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## How much does divorce cost in Michigan?

Although divorce can be challenging and expensive, it may be best to help you and your spouse have fulfilling lives. If you wonder, “How much does a divorce cost in Michigan?” nobody can give you a precise answer. The price depends on many factors, such as whether you and your spouse get along or have children. In short, every situation is unique, resulting in different expenses.

Still, it may give you peace of mind (and help you budget) to know the general fees you can expect to face and how much they may cost. In this article, we break down the main costs of a divorce in Michigan.

### The average cost of divorce in Michigan

The average cost of getting a divorce in Michigan includes attorney fees that currently total [\\$9,500 to \\$11,300](#) as well as about [\\$1,600 for fees](#) such as filing the paperwork to initiate your divorce, paying expert witnesses to testify for you and hiring an accountant to dive into your finances.

### Breakdown of the cost of divorce in Michigan

Every divorce in Michigan requires some fees for certain processes. Below is an overview and how much each step may cost.

#### Filing fees

To initiate a divorce, one spouse must complete and file the appropriate paperwork with the court. At this time, they also pay a filing fee.

The base filing fee is currently between \$150 and \$300, depending on where you file. Most [Michigan courts](#) charge an additional:

- \$20 to \$80 to handle child support, parenting time and custody matters

- \$25 to file online

Sometimes one or both parties may petition the court to waive the filing fees if they can't pay them.

## Service fees

After filing the divorce papers, you need to serve them to your spouse. You can do this in a few ways, each with different costs:

- **Hire a process server or the sheriff:** Typically, the sheriff who works where the party to be served lives delivers the legal documents to them. The cost to serve divorce papers is currently [\\$26](#), plus mileage or other fees incurred by the process server or sheriff to accomplish this task.
- **Mail them:** Use certified mail, return receipt requested, via the United States Postal Service or another reputable service provider. The current cost for this is about \$4 plus postage.

## Attorney fees

You don't have to hire an attorney to get divorced in Michigan, but many people find it to be helpful, especially if they disagree with their spouse on any issues of the divorce.

Divorce lawyers typically charge flat or hourly fees to handle a case. The current average hourly rate for a divorce lawyer in Michigan is [\\$225 to \\$270](#), though some attorneys charge more. Overall, more complex Michigan divorces may cost you more than \$11,000 in attorney fees..

## Temporary spousal or child support

The court may require one party to pay spousal or child support payments while the divorce is pending.

If one spouse earns significantly more than the other, the court may ask the higher-earning spouse to pay the other spouse's filing fees or living expenses. The amount of the spousal support payments depends on what the court decides the party needs.

For temporary child support, the court uses a standardized formula to calculate payments. This formula takes into account the paying spouse's income, expenses, deductions and the cost of providing for a child.

## Discovery

In discovery, the parties typically request information from each other. This step can involve a number of costs:

- **Attorney fees** to prepare requests for documents from your spouse.
- **Minimal fees for copies** of documents from institutions like banks and hospitals.
- **Transcriptionists** to document any depositions can cost several hundred to more than a thousand dollars.
- **Expert witnesses**—such as child psychologists, forensic accountants and others who may have special knowledge about an issue that you’re dealing with—for depositions. These witnesses generally charge a few hundred dollars an hour to participate in divorce proceedings.

## Mediation

Before going to trial for divorce in Michigan, the court may ask you to engage in [mediation](#). During this legal process, you and your spouse work with a neutral third party to resolve some or all of the legal issues involved in the divorce. If you reach a consensus, the mediator helps you prepare a [settlement agreement](#) for the court to review.

While mediation costs money, the overall fees can be substantially less than going through a divorce trial. Mediators generally charge per hour, with rates in Michigan currently ranging from about \$150 to \$300. Some mediators adjust their rates based on the parties’ ability to pay and the number of sessions needed to resolve the issue. They may also charge an intake fee to determine if mediation is right for the spouses and develop a mediation plan.

## Trial

If you and your spouse can’t reach an agreement on any terms of the divorce, you need to resolve them in court. The cost of a trial typically includes:

- Attorney fees for time spent preparing for trial and arguing your case in court
- Expert witness fees
- Paralegal fees for preparing documents for court

## Factors that impact the cost of a Michigan divorce

Overall, five issues can make a big difference in the cost of your divorce in Michigan:

- The type of divorce
- If you have shared minor children
- If you share property
- If one spouse seeks alimony
- Significant income differences

## Contested divorce vs. uncontested divorce

A [contested divorce](#) is one where the spouses disagree on some or all terms of the divorce. In this case, they need to go to trial and have a judge make the final decision.

An [uncontested divorce](#) is one where the spouses reach a settlement on the issues of the divorce without going to court.

Since an uncontested divorce in Michigan has no issues to resolve in court, it typically takes less time and therefore usually costs less than a contested divorce. Even if you can't resolve all of the issues, you may be able to reduce the cost of a contested divorce by reaching a partial stipulation on the issues you and your spouse do agree on.

## Minor children

If you and your spouse have children, part of the divorce process is determining [child custody](#) and child support. It can take longer to work out the details of your divorce if you have children, which can, in turn, cost more money. It may also be more expensive to maintain two separate households if you have children, and you may be ordered to pay child support.

## Property division

The amount and type of assets you and your spouse have can significantly influence the expense of dividing the property and ending the marriage.

Spouses with complex or numerous assets, such as a business, may need additional steps to determine the proper value and equitable distribution of the property. For example, you may need to hire forensic accountants to estimate the value of your property and testify in court. There may also be costs associated with dividing the property, such as appraisal fees or refinancing fees for real property.

If you and your spouse can reach a settlement agreement on the division of property, you may be able to cut down on many of the costs of property division.

## Spousal support

[Michigan courts](#) may award alimony, also called spousal maintenance or spousal support, if it's necessary and appropriate in the situation. If you're the higher earning spouse, alimony can be an ongoing cost for you after your divorce is final. In most cases, alimony payments terminate when the party receiving support remarries.

## Income differences

If one spouse can't afford to pay their legal fees or filing costs for the divorce but another spouse can, the court may require the higher-earning partner to help pay for the divorce costs of the other.

## When to speak with an attorney

Getting a divorce can be difficult, but the right attorney can help you navigate the situation confidently and effectively. Depending on your needs, you may choose to hire a divorce lawyer to help with part of the proceedings, such as preparing the divorce settlement agreement, or to help with every step of the process.

Whatever your situation, an attorney can help you understand and assert your legal rights. Although you can go through a divorce without one, you may find that they're an asset to have in your corner.