

56 Pages
\$8.40

Forms Associated with Florida Supreme Court Forms for Filing a

ADOPTION OF ADULT BY STEPPARENT

Revised December 1, 2015
For Forms Revised 11-2015

PETITION FOR ADOPTION OF ADULT BY STEPPARENT

BEFORE YOU CHOOSE TO REPRESENT YOURSELF IN ANY ACTION, IT IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT YOU SEEK THE ADVICE OF AN ATTORNEY

*******NOTICE*******

FEES FOR FORMS, PACKETS, AND FEES FOR FILING ARE NON-REFUNDABLE.
New cases filed by unrepresented (pro se) litigants will not be processed after 4:30 p.m. each day due to their complex nature and the extensive time required to intake a case.

*****INFORMATION ABOUT FORMS AND PACKETS*****

FORMS INCLUDED IN PURCHASED PACKETS MAY BE INCOMPLETE OR OUTDATED DUE TO RECENT CHANGES IN LAWS OR RULES. THIS DOES NOT CHANGE HOW THOSE LAWS OR RULES MAY AFFECT YOUR CASE OR FILING REQUIREMENTS. Packets may or may not include all the forms you may need for your particular situation. There may be other forms not included in the packet, that are available on request.

Please remember, it is up to you, the pro se litigant, to determine which forms and/or packets is/are appropriate for your situation, if any, and that you are representing yourself and you alone are responsible for the correct completion and filing of the forms. It is also your decision whether or not you choose to use forms. Clerk and Court personnel cannot act as your lawyer or tell you what your legal rights or remedies are, represent you in court or tell you how to testify in court. The presiding judge in your case may require amendment of form(s) or substitution of a different form other than those you may have obtained from the clerk's office. The form(s) you file are only a request and the judge is not required to grant the relief requested in a form. The information you give to and receive from Clerk and Court personnel is not confidential and may be subject to disclosure at a later date. If there is another person involved in your case, that person will receive the same type of assistance that you receive. If you have any questions concerning your legal rights and remedies, please contact an attorney.

Please have forms **completed, stapled properly, signed and notarized BEFORE** filing them with the Clerk of Court.

STEPARENT ADOPTION OF ADULT

PACKAGE INDEX

	Page
Social Security Number Collection Statement.....	<u>1</u>
Application for Determination of Civil Indigent Status.....	<u>2</u>
Self-Help Procedures for Filing a Stepparent Adoption.....	<u>4</u>
General Information for Self-Represented Litigants.....	<u>7</u>
Certified Statement of Final Decree of Adoption.....	<u>9</u>
Family Law Forms Information for Self-Represent Litigants.....	<u>11</u>
Family Law Glossary of Common Terms and Definitions.....	<u>17</u>
12.928 – Cover Sheet for Family Court Cases	<u>22</u>
12.900(h) – Notice of Related Cases	<u>27</u>
12.981(c)(1) - Petition for Adoption of Adult by Stepparent.....	<u>33</u>
12.981(a)(2) – Stepparent Adoption: Consent of Adoptee.....	<u>39</u>
12.981(c)(2) – Stepparent Adoption: Consent of Adult Adoptee’s Spouse.....	<u>42</u>
Stepparent Adoption: Consent of Birth Parent – Adult Adoption.....	<u>45</u>
12.915 – Notice of Current Address.....	<u>48</u>
1.998 – Final Disposition Form.....	<u>52</u>
12.900(a) – Disclosure from Nonlawyer.....	<u>53</u>

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER COLLECTION STATEMENT

The Okaloosa County Clerk of Circuit Courts collects and receives Social Security Numbers for the purposes outlined below. Social Security Numbers which have been collected or received by this office may be used as a unique identifier and may be used for cross-reference search purposes in certain applications.

PASSPORT APPLICATIONS – Section 6039E of the Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. 6039E) requires you to provide your Social Security Number when you apply for a U.S. Passport or for the renewal of a U.S. Passport. This office, in our acceptance agency capacity, verifies the completeness of your application for U.S. Passport which is forwarded to the U.S. Department of State.

MARRIAGE LICENSE APPLICATIONS – Pursuant to Section 741.04 of the Florida Statutes, and in compliance with the federal *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996*, when applying for a marriage license, you are required to provide your Social Security Number, if you have been issued one. Use of Social Security Numbers through this requirement shall be limited to the purpose of administration of the Department of Revenue Title IV-D program for child support enforcement. It is sent to the Florida Department of Health, Office of Vital Statistics as part of your marriage record.

COURT RECORDS – Pursuant to federal, state, and local laws, rules and codes, you are required to provide your Social Security Number on certain court pleadings, forms, and financial documents. The Okaloosa County Clerk of Circuit Courts, in our capacity as clerk to the courts and custodian of court records, may receive your Social Security Number, from you or from other agencies, as part of document filings. We may use the number in order to process records of court cases, in compliance with the listed authorities, for the following uses: Identification and verification, verifying financial information, billing and payments, collections, data collection, data processing, reconciliation, tracking, tax reporting, reporting required information to other agencies, transmittals and for administration of the Department of Revenue Title IV-D program for child support enforcement. This office is in compliance with state privacy laws regarding access of court files.

OFFICIAL RECORDS – The Okaloosa County Clerk of Circuit Courts, in our capacity as county recorder and custodian of the county's Official Record series, does not collect your Social Security Number. This office may receive documents containing your Social Security Number to be recorded into the Official Records. This office is in compliance with state privacy laws relative to the Official Record Series.

VENDORS AND EMPLOYEES – Pursuant to federal, state, and local laws, rules, and codes, we may collect your Social Security Number for the following uses: Identification and verification, verifying financial information, billing and payments, collections, data collection, data processing, reconciliation, tracking, tax reporting, reporting required information to other agencies, transmittals, employee benefits, and compliance with record keeping requirements.

CASH PAYMENTS OVER \$10,000 - Pursuant to the Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service Pub. 1544, this office collects the Social Security Number or Taxpayer Identification Number for cash payments over \$10,000 for tax reporting purposes.

IN THE CIRCUIT/COUNTY COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NO. _____

Plaintiff/Petitioner or In the Interest Of
vs.

Defendant//Respondent

APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION OF CIVIL INDIGENT STATUS

Notice to Applicant: If you qualify for civil indigence you must enroll in the clerk's office payment plan and pay a one-time administrative fee of \$25.00. This fee shall not be charged for Dependency or Chapter 39 Termination of Parental Rights actions.

1. I have _____ dependents. (Include only those persons you list on your U.S. Income tax return.)
Are you Married?...Yes....No Does your Spouse Work?...Yes....No Annual Spouse Income? \$ _____

2. I have a net income of \$ _____ paid () weekly () every two weeks () semi-monthly () monthly () yearly () other _____.
(Net income is your total income including salary, wages, bonuses, commissions, allowances, overtime, tips and similar payments, **minus** deductions required by law and other court-ordered payments such as child support.)

3. I have other income paid () weekly () every two weeks () semi-monthly () monthly () yearly () other _____.
(Circle "Yes" and fill in the amount if you have this kind of income, otherwise circle "No")

Second Job	Yes \$ _____	No	Veterans' benefits	Yes \$ _____	No
Social Security benefits			Workers compensation	Yes \$ _____	No
For you	Yes \$ _____	No	Income from absent family members	Yes \$ _____	No
For child(ren)	Yes \$ _____	No	Stocks/bonds	Yes \$ _____	No
Unemployment compensation	Yes \$ _____	No	Rental income	Yes \$ _____	No
Union payments	Yes \$ _____	No	Dividends or interest	Yes \$ _____	No
Retirement/pensions	Yes \$ _____	No	Other kinds of income not on the list	Yes \$ _____	No
Trusts	Yes \$ _____	No	Gifts	Yes \$ _____	No

I understand that I will be required to make payments for fees and costs to the clerk in accordance with §57.082(5), Florida Statutes, as provided by law, although I may agree to pay more if I choose to do so.

4. I have other assets: (Circle "yes" and fill in the value of the property, otherwise circle "No")

Cash	Yes \$ _____	No	Savings account	Yes \$ _____	No
Bank account(s)	Yes \$ _____	No	Stocks/bonds	Yes \$ _____	No
Certificates of deposit or money market accounts	Yes \$ _____	No	Homestead Real Property*	Yes \$ _____	No
Boats*	Yes \$ _____	No	Motor Vehicle*	Yes \$ _____	No
			Non-homestead real property/real estate*	Yes \$ _____	No

*show loans on these assets in paragraph 5

Check one: I () DO () DO NOT expect to receive more assets in the near future. The asset is _____.

5. I have total liabilities and debts of \$ _____ as follows: Motor Vehicle \$ _____, Home \$ _____, Other Real Property \$ _____, Child Support paid direct \$ _____, Credit Cards \$ _____, Medical Bills \$ _____, Cost of medicines (monthly) \$ _____, Other \$ _____.

6. I have a private lawyer in this case..... Yes No

A person who knowingly provides false information to the clerk or the court in seeking a determination of indigent status under s. 57.082, F.S. commits a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s.775.082, F.S. or s. 775.083, F.S. I attest that the information I have provided on this application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 20____.

Date of Birth Driver's License or ID Number

Signature of Applicant for Indigent Status
Print Full Legal Name _____
Phone Number: _____

Address, P O Address, Street, City, State, Zip Code

CLERK'S DETERMINATION

Based on the information in this Application, I have determined the applicant to be () Indigent () Not Indigent, according to s. 57.082, F.S.
Dated this _____ day of _____, 20 ____.

JD Peacock II, Clerk of Circuit Court and Comptroller

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

This form was completed with the assistance of: _____
Clerk/Deputy Clerk/Other authorized person.

APPLICANTS FOUND NOT TO BE INDIGENT MAY SEEK REVIEW BY A JUDGE BY ASKING FOR A HEARING TIME.

THERE IS NO FEE FOR THIS REVIEW.

Sign here if you want the judge to review the clerk's decision _____

**SELF-HELP PROCEDURES FOR FILING A
PETITION FOR STEPPARENT ADOPTION**

PLEASE READ ALL THE INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE FILING YOUR CASE.

These instructions are for a stepparent who is adopting his/her spouse's biological child. It should be filed in the county where the child resides. Both the stepparent and his/her spouse must sign the petition. Please read the instruction sheet on General Information for Self-Represented Litigants along with this instruction sheet before proceedings.

Please remember that the Clerk and Court personnel cannot act as your lawyer or tell you what your legal rights or remedies are, represent you in court or tell you how to testify in court. Clerk and Court personnel are not acting on behalf of the court or any judge. The presiding judge in your case may require amendment of form(s) or substitution of a different form other than those you may have obtained from the Clerk's Office or a legal form provider. The form(s) you file are only a request and the judge is not required to grant the relief requested in a form. The information you give to and receive from Clerk and Court personnel is not confidential and may be subject to disclosure at a later date. If there is another person involved in your case, that person will receive the same type of assistance that you receive.

DEFINITIONS:

Petitioner – Parent married to the parent of the child to be adopted who files the petition to begin the action.

Respondent – The non-custodial birth parent who is being asked to give up his/her parental rights pending a stepparent adoption and whose consent should be obtained.

A list of required forms as follows. Additional forms that may be needed are listed under the specific sections below that may apply to your case. This list of forms and procedural information as provided as a self-help service for litigants who choose to represent themselves in Court, pro se (without an attorney) and should be considered only as a guideline and not legal advice. It is your responsibility to fill the forms out completed and properly. If you have any questions concerning your legal rights and remedies, please contact an attorney. Clerk and Court personnel cannot give you legal advice. You are representing yourself and you alone are responsible for the correct completion and filing of the forms.

