

The First Steps to Divorce in New York



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If you are thinking about divorce in New York, the steps you take at the beginning can significantly impact your finances, your family, and your overall experience. This guide will help you approach the process thoughtfully and strategically.

Step 1: Get Clear Before You Act

Take a moment before making any major decisions. Avoid reacting emotionally or rushing into filing. The goal is not just to get divorced, but to do so in a way that protects your future. Make sure to consider:

- Your goals for the process
- Your priorities (children, finances, stability)
- Whether you want to avoid court if possible

Step 2: Understand Your Financial Picture

You do not need perfect information, but you do need awareness. As soon as possible, start gathering:

- Income information (yours and your spouse's)
- Bank accounts and investments
- Retirement accounts
- Debts and liabilities
- Monthly expenses

This information will help you make informed decisions and avoid costly surprises.

Step 3: Think About Parenting (If You Have Children)

Consider what a stable and practical parenting arrangement would look like. Think about:

- Current routines
- School and activities
- Time each parent spends with the children

In many cases, parents can work together to create a plan that supports their children without court involvement.

Step 4: Understand Your Process Options

In New York, divorce does not have to mean going to court.

Options include:

- Litigation (court-based process where you have attorneys fighting in court)
- Mediation (working with a neutral professional who can guide you both outside of court)
- Collaborative divorce (team-based, out-of-court process where you have support & resources)

Choosing the right process early can save time, money, and stress.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Ask about the retainer, hourly rate, and what services are billed separately. Request a written fee agreement and review it carefully before signing anything.

- moving out of the home too quickly without a plan
- Taking advice from friends or the internet instead of professionals
- Escalating conflict early
- Assuming court is the only option

How you start your divorce often shapes how it unfolds.

Next Steps

Every situation is different. Before making any major decisions, it is important to understand your options and develop a strategy that fits your goals.

If you are in New York and considering divorce, reach out to Vaz Law, PLLC so we can help you move forward with clarity and confidence. www.VazLaw.com

You have more options than you think and the right strategy, from the beginning, can make this process smoother, more private, and more manageable.

This information/chart is intended for educational purposes only.

**** Not legal advice. ****

