

GENERIC DIVORCE PETITION TEMPLATE

For adaptation to state-specific divorce or dissolution filings

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IMPORTANT EDUCATIONAL USE NOTICE

This template is for general educational and organizational purposes only. It is not legal advice, does not create an attorney-client relationship, and may not be accepted by any court without state-specific revisions. Divorce law, required forms, filing procedures, waiting periods, residency rules, service requirements, child-related requirements, financial disclosures, and local court rules vary by state, county, and case type. Consult a licensed attorney or your local court self-help center before filing anything that affects your rights, family, property, money, safety, or legal status.

How to Use This Template

- Replace every bracketed placeholder with accurate, case-specific information.
- Confirm your state and county court use the same terminology. Some states use Divorce, Dissolution of Marriage, Complaint for Divorce, Petition for Dissolution, or Verified Complaint.
- Attach required state or county forms, including financial disclosures, confidential information sheets, parenting plans, child support worksheets, civil cover sheets, fee waivers, and service forms when required.
- Do not include confidential information such as full Social Security numbers, full financial account numbers, protected addresses, or children's confidential data unless your local rules require it and explain how to file it safely.
- If domestic violence, stalking, coercive control, child safety, protective orders, or unsafe disclosure of address information is involved, consult a licensed attorney, domestic violence advocate, or court self-help office before filing.

State-Specific Items to Verify Before Filing

- Residency requirement and required length of residence before filing
- County venue rule and whether you are filing in the correct court
- Required waiting period or separation period
- Available legal grounds and whether no-fault grounds are accepted
- Whether your petition must be verified, notarized, or signed under penalty of perjury
- Mandatory financial disclosure forms and deadlines
- Parenting plan, custody affidavit, child support worksheet, and parenting class requirements if children are involved
- Rules for serving the other spouse and proof of service
- Whether temporary orders, protective orders, restraining orders, or emergency relief should be filed separately
- Local formatting rules, e-filing rules, filing fees, and fee waiver forms

Safety and Urgency Note

This generic divorce petition is not designed to handle emergencies by itself.

- If there is immediate danger, call emergency services or a local crisis resource. Do not wait on a divorce filing to address immediate safety concerns.
- If you need a protective order, restraining order, temporary custody order, temporary support, exclusive use of a home, or confidential address protection, confirm whether your court requires separate emergency forms or motions.
- If revealing an address, phone number, school, workplace, child location, or shelter location could create danger, ask the court clerk, legal aid, domestic violence advocate, or licensed attorney about confidential filing procedures before filing.

IN THE [NAME OF COURT] OF [COUNTY], [STATE]

[PETITIONER FULL LEGAL NAME], Petitioner,	Case No.: [CASE NUMBER] Division: [DIVISION, IF ANY]
v.	Judge: [JUDGE, IF ASSIGNED]
[RESPONDENT FULL LEGAL NAME], Respondent.	PETITION FOR DIVORCE / DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE
This caption must match your court's required format.	Check local court rules before filing.

Petition for Divorce / Dissolution of Marriage

Use the terminology required in your state. Delete provisions that do not apply. Add state-specific statutory language if required by your jurisdiction.

1. Parties

Petitioner, [PETITIONER FULL LEGAL NAME], is an adult resident of [CITY], [COUNTY], [STATE].

Respondent, [RESPONDENT FULL LEGAL NAME], is an adult resident of [CITY], [COUNTY], [STATE], or is believed to reside at [ADDRESS OR GENERAL LOCATION, IF KNOWN].

The parties were married on or about [DATE OF MARRIAGE] in [CITY/COUNTY/STATE OR COUNTRY].

The parties separated on or about [DATE OF SEPARATION], if applicable, or continue to reside together as of the date of filing.

2. Jurisdiction and Venue

This Court has jurisdiction over this matter because [STATE THE RESIDENCY, DOMICILE, OR OTHER BASIS REQUIRED BY YOUR STATE].

