

PLAIN-ENGLISH GUIDE

Family Law in Union County

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

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- 01** See which court hears your case, and why divorce and dissolution cost different amounts here.

 - 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 Union County.

01

Which court handles this?

The Domestic Relations Division hears divorce and dissolution. The Juvenile Division handles custody for parents who were never married. Probate handles adoption. All sit in the courthouse on West Fifth Street.

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 Union 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.

ATTORNEYS MUST E-FILE

Union County requires attorneys to e-file. Pro se filers can pay and file in person, but new-case deposits must be paid in person. Check the deposit and forms before you go.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Four parts: Domestic Relations (divorce and dissolution), Juvenile Court (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. In Union County they all sit in the same courthouse on West Fifth Street. Start with the relationship, and with what you need a judge to decide.

MARRIED OR FORMERLY MARRIED

Domestic Relations

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

WHO HEARS IT

Judge Don W. Fraser; a Magistrate hears most DR matters.

PARENTS NEVER MARRIED

Juvenile Division

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

WHO HEARS IT

Judge Rick Rodger, Room 107.

ADOPTION

Probate Court

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

WHO HEARS IT

Judge Rodger, Room B06, same as Juvenile.

All in one courthouse

The Domestic Relations, Juvenile, and Probate courts all sit at 215 West Fifth Street in Marysville. Judge Rodger hears both Juvenile and Probate. Each court keeps its own forms, fees, and clerk, so file with the right one for your case.

PART ONE

The Domestic Relations Division ends marriages.

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

DISSOLUTION	DIVORCE	DISSOLUTION HEARING	RESIDENCY
\$375 / \$400	\$450 / \$560	30–90 days	6 months in Ohio

QUICK PATHFINDER

Do you agree on everything?

If yes, dissolution may fit, and it costs less here. 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.

DIVORCE COSTS MORE THAN DISSOLUTION HERE

Union charges \$375 for a dissolution without children and \$400 with. A divorce costs \$450 without children and \$560 with. If you fully agree, dissolution is the cheaper path. All costs must be paid before the final entry is signed.

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.

THE 90-DAY CLASS DEADLINE

If you have children, both spouses take the online co-parenting class before the hearing. In a dissolution, the decree will not be processed until the class certificate is filed, and the case is dismissed if no certificate arrives within 90 days of filing. Take the class early.

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 1 — Income & Expenses https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Each spouse files a separate one
Affidavit 2 — Property & Debt https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Lists what you own and owe
Parenting plan + support worksheet https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	With children; the agreed schedule and support math
Co-parenting class certificate https://www.unioncountyohio.gov/departments/CommonPleasCourt	Online program	Print it and file it with the Clerk

COST

\$375 or \$400

A dissolution costs \$375 without children and \$400 with. The deposit goes toward your real costs, and the balance is billed or refunded at the end. Both spouses must appear at the hearing.

THE CLASS

The online co-parenting class runs about four hours and costs \$49.99 per parent. Take it through the program the court links from its website, then print and file your certificate.

DIVORCE

Filing a divorce when you do not agree.

Divorce is filed with the Clerk of Courts, and e-filed by attorneys. Union County will not accept the packet without all the required pieces, so build it fully before you file.

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 1 — Income & Expenses https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	With your three most recent pay stubs
Affidavit 2 — Property & Debt https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Lists what you own and owe
Affidavits 3 & 4 — Parenting and Insurance https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	With children; notarized
Classification Form + UCD1 https://www.unioncountyohio.gov/departments/CommonPleasCourt	Union County forms	Required local cover and disclosure forms

A restraining order on filing

When you file, the court's mutual restraining order takes effect and is served with the Complaint. It stops both spouses from moving the children out of the court's reach, harassing each other, selling or hiding property, or changing insurance and beneficiaries.

IF YOU CANNOT FIND YOUR SPOUSE

Service can be by publication or by posting and mail. Union posts notices at Union County Human Services, the Marysville Municipal Court, and the Clerk's website. You pay the newspaper directly for publication.

TEMPORARY ORDERS

How Union decides them — with a hearing.

A divorce can take months. Temporary orders set the rules in the meantime.

Union's approach is different from many counties.

Hearings on every motion

Union County holds a hearing on all motions for temporary orders. It does not decide them on the affidavits alone. In cases with children, the court usually sends parents to an initial mediation session before that hearing.

Asking a spouse to leave the home

A motion for exclusive use of the home is never granted without the other side first being heard. It must state specific reasons backed by your affidavit, and it is set for a hearing with the other temporary-order requests.

IF YOU NEED PROTECTION RIGHT AWAY

Because the court holds hearings on temporary motions, the divorce case is not the fast path for an emergency. For immediate protection from violence or threats, a domestic violence protection order can include a same-day order to leave the home. Confirm any emergency procedure with the DR Bailiff at (937) 645-3015. If anyone is in danger right now, call 911.

CHILDREN

Custody, parenting time, and child support in a divorce.

Ohio uses specific words for custody. The right words help you read the forms and talk to the court.

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 co-parenting class

In any divorce, legal separation, or dissolution with children, both parents take the online co-parenting class before the final hearing. It costs \$49.99 per parent. The court can hold up parenting time until you finish it.

CHILD SUPPORT RUNS THROUGH THE CSEA

The Union County child support agency handles support. Reach it at (937) 644-1010. 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 Division. Annulment is rare and has narrow grounds. The deposit for legal separation may differ, so confirm it with the Clerk.

A note on retirement accounts

If a divorce divides a retirement account, it usually takes a separate order, a QDRO or a DOPO, to split it with the plan. In Union County these are due within 60 days of the decree. Getting the wording right matters, so many people use a lawyer for this step.

AFTER THE DECREE

Changing or enforcing a Union 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**\$485**

To modify custody, parenting time, or support after the decree

COUNTERCLAIM IN A DIVORCE**\$100**

The other spouse's own claim in the divorce

GUARDIAN AD LITEM**\$500**

Deposit toward a GAL appointed in a DR case

Modifying and enforcing

To change custody or support, you file a post-decree motion in your original case. The deposit is \$485. Support changes can also start through the child support agency. Some post-decree motions may need the co-parenting class again.

MOVING WITH THE CHILDREN

A parent who plans to move should follow Ohio's relocation notice rules before moving. Ask the DR Bailiff at (937) 645-3015 which form your decree needs and how far ahead to file it.

HELP ALONG THE WAY

Mediation, GALs, and the parenting class.

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

Mediation

Union has a Mediation Department, and cases with children often mediate early, before the temporary-orders hearing. The court fee covers an initial session, and added sessions cost \$160 each. Mediation is never used for 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. The deposit is \$500, and the court decides who pays in the end.

The co-parenting class

The online co-parenting class is its own kind of help. It shows parents how to reduce conflict and build a workable plan, and the court suggests taking it before mediation.

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 Union 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 (DVCPO) can order someone to stay away. It can also set temporary custody and support. Your safety drives the timeline.

FILING FEE	EX PARTE ORDER	FULL HEARING	HEARD BY
\$0 to petitioner	Same day	Within 7–10 days	A Magistrate

How it works here

DVCPO petitions are heard in the Court of Common Pleas, and a Magistrate can issue the order under R.C. 3113.31. There is no fee for the petitioner. A judge or magistrate can issue a same-day ex parte order when there is an immediate danger.

What the order can do

A full hearing follows, usually within 7 to 10 days. A final order can last up to five years. It can order no contact, use of the home, temporary custody and support, and even transfer of a shared cell phone number.

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.

PART TWO

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 Juvenile Division, before Judge Rodger.

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. The court suggests asking the child support agency to decide paternity before you file.

Filing for custody as an unmarried parent

FORM	WHERE TO GET IT	WHAT IT'S FOR
Complaint to establish paternity https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Plus a request to set custody and parenting time
Parenting Proceeding Affidavit https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	Notarized, with an original signature
Health Insurance Affidavit https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/forms/all-forms/domestic-relations-and-juvenile-standardized/1	Ohio Supreme Court forms	When support is at issue
Title IV-D Application https://www.unioncountyohio.gov/departments/CommonPleasCourt	Juvenile Clerk or CSEA	Sets up the support case with the agency

COSTS AND PARENTING TIME

The Juvenile Division is in Room 107, (937) 645-3029, extension 3411. An agreed custody case costs \$75 to file. A contested one costs \$115. The court has standard parenting-time guidelines, with one schedule for nearby parents and another for parents who live far apart.

AFTER A JUVENILE ORDER

Changing orders and CPS cases.

Juvenile orders can change as children grow. The court works on set time standards to keep cases moving.

Modifying a juvenile order

To change custody, parenting time, or support, you file a motion in the existing case. A show-cause motion to enforce an order has a \$100 deposit. Support changes can also start through the agency at (937) 644-1010.

Abuse, neglect, and dependency

These CPS cases are heard in the Juvenile Division. To report concerns about a child's safety, call (937) 644-1010 on weekdays, or the Sheriff at (937) 645-4100 after hours. For immediate danger, call 911.

A REGISTRATION NOTE

To register an out-of-state custody order, the deposit is \$115, or \$175 if you also ask to enforce or change it at the same time. Confirm the current checklist with the Juvenile Clerk at (937) 645-3029 before you file.

PART THREE

Adoption is handled by the Probate Court.

Stepparent and kinship adoptions go to the Probate Court, before Judge Rodger.

There is one cost detail worth knowing before you start.

PLAN FOR THE HOME STUDY FEE

A stepparent, grandparent, or legal-custodian adoption costs \$950 at filing in Union County. That is a \$200 court-cost deposit plus a \$750 home study by the court's assessor. Each extra child adds \$100 to the home study.

STEPPARENT OR KINSHIP**\$950**

A \$200 deposit plus a \$750 home study

EACH ADDITIONAL CHILD**+\$100**

Added to the home study fee

ADULT ADOPTION**\$160**

No home study fee for an adult adoption

1**File the petition in Probate**

File the Petition for Adoption in the Probate Court, Room B06, (937) 645-3029, with the \$950 due at filing and the required local forms.

2**Address consent**

The other parent's consent is usually needed. The court can waive it if a parent had little or no contact, or gave no support, for the year before filing.

3**Complete the home study**

The court's assessor does a home study. For a stepparent or kinship case it is the smaller study, not the full one used for other adoptions.

4**Attend the hearing**

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

PART FOUR

How Gavvl Law can help in Union 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 Union 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 14, 2026 from official court sources. Court fees, forms, and procedures change. Always confirm current fees and requirements with the Union 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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