

START HERE / SEPTEMBER 2026 EDITION

Your California divorce and legal separation starter kit

Understand the paperwork. Prepare your questions. Choose a clear next step.

You do not need to understand every court form before you begin. This guide helps you organize the practical questions: what kind of help you need, what the two Fast Divorce services include, what you will pay, and what happens before document preparation starts.

Read the whole guide or begin with the page that answers your immediate question. Use the checklist for your own preparation. You do not need to fill in personal information, sign this guide, or send it back.

Inside this guide

[02 Understand your choices](#)

[03 The court process at a glance](#)

[04 Services and pricing](#)

[05 Before document preparation begins](#)

[06 Your preparation checklist](#)

[07 Questions before you begin](#)

[08 Useful reading and support](#)

[09 Take your next step](#)

Fast Divorce® is a Legal Document Assistant service, not a law firm. You make the legal decisions and represent yourself. This guide offers general information and service details, not legal advice.

I am not an attorney. I can only provide self help services at your specific direction.

Understand your choices

Divorce and legal separation are different court outcomes. California Courts explains that divorce ends a marriage. Legal separation leaves you married while allowing court orders about property, debts, financial support and, when applicable, children. A legally separated person cannot marry someone else.

The court processes are similar, but legal separation does not have divorce's six-month waiting period. That does not make completion immediate: required steps, complete paperwork and court review still matter. Residency requirements also differ. Read the official explanation and ask an attorney about the consequences for your circumstances.

California Courts: Legal separation

You direct the legal decisions

Our team helps organize the information you provide, prepare documents at your specific direction, and keep track of the agreed paperwork steps. You can ask about the service scope, information requested and status of your paperwork.

We cannot advise you about legal rights, select legal forms, negotiate terms or represent you in court. An attorney can explain legal choices; a mediator can help willing spouses discuss terms. More document preparation support does not replace either role.

Both Fast Divorce services cover eligible divorce or legal-separation document work within the scope we accept. Your requested documents and existing decisions matter. Having children or an existing case does not automatically mean you need Complete.

[Back to contents](#)

The court process at a glance

The court process is separate from hiring a document preparation service. This is broad orientation, not a personal route or form selection. Ordinary cases and joint filings have different instructions.

1 • Start the court case

In an ordinary case, one party files and the other receives required service and an opportunity to respond. A joint petition starts a case together under a separate procedure. Starting either route does not finish the case.

2 • Share financial information

Disclosures address income, expenses, property and debts. Gathering records is preparation; the required exchange and any proof of completion are additional steps. Follow the court's instructions for the applicable process.

3 • Resolve and document the issues

The case must address applicable property, debt, support and parenting issues. The path may involve a written agreement, a default process or a judge's decision. Nonresponse does not automatically produce a judgment or agreement.

4 • Complete judgment and court review

Finishing requires the appropriate final paperwork and court action. Divorce's waiting period is a minimum, not an automatic completion date. Legal separation has no six-month waiting period, but still requires completion of its court process.

[California Courts: Divorce process](#)

[California Courts: Joint petition](#)

[Back to contents](#)

Services and pricing

Both flat-fee services include the accepted document work through the judgment stage, selected document preparation, included filing and standard service coordination, human support, and Client Portal access after acceptance and invitation. Your agreement defines the work we accept.

Compare	Super Fast Divorce®	Complete Divorce™
Typical accepted work	For straightforward uncontested paperwork based on facts and terms you have already decided, within the scope we accept.	For more detailed uncontested paperwork, such as already-decided parenting, support, property, or debt terms, within the scope we accept.
Included draft changes	One combined round of draft changes within the accepted scope.	Up to three combined rounds of draft changes within the accepted scope.
Scope limits	Support orders, support calculations, detailed parenting plans, and real-estate or retirement division are outside Super Fast's scope.	No legal advice, negotiating terms, mediation, or court representation. Retirement-plan division orders are not included; a separate professional may be needed.
Standard service fee	\$1,947	\$2,997
Paid in full at enrollment	\$1,799 · \$148 discount	\$2,799 · \$198 discount
Monthly payment option	Three payments of \$649 — \$1,947 total	Three payments of \$999 — \$2,997 total

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A combined revision round means sending your requested changes together so we can apply them in one pass. The selected service has the same scope with either payment choice.

The first monthly payment is due at enrollment. Monthly plans require a valid credit card on file and authorization for automatic charges for payments two and three on your signed schedule.

These are service fees. Court and third-party costs are separate unless your signed records expressly include them. Your entire account balance, including remaining service payments and authorized outside costs, must be zero before judgment preparation, assembly, review, quality checks, finalization, or submission begins.

[Read full pricing and payment details](#)

[Back to contents](#)

Before document preparation begins

1 • Read the service page

Review the service description, requirements and limits before applying. The first online application is for review; it takes no payment and does not complete a service contract. An introductory call is not required. For an already-filed case, see page 7.

2 • Receive your separate Notice to Consumer

At first contact, we explain our services, nonattorney role and registration. Before paid-service enrollment, you receive the separate notice and time to read it. Answer Yes or No based on what actually occurred, sign and date it, and receive a clearly legible signed copy before a service contract is offered for signature or payment is accepted. California does not permit an additional acknowledgment about this same notice.

3 • Review the complete terms before signing or paying

Your LDA Contract identifies services, charges and cancellation rights. The Master Services Agreement and applicable attachments provide additional terms. You can review and keep the complete applicable terms before any signature or payment. You receive the fully executed contract before services begin.

4 • Submit, then receive our acceptance decision

Confirmation of receipt is not acceptance, a filed court case or court approval. We review completeness and scope, seek clarification when needed, and confirm whether we can accept the work. A different service requires your authorization.

