

## Preparing to Meet with Your Family Law Attorney

Most aspects of family law include analysis and disclosure of your personal finances. Your financial issues include income, expenses, assets and debts. Two forms Washington state courts often require to be filled out are a financial declaration and a child support worksheet. Both of these forms can be found at [www.courts.wa.gov/forms/](http://www.courts.wa.gov/forms/). The financial declaration requires that you disclose how much it costs for you to live month to month and how much income you have available. The child support worksheets require analysis of your income and assets.

For the first meeting, be prepared to bring two years worth of tax returns (both personal and business if it applies to you) and your latest pay stub that shows year to date information.

Bring at least a list or recent statements of your assets to include:

- Bank accounts and balances

- Recent statements from investment accounts, retirement accounts.

- Lists of property, to include real property and valuable personal property.

- List of debts or latest statements with present balances.

For **Divorce clients**, if possible, provide three sets of statements and lists of assets and debts. The first set of statements and lists are those assets and debts owned prior to the marriage or intimate domestic partnership, the second statement and lists are those assets and debts at the time of separation from your spouse, and the third set of statements and list are the present status of all assets and debt.

Also for Divorce clients, bring copies of any pre-nuptial, written separation agreement or any agreement made during the marriage or intimate domestic partnership.

Through the litigation process, you will be required to get your attorney additional information. In divorces and most things financial, every large asset and all debt must be identified with a statement or some form of appraisal or documentation. Appraisals in family law litigation always refer to the fair market value – what a normal willing buyer would pay on Craig's list, via a real estate agent, or at a garage sale. If you anticipate family law litigation, start the process early by gathering and organizing your documentation of all assets, debt, income and expenses.