



LAW OFFICE OF
LASHEENA M. WILLIAMS



Divorce in Howard County

Your Step-by-Step Guide to Separation, Stability, and Moving Forward

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We Wrote This for You — Because No One Should Go Through Divorce Alone



We understand that behind every case file is a parent trying to protect their children, a spouse trying to secure financial stability, or an individual simply trying to start over.

Divorce is more than paperwork. It affects where you live, how you parent, your finances, and your future. It can disrupt routines, change family dynamics, and introduce legal processes that may feel cold or confusing during an already vulnerable time. Whether you're thinking about separation, preparing to file, or responding to a spouse's petition, you deserve clear, compassionate guidance from people who understand both the law and the emotional toll this experience can take.

At the Law Office of LaSheena M. Williams, we help families across Maryland — including those in Columbia, Elkhridge, Ellicott City, and the surrounding communities — move through divorce with clarity, dignity, and purpose. We don't just offer legal services; we provide structure, strategy, and a sense of control when everything feels uncertain. Our experience in local courts, knowledge of Maryland family law, and client-first approach allow us to advocate for you with both skill and empathy.

We understand that behind every case file is a parent trying to protect their children, a spouse trying to secure financial stability, or an individual simply trying to start over. That's why we've created this guide — to demystify the process, highlight the local resources available to you, and empower you to make informed decisions at each stage. With the right support, divorce doesn't have to mean chaos. It can be the first step toward a stronger, more secure future.

Legal Grounds & Process Simplified

Maryland offers two main types of divorce



Mutual Consent

Both parties agree on all terms in writing.



Six-Month Separation

You've lived separately (even under one roof) for six months.

No fault is needed.

Divorce begins with filing a Complaint for Divorce in the Howard County Circuit Court, followed by service, response, and court-scheduled steps such as mediation, parenting classes, or trial preparation.



What Happens After You File

All divorce and custody cases are handled at
Howard County Circuit Court
Family Division

- 📍 9250 Judicial Way, Ellicott City, MD 21043
- 📞 410-313-2111
- 💻 mdcourts.gov/howard



Photo courtesy of howardcountymd.gov/courts.

The court will issue a Scheduling Order that outlines



Scheduling conferences



Mediation or custody evaluations



Required parenting programs



Trial or hearing dates (if needed)



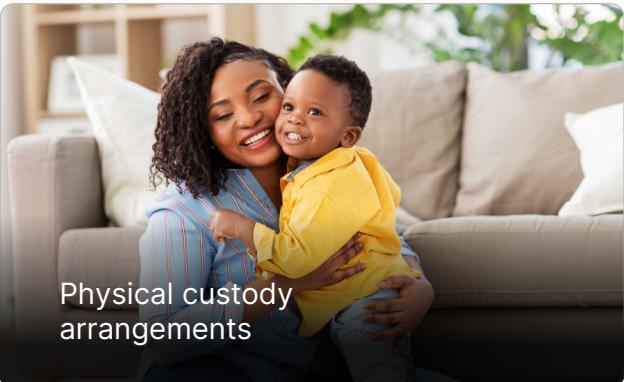
Howard County also has a Family Law Assistance Program available at the courthouse to help self-represented litigants.

Photo courtesy of Wikipedia.

Creating a Healthy Future for Your Children

Parenting Plan

Howard County courts emphasize the best interests of the child. Parents must submit a Parenting Plan that includes:



Physical custody arrangements



Holiday/vacation schedules



Communication strategies



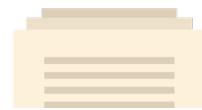
Legal custody and decision-making



If there's disagreement, the court may order:

- Custody Mediation
- Child Custody Evaluation
- Appointment of a Best Interest Attorney (BIA)

Parenting Plans should be detailed, flexible, and child-focused.



What Stays, What's Shared, and What Gets Divided

Marital property

Includes any assets or debts acquired during the marriage — regardless of who's on the title. This can include:



Homes, vehicles, or rental properties



Bank accounts, credit card debt



Retirement plans or business interests

Maryland applies equitable distribution, meaning property is divided fairly, not equally. The court considers your contributions, earning potential, and needs when making decisions.