There are fees for this action. If you do not have the money to pay the filing fee, you may obtain an Application for Determination of Civil Indigent Status from the Clerk, fill it out, and the Clerk will determine if you are eligible to have filing fees waived.

You must complete and file documents 1-7 with the Clerk of Court, then proceed according to your particular situation as indicated in either A, B, or C below. Additional forms that may be indicated in those sections are available in the Clerk of Court Record Center and at www.okaloosaclerk.com under the Self-Help Center section.

DOCUMENTS TO BE FILED

1. _____ Form 12.981(b)(1) **Joint Petition for Adoption by Stepparent** –Both the stepparent wanting to adopt and his or her spouse must sign this petition. You must attach one of the following (a, b, c, or d) to the petition.
 - _____ a. Form 12.981 (a)(1) **Consent and Waiver by Parent** - This form must be completed and signed by the parent who is giving up rights to and custody of the minor child to be adopted. This consent cannot be signed before the birth of the child. This form must be signed before a notary public and two (2) other witnesses who must also sign this form and print their names, street addresses, city, state, and driver’s license or State ID card number. This consent cannot be signed before the birth of the child.
 - OR
 - _____ b. Form 12.918(a)(3)**Affidavit of Non-Paternity**– This form is to be completed when the father of the child was not married to the mother and paternity had not been established by a valid acknowledgment or court order. This consent can be signed before the birth of the child.
 - _____ c. **Certified copy of respondent’s death certificate, if deceased.**
 - OR
 - _____ d. Form 12.981 (a)(4) **Affidavit of diligent Search** – If the respondent’s location is unknown. You must make a very serious effort to locate the respondent through the diligent search process and follow all instructions that come with this form.
2. _____ You must also fill out and file the following three (3) forms with the petition:
 - _____ a. Form 12.928 - **Cover Sheet for Family Law Cases**
 - _____ b. Form 12.900(h) - **Notice of Related Cases, Form**
 - _____ c. Form 1.998 - **Final Disposition Form**
3. _____ Form 12.902(d) - **Uniform child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act (UCCJEA) Affidavit,**
4. _____ **Certified copy of the child(ren)’s birth certificate(s).**
5. _____ Form 12.981(a)(5) - **Indian Child Welfare Act Affidavit**
6. _____ Form 12.981(a)(3) - **Consent of Adoptee** if child is age 12 or older - This form must be signed by the child(ren) to be adopted before a notary public and two (2) other witnesses if he/she is 12 years old or older. Please note that the witnesses who sign this consent must also print their names and addresses.
7. _____ Form 12.981(a)(6) - **Motion for Search of Putative Father Registry** and Form 12.981(a)(7) **Order Granting Motion for Search of Putative Father Registry,** (Form 12.981(a)(7) – This search is required in **EVERY** adoption proceeding. To get this search done, you must complete the Motion for Search of Putative Father Registry and two (2) copies of the Order Granting Motion

for Search of Putative Father Registry and file them all along with a self-addressed envelope with the Clerk of Court. If your motion is granted by the Court, you will then need to send the following documents to the Office of Vital Statistics of the Department of Health:

Certified copy of the Order Granting Motion for Search of the Putative Father Registry.

Completed Florida Putative Father Registry – Application for Search Application and application fee. Address and fee information are located on application.

Once the search is complete, the Office of Vital Statistics will provide a Certificate of Search to the Court. If the search results reveal who and where the father is, you should attempt to obtain consent by either **Consent and Waiver by Parent**, Form 12.981(a)(1). (See No.1(a) above) or **Affidavit of Non-Paternity**, Form 12.981(a)(3). (See No.1(b) above). If you are unable to obtain the consent or affidavit of non-paternity of the respondent, see Sections B and C below:

A. IF YOU OBTAINED A **CONSENT AND WAIVER FORM OR AFFIDAVIT OF PATERNITY** FROM THE OTHER PARENT:

1. _____ File all completed original documents with the Circuit Civil Division in the Clerk’s Office.
**Make sure you keep copies of all documents for your records. Once you have filed your documents, your file will become confidential.
2. _____ If the respondent signed the **Consent and Waiver by Parent**, Form 12.981(a)(1) or Affidavit on Non-Paternity, Form 12.981(a)(3) and all other required documents have been filed, call for hearing date at the number listed in the instruction sheet that will be given to you at the time of filing.
3. _____ At your final hearing, your stepparent adoption case will be heard by a General Magistrate. At the conclusion of your hearing, the General Magistrate will sign a Report of Magistrate. There is then a ten(10) day exception period after the General Magistrate signed this report before your adoption will be final. The petitioner and spouse may sign the **Agreement to Waive Exception Period** form to waive receipt of the Report of Magistrate and the ten (10) day exception period.

B. IF YOU **CANNOT** OBTAIN A **CONSENT AND WAIVER FORM OR AFFIDAVIT OF NON-PATERNITY** FROM THE OTHER PARENT AND YOU KNOW HIS/HER CURRENT OR PREVIOUS ADDRESS.

1. _____ Form 12.910(a) **Summons: Personal Service on an Individual**. Tell the Clerk of Court that you need a Summons issued. After receiving a copy of the Summons from the Clerk’s Office, deliver the Summons with copies of Form 1 – 7, plus a blank **Stepparent Adoption: Consent and Waiver by Parent**, Form 12.981(a)(1) and **Affidavit of Non-Paternity**, Form 12.981(a)(3) for the respondent to complete, to the Sheriff’s Office Civil Process Division or Certified Process Server in the county where the other birth parent lives for service. It is your responsibility to provide copies of the Summons and all other documents plus any service fee that may be required to the Sheriff or Process Server in the county where the respondent lives. You will be charged a

service fee by the Sheriff's Office or Process Server will send a Return of Service to you and to the Clerk of Court, stating the date of service and/or whether the respondent was or was not served.

2. _____ If the respondent does not file an answer within 20 days required by the summons, you must file **Motion for Default**, Form 12.922(a) and **Default**, Form 12.922(b) along with an Affidavit of Military Service, Form 12.912(b). Once a default is entered, you may request a hearing by calling the number listed in the instruction sheet that will be given to you at the time of filing.

C. IF YOU HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO FIND THE OTHER PARENT'S CURRENT OR PREVIOUS ADDRESS THROUGH DILIGENT SEARCH AND THE FLORIDA PUTATIVE FATHER REGISTRY:

1. _____ If attempts at personal service by sheriff with a summons are unsuccessful, you must use constructive service (sometimes referred to as service by publication). The requirements for construction service are complex.

****First:** Complete and file the Affidavit of Diligent Search. Form 12.981(a)(4). You must make very serious effort to locate the respondent through the diligent search process and follow all instructions that come with this form.

****Second:** Contact the Case Manager for a hearing date and time. Then immediately fill out the Notice of Action for Adoption by Stepparent and take it to the Clerk's Office. Do not fill in a response date until you are presenting it to the Clerk of Court for signature. When calculating the date to be inserted in the Notice of Action for Adoption by Stepparent you should allow for the Statutory 30 days plus 7 days for mailing to the newspaper + 10 days for the newspaper to start to run the notice.

Example: Notice of Action taken to Clerk on May 1st, count out 47 days (30 days + 7 days = 47 days) so the response date to insert in the Notice of Action would be June 17th.

****Third:** Once the Clerk has signed the Notice of Action for Adoption by Stepparent, a copy must be sent **IMMEDIATELY** to a "qualified" newspaper in the county where the respondent was last known to have resided, to be published once a week for four (4) consecutive weeks. The newspaper will charge you for this service.

**YOU MAY CONSULT WITH AND/OR RETAIN AN ATTORNEY
AT ANY TIME DURING YOUR ACTION.**

Items to Bring to Hearing:

1. Completed **Certified Statement of Final Decree of Adoption** which is included in this packet (plus check for \$20.00 only if child was born in Florida made payable to “The Office of Vital Statistics.”)
2. **Money Order or Cashier’s Check** (no personal checks allowed) made payable to “Clerk of Court” for the number of certified copies of the Final Judgment of Adoption that you want to receive (to calculate the amount needed: multiply the number of copies you want time \$6.00. (Example: 10 copies x 6 = \$60.00). It is suggested that you purchase at least four (4) copies, with two (2) being for you to keep, one (1) for Bureau of Vital Statistics, and one (1) to be mailed to the other birth parent.
3. **One (1) self-addressed, stamped envelope (9x12 size)** with \$3.00 worth of postage for the purpose of mailing your copies of the Final Judgment of Adoption once the adoption is final.



CERTIFIED STATEMENT OF FINAL DECREE OF ADOPTION
(Important—Read Information and Instruction on page two before completion)

TYPE OR PRINT
IN BLACK INK

A. INFORMATION REGARDING ORIGINAL STATUS OF CHILD

Birth Certificate No. (If Known)

1a. Child's Name (First, Middle, Last)
1b. Child's Sex
1c. Child's Date of Birth
1d. Child's Place of Birth (City, State, County)
2a. Name of Father (First, Middle, Last)
2b. Father's Race
3a. Name of Mother (First, Middle, Last)
3b. Mother's Race

B. INFORMATION FOR A NEW CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH

1. Child's Name After Adoption (First, Middle, Last)
2a. Name: (First, Middle, Last)
2b. Birth Date:
2c. Birth Place:
2d. Race:
2e. Social Security Number:
4. Residence Address of Adoptive Parent(s) at Time of Adoption: (Street, Apt. No. or Rural Route Number, City, Town, or Location, County, State, Inside City Limit, Zip Code)

5. Mailing Address if different from residence address:

6. Is this a single parent adoption? [] Yes [] No
7. Is this a stepparent or other relative adoption? [] Yes [] No If yes, please state relationship

8. Person completing Part A and B of this Form:
8a. Name: (Type or Print)
8b. Relationship/Title (If agency, list agency name & License No.)

8c. Signature (Signature of Person Completing the Form)
8d. Telephone (Area Code and Number)

9a. Attorney/Pro Se Petitioner (Type or Print)
9b. Bar No
9c. Telephone (Area Code and Number)

9d. Address (Street, City, State, Zip Code)

"For infant adoptions: If you are interested in obtaining information on Florida's Healthy Start Program and potential services available for your infant, please call the Healthy Baby Hotline at 1-800-45-BABY (1-800-451-2229) and identify yourself as an adoptive parent.

C. CERTIFICATE OF CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT

Court Docket No.

1. On the ___ day of ___, 20___, the Circuit Court of ___ County, ___

Judge ___ presiding ordered a decree of adoption in the case of the child and parents described above. Florida Putative Father Registry was searched pursuant to chapter 63, Florida Statutes.

2a. Signed and Sealed by (Clerk of Circuit Court)
2b. Date

FEE: State Law requires a \$20.00 fee made payable to “The Office of Vital Statistics” for filing a new birth certificate for a Florida birth resulting from adoption. This fee includes the issuance of one certification of the new certificate. Certification of the new certificate cannot be provided prior to the payment of this fee.

Instructions

(Prompt submission of this statement, when properly completed, will ensure the time filing of a new birth certificate.)

Pursuant to s. 63.152, Florida Statutes, within 30 days after entry of a judgment of adoption, the clerk of the court, and in agency adoptions, any child-placing agency licensed by the department, shall prepare a certified statement of the entry for the State Registrar of Vital Statistics on a form provided by the registrar. A new birth record containing the necessary information supplied by the certificate shall be issued by the registrar on application of the adoptive parent(s) or the adopted person.

Please type using black ribbon. Provide all information. This will ensure timely filing of a new birth certificate. Providing contact information is critical in case contact with the person completing the form and/or the attorney is needed to obtain additional or clarifying information.

