

# THE DIVORCE PROCESS

- Costs to file the required documents will vary, and are in addition to the legal fees.
- Time to complete your divorce case may vary widely, depending on the circumstances.

## THE FIRST STEP

You've already done it! Contacting an attorney to protect and guide you during your divorce is important. There are a lot of steps to the process as you will see, and it is important to have a lawyer with experience in divorce cases.

## DIVORCE DEFINITIONS

Divorce – The dissolving of the legal bond that exists between a married couple. Divorces cases have a dramatic range in the degree of difficulty. It can be as simple as each party merely signing a few legal documents, which will be filed with the court, or it can be a multiple year battle where parties fight bitterly about all the details of the dissolution.

Custody – This involves the determination of where the children of the marriage will spend their time. The fundamental question is what is in the best interest of the children. To a greater extent than ever the practical logistics of the case, such as where the children go to school and how they get there, have taken on great importance in the Courts. It will always be preferable for the parties to work out an arrangement which is best for their children, but this is not always possible.

Support – In nearly all cases, the amount of spousal and child support is based on an analysis of the income of the parties. Sometimes this is simple, such as when both parties have W-2 income. Other times it is much more difficult, when one party or the other runs their own business or is not working up to their earning capacity.

Property Division – This is formally known as “Equitable Distribution.” The parties must identify all of their assets which were obtained from the date of marriage until the date of separation, value them, and then decide how to split them. Most often, the parties need the assistance of lawyers and the Court to navigate their way through this difficult process.

*As you will see from the attached graphic, working amicably will help reduce timely and costly steps.*

# DIVORCE PROCESS EXAMPLE:

