



Superior Court of California, County of Merced

Start Your Divorce, Legal Separation, or Annulment Part #1

This packet has:

- Information and instructions about ending your marriage and the court process
- An information sheet with every step of the process
- Forms for you to fill out to start your case
- Blank forms for you to serve (give in the proper legal way) to your spouse or domestic partner

The general steps are:

1. Fill out your forms.
2. File your forms with the court.
3. Have someone 18 or older (not you) give the papers to your spouse or partner. This is called "service."
4. Wait to see if your spouse or partner responds.
5. Finish up your case, either by yourself, by agreement, or in a court trial with a judge.

To start, fill out:

- Petition ([FL-100](#); <https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/fl100.pdf>)
- Summons ([FL-110](#); <https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/fl110.pdf>)
- Declaration under UCCJEA ([FL105](#); <https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/fl105.pdf>) if you have children with your spouse or domestic partner.

- ❑ Merced County DCSS Court Info Sheet
(<https://www.mercedcourt.org/files/Forms/local/MCDSS-123%20MCDCS%20Info%20Sheet%20rev.%2010.02.2019.pdf>)
- ❑ Fee waiver forms *if* you are low income and want to ask the court to waive the \$435 filing fee (there may be more fees later if you need to go to court). For a fee waiver, fill out: all of [FW-001](https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/fw001.pdf) (<https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/fw001.pdf>) and #1 and case name on [FW-003](https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/fw003.pdf) (<https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/fw003.pdf>).

You can also do your required financial disclosures to start, or within 60 days of starting your case. You may not have to file them with the court. Ask for help to find out.

The forms for doing your financial disclosures are in this packet:

- Declaration of Disclosure ([FL-140](https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/fl140.pdf); <https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/fl140.pdf>)
- Income & Expense Declaration ([FL-150](https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/fl150.pdf); <https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/fl150.pdf>)
- Schedule of Assets and Debts ([FL-142](https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/fl142.pdf); <https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/fl142.pdf>)

Need Help?

If you need more help, you may want to:

- Use our [form preparation programs](https://www.mercedcourt.org/online_form_preparation.shtml) at: https://www.mercedcourt.org/online_form_preparation.shtml. The programs ask you questions and use your information to fill out the forms for you.
 - Use this [program to start your divorce or legal separation](https://sharpcourts.org/divorce-legal-separation/): <https://sharpcourts.org/divorce-legal-separation/>
- Get help from the [Self-Help Center](https://www.mercedcourt.org/self_help_center.shtml): https://www.mercedcourt.org/self_help_center.shtml
- Talk to a lawyer.