



a different way through divorce

Checklist: How to save money on legal fees

No one we know has money just sitting around waiting for a lawyer. Cost is a real issue when it comes to lawyers, yet we want to ensure we're getting good legal advice for informed decision making.

The good news is there are some ways you can lower the costs. You can't control everything, and some divorces (and some exes) are litigious, and it can make a whole lot of sense to let your lawyer handle your entire file and advocate for you along the way. There is an emotional toll to the separation and divorce process that also needs to be taken into consideration alongside the costs.

Ways to save on legal fees

- Check if you qualify for legal aid.
- If you are able to sit in a room with your spouse-soon-to-be-ex and work collaboratively, you may want to consider a [formal mediation service](#), sometimes offered through the courthouse and fees are geared to income, to draft your separation agreement. You then only need to hire a lawyer for Independent Legal Advice to ensure it's iron-clad in the eyes of the law.
- If there are more complicated property matters, then you and your spouse can still use a mediator together and share in the legal costs, but be sure to choose one that is a family lawyer as well.
- Prepare for your first meeting. The more you have prepared going into your first meeting with your lawyer, the more time and money you'll save. Use our checklist for your first meeting to get the most out of the money you pay for legal help.
- Request a junior lawyer. These are new hires early in their career but have access to senior mentors in the firm who can help them out. They bill out at a cheaper rate per hour, and if they have questions about their case, they'll still consult with a more experienced senior counsel.

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- Pick and choose your services. Some firms and lawyers will let you consult with them just when you have specific questions, or need specific documents prepared or drafted. They can be hired just to help prep you for court, even if you are self-representing. Ask your lawyer's office if you can hire them on this kind of limited retainer, or on an as-needed basis.
- Download tasks. Talk to your lawyer about downloading tasks to you that you feel you can handle. For example you can fill in the financial statement on your own, gather all the supporting documents, and even deliver courier packages to your ex's lawyer to save on courier fees.
- Bundle your services. Every phone call or email to your lawyer costs money. Save up and put multiple questions into one email, or for one meeting, so they can use their time efficiently which costs you less.

Other ideas and options you want to explore or try:

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