5 • Follow the accepted paperwork steps

After acceptance and invitation, the Client Portal holds tasks, requested records, drafts and messages. Review drafts and gather requested changes together. Court review and judgment remain separate from our document preparation.

Cancellation: You may cancel for any reason within 24 hours after you and the LDA have both signed the contract. Give written notice as described there. Read Part III for full cancellation rules, refund rights and limited conditions governing charges for work already performed.

[Read the Notice to Consumer](#)

[Read the LDA Contract and complete terms](#)

[Back to contents](#)

Your preparation checklist

Use these boxes to track preparation, not to record private details. This is a reading checklist, not an application or a list of documents everyone must submit. Keep originals and personal records separately; the application and accepted service determine what we request.

Understand the request

- ☐ Read both service scopes, exclusions and payment conditions.
- ☐ Separate decisions already made from questions needing legal advice or mediation.
- ☐ List questions about included work, additional costs and cancellation.
- ☐ Review the Notice to Consumer and LDA Contract pages.

Locate the basic information

- ☐ Locate accurate contact information and marriage and separation dates for the later application.
- ☐ Know where to find information about children, if applicable; do not write it in this guide.
- ☐ Gather existing written parenting, support, property or debt terms that you want documented.
- ☐ If a case exists, locate the court information, case number, filed papers, orders and notices.

Organize financial records

- ☐ Locate recent income records and tax returns.
- ☐ Find records showing assets and debts, including applicable bank, mortgage, credit-card and retirement statements.
- ☐ Keep a simple private list of records still missing so you can gather them accurately.

California Courts' financial-disclosure guide describes gathering two years of tax returns, two months of income proof and records of what you own and owe. It explains that disclosure information is shared with the other party. Read its instructions for your process; collecting records alone does not complete required disclosures.

California Courts: Gather and share financial information

A useful preparation habit: keep a dated copy of what you receive and what you send. Read notices promptly. Ask about an unclear deadline rather than guessing from a general guide.

[Back to contents](#)

Questions before you begin

I already filed. Can either service help?

Either service may fit an eligible existing case after review. Read the Already Filed requirements before applying. An amended petition or a case approaching or past five years needs a conversation first. Existing cases with an upcoming hearing are outside our intake scope. You must be self-represented in the court record before we can accept the work.

[Read the Already Filed requirements](#)

Does Super Fast mean the divorce ends sooner?

No. California generally has a minimum six-month waiting period before a marriage can legally end, and a court judgment is still required. Preparing paperwork sooner does not remove that period. The starting event depends on the court process, and court review can take longer.

What if my spouse does not participate?

A spouse's nonparticipation does not automatically require Complete. Some matters may fit an accepted default process after required court steps. Silence is not agreement or an automatic divorce. Tell us about participation so we can review the service scope; ask an attorney about response rights or deadlines.

Is a joint petition a third package?

No. It is a way to start a court case. Either service may support that path when the work fits its scope. Financial disclosures, a complete agreement, judgment paperwork and the applicable divorce waiting period still matter.

[Learn about joint petitions](#)

Does my spouse automatically become a client?

No. A spouse who voluntarily engages Fast Divorce receives their own required documents before work requiring their participation, directions or signature. A nonparticipating spouse does not become a client because you apply.

[Back to contents](#)

Useful reading and support

Use official information to understand the process and your selected service page to understand our work. Neither a website summary nor this kit decides which legal choice, form or strategy fits you.

Read with a purpose

Fast Divorce: Start Here

Return to the service comparison and practical next steps.

Fast Divorce: How It Works

Review enrollment, acceptance, Portal and paperwork stages.

California Courts: Divorce process

Explore the court's overview and its separate process guides.

California Courts: Getting legal help

Find information about hiring a lawyer and free or low-cost help.

California Courts: Court-based self-help

Learn what your court's self-help center offers.

California Courts: Reaching agreements

Read about discussing terms and finding assistance.

Attorney, mediator or document preparation?

Ask an attorney when you need advice about rights, deadlines, legal effects or what terms to agree to. California Courts notes that some lawyers help with specific parts of a case. A mediator can help willing spouses communicate and work toward an agreement; mediation is not included in these Fast Divorce packages.

Court self-help programs offer free information and resources for people without their own lawyer. Court staff do not become your lawyer, and those conversations do not have attorney-client confidentiality. Ask the program what it can help with.

Our role is to prepare the accepted documents from your information and specific directions. Keep service questions and legal questions distinct so each reaches someone who can answer it.

[Back to contents](#)

Take your next step

You can move forward one practical step at a time: read a service page, gather a missing record, or ask what the service includes. You stay in control of your legal decisions while our team supports the agreed document preparation process.

[**Explore Super Fast Divorce®**](#)

[**Explore Complete Divorce™**](#)

An introductory call is not required when your matter meets the service requirements. If an existing-case limit applies or the requested work is unclear, contact us before applying. The detailed service page is your next stop before its application.

Talk to our team

(818) 610-3392

hello@fastdivorce.com

Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Pacific.

[Call Fast Divorce](#) | [Email Fast Divorce](#) | [Contact our team](#)

Fast Divorce, Inc. · 20944 Sherman Way, Suite 101, Canoga Park, CA 91303. California Legal Document Assistant registered in Los Angeles County, No. 2024240911. Registration expires November 16, 2026. Serving self-represented clients throughout California.

To check registration, ask the county for Fast Divorce and registration number 2024240911. County registration does not mean the clerk has evaluated or approved our experience or quality of work. Call the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk at (800) 201-8999, option 4.

[**Call the county registration office**](#)

[**Registration details and county contact**](#)

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[Back to contents](#)