

Wisconsin Divorce Readiness Checklist

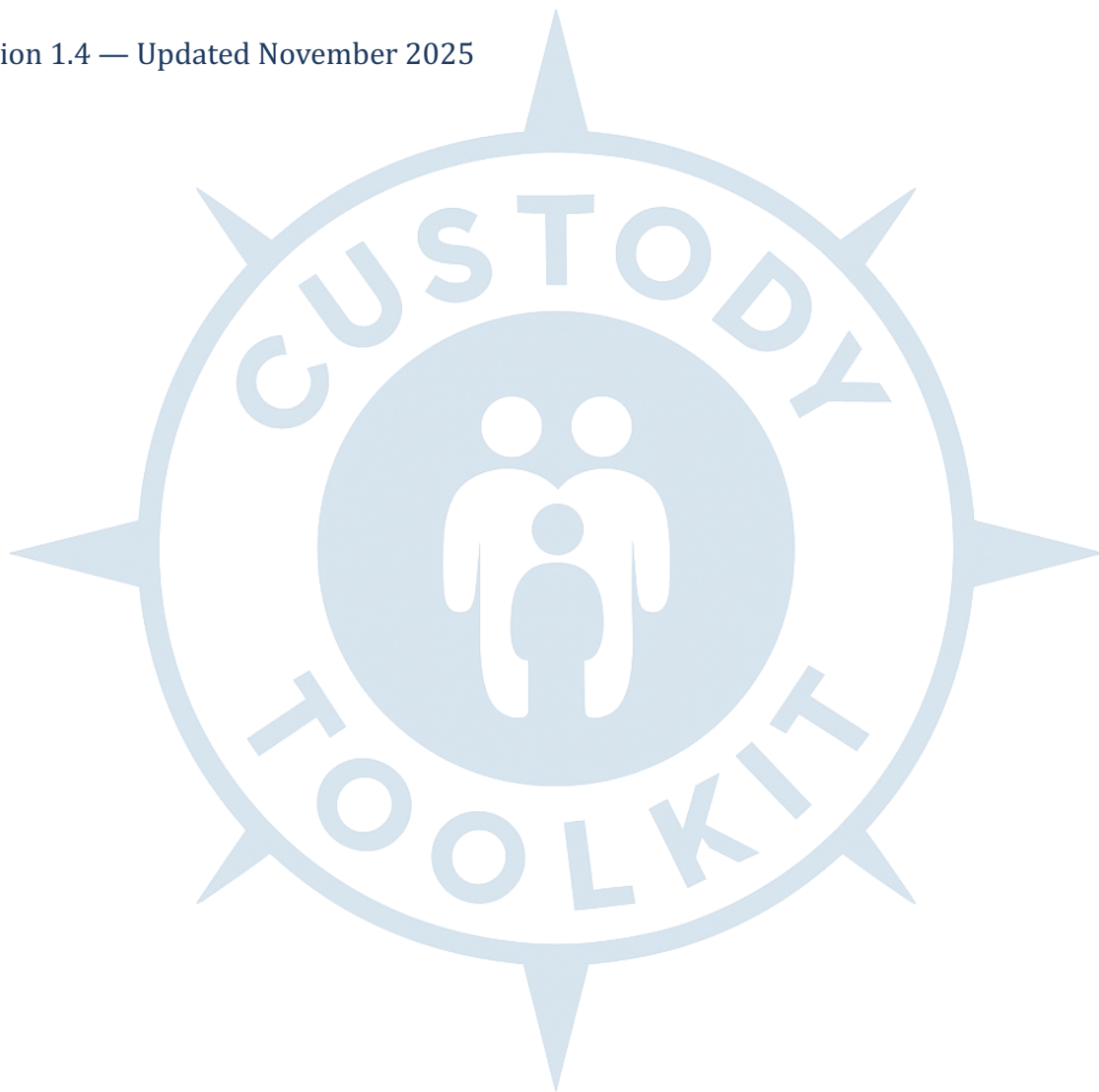
Complete this checklist before filing to ensure you're fully prepared

Created by CustodyToolkit.com

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

Informational only. Not legal advice.

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How to Use This Checklist:

Check each box as you complete the item. Your goal is to have as many items checked as possible before filing for divorce. This preparation will save you time, money, and stress throughout the process. Most people complete this checklist in 10–20 minutes

Before You File → Score: (___ /5)

- ☐ I've considered counseling or mediation to explore reconciliation
- ☐ I have a support system in place (friends, family, therapist)
- ☐ I've thought through living arrangements during the divorce process
- ☐ I've prepared for the emotional impact on myself and my children
- ☐ I understand the 120-day minimum waiting period in Wisconsin

Must have items before filing → Score: (___ /7)

- ☐ Either I or my spouse has lived in Wisconsin for at least 6 months
- ☐ I (or my spouse) have lived in the county where I'm filing for at least 30 days
- ☐ I know my spouse's full legal name
- ☐ I know my spouse's current address for service (and/or I have a plan for alternative service)
- ☐ My most recent pay stub (or income source information)
- ☐ A list of major assets and debts (detailed proof is required later—not now)
- ☐ Full names and birthdates of all children (if applicable)

