

JOINT SIMPLIFIED DISSOLUTION

Summary of Procedures and Rules for Joint Simplified Dissolution:

Both you and your spouse must go to court to complete a Joint Simplified Dissolution of Marriage. The Joint Simplified Dissolution of Marriage procedures have been available in Illinois since 1994, and are designed so that you can get a divorce without a lawyer.

A Joint Simplified Dissolution is only available for very simple cases, in which: (a) there are no children; (b) there is no real estate; (c) the marriage was for less than 8 years; (d) the parties have lived separate and apart from each other continuously for at least six months; (e) there is less than \$10,000 total in personal property (including cars); and (f) less than \$35,000 total in combined annual husband and wife income (with no spouse earning more than \$20,000).

But in addition to being simple, the case must also be a joint divorce. This means that both the husband and the wife must agree to the divorce. Both sides must fill out the forms together and appear in court together. Both you and your spouse also have to show up in court together at the hearing where a Judge signs the Judgment that actually divorces you.

If you meet the requirements, a Joint Simplified Dissolution requires four forms: a Joint Petition, a Joint Agreement on Assets and Debts, a Joint Affidavit, and a Judgment. Each is only two or three pages long.

You file the Petition, Joint Agreement, and Affidavit. The filing fee runs anywhere from about \$200 to \$400, depending on the county.

After the case is filed, you need a court date to have the Judge sign the Judgment. You'll probably have to schedule that with the Clerk. Some counties, though, have "walk in" dates where you can file, go to court, and get divorced, all on the same day. You should check with your local court for the procedures applicable in your county.