Venue is proper in [COUNTY] because [STATE WHY THIS COUNTY IS THE PROPER COUNTY, SUCH AS RESIDENCE OF A PARTY OR COUNTY OF SEPARATION, IF APPLICABLE].

Petitioner satisfies all residency, waiting-period, and filing requirements required by applicable law, subject to court review.

3. Grounds for Divorce or Dissolution

Choose the language permitted by your state. Many states allow no-fault grounds, but wording varies. Some states require specific statutory language.

- No-fault grounds: The marriage is irretrievably broken, there are irreconcilable differences, or the parties are incompatible, as permitted by applicable state law.
- Fault-based grounds, if recognized and intentionally alleged: [INSERT STATE-SPECIFIC GROUNDS AND FACTS].
- Separation-based grounds, if required or applicable: The parties have lived separate and apart since [DATE], as required by applicable law.

4. Children of the Marriage

Use full legal names only if permitted by your state filing rules. Some courts require initials or separate confidential information sheets for children.

The parties have the following minor child or children together:

Child name or initials	Date of birth	Current residence	Parenting arrangement requested	Other notes
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[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

- There are no minor children of the marriage.
- A child-related affidavit, parenting plan, custody disclosure, or child support worksheet is attached or will be filed as required by local rules.

5. Pregnancy

Some states require pregnancy disclosures. Use the required local language.

- Neither party is pregnant.
- A party is pregnant. Additional court findings, parentage determinations, or child-related orders may be required.
- Unknown or not applicable under local rules.

6. Domestic Violence, Safety, and Protective Orders

Do not disclose a protected address or confidential safety information in a public filing. Consider separate emergency filings, protective orders, address confidentiality programs, or sealed filings where available.

- There are no known active protective orders involving the parties or children.
- There is an active protective order, restraining order, no-contact order, criminal bond condition, safety plan, or related court order. Details should be provided only in the manner permitted by local rules.
- Petitioner requests that the Court consider appropriate safety-related relief, including confidential address protection, safe exchange provisions, supervised visitation, temporary exclusive use of the residence, or other lawful relief as appropriate.

7. Property and Assets

Property division rules vary widely. Identify property generally here and use required financial disclosure forms where available.

- The parties have already divided all marital/community property to their satisfaction.
- The parties own marital/community property that should be equitably, fairly, or legally divided by the Court according to applicable state law.
- Petitioner requests confirmation of Petitioner's separate property, if recognized under applicable law, including: [DESCRIBE GENERALLY].
- Petitioner requests that retirement accounts, pensions, investment accounts, business interests, vehicles, real property, personal property, digital assets, and other assets be divided according to applicable law and court order.

8. Debts and Liabilities

- The parties have no known marital/community debts requiring division.
- The parties have debts that should be allocated by the Court according to applicable law, including: [LIST GENERALLY].
- Petitioner requests that each party be ordered to hold the other harmless from debts assigned to that party, to the extent permitted by law.

9. Temporary Orders

Temporary orders are often requested by separate motion. Confirm local practice.

- Petitioner is not requesting temporary orders at this time.
- Petitioner may request temporary orders regarding parenting time, child support, spousal support, exclusive use of property, payment of bills, insurance, attorney fees, safety, or other temporary relief.

10. Child Custody, Parenting Time, and Child Support

Use this section only if minor children are involved. Many states require a separate parenting plan or child support worksheet.

- Petitioner requests that legal custody, physical custody, parenting time, decision-making, visitation, and child support be ordered in the best interests of the child or children and according to applicable law.
- Petitioner requests child support, medical support, health insurance provisions, childcare expense allocation, tax dependency provisions, and related relief as allowed by law.
- Petitioner requests a parenting plan consistent with the child or children's safety, stability, school schedule, medical needs, and best interests.

