



## Divorce in Connecticut

# Divorce in Connecticut

Divorce laws vary from state to state. This brochure addresses some common questions people may have about divorce in Connecticut. For a more complete legal booklet on divorce in Connecticut, or to speak to a staff person about this or other legal issues, call CWEALF's Information and Referral Service number listed on the back of the brochure.

### Did you know...

- that Connecticut does not have common law marriage?

Even if you have lived with the same person for a number of years, Connecticut does not consider you married. However, if you have children and property together, you may want to consult a lawyer to help establish custody, child support, visitation, and assist with the division of property.

- that you can file for a divorce on a "no fault" basis?

This means you do not have to prove that your spouse is at fault, only that the "marriage has broken irretrievably" and there is no hope of getting back together. that both people do not have to agree to the divorce?

### Only one person has to claim that the marriage has irretrievably broken down.

- that property settlements are not modifiable after the divorce?

If you don't like a judge's decision about property settlements, you can appeal to a higher court. Appeals, however, are not often successful and are time consuming and expensive. These appeals must be done within twenty days of the date the decree was issued.

- that even if you do not know where your spouse is, you can obtain a divorce? Attempts must be made to notify your spouse through "publication." You must follow specific rules about when and where to publish a legal notice in the newspaper and get documents to prove that you have taken these steps. CWEALF can give you more information on how to go about completing this process.

### How can I get a divorce?

You must file an action in court either by:

- Hiring an attorney; or
- Doing a prose "do it yourself" divorce. This method generally works best when the divorce will be uncomplicated. There are some attorney services that will review your papers if you do decide to proceed on your own with your divorce.

### How long will it take to get a divorce?

The state of Connecticut has a waiting period of ninety days. The ninety days begins on the "return date," which is the date set by the court ordering the defendant to appear in court. However, the more complicated the divorce, the longer it takes.



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### **Who is the plaintiff?**

The person who starts the divorce is the plaintiff.

### **Who is the defendant?**

The person who is served the divorce papers is the defendant.

### **"Do it Yourself" Divorce**

Some people can represent themselves in court, and fill out and file all the necessary paperwork. This is called a pro se divorce. Using the pro se process, a divorce may cost between \$225-250.

### **Who can do their divorce pro se?**

The best candidate to complete a divorce pro se is someone who has an uncomplicated divorce. This means that such things as property settlements and child custody issues have been agreed upon. If you start the divorce process on your own, but then find it is too difficult, you can still hire an attorney. Call CWEALF for more information about the pro se divorce process.

### **What resources are available to help with a pro se divorce?**

You may obtain the "Do It Yourself Divorce Guide" from any family court in Connecticut. This book contains all the necessary forms for you to fill out. Occasionally there are classes offered in Connecticut to help with pro se divorce. To see if there is a class near you, call CWEALF, Infoline, or the nearest Legal Aid office. You may also ask the Clerk at the court for a referral.

### **Which is the best method for me?**

When you hire an attorney she or he will represent you in court, which can be expensive. However, if there are many unresolved issues, you may need to seek the advice of an attorney.

For help deciding which is the best method for you or assistance finding an attorney in your area, contact CWEALF.

### **Connecticut District Courts: Judicial District Phone Number**

Ansonia-Milford 203-877-4293  
Danbury 203-207-8600  
Fairfield 203-579-6527  
Hartford 860-548-2700  
Litchfield 860-567-0885  
Meriden 203-238-6666  
Middlesex 860-343-6400  
New Britain 860-515-5180  
New Haven 203-503-6800  
New London 860-443-5363  
Norwich 860-887-3515  
Stamford-Norwalk 203-965-5307  
Tolland 860-896-4920  
Waterbury 203-591-3300  
Windham 860-928-7749



Connecticut  
Women's  
Education  
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CWEALF Publications

page 3 of 3

## Divorce in Connecticut

**For legal information call:**

**Connecticut Women's Education & Legal Fund**

Information and Referral Service

Available Monday – Friday

Greater Hartford: 524-0601

Toll Free: 1-800-479-2949

CWEALF also publishes a series of booklets that discuss legal issues of concern for women and girls.

Other publications available from CWEALF:

Child Support in Connecticut

Divorce in Connecticut \*

How to Choose an Attorney

Legal Rights of Lesbians, Gay Men & Bisexuals in Connecticut

Legal Rights of Older Women

Pregnancy, Family and Medical Leave in Connecticut \*

Sexual Harassment in Schools \*

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace \*

Women and Credit

Women, Work and Sex Discrimination

Title IX: Gender Equity in Sports \*

Pridelink

\* Information also available in Spanish.

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