

WISCONSIN DIVORCE TIMELINE

Visual Guide

A step-by-step roadmap through filing, mediation, settlement, and finalization of your Wisconsin divorce

Created by CustodyToolkit.com

Designed by a Wisconsin family law attorney for self-represented Wisconsinites.

Informational only. Not legal advice.

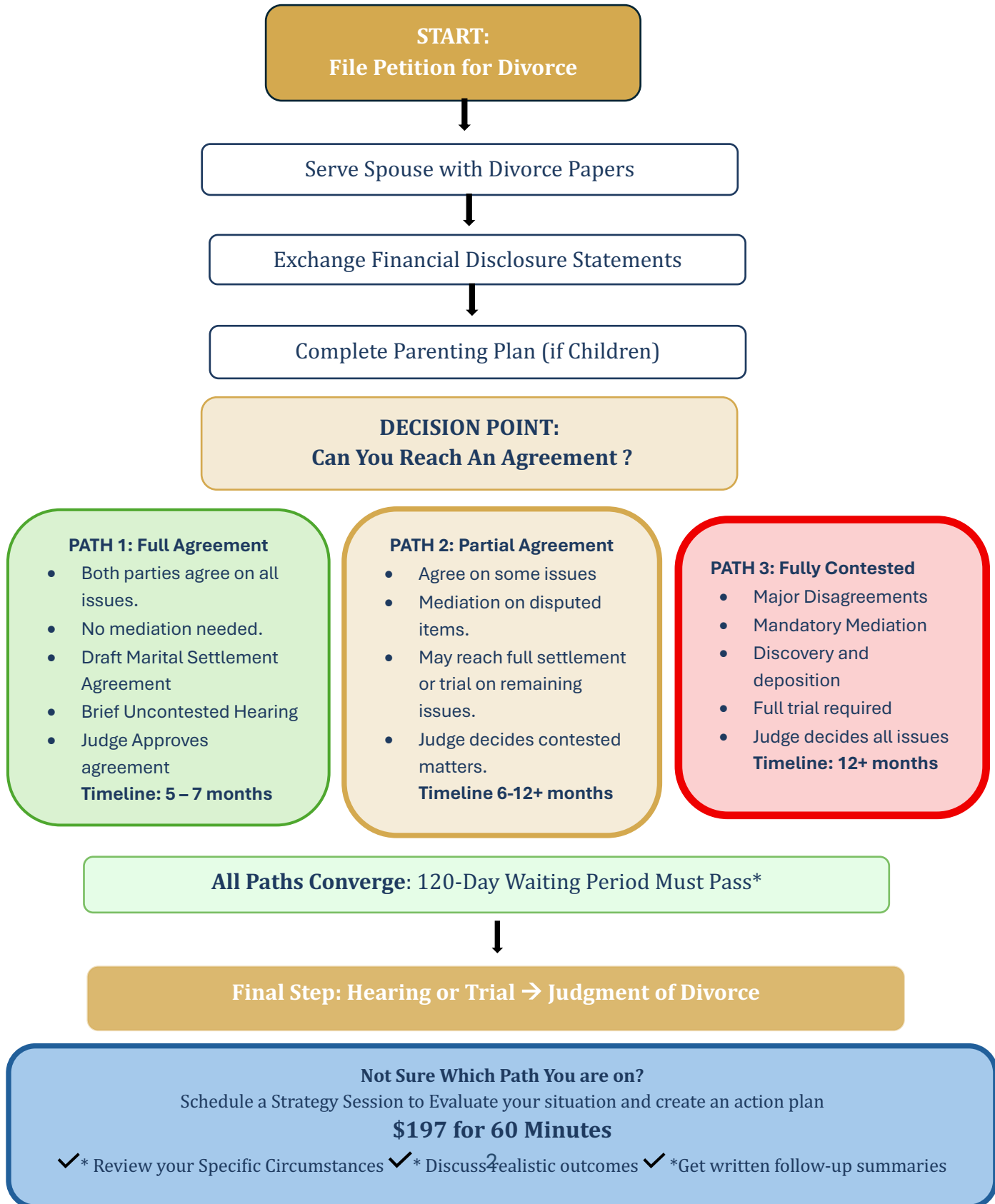
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Section 1: Overview

Timeline Flowchart

Three possible Paths Through Wisconsin Divorce



KEY MILESTONES

Critical Deadlines in Every Wisconsin Divorce

Day 1: Filing Your Petition

- File Petition and Summons with circuit court clerk
- Pay filing fee (approximately \$200*)
- Receive case number and stamped copies

This is the official start date of your divorce

Within 30 Days: Serve Your Spouse

- Must properly serve spouse with divorce papers
- Use sheriff service, declaration of service, or acceptance of service
- Must be completed within 90 days or case may be dismissed
- The 120-day waiting period starts from date of service

Within 20 Days of Service: Spouse's Response Due

- Spouse has 20 days to file a response with the court
- If no response filed, you may request default judgment*
- If response is filed, case proceeds as contested or uncontested

Within 90 Days After Service: Financial Disclosure Exchange

- Both parties must complete Financial Disclosure Statement
- Attach required documentation
- Exchange statements with spouse and file with court

This is mandatory in all Wisconsin divorces

30-90 Days: Complete Parent Education (If Applicable)

- Required in most Wisconsin counties if you have minor children
- 4-hour course covers co-parenting and children's needs during divorce
- May be completed online or in-person (some counties require in-person)
- Must file certificate of completion with court

60-90 Days: Mediation (If Required or Requested)

- Most counties require mediation if custody/placement is disputed
- Voluntary mediation available for property/financial issues
- Typically 2+ hours with neutral mediator
- Can result in full, partial, or no agreement

THE 120-DAY RULE - CANNOT BE WAIVED

- Wisconsin law requires a minimum 120-day waiting period from the date your spouse is served before your divorce can be finalized. Even if you and your spouse agree on everything from day one, you cannot finalize your divorce until at least 120 days have passed.

This waiting period can only be waived in special circumstances (e.g. safety concerns).

Day 120+: Earliest Possible Final Hearing Date

- Cannot schedule final hearing until 120 days after service
- If uncontested: Brief hearing to approve settlement
- If contested: May require multiple hearings or full trial
- Judge signs Judgment of Divorce

Average Completion Times by Case Type:

→ Uncontested with full agreement:

- 4-6 months from filing

→ Mediation with partial agreement:

- 6-12 months from filing

→ Contested trial on all issues:

- 12+ months from filing

→ High-conflict with GAL and experts:

- 18+ months from filing

Ready to Start Your Paperwork?

Get all Wisconsin court-approved forms with step-by-step filing instructions

Filing Packet - \$197

✓ All required forms ✓ Line-by-line instructions ✓ Filing checklists ✓ Sample documents custodytoolkit.com