

# How to Respond to a Divorce, Legal Separation, or Invalidity (Annulment) Petition

Note: If you **agree** with everything your spouse or domestic partner has requested in the petition you may fill out the form *Agreement to Join Petition* (FL All Family 119). You do not need to use these instructions. Ask the facilitator office for specific instructions for agreed cases.

## Talk to a lawyer, if you can

These instructions have been developed by the King County Superior Court Family Law Information Center. They are not intended to be a substitute for legal advice. They provide only legal *information*. It's a good idea to talk to a lawyer before you file any forms. If you cannot afford a lawyer, you can:

- Find a lawyer to help you with the *most difficult* parts of your case, such as reviewing your forms, explaining how to get ready for court and confirming this is the best legal action for your case. You can contact the King County Bar Association to ask for a referral.
- Ask the Family Law Facilitator's office for a list of low-cost and free legal resources.

King County Superior Court  
516 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave, Room W-382  
Seattle, WA 98104

Maleng Regional Justice Center  
401 4<sup>th</sup> Ave North, Room 3D  
Kent, WA 98032

## Step 1: Determine your response deadline

20 days	If you were served in person in Washington state.
60 days	If you were served in person outside of Washington state or by publication.
90 days	If you were served by mail.

## Step 2: Fill out these forms

All of these forms can be downloaded at: [www.courts.wa.gov/forms/](http://www.courts.wa.gov/forms/)

Form Name	Form Number	Notes	Completed
<a href="#">Response to Petition about a Marriage</a>	FL Divorce 211	Use form FL Divorce 212 for <a href="#">Response to Petition about a Domestic Partnership</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you have children under the age of 18 born during your marriage, you will also fill out these forms

<a href="#">Parenting Plan</a>	FL All Family 140		<input type="checkbox"/>
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### How many copies do I need?

- **Original** set to file with Clerk's office.
- Copy 1 is to serve the other party
- Copy 2 you will keep for your records

## Step 3: Take your original forms to the Clerk's Office and file

## Step 4: Have the other party served

You may deliver or mail documents yourself. If the other party has an attorney, deliver or mail the forms to the attorney instead. After you have delivered/mailed the forms to the other party or attorney, fill out the *Proof of Mailing or Hand Delivery* form. Make one copy of this form for your records and file the original with the Clerk's Office.

<a href="#">Proof of Mailing or Hand Delivery</a>	FL All Family 112	Download at: <a href="http://www.courts.wa.gov/forms/">www.courts.wa.gov/forms/</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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You have now responded to the Petition and must take the following additional steps.

## Step 5: You and your spouse/registered domestic partner *must* go to a family law class

You **must** both go to a class, called *Family Law Orientation*. This class will explain how the courts handle family law cases. And it will tell you where you can find information and help. The deadline to complete this class is listed on your *Case Schedule*.

Go to the [Family Law Facilitator's Office](#) for information or to register (W-382 in Seattle and 3D in Kent).

### **If you have children under 18, you *must* both go to a parenting class**

Both parents **must** go to a parenting class called *What About the Children*. You must complete the class by the deadline listed on your *Case Schedule*.

Go to the [Family Law Facilitator's Office](#) for information or to register (W-382 in Seattle and 3D in Kent).

## Step 6: Follow your Case Schedule

If you do not have a copy of your case schedule, you may get it from the Clerk's office. This contains deadlines each party must follow. Some of these deadlines include:

- **Status Conference:** If the Confirmation of Issues is not signed by both parties and filed, or if your case is otherwise not on track with your Case Schedule, you are required to attend your Status Conference. See your case schedule for your Status Conference date.
- **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR):** Also called mediation or settlement conference, parties must try to reach an agreement with the help of a professional, such as an attorney or social worker, prior to trial. The *Legal Resource List* available in the Facilitator's office contains information on programs that offer ADR.

**If you and the other party *do* come to an agreement:** You can finalize your dissolution case in the Ex Parte courtroom, after the 90-day waiting period has expired. (This waiting period does not apply to legal separation and invalidity cases.) You **must** file an *Ex Parte Notice of Court Date (Commissioners)* form, for either [Kent](#) or [Seattle](#), to schedule your final hearing. Choose a hearing date that is at least 14 days from when you file the *Ex Parte Notice of Court Date (Commissioners)* form with the Clerk's office. You may have to pay a document review fee at your final hearing. **\*\*If you reach an agreement in your invalidity case, please see the family law facilitator's for information on how to finalize.\*\***

**If you and the other party *cannot* agree:** Your case must be resolved at trial. See your case schedule for your trial date.

While you are waiting for trial, if you would like to have temporary orders (such as temporary parenting plan, child support, maintenance, temporary restraining orders, and/or temporary orders regarding the use of property), you may request a hearing. Ask the facilitator for information for filing a *Motion for Temporary Orders*.

## Step 7: Complete your final documents

To finalize your case by agreement or trial, you will need to fill out the forms below.

All of these forms can be downloaded at: [www.courts.wa.gov/forms/](http://www.courts.wa.gov/forms/)

Form Name	Form Number	Notes	Completed
<a href="#">Findings and Conclusions About a Marriage</a>	FL Divorce 231	Use FL Divorce 232 for <a href="#">Registered Domestic Partnership</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Final Divorce Order (Dissolution Decree) / Legal Separation Order (Decree) / Invalid Marriage Order (Annulment Decree) / Valid Marriage Order (Decree)</a>	FL Divorce 241	Use FL Divorce 242 for <a href="#">Registered Domestic Partnership</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you have children under the age of 18 born during your marriage, you also need to fill out these forms

<a href="#">Parenting Plan</a>	FL All Family 140		<input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Child Support Order</a>	FL All Family 130		<input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Child Support Worksheets</a>	WSCSS - Worksheets		<input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Child Support Schedule &amp; Instructions</a>	This is information to use to calculate Child Support Worksheets. Online Child Support Calculation software is available at <a href="https://fortress.wa.gov/dshs/dcs/SSGen/Home">https://fortress.wa.gov/dshs/dcs/SSGen/Home</a>		

You may also need these forms if you are going to trial

<a href="#">Financial Declaration of (name): _____</a>	FL All Family 131		<input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Sealed Financial Source Documents (Coversheet)</a>	FL All Family 011	This form goes on the <i>front</i> of the financial documents you file.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>If your case involves financial matters you may have to provide copies of financial documents, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your W-2s and complete personal tax returns for the past 2 years</li> <li>Your most recent pay stubs (at least 6 months)</li> <li>Complete partnership/corporate tax returns for the past 2 years if you have a 5% interest or more</li> <li>Statements from all of your banks and financial institutions for the past 6 months</li> <li><i>Note:</i> The other party can ask you for a copy of your check register. If this happens, you will have 14 days to provide it.</li> </ul>			
<a href="#">Restraining Order</a>	FL All Family 150		<input type="checkbox"/>
<a href="#">Law Enforcement Information Sheet</a>	WPF All Cases 01.0400		<input type="checkbox"/>