Section B. Complete all information regarding both mother and father regardless of whether a stepparent adoption or two new parents. This information is required for completion of a new birth certificate. In the case of a stepparent adoption, the information allows us to verify information already on file.

Mail to: Department of Health, Office of Vital Statistics, P. O. Box 210, Jacksonville, FL 32231-0042.

Fee: If the fee is accompanying this statement, please **DO NOT** send cash. Please send a check or money order made payable to the Office of Vital Statistics. DH Form 429, Application for Amendment to Florida Birth Record, should be used when remitting the fee. This will ensure that the new certificate is mailed to the appropriate party as listed on the application.

If the fee is not remitted at the time of submission of this statement, the birth record, if the birth occurred in Florida, shall be amended and the record flagged for collection of the amendment/Processing fee at the time certificate of the new record is requested.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Upon receipt of the report of adoption from a clerk of the court, as heretofore provided for, or upon receipt of a certified copy of a final decree of adoption, together with all necessary information, the State Registrar shall make and file a new birth certificate. All names and particulars entered in the new certificate shall refer to the adoptive parents. The original birth record and court documents shall be sealed only to be opened pursuant to a court order or other provision as may be provided for in Florida law.

Form is also used for adoption of a foreign child pursuant to s. 382.017, F.S. which allow the creation of a Certificate of Foreign Birth.

OUT OF STATE BIRTHS – ADOPTIONS GRANTED IN FLORIDA: Although birth certificates for these children are not placed on file in our state, the adoption report sent to our office from the court shall be forwarded to the appropriate registration authority in the state of birth. **DO NOT** remit the fee when the birth occurred outside the State of Florida.

If you have any questions regarding the completion of this form or you wish to order a small supply, you may contact the Office of Vital Statistics at (904) 359-6900, ext. 9001. To print your own forms, please visit our website at: http://www.doh.state.fl.us/planning_eval/vital_statistics/index.html.

FAMILY LAW FORMS, COMMENTARY, AND INSTRUCTIONS GENERAL INFORMATION FOR SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS (09/13)

You should read this General Information thoroughly before taking any other steps to file your case or represent yourself in court. Most of this information is **not** repeated in the attached forms. This information should provide you with an overview of the court system, its participants, and its processes. It should be useful whether you want to represent yourself in a pending matter or have a better understanding of the way family court works. **This is not intended as a substitute for legal advice from an attorney. Each case has its own particular set of circumstances, and an attorney may advise you of what is best for you in your individual situation.**

These instructions are not the only place that you can get information about how a family case works. You may want to look at other books for more help. The Florida Statutes, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure, Florida Rules of Civil Procedure, and other legal information or books may be found at the public library or in a law library at your county courthouse or a law school in your area. If you are filing a petition for **Name Change** and/or **Adoption**, these instructions may not apply.

If the word(s) is printed in **bold**, this means that the word is being emphasized. Throughout these instructions, you will also find words printed in **bold** and **underlined**. This means that the definitions of these words may be found in the glossary of common family law terms at the end of this general information section.

Commentary

1995 Adoption. To help the many people in family law court cases who do not have attorneys to represent them (pro se litigants), the Florida Supreme Court added these simplified forms and directions to the Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure. The directions refer to the Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure or the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure. Many of the forms were adapted from the forms accompanying the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure. Practitioners should refer to the committee notes for those forms for rule history.

The forms were adopted by the Court pursuant to *Family Law Rules of Procedure*, 667 So. 2d 202 (Fla. 1995); *In re Petition for Approval of Forms Pursuant to Rule 10-1.1(b) of the Rules Regulating the Florida Bar—Stepparent Adoption Forms*, 613 So. 2d 900 (Fla. 1992); *Rules Regulating the Florida Bar—Approval of Forms*, 581 So. 2d 902 (Fla. 1991).

Although the forms are part of these rules, they are not all inclusive and additional forms, as necessary, should be taken from the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure as provided in Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure. Also, the following notice has been included to strongly encourage individuals to seek the advice, when needed, of an attorney who is a member in good standing of the Florida Bar.

1997 Amendment. In 1997, the Florida Family Law Forms were completely revised to simplify and correct the forms. Additionally, the appendices were eliminated, the instructions contained in the appendices were incorporated into the forms, and the introduction following the Notice to Parties was created. Minor changes were also made to the Notice to Parties set forth below.

NOTICE TO PARTIES WHO ARE NOT REPRESENTED BY AN ATTORNEY WHO IS A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING OF THE FLORIDA BAR

If you have questions or concerns about these forms, instructions, commentary, the use of the forms, or your legal rights, it is strongly recommended that you talk to an attorney. If you do not know an attorney, you should call the lawyer referral service listed in the yellow pages of the telephone book under "Attorney." If you do not have the money to hire an attorney, you should call the legal aid office in your area.

Because the law does change, the forms and information about them may have become outdated. You should be aware that changes may have taken place in the law or court rules that would affect the accuracy of the forms or instructions.

In no event will the Florida Supreme Court, The Florida Bar, or anyone contributing to the production of these forms or instructions be liable for any direct, indirect, or consequential damages resulting from their use.

FAMILY LAW PROCEDURES

Communication with the court Ex parte communication is communication with the judge with only one party present. Judges are not allowed to engage in ex parte communication except in very limited circumstances, so, absent specific authorization to the contrary, you should not try to speak with or write to the judge in your case unless the other party is present or has been properly notified. **If you have something you need to tell the judge, you must ask for a hearing and give notice to the other party or file a written statement in the court file and send a copy of the written statement to the other party.**

Filing a case. A case begins with the filing of a petition. A petition is a written request to the court for some type of legal action. The person who originally asks for legal action is called the petitioner and remains the petitioner throughout the case.

A petition is given to the clerk of the circuit court, whose office is usually located in the county courthouse or a branch of the county courthouse. A case number is assigned and an official court file is opened. Delivering the petition to the clerk's office is called filing a case. A filing fee is usually required.

Once a case has been filed, a copy must be given to (served on) the respondent. The person against whom the original legal action is being requested is called the respondent, because he or she is expected to respond to the petition. The respondent remains the respondent throughout the case.

Service. When one party files a petition, motion, or other pleading, the other party must be "served" with a copy of the document. This means that the other party is given proper notice of the pending action(s) and any scheduled hearings. Personal service of the petition and summons on the respondent by a deputy sheriff or private process server is required in all original petitions and supplemental petitions, unless constructive service is permitted by law. Personal service may also be required in other actions by some judges. After initial service of the original or supplemental petition and summons by a deputy sheriff or private process server, service of most motions and other documents or papers filed in the case generally may be made by regular U.S. mail, or hand delivery. However, service by certified mail is required at other times so you have proof that the other party actually received the papers. The instructions with each form will advise you of the type of service required for that form. **If the other party**

is represented by an attorney, you should serve the attorney and send a copy to the other party, except for original or supplemental petitions, which must be personally served on the respondent.

Other than the original or supplemental petitions, any time you file additional pleadings or motions in your case, you must provide a copy to the other party and include a **certificate of service**. Likewise, the other party must provide you with copies of everything that he or she files. Service of additional documents is usually completed by U.S. mail. For more information, see the instructions for **Certificate of Service (General)**, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.914.

Forms for service of process are included in the Florida Family Law Forms, along with more detailed instructions and information regarding service. The instructions to those forms should be read carefully to ensure that you have the other party properly served. **If proper service is not obtained, the court cannot hear your case.**

Note: If you absolutely do not know where the other party to your case lives or if the other party resides in another state, you may be able to use **constructive service**. However, if constructive service is used, other than granting a divorce, the court may only grant limited relief, which cannot include either alimony or child support. For more information on constructive service, see **Notice of Action for Dissolution of Marriage (No Child or Financial Support)**, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.913(a)(1), **Notice of Action for Family Cases with Minor Child(ren)**, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.913(a)(2), **Affidavit of Diligent Search and Inquiry**, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Form 12.913(b), and **Affidavit of Diligent Search**, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Form 12.913(c).. Additionally, if the other party is in the military service of the United States, additional steps for service may be required. See, for example, **Memorandum for Certificate of Military Service**, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.912(a). In sum, the law regarding constructive service and service on an individual in the military is very complex and you may wish to consult an attorney regarding these issues.

Default... After being served with a petition or **counterpetition**, the other party has 20 days to file a response. If a response to a petition is not filed, the petitioner may file a **Motion for Default**, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.922(a), with the clerk. This means that you may proceed with your case and set a **final hearing**, and a **judge** will make a decision, even if the other party will not cooperate. For more information, see rule 12.080(c), Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure.

Answer and Counterpetition... After being served, the respondent has 20 days to file an answer admitting or denying each of the allegations contained in the petition. In addition to an answer, the respondent may also file a counterpetition. In a counterpetition, the respondent may request the same or some other relief or action not requested by the petitioner. If the respondent files a counterpetition, the petitioner should then file an **Answer to Counterpetition**, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.903(d), and either admit or deny the allegations in the respondent's counterpetition.

Mandatory disclosure... Rule 12.285, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure, requires each party in a **dissolution of marriage** to exchange certain information and documents, and file a **Family Law Financial Affidavit**, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Form 12.902(b) or (c). Failure to make this required disclosure within the time required by the Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure may allow the court to dismiss the case or to refuse to consider the pleadings of the party failing to comply. This requirement also must be met in other family law cases, **except** adoptions, simplified dissolutions of marriage, enforcement proceedings, contempt proceedings, and proceedings for injunctions for domestic or repeat violence. The **Certificate of Compliance with Mandatory Disclosure**, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Form 12.932, lists the documents that must be given to the other party. For more information see rule 12.285, Florida

Family Law Rules of Procedure, and the instructions to the **Certificate of Compliance with Mandatory Disclosure**, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Form 12.932.

Parenting Plan. If your case involves minor or dependent child(ren), a **Parenting Plan** shall be approved or established by the court. **Parenting Plan**, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form, 12.995(a), **Safety-Focused Parenting Plan**, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.995(b), or **Relocation/Long Distance Parenting Plan**, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.995(c). The Parenting Plan shall be developed and agreed to by the parents and approved by a court. **If the parents cannot agree, or if the agreed Parenting Plan is not approved, the court must establish a Parenting Plan.** The Parenting Plan shall contain a time-sharing schedule and should address the issues regarding the child(ren)'s education, health care, and physical, social, and emotional well-being.

Setting a hearing or trial. Generally, the court will have hearings on motions, final hearings on **uncontested** or **default** cases, and trials on contested cases. Before setting your case for **final hearing** or trial, certain requirements such as completing mandatory disclosure and filing certain papers and having them served on the other party must be met. These requirements vary depending on the type of case and the procedures in your particular jurisdiction. For further information, you should refer to the instructions for the type of form you are filing.

Next, you must obtain a hearing or trial date so that the court may consider your request. You should ask the clerk of court, or **family law intake staff** about the local procedure for setting a hearing or trial, which you should attend. These family law forms contain **orders** and **final judgments**, which the judge may use. You should ask the clerk of court or family law intake staff if you need to bring one of these forms with you to the hearing or trial. If so, you should type or print the heading, including the circuit, county, case number, division, and the parties' names, and leave the rest blank for the judge to complete at your hearing or trial.

Below are explanations of symbols or parts of different family law forms...

{specify}, {date}, {name(s)}, {street}, {city}, {state}, {phone}

Throughout these forms, you will find hints such as those above. These tell you what to put in the blank(s).

[one only] [all that apply]

These show how many choices you should check. Sometimes you may check only one, while other times you may check several choices. () This also shows an area where you must make a choice. Check the () in front of the choice that applies to you or your case.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE _____ (1) _____ JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
IN AND FOR _____ (2) _____ COUNTY, FLORIDA

Case No.: _____ (3)
Division: _____ (4)

_____, (5)
Petitioner,
and
_____, (6)
Respondent.

Line 1 The clerk of court can tell you the number of your judicial circuit. Type or print it here.

Line 2 Type or print your county name on line (2).

- Line 3** If you are filing an initial petition or pleading, the Clerk of the Court will assign a case number after the case is filed. You should type or print this case number on all papers you file in this case.
- Line 4** The clerk of the court can tell you the name of the division in which your case is being filed, and you should type or print it here. Divisions vary from court to court. For example, your case may be filed in the civil division, the family division, or the juvenile division.
- Line 5** Type or print the legal name of the person who originally filed the case on line 5. This person is the petitioner because he/she is the one who filed the original petition.
- Line 6** Type or print the other party's legal name on line 6. The other party is the respondent because he/she is responding to the petition.

I understand that I am swearing or affirming under oath to the truthfulness of the claims made in this petition and that the punishment for knowingly making a false statement includes fines and/or imprisonment.

Dated: _____ (1) _____ (2)
 _____ (2)

Signature of Petitioner
 Printed Name: _____ (3)

Address: _____ (4)

City, State, Zip: _____ (5)
 Telephone Number: _____ (6)
 Fax Number: _____ (7)
 E-mail Address: _____ (8)

Some forms require that your signature be witnessed. You must sign the form in the presence of a **notary public** or deputy clerk (employee of the clerk of the court's office). When signing the form, you must have a valid photo identification unless the notary knows you personally. You should completely fill in all lines (1 & 3–8) except 2 with the requested information, if applicable. **Line 2, the signature line, must be signed in the presence of the notary public or deputy clerk.**

STATE OF FLORIDA
 COUNTY OF _____

Sworn to or affirmed and signed before me on _____ by _____.

 NOTARY PUBLIC or DEPUTY CLERK

 [Print, type, or stamp commissioned name of notary or clerk.]

_____ Personally known
 _____ Produced identification
 Type of identification produced _____

DO NOT SIGN OR FILL IN THIS PART OF ANY FORM. This section of the form is to be completed by the notary public who is witnessing your signature.

IF A NONLAWYER HELPED YOU FILL OUT THIS FORM, HE/SHE MUST FILL IN THE BLANKS BELOW:

[fill in **all** blanks] This form was prepared for the: *{either Petitioner or Respondent; or Husband or Wife}*

This form was completed with the assistance of:

{name of individual } _____ (1) _____,

{name of business} _____ (2) _____,

{address} _____ (3) _____,

{city} _____ (4) _____, *{state}* _____ (5), *{telephone number}* _____ (6) _____.

This section should be completed by anyone who helps you fill out these forms but is **not** an attorney who is a member in good standing of The Florida Bar, which means that he or she is not licensed to practice law in Florida.

Line 1 The **nonlawyer** who helps you should type or print his or her name on line 1.

Lines 2–6 The nonlawyer’s business name, address, (including street, city, state, and telephone number) should be typed or printed on lines 2–6.

In addition, a **Disclosure from Nonlawyer**, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Form 12.900(a), should be completed if a nonlawyer assists you. The disclosure is available as a family law form and should be completed before the nonlawyer helps you. This is to be sure that you understand the role and limitations of a nonlawyer. You and the nonlawyer should keep a copy of this disclosure for your records.

FAMILY LAW GLOSSARY OF COMMON TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Note: The following definitions are intended to be helpful, BUT they are not intended to constitute legal advice or address every possible meaning of the term(s) contained in this glossary.

Affidavit - a written statement in which the facts stated are sworn or affirmed to be true.

Alimony-spousal support which may be ordered by the court in a proceeding for dissolution of marriage. Types of alimony include: bridge-the-gap, durational, rehabilitative, or retroactive, and may be either temporary or permanent. The court may order periodic payments, payment in lump sum, or both. In determining whether to award alimony, the court must determine whether either party has an actual need for alimony and whether the other party has the ability to pay. The court must consider the factors set forth in section 61.08, Florida Statutes, and must make certain written findings. An alimony award may not leave the paying party with significantly less net income than that of the receiving party without written findings of exceptional circumstances.

Answer - written response by a respondent that states whether he or she admits (agrees with) or denies (disagrees with) the allegations in the petition. Any allegations not specifically denied are considered to be admitted.

Appeal - asking a district court of appeal to review the decision in your case. There are strict procedural and time requirements for filing an appeal.

Asset - everything owned by you or your spouse, including property, cars, furniture, bank accounts, jewelry, life insurance policies, businesses, or retirement plans. An asset may be marital or nonmarital, but that distinction is for the court to determine if you and your spouse do not agree.

Attorney - a person with special education and training in the field of law who is a member in good standing of The Florida Bar and licensed to practice law in Florida. An attorney is the only person who is allowed to give you legal advice. An attorney may file your case and represent you in court, or just advise you of your rights before you file your own case. In addition to advising you of your rights, an attorney may tell you what to expect and help prepare you for court. In family law matters, you are not entitled to a court-appointed lawyer, like a public defender in a criminal case. However, legal assistance is often available for those who are unable to hire a private attorney. You may consult the yellow pages of the telephone directory for a listing of legal aid or lawyer referral services in your area, or ask your local clerk of court or family law intake staff what services are available in your area. You may also obtain information from the Florida Supreme Court's Internet site located at <http://www.flcourts.org>.

Bond - money paid to the clerk of court by one party in a case, to be held and paid to an enjoined party in the event that the first party causes loss or damage of property as a result of wrongfully enjoining the other party.

Beneficiary Designation-Florida law provides that a beneficiary designation made by or on behalf of a party providing for the payment or transference of an asset or benefit upon his or her death to the other spouse is void when the final judgment dissolving or declaring a marriage invalid is signed, unless the final judgment specifically states otherwise. Federal law and other statutory provisions may also apply. This includes, but is not limited to, such assets as life insurance policies, annuities, employee benefit plans, individual retirement accounts, and payable-on-death accounts. Whether or not to continue a beneficiary designation is a complex area of the law and you may wish to consult with an attorney.

Bridge-the-Gap Alimony-spousal support which is ordered to assist a party to make the transition from being married to being single. Bridge-the-Gap alimony is designed to assist a party with legitimate, identifiable short-time needs; its length cannot exceed two years and it cannot be modified.

Central Depository-the office of the clerk of court that is responsible for collecting and disbursing court ordered alimony and child support payments. The depository also keeps payment records and files judgments if support is not paid.

Certificate of Service - a document that must be filed whenever a form you are using does not contain a statement for you to fill in showing to whom you are sending copies of the form. Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.914 is the certificate of service form and contains additional instructions.

Certified Copy - a copy of an order or final judgment, certified by the clerk of the circuit court to be an authentic copy.

Certified Mail - mail which requires the receiving party to sign as proof that they received it.

Child Support - money paid from one parent to the other for the benefit of their dependent or minor child(ren).

Clerk of the Circuit Court - elected official in whose office papers are filed, a case number is assigned, and case files are maintained. The clerk's office usually is located in the county courthouse.

Concurrent Custody-(for the purposes of a petition filed pursuant to chapter 751, Florida Statutes) means that an eligible extended family member is awarded custodial rights to care for a child or children concurrently with the child(ren)'s parent or parents.

Constructive Service - notification of the other party by newspaper publication or posting of notice at designated places when the other party cannot be located for personal service. You may also be able to use constructive service when the other party lives in another state. Constructive service is also called "service by publication." However, when constructive service is used, the relief the Court may grant is limited; that relief cannot include either alimony or child support. For more information on service, see the instructions for Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Forms 12.910(a) and 12.913(b) and Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.913(a).

Contested Issues - any or all issues upon which the parties are unable to agree and which must be resolved by the judge at a hearing or trial.

Contingent Asset - an asset that you **may** receive or get later, such as income, tax refund, accrued vacation or sick leave, a bonus, or an inheritance.

Contingent Liability - a liability that you **may** owe later, such as payments for lawsuits, unpaid taxes, or debts that you have agreed or guaranteed to pay if someone else does not.

Counterpetition - a written request to the court for legal action, which is filed by a respondent after being served with a petition.

Custody Order – a judgment or order incorporating a Parenting Plan is a child custody determination for the purposes of the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act, the International Child Abduction Remedies Act, 42 U.S.C. ss. 11601 et seq., the Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act, and the Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction enacted at the Hague on October 25, 1980.

Default - a failure of a party to respond to the pleading of another party. This failure to respond may allow the court to decide the case without input from the party who did not appear or respond.

Delinquent - late.

Dependent Child(ren) - child(ren) who depend on their parent(s) for support either because they are under the age of 18, have a mental or physical disability that prevents them from supporting themselves, or are in high school, between the ages of 18 and 19, and performing in good faith with a reasonable expectation of graduation before the age of 19.

Deputy Clerk - an employee of the office of the clerk of court, which is usually located in the county courthouse or a branch of the county courthouse.

Dissolution of Marriage - divorce; a court action to end a marriage.

Durational Alimony-spousal support which is ordered to provide economic assistance for a set period of time following a marriage of short or moderate duration or following a marriage of long duration if there is no ongoing need for support on a permanent basis. Durational alimony terminates upon the death of either party or upon remarriage of the party receiving support. It may be modified or terminated , but cannot exceed the length of a marriage.

Electronic Communication – Contact, other than face-to-face contact, facilitated by tools such as telephones, electronic mail or email, webcams, video-conferencing equipment and software or other wired or wireless technologies, or other means of communication to supplement fact-to face contact between a parent and that parent’s minor child.

Enjoined - prohibited by the court from doing a specific act.

Ex Parte - communication with the judge by only one party. In order for a judge to speak with either party, the other party must have been properly notified and have an opportunity to be heard. If you have something you wish to tell the judge, you should ask for a hearing or file information in the clerk of court’s office, with certification that a copy was sent to the other party.

Extended Family-(for the purposes of a petition filed pursuant to chapter 751, Florida Statutes) is a person who is either:

- 1) A relative of a minor child within the third degree by blood or marriage to the parent; OR
- 2) The stepparent of a minor child if the stepparent is currently married to the parent of the child and is not a party in a pending dissolution, separate maintenance, domestic violence, or other civil or criminal proceeding in any court of competent jurisdiction involving one or both of the child’s parents as an adverse party.

Family Law Intake Staff - a court’s employee(s) who is (are) available to assist you in filing a family law case. Family law intake staff are not attorneys and cannot give legal advice. They may only assist you with filling out the form(s). Your local clerk’s office can tell you if your county has such assistance available.

Filing - delivering a petition, response, motion, or other pleading in a court case to the clerk of court’s office.

Filing Fee - an amount of money, set by law, that the petitioner must pay when filing a case. If you cannot afford to pay the fee, you must file an **Application for Determination of Civil Indigent Status**, to ask the clerk to file your case without payment of the fee. This form can be obtained from the clerk’s office.

Final Hearing - trial in your case.

Financial Affidavit - a sworn statement that contains information regarding your income, expenses, assets, and liabilities.

Final Judgment - a written document signed by a judge and recorded in the clerk of the circuit court’s office that contains the judge’s decision in your case.

Guardian ad Litem - a neutral person who may be appointed by the court to evaluate or investigate your child’s situation, and file a report with the court about what is in the best interests of your child(ren). Guardians do not “work for” either party. The guardian may interview the parties, visit their homes, visit the child(ren)’s school(s) and speak with teachers, or use other resources to make their recommendation.

Hearing - a legal proceeding before a judge or designated officer (general magistrate or hearing officer) on a motion.

Health Insurance-coverage under a fee-for-service arrangement, health care maintenance organization, or preferred provider organization, and other types of coverage available to either parent, under which medical services could be provided to a minor or dependent child.

Judge - an elected official who is responsible for deciding matters on which you and the other parties in your case are unable to agree. A judge is a neutral person who is responsible for ensuring that your case is resolved in a manner which is fair, equitable, and legal. **A judge is prohibited by law from giving you or the other party any legal advice, recommendations, or other assistance, and may not talk to either party unless both parties are present, represented, or at a properly scheduled hearing.**

Judicial Assistant - the judge’s personal staff assistant.

Liabilities - everything owed by you or your spouse, including mortgages, credit cards, or car loans. A liability may be marital or nonmarital, but that distinction is for the court to determine if you and your spouse do not agree.

Lump Sum Alimony - money ordered to be paid by one spouse to another in a limited number of payments, often a single payment.

Mandatory Disclosure - items that must be disclosed by both parties except those exempted from disclosure by Florida Family Law Rule 12.285.

Marital Asset - generally, anything that you and/or your spouse acquired or received (by gift or purchase) during the marriage. For example, something you owned before your marriage **may** be nonmarital. An asset may only be determined to be marital by agreement of the parties or determination of the judge.

Marital Liability - generally, any debt that you and/or your spouse incurred during the marriage. A debt may only be determined to be nonmarital by agreement of the parties or determination of the judge.

Mediator - a person who is trained and certified to assist parties in reaching an agreement before going to court. Mediators do not take either party's side and are not allowed to give legal advice. They are only responsible for helping the parties reach an agreement and putting that agreement into writing. In some areas, mediation of certain family law cases may be required before going to court.

Modification - a change made by the court in an order or final judgment.

Motion - a request made to the court, other than a petition.

No Contact - a court order directing a party not speak to, call, send mail to, visit, or go near his or her spouse, ex-spouse, child(ren), or other family member.

Nonlawyer - a person who is not a member in good standing of The Florida Bar.

Nonmarital Asset - generally, anything owned separately by you or your spouse. An asset may only be determined to be nonmarital by either agreement of the parties or determination of the judge.

Nonmarital Liability - generally, any debt that you or your spouse incurred before your marriage or since your separation. A debt may only be determined to be nonmarital by either agreement of the parties or determination of the judge.

Nonparty - a person who is not the petitioner or respondent in a court case.

Notary Public - a person authorized to witness signatures on court related forms.

Obligee - a person to whom money, such as child support or alimony, is owed.

Obligor - a person who is ordered by the court to pay money, such as child support or alimony.

Order - a written decision, signed by a judge and filed in the clerk of the circuit court's office, that contains the judge's decision on part of your case, usually on a motion.

Original Petition - see **Petition**.

Parenting Course - a class that teaches parents how to help their child(ren) cope with divorce and other family issues.

Parenting Plan - a document created to govern the relationship between the parents relating to the decisions that must be made regarding the minor child(ren). The Parenting Plan must contain a time-sharing schedule for the parents and child(ren) and shall address the issues concerning the minor child(ren). The issues concerning the minor child(ren) may include, but are not limited to, the child(ren)'s education, health care, and physical, social, and emotional well-being. In creating the Plan, all circumstances between the parents, including their historic relationship, domestic violence, and other factors must be taken into consideration. The Parenting Plan must be developed and agreed to by the parents and approved by the court. If the parents cannot agree to a Parenting Plan, or if the parents agreed to a plan that is not approved by the court, a Parenting Plan will be established by the court with or without the use of **parenting plan recommendations**.

Parenting Plan Recommendation - A nonbinding recommendation concerning one or more elements of a Parenting Plan made by a court-appointed mental health practitioner or other professional designated pursuant to either section 61.20 or 61.401, Florida Statutes, or Florida Family Law Rule of Procedure 12.363.

Party - a person involved in a court case, either as a petitioner or respondent.

Paternity Action - A lawsuit used to determine whether a designated individual is the father of a specific child or children.

Payor - an employer or other person who provides income to an obligor.

Permanent Alimony - spousal support ordered to provide for the needs and necessities of life as they were established during the marriage for a party who lacks the financial ability to meet his or her needs and necessities after dissolution of marriage. Permanent alimony is paid at a specified, periodic rate until: modification by a court order; the death of either party; or the remarriage of the party receiving alimony, whichever occurs first. Permanent

alimony requires consideration of the factors set forth in section 61.08(2), Florida Statutes, and must include certain written findings by the court.

Personal Service - when a summons and a copy of a petition (or other pleading) that has been filed with the court are delivered by a deputy sheriff or private process server to the other party. Personal service is required for all petitions and supplemental petitions.

Petition - a written request to the court for legal action, which begins a court case.

Petitioner - the person who files a petition that begins a court case.

Pleading - a formal, written statement of exactly what a party wants the court to do in a lawsuit or court action.

Pro Se or Self-Represented Litigant - a person who appears in court without the assistance of a lawyer.

Pro Se Coordinator - see **Family Law Intake Staff**.

Rehabilitative Alimony - spousal support ordered to be paid for a limited period of time to allow one of the parties an opportunity to complete a plan of education or training, according to a rehabilitative plan accepted by the court, so that he or she may better support himself or herself after dissolution of marriage.

Relocation- a change in the location of the principal residence of a parent or other person in accordance with section 61.13001, Florida Statutes.

Respondent - the person who is served with a petition requesting some legal action against him or her.

Scientific Paternity Testing - a medical test to determine who the father of a child is.

Service - the delivery of legal documents to a party. Service must be in accordance with Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.516.

Shared Parental Responsibility - an arrangement under which both parents have full parental rights and responsibilities for their child(ren), and the parents make major decisions affecting the welfare of the child(ren) jointly. Shared Parental Responsibility is presumptive in Florida.

Sole Parental Responsibility - a parenting arrangement under which the responsibility for the minor child(ren) is given to one parent by the court, with or without rights of time-sharing to the other parent.

State Disbursement Unit- the unit established and operated by the Title IV-D agency to provide one central address for the collection and disbursement of child support payments made in both Department of Revenue and non-Department of Revenue cases, in which the obligation is paid through an income deduction order.

Supervised Time-Sharing- a parenting arrangement under which time-sharing between a parent and his or her child(ren) is supervised by either a friend, family member, or a supervised visitation center.

Supplemental Petition - a petition that may be filed by either party after the judge has made a decision in a case and a final judgment or order has been entered. For example, a supplemental petition may be used to request that the court modify the previously entered final judgment or order.

Supportive Relationship-a relationship, defined in section 61.14(1)(b)1, Florida Statutes, existing between a spouse who receives alimony and a person with whom that spouse resides.

Time-Sharing Schedule – a timetable that must be included in the Parenting Plan that specifies the time, including overnights and holidays, that a minor child or children will spend with each parent. The time-sharing schedule shall either be developed and agreed to by the parents of a minor child or children and is approved by the court, or established by the court if the parents cannot agree, or if their agreed-upon schedule is not approved by the court.

Trial - the final hearing in a contested case.

Uncontested - any and all issues on which the parties are able to agree and which are part of a marital settlement agreement.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FLORIDA FAMILY LAW RULES OF PROCEDURE FORM 12.928, COVER SHEET FOR FAMILY COURT CASES (11/13)

When should this form be used?

The Cover Sheet for Family Court Cases and the information contained in it neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other documents as required by law. This form shall be filed by the petitioner/party opening or reopening a case for the use of the **clerk of the circuit court** for the purpose of reporting judicial workload data pursuant to Florida Statutes section 25.075.

This form should be typed or printed in black ink. The petitioner must **file** this cover sheet with the first pleading or motion filed to open or reopen a case in all domestic and juvenile cases.

What should I do next?

Follow these instructions for completing the form:

- I. Case Style. Enter the name of the court, the appropriate case number assigned at the time of filing of the original petition, the name of the judge assigned (if applicable), and the name (last, first, middle initial) of the petitioner(s) and respondent(s).
- II. Type of Action /Proceeding. Place a check beside the proceeding you are initiating. If you are simultaneously filing more than one type of proceeding against the same opposing party, such as a modification and an enforcement proceeding, complete a separate cover sheet for each action being filed.
 - (A) Initial Action/Petition
 - (B) Reopening Case. If you check "Reopening Case," indicate whether you are filing a modification or supplemental petition or an action for enforcement by placing a check beside the appropriate action/petition.
 1. Modification/Supplemental Petition
 2. Motion for Civil Contempt/ Enforcement
 3. Other – All reopening actions not involving modification/supplemental petitions or petition enforcement.
- III. Type of Case. Place a check beside the appropriate case. If the case fits more than one category, select the most definitive. Definitions of the categories are provided below.
 - (A) Simplified Dissolution of Marriage- petitions for the termination of marriage pursuant to Florida Family Law Rule of Procedure 12.105.
 - (B) Dissolution of Marriage - petitions for the termination of marriage pursuant to Chapter 61, Florida Statutes, other than simplified dissolution.

- (C) Domestic Violence - all matters relating to injunctions for protection against domestic violence pursuant to section 741.30, Florida Statutes.
- (D) Dating Violence - all matters relating to injunctions for protection against dating violence pursuant to section 784.046, Florida Statutes.
- (E) Repeat Violence - all matters relating to injunctions for protection against repeat violence pursuant to section 784.046, Florida Statutes.
- (F) Sexual Violence - all matters relating to injunctions for protection against sexual violence pursuant to section 784.046, Florida Statutes.
- (G) Stalking-all matters relating to injunctions for protection against stalking pursuant to section 784.0485, Florida Statutes
- (H) Support - IV-D - all matters relating to child or spousal support in which an application for assistance has been filed with the Department of Revenue, Child Support Enforcement under Title IV-D, Social Security Act, except for such matters relating to dissolution of marriage petitions (sections 409.2564, 409.2571, and 409.2597, Florida Statutes), paternity, or UIFSA.
- (I) Support-Non IV-D - all matters relating to child or spousal support in which an application for assistance has **not** been filed under Title IV-D, Social Security Act.
- (J) UIFSA- IV-D - all matters relating to Chapter 88, Florida Statutes, in which an application for assistance has been filed under Title IV-D, Social Security Act.
- (K) UIFSA - Non IV-D - all matters relating to Chapter 88, Florida Statutes, in which an application for assistance has **not** been filed under Title IV-D, Social Security Act.
- (L) Other Family Court - all matters involving time-sharing and/or parenting plans relating to minor child(ren), support unconnected with dissolution of marriage, annulment, delayed birth certificates pursuant to Florida Statutes section 382.0195, expedited affirmation of parental status pursuant to Florida Statutes section 742.16, termination of parental rights proceedings pursuant to Florida Statutes section 63.087, declaratory judgment actions related to premarital, marital, post-marital agreements, or other matters not included in the categories above.
- (M) Adoption Arising Out Of Chapter 63 - all matters relating to adoption pursuant to Chapter 63, Florida Statutes, excluding any matters arising out of Chapter 39, Florida Statutes.
- (N) Name Change - all matters relating to name change, pursuant to section 68.07, Florida Statutes.
- (O) Paternity/Disestablishment of Paternity – all matters relating to paternity pursuant to Chapter 742, Florida Statutes.
- (P) Juvenile Delinquency - all matters relating to juvenile delinquency pursuant to Chapter 985, Florida Statutes.
- (Q) Petition for Dependency - all matters relating to petitions for dependency.
- (R) Shelter Petition – all matters relating to shelter petitions pursuant to Chapter 39, Florida Statutes.
- (S) Termination of Parental Rights Arising Out Of Chapter 39 – all matters relating to termination of parental rights pursuant to Chapter 39, Florida Statutes.
- (T) Adoption Arising Out Of Chapter 39 – all matters relating to adoption pursuant to Chapter 39, Florida Statutes.
- (U) CINS/FINS – all matters relating to children in need of services (and families in need of services) pursuant to Chapter 984, Florida Statutes.

ATTORNEY OR PARTY SIGNATURE. Sign the Cover Sheet for Family Court Cases. Print legibly the name of the person signing the Cover Sheet for Family Court Cases. Attorneys must include a Florida Bar number. Insert the date the Cover Sheet for Family Court Cases is signed. Signature is a certification that filer has provided accurate information on the Cover Sheet for Family Court Cases.

Nonlawyer Remember, a person who is NOT an attorney is called a nonlawyer. If a nonlawyer helps you fill out these forms, that person must give you a copy of **Disclosure from Nonlawyer**, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Form 12.900(a), before he or she helps you. A nonlawyer helping you fill out these forms also **must** put his or her name, address, and telephone number on the bottom of the last page of every form he or she helps you complete.

Where can I look for more information?

Before proceeding, you should read “General Information for Self-Represented Litigants” found at the beginning of these forms. For further information, see Rule 12.100, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure.

COVER SHEET FOR FAMILY COURT CASES

I. Case Style

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
IN AND FOR OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

Case No.: _____

Judge: _____

Petitioner

and

Respondent

II. Type of Action/Proceeding. Place a check beside the proceeding you are initiating. If you are simultaneously filing more than one type of proceeding against the same opposing party, such as a modification and an enforcement proceeding, complete a separate cover sheet for each action being filed. **If you are reopening a case, choose one of the three options below it.**

- (A) Initial Action/Petition
- (B) Reopening Case
 - 1. Modification/Supplemental Petition
 - 2. Motion for Civil Contempt/Enforcement
 - 3. Other

III. Type of Case. If the case fits more than one type of case, select the most definitive.

- (A) Simplified Dissolution of Marriage
- (B) Dissolution of Marriage
- (C) Domestic Violence
- (D) Dating Violence
- (E) Repeat Violence
- (F) Sexual Violence
- (G) Stalking
- (H) Support IV-D (Department of Revenue, Child Support Enforcement)
- (I) Support Non-IV-D (**not** Department of Revenue, Child Support Enforcement)
- (J) UIFSA IV-D (Department of Revenue, Child Support Enforcement)
- (K) UIFSA Non-IV-D (**not** Department of Revenue, Child Support Enforcement)
- (L) Other Family Court
- (M) ~~xxx~~ Adoption Arising Out Of Chapter 63
- (N) Name Change
- (O) Paternity/Disestablishment of Paternity
- (P) Juvenile Delinquency
- (Q) Petition for Dependency
- (R) Shelter Petition

- (S) ____ Termination of Parental Rights Arising Out Of Chapter 39
- (T) ____ Adoption Arising Out Of Chapter 39
- (U) ____ CINS/FINS

IV. Rule of Judicial Administration 2.545(d) requires that a Notice of Related Cases Form, Family Law Form 12.900(h), be filed with the initial pleading/petition by the filing attorney or self-represented litigant in order to notify the court of related cases. Is Form 12.900(h) being filed with this Cover Sheet for Family Court Cases and initial pleading/petition?

- ____ No, to the best of my knowledge, no related cases exist.
- ____ Yes, all related cases are listed on Family Law Form 12.900(h).

ATTORNEY OR PARTY SIGNATURE

I CERTIFY that the information I have provided in this cover sheet is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature _____ FL Bar No.: _____
 Attorney or party (Bar number, if attorney)

 (Type or print name) (E-mail Address(es))

 Date

IF A NONLAWYER HELPED YOU FILL OUT THIS FORM, HE/SHE MUST FILL IN THE BLANKS BELOW: [fill in all blanks]

This form was prepared for the: {choose only one} () Petitioner () Respondent

This form was completed with the assistance of:

{name of individual} _____,
 {name of business} _____,
 {address} _____,
 {city} _____, {state} _____, {telephone number} _____.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FLORIDA FAMILY LAW RULES OF PROCEDURE FORM 12.900(h), NOTICE OF RELATED CASES (11/13)

When should this form be used?

Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.545(d) requires the **petitioner** in a family law case to file with the court a notice of related cases, if any. Your circuit may also require this form to be filed even if there are no related cases. A case is considered related if

- it involves the same parties, children, or issues and is pending when the family law case is filed; or
- it affects the court's jurisdiction to proceed; or
- an order in the related case may conflict with an order on the same issues in the new case; or
- an order in the new case may conflict with an order in the earlier case.

This form is used to provide the required notice to the court.

This form should be typed or printed in black ink. It must be **filed** with the **clerk of the circuit court** with the initial pleading in the family law case.

What should I do next?

A copy of the form must be served on the presiding judges, either the chief judge or the family law administrative judge, and all parties in the related cases. You should also keep a copy for your records. **Service** must be in accordance with Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.516.

Where can I look for more information?

Before proceeding, you should read "General Information for Self-Represented Litigants" found at the beginning of these forms. The words that are in "**bold underline**" in these instructions are defined there. For further information, see Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.545(d).

Special notes . . .

Remember, a person who is NOT an attorney is called a nonlawyer. If a nonlawyer helps you fill out these forms, that person must give you a copy of a **Disclosure from Nonlawyer**, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Form 12.900(a), before he or she helps you. A nonlawyer helping you fill out these forms **must** also put his or her name, address, and telephone number on the bottom of the last page of every form he or she helps you complete.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
IN AND FOR OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

Case No.: _____

Division: _____

Petitioner,
and

Respondent.

NOTICE OF RELATED CASES

1. Petitioner submits this Notice of Related Cases as required by Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.545(d). A related case may be an open or closed civil, criminal, guardianship, domestic violence, juvenile delinquency, juvenile dependency, or domestic relations case. A case is "related" to this family law case if it involves any of the same parties, children, or issues and it is pending at the time the party files a family case; if it affects the court's jurisdiction to proceed; if an order in the related case may conflict with an order on the same issues in the new case; or if an order in the new case may conflict with an order in the earlier litigation.

[check **one** only]

There are no related cases.

The following are the related cases (add additional pages if necessary):

Related Case No. 1

Case Name(s): _____

Petitioner _____

Respondent _____

Case No.: _____ Division: _____

Type of Proceeding: [check **all** that apply]

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dissolution of Marriage | <input type="checkbox"/> Paternity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Custody | <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child Support | <input type="checkbox"/> Modification/Enforcement/Contempt Proceedings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile Dependency | <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile Delinquency |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Termination of Parental Rights | <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic/Sexual/Dating/Repeat
Violence or Stalking Injunctions | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>{specify}</i> _____ |

State where case was decided or is pending: Florida Other: *{specify}* _____

Name of Court where case was decided or is pending (*for example, Fifth Circuit Court, Marion County, Florida*): _____

Title of last Court Order/Judgment (if any): _____ Date of

Court Order/Judgment (if any): _____

Relationship of cases check **all** that apply]:

- pending case involves same parties, children, or issues;
- may affect court's jurisdiction;
- order in related case may conflict with an order in this case;
- order in this case may conflict with previous order in related case.

Statement as to the relationship of the cases: _____

Related Case No. 2

Case Name(s): _____

Petitioner _____

Respondent _____

Case No.: _____ Division: _____

Type of Proceeding: [check **all** that apply]

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dissolution of Marriage | <input type="checkbox"/> Paternity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Custody | <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child Support | <input type="checkbox"/> Modification/Enforcement/Contempt Proceedings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile Dependency | <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile Delinquency |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Termination of Parental Rights | <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic/Sexual/Dating/Repeat
Violence or Stalking Injunctions | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other {specify} _____ |

State where case was decided or is pending: Florida Other: {specify} _____

Name of Court where case was decided or is pending (for example, Fifth Circuit Court, Marion County, Florida): _____

Title of last Court Order/Judgment (if any): _____ Date of Court Order/Judgment (if any): _____

Relationship of cases check all that apply]:

- pending case involves same parties, children, or issues;
- may affect court's jurisdiction;
- order in related case may conflict with an order in this case;
- order in this case may conflict with previous order in related case.

Statement as to the relationship of the cases: _____

Related Case No. 3

Case Name(s): _____

Petitioner _____

Respondent _____

Case No.: _____ Division: _____

Type of Proceeding: [check **all** that apply]

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dissolution of Marriage | <input type="checkbox"/> Paternity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Custody | <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child Support | <input type="checkbox"/> Modification/Enforcement/Contempt Proceedings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile Dependency | <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile Delinquency |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Termination of Parental Rights | <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic/Sexual/Dating/Repeat
Violence or Stalking Injunctions | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other {specify} _____ |

State where case was decided or is pending: Florida Other: {specify} _____

Name of Court where case was decided or is pending (for example, Fifth Circuit Court, Marion County, Florida): _____ Title of last Court Order/Judgment (if any): _____
Date of Court Order/Judgment (if any): _____

Relationship of cases check all that apply]:

- pending case involves same parties, children, or issues;
- may affect court's jurisdiction;
- order in related case may conflict with an order in this case;
- order in this case may conflict with previous order in related case.

Statement as to the relationship of the cases: _____

2. [check **one** only]

- I **do not** request coordination of litigation in any of the cases listed above.
- I **do** request coordination of the following cases: _____

3. [check **all** that apply]

- Assignment to one judge
- Coordination of existing cases
will conserve judicial resources and promote an efficient determination of these cases
because: _____.

4. The Petitioner acknowledges a continuing duty to inform the court of any cases in this or any other state that could affect the current proceeding.

Dated: _____

 Petitioner's Signature
 Printed Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City, State, Zip: _____
 Telephone Number: _____
 Fax Number: _____
 E-mail Address(es): _____

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I CERTIFY that I delivered a copy of this Notice of Related Cases to the _____ County Sheriff's Department or a certified process server for service on the Respondent, and [check all used] () e-mailed () mailed () hand delivered, a copy to {name} _____, who is the [check all that apply] () judge assigned to new case, () chief judge or family law administrative judge, () {name} _____ a party to the related case, () {name} _____, a party to the related case on {date} _____.

Signature of Petitioner/Attorney for Petitioner
Printed Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Telephone Number: _____
Fax Number: _____
E-mail Address(es): _____
Florida Bar Number: _____

IF A NONLAWYER HELPED YOU FILL OUT THIS FORM, HE/SHE MUST FILL IN THE BLANKS BELOW:

[fill in **all** blanks] This form was prepared for the {choose **only one**}: () Petitioner () Respondent.
This form was completed with the assistance of:
{name of individual} _____,
{name of business} _____,
{address} _____,
{city} _____ {state} _____, {telephone number} _____.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FLORIDA SUPREME COURT APPROVED FAMILY LAW FORM 12.981(c)(1), PETITION FOR ADOPTION OF ADULT BY STEPPARENT (11/15)

When should this form be used?

This form should be used when a stepparent is adopting his or her **spouse's adult** child. You must obtain the written consent of the adult child to be adopted, as well as the written consent of his or her spouse (if married).

This form should be typed or printed in black ink. The name to be given to the adoptee **after** the adoption should be used in the heading of the **petition**. The stepparent is the **petitioner**, because he or she is the one who is asking the court for legal action. You must have your signature witnessed by a **notary public** or **deputy clerk**.

