Finalize a family law case

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You can finalize a family law case by agreement, default, or trial. Learn more and find forms.

There are different ways you can finalize your case.

1. **By agreement**

   If you and the other party in the case **agree** on how to finalize the case, you can fill out the appropriate forms, and then deliver your proposed final papers to the other party and ask them to sign off. Each party who agrees should sign each of the final papers. If there's more than one other party to the case, such as the State, or a Guardian ad Litem, you must have **all** parties agree and sign to be able to finalize this way.

   Once everyone who needs to has signed your proposed final orders, you must present the final papers to a judge for approval.

2. **By default**

If you filed the case, and the other party didn't file and serve a Response to the petition by their deadline, you can <u>file a motion for default</u> and finalize the case with no input from the other party. If you move for an Order on Motion for Default against one party and have signed agreed orders with other parties (**example**: any GAL, or the State of Washington), you can usually present the final papers to the judge for approval when you present the Order on Motion for Default (and the agreed orders the other parties have signed).

3. **By trial**

If a party responds and disagrees with the petition, you must <u>get ready for and go to trial</u>. Getting ready for trial can mean lots of things, like <u>doing discovery</u>, cooperating with a <u>GAL investigation</u> or a Family Court Services evaluation, and figuring out who and what to <u>subpoena to trial</u>.

If you change your mind and don't want to finalize your case, you can ask the judge to dismiss it. If you think the other party will agree, <u>get the dismissal forms</u> to fill out and present to the other party.

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