

How to Prepare for Divorce

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Whatever brought you to the decision to consider divorce, as with most situations, knowledge is power. If you have determined that your spouse is considering separation or divorce, or if you have decided that you have tried to resolve matters and are ready to part ways, consulting with an experienced family lawyer will provide you with information so that you can make informed decisions.

One of the first steps you should take is to prepare a chronology of events from the date of your relationship, noting important dates. The chronology need not be in great detail, but organizing your thoughts and recollection will be very helpful when it's time for you to explain your situation to your attorney, counselors, mediators, etc. "Once and done" will relieve you of the need to review your history over and over again.

Your attorney will request a summary of your and your spouse's income, expenses, assets and liabilities. You will need to provide information as to what accounts, property, etc., is jointly or solely owned by one or both of you or if the assets are owned by a corporation or partnership.

Generally speaking, you will be asked to provide the following documents:

- Income tax returns for the past five years
- Recent pay stubs for you and your spouse
- Bank statements for all joint and separate accounts
- Estate plans, including trust information
- Shareholder or partnership agreements
- Titles to cars, boats, airplanes, etc.
- Information regarding cryptocurrency
- Retirement plan statements
- Investment account statements
- Information regarding all debt - including mortgages, HELOC Accounts, personal loans, etc.
- Investment account statements
- Information regarding inheritance that you or your spouse received

- Information regarding pre-marital assets or gifts received from someone other than your spouse (or that your spouse has received from someone other than you)

Be aware that your attorney will ask you to complete a financial statement, so becoming knowledgeable of your regular expenses will be very helpful.

Consider counseling, which will be very helpful during this stressful and emotional time.

Choose a divorce attorney who is recognized as an expert in this field. Sandy and Cheryl are both Fellows in the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers as well as the International Academy of Family Lawyers, having been recognized by their peers and the Court as experts in the field of Family Law. In addition, both Sandy and Cheryl have been included in Best Lawyers, Super Lawyers and other publications.