



The following descriptions may assist you in understanding common words used in Family Law legal documents:

**Divorce (dissolution of marriage)** = including property division, debt division, spousal maintenance, and legal decision making and parenting time for children.

- Property division = the court will divide the parties’ community property, which is all of the property acquired during the marriage, except property received by gift or inheritance.
- Debt division = the court will divide the parties’ community debt, which is the debt incurred during the marriage.
- Spousal maintenance (alimony) = the court can order one spouse to pay money to support the other spouse, depending on the length of the marriage, the financial resources of the parties, and other factors. If you want the court to consider whether spousal maintenance is appropriate in your case, you must ask for spousal maintenance in the Petition or the Response.
- Legal decision-making= for minor children of the parties, the court will order who has the authority to make decisions about the children’s major life issues, such as education, counseling and medical care.

Joint legal decision-making = both parents make major life decisions about the children together.

Sole legal decision-making = one parent is given the authority to make major life decisions about the children. A parent with sole legal decision-making authority is still expected to keep the other parent informed.

**Paternity** = determines the legal father of a child when the parents are not married. Unmarried parents can request family court orders for legal decision-making, parenting time, child support, and other issues involving the children.

**Legal Decision-Making** (formerly “child custody”) = the authority to make decisions about the children’s major life issues, such as education and medical care.

Joint legal decision-making = both parents make major life decisions about the children together.

Sole legal decision-making = one parent is given the authority to make major life decisions about the children. A parent with sole legal decision-making is still expected to keep the other parent informed.



**Parenting Time (formerly “visitation”)** = the court ordered or agreed upon time the child or children will spend with each parent.

**Child Support** = an amount of money one parent must pay to the other parent to contribute to the living and care expenses of a child. The amount depends on the parties’ income (or what they are capable of earning), expenses paid for the children, like medical insurance and daycare costs, and the amount of parenting time each parent has with the children.

**Enforcement** = a court action to make someone follow court orders.

**Modification** = a court action to change court orders. A party can only request to have a court order modified if there has been a substantial and continuing change in circumstances since the date of the last court order.

**Relocation** = If a parent plans to move to a new address, that parent may have to give advance notice to the other parent and/or file something with the court. Parents should research the current Arizona family law (statute) on relocation, when planning to move.

Community Legal Services supports the safety and well-being of the family through the legal process, focusing on victims of domestic violence and children at risk of abuse or neglect.

Eligibility for services is determined through an application process. To determine if you are eligible, please apply by choosing **Only ONE** of the following methods:

1. By Phone: 602-258-3434 or 1-800-852-9075
2. Online: Arizona’s Access to Justice Online Intake System at [www.azlawhelp.org/accesstojustice.cfm](http://www.azlawhelp.org/accesstojustice.cfm).
3. Walk-in to your local Community Legal Services office to complete the application form. It will take time to process your application and then you will be contacted regarding your eligibility. A list of offices is located at [www.clsaz.org](http://www.clsaz.org).

