

HOW TO RESPOND TO A DIVORCE, LEGAL SEPARATION OR INVALIDITY (ANNULMENT) PETITION

Use this packet only if:

- You do **not agree** with the petition filed by your spouse.

NOTE: if you agree with everything your spouse has requested in the petition you may fill out the form Agreement to Join Petition (FL All Family 119). You do not need to use these instructions. Ask the Court Facilitator for specific instructions for agreed cases.

WARNINGS!

- **As a *Pro Se* Litigant you are representing yourself and therefore are responsible for all documents you file with the Court or present to the Judge.** Please read these instructions carefully. They are not intended to be a substitute for legal advice. They provide only legal information. If you need assistance understanding forms or procedures, the Court Facilitator may review forms you have prepared yourself, answer questions, or help you with procedures.
- **THE COURT FACILITATOR CANNOT GIVE LEGAL ADVICE. Talk to a lawyer if you can.** Find a lawyer to help you with the most difficult parts of your case, such as reviewing your forms, explaining how to get ready for court and confirming this is the best legal action for your case.
- The Court Facilitator does not represent you and may also assist the other party. To schedule an appointment, email d.guernsey@islandcountywa.gov.

Step 1: Determine your response deadline

20 days	If you were served in Washington state.
60 days	If you were served outside of Washington state, or by publication.
90 days	If you were served by mail.

Step 2: Fill out these forms and make copies:

All of these forms in Step 2 can be downloaded at www.courts.wa.gov/forms

Form Name	Form Number	Notes	Completed
Response to Petition about a Marriage	FL Divorce 211		<input type="checkbox"/>

If you have children under the age of 18 born during your marriage, you will also need these forms:

Parenting Plan (Proposed)	FL All Family 140		<input type="checkbox"/>
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Step 3: Take your original forms to the Clerk's Office and file

You can file your documents by bringing your original forms and copies to the Island County Clerk's Office (101 NE Sixth Street, Coupeville, WA).

How many copies do I need?

- **Original** set to file with the Clerk's office
- Copy **1** is for your records.
- Copy **2** is to give to the other party.

In the alternative, you can use the E-filing system. If you choose to e-file, follow the instructions located here: <https://www.islandcountywa.gov/395/EmailElectronic-Filing>.

In addition to the Response form, you should complete and file a Confidential Information form (FL All Family 001) so that the court has your contact information.

Step 4: Have the other party served

What to serve

Serve the other party with a copy of all forms in Step 2.

How to serve

Provided that no order prevents you from having contact with the other party, you may deliver or email them yourself to the address information contained in the Summons. If the other party has an attorney, deliver or email the forms to the attorney instead.

You may also have someone else serve the other party or his/her attorney for you. The server must be over 18.

After you have delivered or emailed the forms to the other party or attorney, fill out the Proof of Mailing or Hand Delivery (for documents after Summons and Petition) (FL All Family 112) form. File the original with the Clerk's Office and keep a copy for your records. **Be sure that each and every form that was served is referenced.**

Form Name	Form Number	Notes	Completed
Proof of Mailing or Hand Delivery (for documents after Summons and Petition)	FL All Family 112	www.courts.wa.gov/forms	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you have questions about serving, ask the Court Facilitator for the packet of information about service.

Step 5: Register for the Parent Education Seminar

If you have children under 18, you must attend a parenting seminar before you can finalize your pending legal matter. You may choose between <https://helpingchildren.us/> or www.successfulco-parenting.com. If neither works for you, please contact the Court Facilitator for other options.

Upon completing the class, you will be given a Certificate of Completion which you will need to bring with you to your final hearing.

Step 6: Finishing your case

Agreement: If you come to an agreement with your spouse or partner, you can proceed to finish your case. Contact the Court Facilitator for the appropriate checklist.

Trial: If you and the other party cannot come to an agreement, you will need to have a trial before a judge. There are specific requirements and procedures related to trial preparation which vary greatly depending on the issues to be resolved. Contact the Court Facilitator for instructions.

HELPFUL SITES:

<https://www.islandcountywa.gov/220/Superior-Court>

(360) 679-7361

<https://www.islandcountywa.gov/394/Superior-Court-Clerk>

(360) 679-7359

<https://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/>

CLEAR Referral Line for Volunteer Lawyer Program (888) 201-1014 (Monday-Friday, 9:15 AM – 12:15 PM)

Apply Online with CLEAR*Online: <https://nwjustice.org/apply-online>