



Save Money on Divorce: The Checklist

Define Your Goals

- Find a time when you are calm and collected, not emotional, to sit down and make some business-like decisions.
- Make a list of the things that are most important to you. Write down your long and short-term goals.
- Identify the items that you and your soon-to-be-ex agree on that do not need to be negotiated.
- Write out all your assets and liabilities and bring it with you when you meet with your attorney.

Educate Yourself

- Research and review credible online sources of Washington State family law information.
- Download our free divorce guide and other resources on our website, morris-sockle.com
- If you are low income, take advantage of community resources, such as Courthouse Facilitators and legal clinics.
- Hire a skilled attorney to handle all aspects of your divorce. It is the best way to ensure that everything is handled correctly. There are no 'do-overs' in divorce, and mistakes can be costly.
- If you have no conflicts, children, no assets/liabilities to be divided, you may be able to do a 'do-it-yourself' divorce. This path is not recommended.
- If you and your spouse agree to all the terms of your divorce, you may be able to finalize your divorce with only one of you being represented by an attorney.

Choose the Right Attorney

- Set up consultations to interview potential attorneys. Look for experience, professionalism, and communication.
- Ask about their hourly rate and if they offer discounts, such as military.
- Compare online reviews, hourly rates, and your level of satisfaction from the initial consultation.
- Keep in mind, a cheap attorney is not always a good attorney. Look for a skilled and experienced professional with plenty of family law experience.

Use Your Attorney Wisely

- If you only need a few tasks completed, and not an entire divorce, ask about 'unbundled services'
- Make sure that the attorney you work with uses legal assistants and paralegals for routine tasks.
- If you can complete a simple task on your own, don't ask your attorney to do it.
- If you are feeling emotional, find a good therapist. Your lawyer is too expensive to talk about your feelings with.
- Listen to the advice your attorney gives you. Do not insist on pursuing actions unlikely to get results.
- Write down your questions and be prepared to talk with your lawyer efficiently during your meetings.
Gather all necessary documents your attorney needs before each meeting.
- Be honest and upfront with your attorney. They need to know all the facts. Lies and omissions will waste time.
- Do all your homework in-between meetings and come prepared.
- Follow all court orders, Don't waste money trying to defend inappropriate behavior.
- Be open to fair negotiations. No one wins 100% of everything they want. Remember that the more time your attorney has to spend working on your case, the more money it will cost.
- Put an honest effort into mediation. The court requires you to show up, but if you can't come to an agreement then you will have to move on to additional steps which will cost you more time and money.
- Know when to walk away. Sometimes it's better to just let it go, get the divorce over with, and move on.
- Wait until your divorce is final before you move in with a new partner.
- Think really carefully before you get married again. Weddings are expensive, and can lead to divorce.