

PHASE 1: INITIATING THE DIVORCE	Notes
File divorce petition at county courthouse	
Recommended: Next Steps Appointment (15 mins) to discuss service, the parenting class, mediation, and next steps in the divorce.	
Register/complete parenting time class. It is important you complete this as soon as possible. A general judgment of dissolution of marriage is oftentimes not accepted by the court until this has been completed.	
Serve spouse the divorce papers - countdown 30 days.	
Wait for your spouse to file a response.	
Recommended: Default Strategy Appointment (15 mins) to discuss filing default judgment documents. Very important to make this appointment between 20 and 25 days after the spouse is served so that documents can be filed at the very first opportunity with the court (31st day after service). If your spouse files a response, ignore this step and proceed to the next phase.	
Recommended: Prepare the default documents. After the Default Strategy Appointment, arrangements will be made to have all documents ready by the 31st day to be filed at the courthouse and lock-in a default judgment.	
File default documents with the court on the 31st day after the spouse is legally served the divorce papers.	
Recommended: Post Divorce Appointment (30 mins) to discuss next steps after the default judgment has been filed and signed by the court. Make this appointment after you receive a <i>Notice of Entry</i> from the court.	

PHASE 2: LITIGATING THE CASE	Notes
Recommended: Response Review Appointment (30 mins). Spouse files a response with the court. The court will send out notices to both parties with dates to attend mediation orientation, complete the parenting class, and information on the first status conference with the judge.	

Recommended: First Status Conference Appointment (30 mins) to discuss the status conference. Make this appointment a week before the status conference.	
Recommended: Post Status Conference Appointment (30 mins) to discuss what occurred at the status conference and how to proceed. Make this appointment soon after the status conference.	
Judge will likely assign a future status conference somewhere around 30, 60, 90 or more days out.	
Attend the first mediation session with the mediator to discuss parenting time and custody issues. Note, this step may happen before this first status conference.	
Recommended: Mediation Session Strategy Appointment (60 mins) to discuss strategy for custody and parenting time and develop a parenting time plan. It is important you go into mediation with a game plan and with some idea of what is and isn't important as the mediator has a set number of hours to spend with the parties to try to finalize a complete parenting time plan. Make this appointment a week before the first mediation session.	
Recommended: Post Mediation Session Appointment (15 mins) to discuss how mediation went and how to proceed next.	
Recommended: Second Status Conference Appointment (15 mins) to discuss case updates and likely issues that may come up during the second status conference and how to deal with them.	
Recommended: Post Status Conference Appointment (15 mins) to discuss what occurred at the status conference and how to proceed. Make this appointment soon after the second status conference.	
Judge will likely assign a future status conference somewhere around 30, 60, 90 or more days out. It is recommended that you make 15-minute appointments before each status conference and also after each status conference as done previously.	
Attend mediation sessions with the mediator. It is not recommended that you make appointments before and after each mediation session. Only for the first session. However, if you feel the need, please don't hesitate to do so. It is highly recommended that you make a 60-minute appointment when there is a proposed parenting time agreement to sign as this could become a court ordered plan.	
Recommended: After the second status conference, make an appointment (30 mins) for a Litigation Strategy Appointment to discuss strategy on how to litigate the case. A discussion about where you and your spouse are in settlement negotiations, what methods to employ to prove your case and strategies to leverage your position.	

PHASE 3: SETTLING THE CASE	Notes
<p>After your last mediation session and various status conferences, the judge will likely set more status conferences (especially if the judge believes the parties are close to settling or there is continuing progress) or will set a date for a final trial to decide all outstanding issues.</p>	
<p>Recommended: Property Strategy Appointment (60 mins) to discuss strategy for how you want to divide assets and debts. We will review a completed assets and liabilities spreadsheet to see how “equitable” your initial division of property is.</p>	
<p>Recommended: Custody and Parenting Time Appointment (60 mins) to discuss strategy for how custody and parenting time should be awarded. *Only if an agreement has not been reached in mediation.</p>	
<p>Recommended: Other Issues Appointment - child support, spousal support, etc. (60 mins). If any other issues in the divorce have not been covered but are still outstanding, they should be discussed.</p>	
<p>Recommended: Settlement Proposal Strategy Appointment (60 mins) after discussing the main outstanding issues from the previous appointments, now discuss how to employ strategies to settle this case in the most advantageous way.</p>	
<p>Wait and see if the case settles. If it does, one party will need to prepare the judgment. If the other side has an attorney, go ahead and let your spouse’s attorney do it.</p>	
<p>Recommended: If your spouse’s attorney prepares the judgment, you will have 7 days from when you receive the proposed judgment to review it and make any objections to its form and content. It is highly recommended that you make an appointment (60 mins) for me to review the judgment and then for us to go over it together. You don’t want something quietly getting in the judgement you don’t want in it.</p>	
<p>Recommended: If your spouse doesn’t have an attorney, I can prepare a proposed judgment.</p>	
<p>Recommended: Post Divorce Appointment (60 mins) to discuss next steps after the judgment has been filed and signed by the court. Make this appointment after you receive a <i>Notice of Entry</i> from the court.</p>	

PHASE 4: GOING TO TRIAL	Notes
<p>Our office does not represent clients in court for hearings or trial. When or if this time comes, we can refer you to trial attorneys who can represent you or we can provide trial prep and coaching. If you</p>	

decide you want trial prep and coaching from our office, keep reading below.	
60 to 45 days before trial	
Recommended: Trial Strategy Appointment (60 mins) to prep for trial. Depending on the number of outstanding issues your case presents or the complexity of the case, multiple Trial Strategy Appointments may be needed.	
20 days before trial	
Recommended: Prepare a trial memo. A trial memo is persuasive because it is a written report that the judge can read before the trial. It gives the judge a roadmap of your case and the legal arguments that support your position. You will also find it useful for yourself as a guide to how to present your case and what issues are being presented to the judge.	
7 days before trial	
Recommended: Trial Strategy Appointment (30 mins) to discuss final issues and questions before trial.	
After trial	
Recommended: Prepare divorce judgment. If your spouse has an attorney, they will prepare the judgment. If not, I can prepare the judgment based on the audio recording of the trial.	
Once a party has prepared a judgment, they must send it to the other party and wait at least 7 days to review and make objections. If there are objections, the parties must try to resolve them before submitting the judgment to the court.	
Judgment is submitted to the court and signed by the judge.	
Recommended: Post Divorce Appointment (60 mins) to discuss next steps after the judgment has been filed and signed by the court. Make this appointment after you receive a <i>Notice of Entry</i> from the court.	

MODIFICATIONS	Notes
Recommended: Modification Appointment (30 mins) to discuss pursuing or responding to a motion to modify (custody, parenting time, child support, other).	