

Set Yourself Up for Success

There are several things you can do to set yourself up for a successful outcome in your case. One of the most important things you can do is gather and prepare all the information you can access related to the case

Oklahoma law requires spouses in a divorce to produce to one another basic financial information, including the last two years of federal and state income tax returns, the most recent two months earning statements from each employer, account statements from each bank account for the past 6 months, proof of the cost of available health insurance, proof of the cost of child care, and documentation for all debts, showing the most recent balance due and payment terms.

In any kind of lawsuit, each side is allowed to send "discovery" requiring the other side to answer questions and produce more information. The discovery process can become very expensive and burdensome.

It is improper for either side to try to surprise the other side at trial with information and evidence that has not previously been disclosed.

There is no downside to preparing your information and evidence for disclosure:

1. They are entitled to the information anyway.
2. The judge will need the information to make a good decision that is supported by the evidence.
3. The other side cannot change the information that you give them.
4. By putting the legwork in, you help your attorney and both of you are able to better identify the strength of your evidence and any need for additional information (which you can demand from the other side). This kind of proactive work is also a show of strength, demonstrating that you are taking the case seriously and working on it diligently.
5. You eliminate the other side's ability to claim that you are hiding evidence.
6. In many of our cases, the other side does not send us discovery requests because we have already disclosed so much information.

Because of the many benefits of making advance disclosures of evidence, we go above and beyond the minimum requirements of the law.

In every divorce case, we ask for:

- current income information and recent tax returns (at least from the last two years)
- 6 months of statements for every bank account
- a list of property owned by each spouse before marriage, together with all information related to an increase in value of any of that property due to marital efforts, such as joint investments, home remodels and repairs
- a list of all property acquired during the marriage, including any business startups or partnerships, together with any available information concerning the value of the property, such as appraisals, Kelley Blue Book estimates, and the current sale price for the comparable property
- a list of all debts owed by each spouse before marriage and a list of all debts incurred during the marriage
- statements for utility bills and other regularly monthly expenses
- a statement for every retirement and deferred compensation account
- if health insurance is available, a document indicating the monthly premium cost
- a list of eyewitnesses with contact information for every material issue and fact

In addition, in custody cases we will need:

- a photograph of the client with each child
- recent report cards and any IEP for each child
- a statement showing the cost of child care
- photographs of the client's home and each child's bedroom
- a list of professionals involved with each child, including teachers and counselors
- a record of payment of child support
- documents related to any child's health or behavioral issues
- a copy of the child's health insurance card
- a timeline of significant events related to the child and the other parent