After completing this form, you should **file** the original with the **clerk of the circuit court** in the county where either you or the adoptee live and keep a copy for your records.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING E-FILING

The Florida Rules of Judicial Administration now require that petitions, pleadings, and documents be filed electronically except in certain circumstances. **Self-represented litigants may file a petition or other pleadings electronically; however, they are not required to do so.** If you choose to file your petition, or other pleading or document electronically, you must do so in accordance with Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.525, and you must follow the procedures of the judicial circuit in which you file. **The rules and procedures should be carefully read and followed**

What should I do next?

For your case to proceed, you must have the written consent of the adoptee, and his or her spouse if married. Consent of the birth parent is not required, but written notice of the final hearing on the adoption must be provided to the parents, if any, or proof of service of process must be filed showing notice has been served on the parents. If you know where they live, you must use **personal service**. If you absolutely do not know where they live, you may use **constructive service**. For more information about personal and constructive service, you should refer the **General Instructions for Self-Represented Litigants** found at the beginning of these forms and the instructions to Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Forms 12.910(a) and 12.913(b) and Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.913(a). However, the law regarding constructive service is very complex and you may wish to consult an attorney regarding that issue.

When you have filed all of the required forms and met the requirements for consent as outlined above, you are ready to set a **hearing** on your petition. You should check with the clerk of court, **family law intake staff**, or **judicial assistant** to set a **final hearing**, and notify the other party(ies) using a **Notice of Hearing (General)**, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.923, or other appropriate notice of hearing form.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING E-SERVICE ELECTION

After the initial service of process of the petition or supplemental petition by the Sheriff or certified process server, the Florida Rules of Judicial Administration now require that all documents required or permitted to be served on the other party must be served by electronic mail (e-mail) except in certain circumstances. **You must strictly comply with the format requirements set forth in the Rules of Judicial Administration.** If you elect to participate in electronic service, which means serving or receiving pleadings by electronic mail (e-mail), or through the Florida Courts E-Filing Portal, you must review Florida Rules of Judicial Administration 2.516. You may find this rule at www.flcourts.org through the link to the Rules of Judicial Administration provided under either Family Law Forms Getting Started, or Rules of Court in the A-Z Topical Index.

SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS MAY SERVE DOCUMENTS BY E-MAIL; HOWEVER, THEY ARE NOT REQUIRED TO DO SO. If a self-represented litigant elects to serve and receive documents by e-mail, the procedures must always be followed once the initial election is made.

To serve and receive documents by e-mail, you must designate your e-mail addresses by using the **Designation of Current Mailing and E-mail Address**, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.915, and you must provide your e-mail address on each form on which your signature appears. Please **CAREFULLY** read the rules and instructions for: **Certificate of Service (General)**, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.914; **Designation of Current Mailing and E-mail Address**, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.915; and Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.516.

Where can I look for more information?

Before proceeding, you should read General Information for Self-Represented Litigants found at the beginning of these forms. See Chapter 63, Florida Statutes, and Florida Family Law Rule 12.200(a)(2) for further information.

Special notes...

With this petition you must file the following forms:

Stepparent Adoption: Consent of Adoptee, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.981(a)(2)

Instructions for Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.981(c)(1), Petition for Adoption of Adult by Stepparent (11/15)

Stepparent Adoption: Consent of Adult Adoptee's Spouse, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.981(c)(2), if the adoptee is married

THIS ADOPTION MAY AFFECT THE ADOPTEE'S INHERITANCE.

Remember, a person who is NOT an attorney is called a nonlawyer. If a nonlawyer helps you fill out these forms, that person must give you a copy of a **Disclosure from Nonlawyer**, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Form 12.900 (a), before he or she helps you. A nonlawyer helping you fill out these forms also **must** put his or her name, address, and telephone number on the bottom of the last page of every form he or she helps you complete.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
IN AND FOR OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

Case No.: _____

Division: _____

IN THE MATTER OF THE ADOPTION OF

{use name to be given to adult} Adoptee.

PETITION FOR ADOPTION OF ADULT BY STEPPARENT

Petitioner, {full legal name} _____, files this petition for adoption of the above-named adult, pursuant to Chapter 63, Florida Statutes, and states:

1. This is an action for adoption of an adult by the adult's stepparent, Petitioner.

2. I desire to adopt {adult's full legal name} _____,
who was born on {date} _____, at {city, county, and state} _____.

3. I desire to adopt the adult because: _____
_____.

4. I am _____ years old, and I have resided at {address} _____,
_____, Florida for _____ years.

5. The adoptee's name shall be: _____.

6. The adoptee's birth parents are:

Father's Name	Birth date
Address	
Mother's Name	Birth date
Address	

7. **Notice.** Notice to the birth parents was made by: _____.

8. **Consent.**

*{Indicate **all** that apply}*

a. _____ The consent of the adoptee is attached.

b. _____ The adoptee is married to *{full legal name of adoptee=s spouse}* _____, and the consent of the spouse is attached.

c. _____ The adoptee is not married.

9. Written notice of this final hearing was provided to the parents or proof of service of process showing notice has been served on the parents is attached.

WHEREFORE, I request that this Court enter a Final Judgment of Adoption of the Adult by Petitioner Stepparent and change the name of the adoptee.

I understand that I am swearing or affirming under oath to the truthfulness of the claims made in this petition and that the punishment for knowingly making a false statement includes fines and/or imprisonment.

Dated: _____

Signature of Petitioner
Printed Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Telephone Number: _____
Fax Number: _____
Designated E-mail Address(es): _____

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF OKALOOSA

Sworn to or affirmed and signed before me on _____ by _____.

NOTARY PUBLIC or DEPUTY CLERK

[Print, type, or stamp commissioned name of notary or clerk.]

_____ Personally known

_____ Produced identification
_____ Type of identification produced

IF A NONLAWYER HELPED YOU FILL OUT THIS FORM, HE/SHE MUST FILL IN THE BLANKS BELOW:

[fill in **all** blanks] This form was prepared for the petitioner.

This form was completed with the assistance of:

{name of individual} _____,
{name of business} _____,
{address} _____,
{city} _____, *{state}* _____, *{zip code}* _____, *{telephone number}* _____.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR FLORIDA SUPREME COURT APPROVED FAMILY LAW
FORM 12.981(a)(2), STEPPARENT ADOPTION: CONSENT OF ADOPTEE
(03/15)**

When should this form be used?

This form must be completed and signed by the person being adopted, the adoptee, if he or she is **over 12 years of age**, unless the court, in the best interest of the minor excuses the minor's consent. It must be signed in the presence of a **notary public** or **deputy clerk** and two witnesses other than the notary public or deputy clerk.

This form should be typed or printed in black ink. After completing this form, you should **file** the original with the **clerk of the circuit court** in the county where the **Joint Petition for Adoption by Stepparent**, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.981(b)(1) is filed and keep a copy for your records.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING E-FILING

The Florida Rules of Judicial Administration now require that all petitions, pleadings, and documents be filed electronically except in certain circumstances. **Self-represented litigants may file petitions or other pleadings or documents electronically; however, they are not required to do so.** If you choose to file your pleadings or other documents electronically, you must do so in accordance with Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.525, and you must follow the procedures of the judicial circuit in which you file. **The rules and procedures should be carefully read and followed.**

Special notes...

Remember, a person who is NOT an attorney is called a nonlawyer. If a nonlawyer helps you fill out these forms, that person must give you a copy of **Disclosure from Nonlawyer**, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Form 12.900 (a), before he or she helps you. A nonlawyer helping you fill out these forms also **must** put his or her name, address, and telephone number on the bottom of the last page of every form he or she helps you complete.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
IN AND FOR OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

Case No.: _____

Division: _____

IN THE MATTER OF THE ADOPTION OF

{use name to be given to the adoptee} Adoptee(s).

CONSENT OF ADOPTEE

1. I, {full legal name} _____, being over the age of 12, consent to my adoption by {name} _____, to be his/her legal child and heir at law.

2. I have been told of my right to choose a person who does not have an employment, professional, or personal relationship with the adoption entity or prospective adoptive parents to be present when this affidavit is executed and to sign it as a witness. The witness I selected is: {full legal name} _____.

3. **{Choose only one}**
() I consent to my name being legally changed to {specify} _____.
() I do **not** consent to a name change.

I understand that I am swearing or affirming under oath to the truthfulness of the claims made in this consent and that the punishment for knowingly making a false statement includes fines and/or imprisonment.

Dated: _____

Signature of Adoptee
Printed Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Telephone Number: _____
Fax Number: _____
Designated E-mail Address(es): _____

Signature of Witness
Printed Name: _____
Business Address: _____
Home Address: _____
Driver's License No.: _____
State ID Card No.: _____

Signature of Witness
Printed Name: _____
Business Address: _____
Home Address: _____
Driver's License No.: _____
State ID Card No.: _____

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF OKALOOSA

Sworn to or affirmed and signed before me on {date}_____.

NOTARY PUBLIC or DEPUTY CLERK

{Print, type, or stamp commissioned name of notary or
deputy clerk.}

____ Personally known
____ Produced identification
Type of identification produced _____

IF A NONLAWYER HELPED YOU FILL OUT THIS FORM, HE/SHE MUST FILL IN THE BLANKS BELOW:

[fill in **all** blanks] This form was prepared for the {choose only **one**} () adoptee () stepparent

This form was completed with the assistance of:

{name of individual} _____,
{name of business} _____,
{address} _____,
{city} _____, {state} _____, {zip code} _____ {telephone number} _____.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FLORIDA SUPREME COURT APPROVED FAMILY LAW FORM 12.981(c)(2), STEPPARENT ADOPTION: CONSENT OF ADULT ADOPTEE'S SPOUSE

When should this form be used?

This form must be completed by the spouse of an adult who is being adopted.

This form should be typed or printed in black ink. After completing this form, the spouse of the adoptee should sign the form before a notary public or deputy clerk. You should file the original with the clerk of the circuit court in the county where the petition for adoption of an adult was filed and keep a copy for your records.

Special notes...

Remember, a person who is NOT an attorney is called a nonlawyer. If a nonlawyer helps you fill out these forms, that person must give you a copy of **Disclosure from Nonlawyer**, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Form 12.900 (a), before he or she helps you. A nonlawyer helping you fill out these forms also **must** put his or her name, address, and telephone number on the bottom of the last page of every form he or she helps you complete.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
IN AND FOR OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

Case No.: _____

Division: _____

IN RE: THE ADOPTION OF

_____,
{use name to be given to adoptee} Adoptee(s).

STEPPARENT ADOPTION: CONSENT OF ADULT ADOPTEE'S SPOUSE

1. I, {full legal name} _____, am the () wife () husband of {full legal name} _____, who Petitioner, {full legal name} _____ wishes to adopt.
2. I consent to the adoption of my spouse by Petitioner.
3. I understand my right to choose a person who does not have an employment, professional, or personal relationship with the adoption entity or the prospective adoptive parents to be present when this affidavit is executed and to sign it as a witness. The witness I selected is: {full legal name} _____.

I understand that I am swearing or affirming under oath to the truthfulness of the claims made in this consent and that the punishment for knowingly making a false statement includes fines and/or imprisonment.

Dated: _____

Signature of Spouse
Printed Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Telephone Number: _____
Fax Number: _____
Designated E-Mail Address(es): _____

Signature of Witness
Printed Name: _____
Business Address: _____
Home Address: _____
Driver's License or Driver's License or State ID Card No.: _____
State ID Card No.: _____

Signature of Witness
Printed Name: _____
Business Address: _____
Home Address: _____

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF OKALOOSA

Sworn to or affirmed and signed before me on _____ by _____.

NOTARY PUBLIC or DEPUTY CLERK

[Print, type, or stamp commissioned name of
notary or deputy clerk.]

- ___ Personally known
- ___ Produced identification
- ___ Type of identification produced

IF A NONLAWYER HELPED YOU FILL OUT THIS FORM, HE/SHE MUST FILL IN THE BLANKS

BELOW: [N fill in **all** blanks]

I, *{full legal name and trade name of nonlawyer}* _____,
a nonlawyer, located at *{street}* _____, *{city}* _____,
{state} _____, *{phone}* _____, helped *{name}* _____,
who is the _____, fill out this form.

STEPPARENT ADOPTION: CONSENT OF BIRTH PARENT ADULT ADOPTION

When should this form be used?

This form is to be completed and signed by the birth parent who wishes to give up all rights related to the adult adoptee. For more information about consenting to adoption, you should refer to Chapter 63, Florida Statutes, and sections 63.062 – 63.082, Florida Statutes, in particular.

This form should be typed or printed in black ink. It must be signed in the present of a **notary public** or **deputy clerk** and two witnesses other than the notary or clerk.

After completing this form, you should hand deliver a copy or duplicate original to the parent giving consent and have them sign the original. Then you should file the original with the **clerk of the circuit court** and keep a copy for your records.

Special notes.....

Remember, a person who is NOT an attorney is called a nonlawyer. If a nonlawyer helps you fill out these forms, that person must give you a copy of Disclosure from Nonlawyer.

□ Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure form 12.900(a), before he or she helps you. A nonlawyer helping you fill out these forms also must put his or her name, address, and telephone number on the bottom of the last page of every form he or she helps you complete.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
IN AND FOR OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

Case No.: _____
Division: _____

IN THE MATTER OF THE ADOPTION OF

{use name to be given to adoptee} Adoptee(s).

**STEPPARENT ADOPTION: CONSENT OF ADULT ADOPTEE'S BIRTH
PARENT**

1. I, {full legal name} _____, am the {Choose only one}
am the birth ()mother ()father of:
{full legal name} _____
who is 18 or more years old, and who Petitioner, {full legal name} _____
wishes to adopt.
2. I consent to the adoption by Petitioner.
3. I waiver any further notice of this adoption proceeding.

I understand that I am swearing or affirming under oath to the truthfulness of the claims made in this consent and waiver and that the punishment for knowingly making a false statement includes fines and/or imprisonment.

Dated: _____

Signature of Parent: _____

Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Fax Number: _____

Designated E-mail Address(es): _____

Signature of Witness

Printed Name: _____

Business Address: _____

Home Address: _____

Signature of Witness

Printed Name: _____

Business Address: _____

Home Address: _____

Driver's License No.: _____

Driver's License No.: _____

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF OKALOOSA

Sworn to or affirmed and signed before me on *{date}* _____ .

NOTARY PUBLIC or DEPUTY CLERK

{Print, type, or stamp commissioned name of notary or deputy clerk.}

_____ Personally Known

_____ Produced Identification

Type of identification produced _____.

IF A NONLAWYER HELPED YOU FILL OUT THIS FORM, HE/SHE MUST FILL IN THE BLANKS BELOW:

[fill in **all** blanks] This form was prepared for the: *{choose only one}* () Mother () Father

This form was completed with the assistance of:

{name of individual} _____,

{name of business} _____,

{address} _____,

{city} _____, *{state}* _____, *{zip code}* _____ *{telephone number}* _____.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FLORIDA SUPREME COURT APPROVED FAMILY LAW FORM 12.915, DESIGNATION OF CURRENT MAILING AND E-MAIL ADDRESS (11/15)

When should this form be used?

This form should be used to inform the clerk and the other **party** of your current mailing and e-mail address(es) or **any change of address**. It is very important that the court and the other party in your case have your correct address.

A party not represented by an attorney may choose to designate e-mail address(es) for **service**. A primary and up to two secondary e-mail addresses can be designated. If you do so and the other party is represented by an attorney or has also designated e-mail address(es) for service, e-mail will be the **exclusive means of service**.

If there is any change in your mailing or e-mail address(es), you must complete a new form, file it with the clerk, and serve a copy on any other party or parties in your case.

What should I do next?

This form should be typed or printed in black ink. After completing this form, you should **file** the original with the **clerk of the circuit court** in the county where your case is filed and keep a copy for your records. A copy of this form must be served on any other party in your case. **Service** must be in accordance with Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.516.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING E-FILING

The Florida Rules of Judicial Administration now require that all petitions, pleadings, and documents be filed electronically except in certain circumstances. **Self-represented litigants may file petitions or other pleadings or documents electronically; however, they are not required to do so.** If you choose to file your pleadings or other documents electronically, you must do so in accordance with Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.525, and you must follow the procedures of the judicial circuit in which you file. **The rules and procedures should be carefully read and followed.**

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING E-SERVICE ELECTION

After the initial service of process of the petition or supplemental petition by the Sheriff or certified process server, the Florida Rules of Judicial Administration now require that all

documents required or permitted to be served on the other party must be served by electronic mail (e-mail) except in certain circumstances. **You must strictly comply with the format requirements set forth in the Rules of Judicial Administration.** If you elect to participate in electronic service, which means serving or receiving pleadings by electronic mail (e-mail), or through the Florida Courts E-Filing Portal, you must review Florida Rules of Judicial Administration 2.516. You may find this rule at www.flcourts.org through the link to the Rules of Judicial Administration provided under either Family Law Forms Getting Started, or Rules of Court in the A-Z Topical Index.

SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS MAY SERVE DOCUMENTS BY E-MAIL; HOWEVER, THEY ARE NOT REQUIRED TO DO SO. If a self-represented litigant elects to serve and receive documents by e-mail, the procedures must always be followed once the initial election is made.

To serve and receive documents by e-mail, you must designate your e-mail addresses by using the **Designation of Current Mailing and E-mail Address**, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.915, and you must provide your e-mail address on each form on which your signature appears. Please **CAREFULLY** read the rules and instructions for: **Certificate of Service (General)**, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.914; **Designation of Current Mailing and E-mail Address**, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.915; and Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.516.

Where can I look for more information?

Before proceeding, you should read General Information for Self-Represented Litigants found at the beginning of these forms. The words that are in **bold underline** in these instructions are defined there.

Special notes...

Remember, a person who is NOT an attorney is called a nonlawyer. If a nonlawyer helps you fill out these forms, that person must give you a copy of **Disclosure from Nonlawyer**, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Form 12.900(a), before he or she helps you. A nonlawyer helping you fill out these forms also **must** put his or her name, address, and telephone number on the bottom of the last page of every form he or she helps you complete.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
IN AND FOR OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

Case No.: _____

Division: _____

IN THE MATTER OF THE ADOPTION OF:

{use name to be given to the adoptee} Adoptee

DESIGNATION OF CURRENT MAILING AND E-MAIL ADDRESS

I, {full legal name} _____, being sworn, certify that
my current mailing address is: {Street} _____
{City} _____, {State} _____ {Zip} _____
{Telephone No.} _____ {Fax No.} _____.

I designate as my current e-mail address(es): _____

I understand that I must keep the clerk's office and the opposing party or parties notified of my current mailing and e-mail address(es) and that all future papers in this lawsuit will be served at the address(es) on record at the clerk's office.

I certify that a copy of this document was () e-mailed () mailed () faxed
() hand-delivered to the person(s) listed below on {date} _____.

Other party or his/her attorney:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Fax Number: _____

Designated E-mail Address(es): _____

Dated: _____

Signature of Party

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF OKALOOSA

Sworn to or affirmed and signed before me on _____ by _____.

NOTARY PUBLIC or DEPUTY CLERK

*[Print, type, or stamp commissioned name of notary
or clerk.]*

_____ Personally known
_____ Produced identification
_____ Type of identification produced _____

**IF A NONLAWYER HELPED YOU FILL OUT THIS FORM, HE/SHE MUST FILL IN THE BLANKS
BELOW:**

[fill in **all** blanks] This form was prepared for the: *{choose only one}* () Petitioner ()
Respondent

This form was completed with the assistance of:

{name of individual} _____,

{name of business} _____,

{street} _____,

{city} _____, *{state}* _____, *{zipcode}* _____, *{telephone number}* _____.

FORM 1.998. FINAL DISPOSITION FORM

This form shall be filed by the prevailing party for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of reporting judicial workload data pursuant to Florida Statutes section 25.075.

I. CASE STYLE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

Plaintiff/Petitioner

Case No. _____

Judge: _____

vs.

Defendant/Respondent

II. MEANS OF FINAL DISPOSITION (Place an "x" in one box for major category and one subcategory, if applicable, only)

- Dismissed Before Hearing
 - Dismissed Pursuant to Settlement – Before Hearing
 - Dismissed Pursuant to Mediated Settlement – Before Hearing
 - Other - Before Hearing
- Dismissed After Hearing
 - Dismissed Pursuant to Settlement – After Hearing
 - Dismissed Pursuant to Mediated Settlement – After Hearing
 - Other After Hearing – After Hearing
- Disposed by Default
- Disposed by Judge
- Disposed by Non-jury Trial
- Disposed by Jury Trial
- Other

DATE: _____

SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY FOR PREVAILING PARTY

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FLORIDA FAMILY LAW RULES OF PROCEDURE FORM 12.900(a), DISCLOSURE FROM NONLAWYER (11/12)

When should this form be used?

This form must be used when anyone who is **not** a lawyer in good standing with The Florida Bar helps you complete any Florida Family Law Form. Attorneys who are licensed to practice in other states but not Florida, or who have been disbarred or suspended from the practice of law in Florida, are nonlawyers for the purposes of the Florida Family Law Forms and instructions.

The nonlawyer must complete this form and both of you are to sign it before the nonlawyer assists you in completing any Family Law Form.

In addition, on any other form with which a nonlawyer helps you, the nonlawyer shall complete the nonlawyer section located at the bottom of the form unless otherwise specified in the instructions to the form. This is to protect you and be sure that you are informed in advance of the nonlawyer's limitations.

What should I do next?

A copy of this disclosure, signed by both the nonlawyer and the person, must be given to the person to retain and the nonlawyer must keep a copy in the person's file. The nonlawyer shall also keep copies for at least 6 years of all forms given to the person being assisted.

Special Notes

This disclosure form does **NOT** act as or constitute a waiver, disclaimer, or limitation of liability.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

Case No.: _____

Division: _____

Petitioner,
and

Respondent.

DISCLOSURE FROM NONLAWYER

{Name} _____ told me that he/she is a nonlawyer and may not give legal advice, cannot tell me what my rights or remedies are, cannot tell me how to testify in court, and cannot represent me in court.

Rule 10-2.1(b) of the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar defines a paralegal as a person who works under the supervision of a member of The Florida Bar and who performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a member of The Florida Bar is responsible. Only persons who meet the definition may call themselves paralegals. {Name} _____, informed me that he/she is not a paralegal as defined by the rule and cannot call himself/herself a paralegal.

{Name} _____, told me that he/she may only type the factual information provided by me in writing into the blanks on the form. Except for typing, {name} _____, may not tell me what to put in the form and may not complete the form for me. However, if using a form approved by the Supreme Court of Florida, {name} _____, may ask me factual questions to fill in the blanks on the form and may also tell me how to file the form.

[choose **one** only]

____ I can read English.

____ I cannot read English, but this disclosure was read to me [fill in **both** blanks] by {name} _____ in {language} _____, which I understand.

Dated: _____

Signature of Party

Signature of **NONLAWYER**

Printed Name: _____

Name of Business: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____