



Law Office of Ariel Brownell

Resolving Family Conflict with Heart

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Pre-Divorce Checklist

Divorce is never easy. However, collecting information and thinking through some of the issues before you meet with your attorney can help you move through the process as smoothly as possible. Below is a checklist outlining the kinds of issues you need to consider and the information you need to gather. *

Issues to Consider

- € **Child Custody.** Who will the children live with? Who will make major decisions on their behalf?
- € **Child Support.** Who pays? What amount?
- € **Taxes.** Who will claim the children on their tax return? Will you file jointly or separately during the divorce?
- € **Spousal Support.** Who pays? What amount? For how long?
- € **Assets.** How will the assets be divided?
- € **Family Home.** Who will live there? Will it be sold?
- € **Debts.** How will the debts be divided? Who pays what?
- € **Retirement Accounts.** How will the retirement assets be divided?
- € **Business.** How will business interests be divided?
- € **Insurance.** What kinds and amounts of insurance will protect the interests of the parties? Who pays for it?

Documents to Gather

- € **Tax Returns.** Federal and State tax returns for the previous two to five years.
- € **Paycheck Stubs.** Copies of past twelve months of paycheck stubs for you and, if possible, your spouse.
- € **Deeds.** A copy of the deed to your house and any other real property you and/or your spouse own.
- € **Mortgage Statement.** The most recent mortgage statement for any properties you or your spouse own.

- € **Premarital or Postmarital Agreement.** A copy of any agreement entered into by you and your spouse prior to or after your marriage.
- € **Vehicle Registrations and Titles.** Copies of registration and title for all vehicles. Indicate the month and year each vehicle was purchased. Provide an estimate of the current value of the vehicle(s).
- € **Credit Card Statements.** Copies of past twelve months for all credit cards.
- € **Bank and Credit Union Statements.** Copies of past twelve months for all deposit accounts, include checking and savings.
- € **Brokerage/Investment Account Statements.** Copies of the past two months for all investment accounts in your name and/or your spouse's name. Indicate the month and year each account was opened.
- € **Wills and Trusts.** A copy of all wills and trusts entered into by you and/or your spouse during your marriage. Indicate the month and year each was entered into.
- € **Life Insurance Statements.** A copy of any life insurance policies with a cash value. Ask the insurance company what the cash value was at the time of marriage. Indicate the month and year each policy was acquired.
- € **Employee Benefits Information.** A copy of the employee benefit booklet distributed by your or your spouse's company. If the company mails a monthly or yearly summary of benefits, provide a copy. Indicate the month and year each benefit package was acquired.
- € **Retirement Plan/Deferred Compensation Plan/Pension Plan Information.** Obtain a copy of each plan and all information you can gather about the plan. This includes pensions, IRAs, 401(k) plans, 403(b) plans, etc. Please indicate the month and year each was acquired.

Considering these questions and gathering these documents in advance of your first meeting with an attorney will go a long way towards maximizing the utility of your first meeting.

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!