Protecting Your Child's Needs & Your Financial Security

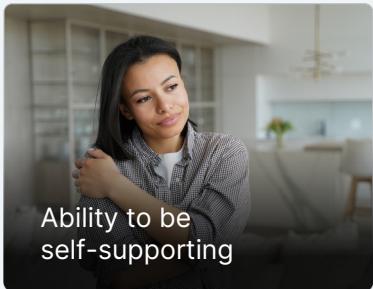
Child Support

is calculated using a statewide formula based on:



Alimony

may be awarded temporarily (during or shortly after the case) or long-term, based on need and the marriage's length. The court weighs:

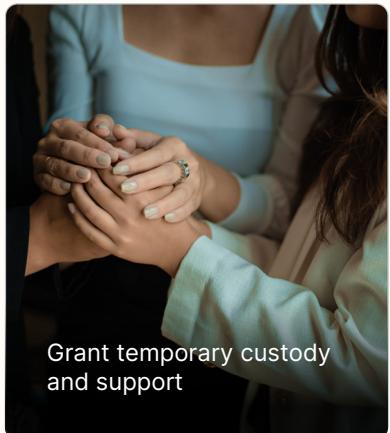
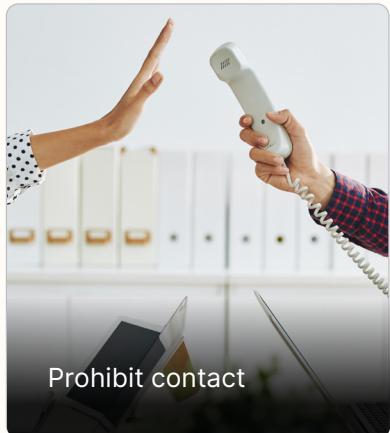


We'll help you understand your options and what the court is likely to decide.

If You're Unsafe, the Law Is On Your Side

Protective Order

If your spouse is threatening, abusive, or controlling, you can seek a Protective Order from the court. This can:



Local Support in Howard County



HopeWorks of Howard County

410-997-2272

wearehopeworks.org

Provides legal advocacy, counseling, emergency housing
We will help you file and ensure protective measures are in place fast.

You Don't Have to Do This Without Resources

Divorce often brings financial strain — especially if you're moving, paying legal fees, or supporting children solo.

Howard County Department of Social Services
410-872-8700

Offers housing, food, and child care assistance



HopeWorks of Howard County
410-997-2272

Provides legal advocacy, counseling, emergency housing
We will help you file and ensure protective measures are in place fast.



Howard County Community Action Council

Energy, housing, and food support



Maryland 2-1-1

24/7 referrals for state and local aid
We can also help you apply for fee waivers to reduce court costs.



Mental Health Is Legal Health

Divorce often brings fear, anger, grief, and burnout. You don't need to pretend you're fine. Therapy or support groups can help you cope — and even co-parent better.

Howard County Health Department

Behavioral Health Services

HopeWorks

Counseling for trauma, family stress, and divorce

Sliding scale and telehealth therapists

Therapists across Columbia and Ellicott City



Taking care of your mind is an act of strength, not weakness.



House of Ruth Maryland



Help Is Built Into the Court System

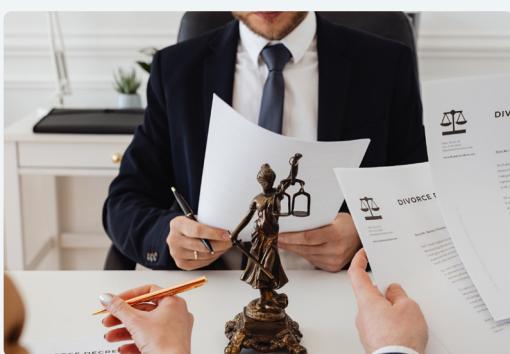
Howard County provides court-connected resources through its Family Law Office, including:



Mediation for
custody and visitation



Custody evaluations by mental
health professionals



Parenting
education referrals



Self-help guidance if
you're not represented

Visit the **Family Law Assistance Program (FLAP)** in the courthouse for free legal guidance on paperwork and court process.

Required for All Divorcing Parents With Minor Children

Parents must attend an approved Parenting Seminar. These classes:



Teach communication skills



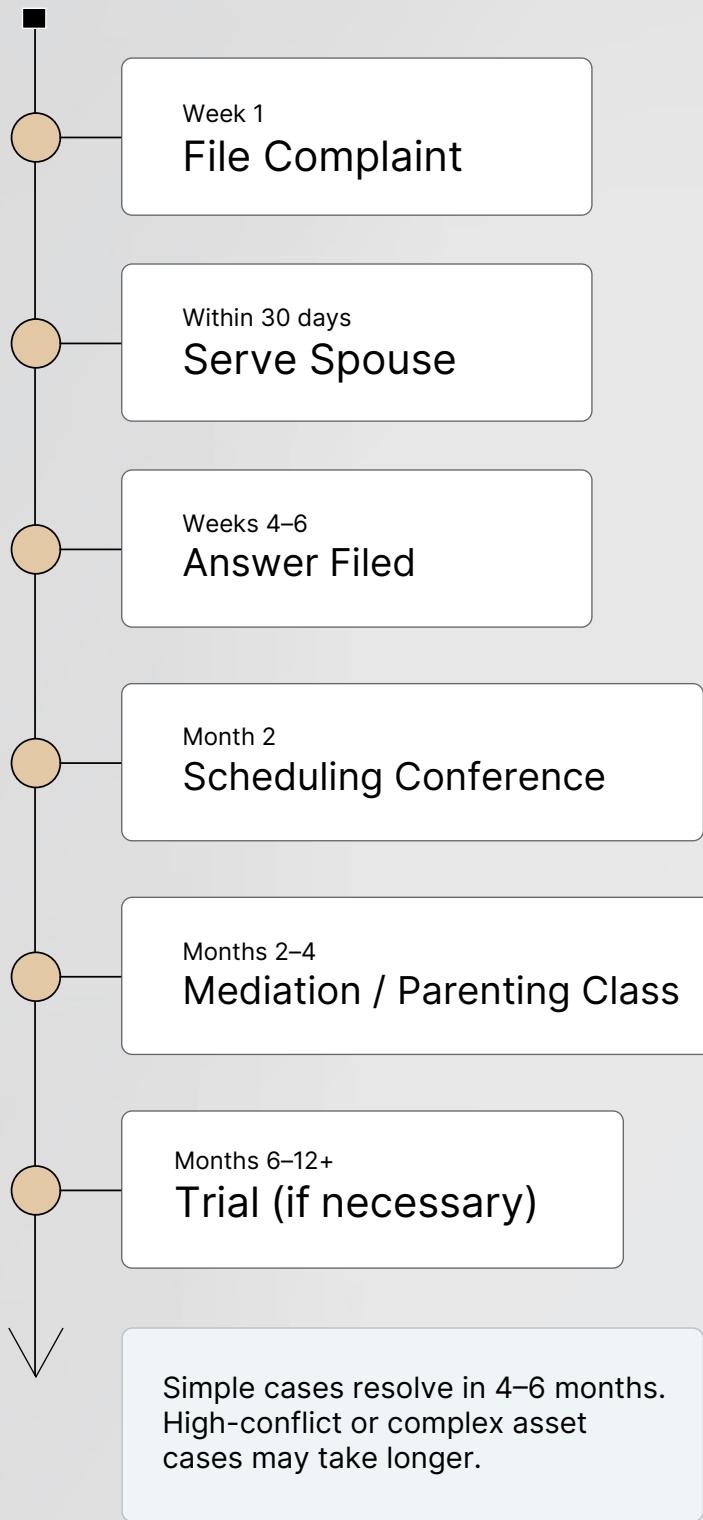
Explain children's emotional needs during divorce



Prepare parents to reduce court conflict

Certificates must be submitted before final hearings. You may attend in person or, in some cases, virtually (with court approval).

From Filing to Final Hearing



What Our Clients Ask Most

Can I file without a lawyer?

Yes, but legal guidance ensures you're fully protected.

What if my spouse ignores the court process?

You may proceed by default after proper service.

Do I have to move out to file?

No — separate lives under one roof qualifies.

What if we both want full custody?

The court will decide based on your child's best interest. Mediation is often required first.

Next Steps & Contact

The decisions you make today will shape your tomorrow. Let us help you take the next step.

Call us today to schedule a confidential consultation.

We'll walk you through your options and give you the support you deserve.



Law Office of LaSheena M. Williams, P.C.

Serving Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Howard
County, Frederick County, and surrounding areas

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