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## The Divorce Process: From Filing to Judgment

The divorce process is often daunting and confusing for those unfamiliar with the legal system. Depending on how well you and your spouse can work together, you may have a little, or a lot, of contact with the Court. It is possible to finalize a divorce without ever setting foot into a courtroom. This flowchart offers a visual representation of the process, including the three ways an action can resolve: contested, uncontested, and default.\*

Petitioner (Spouse initiating the action) files a Petition for Dissolution, Legal Separation, or Nullity, along with a Summons.



Serve Petition and Summons on Respondent



Waiting Period. Respondent has 30 days to file a response.

Depending on the response, the action may proceed one of the following three ways:

## Contested



Response filed; parties in disagreement. Both parties prepare and serve Preliminary Declarations of Disclosure.



If temporary orders are needed, hearings take place. Orders are generally temporary pending final judgment.



## Uncontested



Response filed; parties in agreement. Both parties prepare and serve Preliminary Declarations of Disclosure.



Parties finalize agreement and execute Marital Settlement Agreement, Final Judgment, and other necessary documents.



## Default



No response filed; Petitioner prepares and serves Preliminary Declarations of Disclosure. Default of Respondent Entered.



Parties may come to agreement and proceed as uncontested. If no agreement, Petitioner submits proposed Final Judgment and other documents.



<sup>\*</sup>The information provided in this document is for informational purposes only and should not be considered legal advice on any subject matter. This information may not reflect the most current legal developments. You should not act on this information without consulting legal counsel.

Contested Continued

Uncontested Continued

Default Continued

Discovery by both parties over months or years.



Final Judgment entered by Court.

Termination date of marriage
defined. Parties restored to status
of unmarried persons.

Final Judgment entered by Court.

Termination date of marriage
defined. Parties restored to status
of unmarried persons.

Parties attend settlement conference. If no settlement agreement, proceed to trial.



Trial held. Final Judgment entered by Court. Parties restored to status of unmarried persons.

Please contact my office if you would like to schedule a consultation to discuss your specific matter.

Ariel Brownell Lee is a Sacramento native. She received her Bachelors of Science from Sacramento State University, where she majored in Criminal Justice with a minor in Psychology. Ariel attended law school at UC Davis, King Hall School of Law. During her time at King Hall, she developed a strong interest in family law. She realized family law was the perfect practice area for her because it allowed her to affect real, positive change, directly in peoples' lives.

Ariel is an active member of the local legal community. She is currently serving as President of the Women's Section of the Contra Costa County Bar Association, is a delegate of Contra Costa for the California Conference of Bar Associations, serves on the Board of Director's for California Women Lawyers as the affiliate governor for Contra Costa Country, and in association with CWL, co-host the podcast "Seat at the Table" with Summer Selleck.

Ariel owns a boutique family law firm in Walnut Creek. She and her staff strive to offer exceptional and personal customer service to all of their clients. Call for a consult today!

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