Strongly recommended before filing:

Income → Score: (___ /2)

- ☐ My last 2 years of tax returns (both spouses)
- ☐ Last 3 months of pay stubs (recommended: both spouses)

Assets → Score: (___ /7)

- ☐ List of all bank accounts (checking, savings, CDs) with current balances
- ☐ Retirement account statements (401k, IRA, pension) for both spouses
- ☐ Investment account statements (stocks, bonds, mutual funds)
- ☐ Vehicle titles and current values (use KBB.com)
- ☐ Business ownership documents (if applicable)
- ☐ Life insurance policies and cash values
- ☐ List of valuable personal property (jewelry, collections, etc.)



Debts→ Score: (___/3)

- ☐ Credit card statements (all cards, both spouses)
- ☐ Loan statements (student, auto, personal)
- ☐ Any other debts or obligations (mortgage, tax, medical)

Monthly Expenses→ Score: (___/8)

- ☐ Mortgage/rent payment amount
- ☐ Utility bills (electric, gas, water, internet, phone)
- ☐ Childcare costs
- ☐ Health insurance premiums
- ☐ Car insurance
- ☐ Groceries and household expenses
- ☐ Children's activities and school expenses
- ☐ Medical expenses not covered by insurance

Information About Children→ Score: (___/6)

- ☐ Full legal names and birthdates of all children
- ☐ Current school and grade for each child
- ☐ Children's healthcare providers and insurance information
- ☐ Children's extracurricular activities and associated costs
- ☐ Special needs, medications, or healthcare requirements
- ☐ Current childcare arrangements and providers

Custody Planning→ Score: (___/5)

- ☐ I've thought about my preferred custody arrangement (joint vs. sole)
- ☐ I've considered a realistic placement schedule (where kids will live)
- ☐ I understand Wisconsin presumes joint legal custody unless there are safety concerns
- ☐ I can document my involvement in children's daily care and activities
- ☐ I have a plan for how decisions will be made (school, healthcare, religion)

Child Support Preparation→ Score: (___/4)

- ☐ I know my gross monthly income
- ☐ I know my spouse's gross monthly income (approximately)
- ☐ I understand Wisconsin's percentage-based child support guidelines
- ☐ I've considered how placement time affects support calculations



Housing & Living Arrangements→ Score: (/5)

- ☐ I've thought about who will stay in the marital home during the divorce
- ☐ If I'm moving out, I have a place to go
- ☐ I can afford my anticipated housing costs post-divorce
- ☐ I've documented the condition of the marital home (photos)
- ☐ I've made copies of household inventory/valuable items list

⚠ What not to Do: Do not hide assets or transfer money improperly. Do NOT max out credit cards. Do NOT empty joint bank accounts. Do NOT cancel insurance policies without court permission. These actions can seriously harm your case.

VII. Legal Representation→ Score: (/5)

- ☐ I've considered whether I need an attorney for my situation
- ☐ I understand the difference between full representation and limited scope services
- ☐ I know about self-help resources available in Wisconsin
- ☐ I know about limited-scope representation for mediation/MSA review/or Temporary Orders Hearings.
- ☐ I've researched costs: full attorney (\$3,000-\$15,000+) vs. document services (\$200-\$500)

Calculate Your Readiness Score

Count your total checkmarks and assess where you stand:

✓ 45+ items checked: READY TO FILE

You're well-prepared to move forward with confidence. You have the documentation and understanding needed to file.

📝 35-44 items checked: ALMOST READY

You're making good progress. Focus on gathering the remaining financial documents and finalizing your custody plan.

📖 20-35 items checked: GETTING STARTED

Begin with financial documentation and understanding the process. Consider downloading the free toolkit and reading the complete guide.

🔍 Under 20 items checked: EARLY STAGES

Start by educating yourself on the Wisconsin divorce process. Gather basic documents and consider scheduling a free consultation.

Total Items Checked: _____

Some checklist items carry more weight than others. Missing "must-have" items means you are not ready to file—even if your total score is high.



Your Next Steps Based on Readiness:

If You're Ready (45+ items):

- ✓ Get the Filing Packet (\$197) – You have what you need to file
- ✓ Schedule Document Review (\$97) – Get attorney feedback before filing

If You're Almost Ready (35-44 items):

- ✓ Schedule Strategy Session (\$197) – Get guidance on what you're missing
- ✓ Download Free Toolkit – Use checklists to organize remaining items

If You're Getting Started (20-35 items):

- ✓ Read the Complete Wisconsin Divorce Guide – Understand the process
- ✓ Schedule Free 15-Min Assessment – Get direction on where to start

If You're in Early Stages (Under 20 items):

- ✓ Start with Education – Visit custodytoolkit.com/divorce-guide
- ✓ Gather Basic Documents – Focus on tax returns and financial statements

Wisconsin Custody Toolkit

custodytoolkit.com | Resources for Wisconsin residents.

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