11. Spousal Support / Alimony / Maintenance

- Petitioner requests spousal support, alimony, or maintenance according to applicable law.
- Petitioner requests that no spousal support, alimony, or maintenance be awarded to either party.
- Petitioner requests that the Court reserve jurisdiction to decide spousal support, alimony, or maintenance if permitted by law.

12. Insurance, Taxes, and Related Financial Matters

- Petitioner requests appropriate orders regarding health insurance, life insurance, vehicle insurance, homeowner or renter insurance, and continuation or termination of coverage as permitted by law.
- Petitioner requests appropriate orders regarding tax filing status, tax refunds, tax liabilities, dependency exemptions or credits, and related financial matters as permitted by law.

13. Name Change

- Petitioner requests restoration of a prior legal name: [FULL PRIOR NAME].
- No name change is requested.

14. Attorney Fees and Costs

- Petitioner requests that each party pay their own fees and costs.
- Petitioner requests attorney fees, expert fees, filing fees, service fees, and costs as permitted by applicable law.

15. Request for Relief

Edit this list carefully. Ask only for relief that applies to your case and is permitted by your jurisdiction.

- Grant a divorce or dissolution of marriage;
- Enter all required findings regarding jurisdiction, venue, residency, and grounds;
- Divide marital/community property and debts according to applicable law;
- Confirm separate property, if applicable and recognized by law;
- Enter custody, parenting time, child support, medical support, and child-related orders if minor children are involved;
- Enter spousal support, alimony, maintenance, or reservation orders if appropriate;
- Enter appropriate safety, protective, or confidentiality orders if necessary;

- Restore Petitioner's prior name if requested;
- Award fees and costs if permitted by law;
- Grant all other just and proper relief allowed by law.

16. Signature Block

Respectfully submitted,

[PETITIONER FULL LEGAL NAME]

[MAILING ADDRESS OR CONFIDENTIAL ADDRESS METHOD]

[CITY, STATE, ZIP]

[PHONE NUMBER]

[EMAIL ADDRESS]

Self-represented party, if applicable

17. Verification / Declaration

Some states require notarized verification. Others allow unsworn declarations under penalty of perjury. Use the exact language required in your jurisdiction.

I, [PETITIONER FULL LEGAL NAME], declare that I have read this Petition and that the facts stated in it are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief. I understand that false statements may subject me to penalties under applicable law.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Optional Notary Block

State of _____

County of _____

Subscribed and sworn to before me on this ____ day of _____, 20____.

Notary Public: _____

My commission expires: _____

18. Certificate of Service

Service rules are strict. Improper service can delay or defeat your case. Use the service method required by your court.

I certify that on [DATE], I served a copy of this Petition and any required attachments on Respondent by the following method: [PERSONAL SERVICE / SHERIFF / PROCESS SERVER / CERTIFIED MAIL / E-FILING SERVICE / OTHER METHOD PERMITTED BY LAW].

Signature: _____

Filing Readiness Checklist

This checklist is not a substitute for local rules. It is an organizational tool only.

- I confirmed the correct court, county, and case caption format.
- I confirmed the state residency and venue requirements.
- I confirmed the required grounds and used the correct state terminology.
- I completed all required state or county forms beyond this petition.
- I reviewed whether confidential information must be filed separately or redacted.
- I reviewed whether domestic violence, stalking, child safety, or address confidentiality issues require special procedures.
- I completed required financial disclosures or know the deadline to complete them.
- I completed required child-related forms if minor children are involved.
- I reviewed filing fees, fee waiver options, e-filing rules, and service requirements.
- I consulted a licensed attorney or court self-help resource if the case involves safety, children, property, debt, immigration, benefits, military service, retirement accounts, business ownership, taxes, or contested issues.

Document Preparation Notes

State-specific name of filing: _____

Court website or self-help page checked: _____

Required attachments: _____

Filing fee or fee waiver form: _____

Service method required: _____

Deadline or waiting period: _____

Safety or confidentiality concerns: _____

End of Template

Use templates to get organized. Use lawyers to get advice.