estate or any retirement plan, you should talk to an attorney before using the do-it-yourself forms. The wording matters.

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 request temporary orders from the General Division, usually by motion with a supporting affidavit, using the county's generic domestic motion form plus the right parenting or financial forms.

Confirm the procedure

The General Division's exact procedure for temporary orders, and whether an emergency ex parte order is available on your facts, should be confirmed with the Clerk at (330) 365-3243 before you rely on it.

UNMARRIED PARENTS AND EMERGENCIES

If you were never married and need emergency custody, you file in the Juvenile Division with a Complaint for Custody and a Request for Expedited Hearing. If the emergency involves violence, a protection order may be the faster tool. If anyone is in danger right now, call 911.

CHILDREN

Custody, parenting time, and child support.

Ohio uses specific words for custody. Tuscarawas County uses published parenting orders based on how far apart the parents live.

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.

Two parenting orders

When parents cannot agree, the court applies a default. The Standard Parenting Order is used when the parents live 150 miles or fewer apart. The Long Distance order is used when they live farther apart.

CHILD SUPPORT RUNS THROUGH THE CSEA

In Tuscarawas County, the child support agency runs through the Prosecutor's Office, reachable at 800-685-2732. Support is collected by income withholding and paid through the state.

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 for the same fee as a divorce. 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. Tuscarawas charges a small fee to file that agreed order after the decree. Getting the wording right matters, so many people use a lawyer for this step.

AFTER THE DECREE

Changing or enforcing a Tuscarawas County order.

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

MOTION TO MODIFY**\$170**

Or \$135 if you mediated within the prior two months

CONTEMPT (SHOW CAUSE)**\$145**

To enforce an order the other party broke

AGREED POST-DECREE MOTION**\$90**

When both sides agree to the change

Modifying and enforcing

To change custody or support, you file a motion to modify for \$170. If you mediated within the prior two months, the fee drops to \$135. Support changes can also start through the agency at 800-685-2732.

MOVING WITH THE CHILDREN

A parent who plans to move files a Notice of Intent to Relocate, which costs just \$2.50. File it ahead of time and follow Ohio's notice rules so your parenting time is not disrupted.

HELP ALONG THE WAY

Mediation, GALs, and parenting orders.

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

Mediation

Both the General Division and the Juvenile Division offer mediation to help parents reach an agreement on their own. It is never used 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.

Parenting orders

The Standard and Long Distance Parenting Orders give a default schedule based on how far apart the parents live, unless the parents agree on their own plan.

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 Tuscarawas 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. Ohio has one for domestic violence and one for stalking. Your safety drives the timeline.

FILING FEE	ADULT CASES	EX PARTE ORDER	FINAL ORDER
\$0 to petitioner	General Division	Often same day	Up to 5 years

How it works here

Because there is no separate domestic relations court, an adult protection order is filed in the General Division under R.C. 3113.31. There is no fee. The court can grant a same-day ex parte order, then hold a full hearing.

Help and forms

A protection order against a minor goes to the Juvenile Division. The court points petitioners to legal-aid forms, and for local help lists the Prosecutor's Office at (330) 365-3214.

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. Confirm the current intake steps with the Clerk before filing.

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 Wilgus.

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 Custody https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Tuscarawas Juvenile Division	Sets custody and parenting time
Complaint for Parentage https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	When fatherhood is not yet established
Affidavit of Basic Information https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Required by Local Rule 6.2	Filed with the initial case
Request for Expedited Hearing https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Tuscarawas Juvenile Division	When custody needs a fast setting

CONFIRM THE JUVENILE DEPOSIT

The Juvenile Division sets its own deposit amounts on a published cost list. Confirm the current deposit for your filing before you file. A fee waiver is available if you cannot afford it.

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. The Juvenile Division uses its own parenting schedule. Support changes can also start through the agency at 800-685-2732.

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 about a child's safety, contact county children services. For immediate danger, call 911.

A NOTE ON EXPEDITED CUSTODY

An unmarried parent who needs a fast custody decision can ask the Juvenile Division for an expedited hearing. A local rule says the first filing must include the Affidavit of Basic Information and a confidential information page. File both up front.

PART THREE

Adoption is handled by the Probate Division.

Stepparent and kinship adoptions go to the Probate Division, before Judge Wilgus, who also leads the Juvenile Division. Here is the basic shape.

CONFIRM THE DEPOSIT

The Probate Division is at 101 E. High Avenue, Room 203, with an adoption line at 330-365-3244. It sets adoption deposits on its own list. Confirm the current deposit for your adoption type 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. The court has instruction sheets by adoption type.

2

Address consent

In a stepparent case, the other parent usually must consent, and there is a required child-support agency notice. A court can excuse consent in some cases. A child 12 or older also consents.

3

Complete the home study

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

4

Attend the hearing

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

PART FOUR

How Gavvl Law can help in Tuscarawas 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

This guide explains how things generally work in Tuscarawas 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 June 15, 2026 from official court sources. Court fees, forms, and procedures change. Always confirm current fees and requirements with the Tuscarawas 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

Gavvl Law attorneys are licensed to practice law in Ohio. This guide describes Ohio law and Tuscarawas County procedure only. Advertising material. Gavvl Law LLC, 1677 Old Henderson Road, Columbus, Ohio 43220. Attorney responsible for content: Stephanie Green, Esq., Managing Partner. Privacy: gavvl.com/privacy-policy.