

## **DIVORCE INFORMATION SHEET**

If you are having marital problems, there are a number of different legal forms of action to consider. Some of these may result in ending your marriage and others do not. Please read this information carefully so that you can discuss your options with a lawyer.

### **I. DIVORCE**

A divorce is a legal proceeding which ends a marriage. In order to get a divorce, there must be sufficient legal grounds for the divorce, and you must have lived in Ohio for at least the last six months and in the county for the last 90 days. The court can issue orders protecting you and the marital property. Violation of these orders is punishable by contempt in Domestic Relations Court.

The Court can:

- a. award spousal support to either party;
- b. divide your belongings;
- c. decide the issues of custody, support and visitation;
- d. decide who will pay the bills; and
- e. issue orders protecting you from harm.

### **II. DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE**

The purpose of the dissolution proceeding is to cut the length and cost of a divorce. You and your spouse must come to a complete agreement on how to divide your property, support, child custody, and other duties. (A dissolution can also be filed if there are no children.) The parties file a joint petition asking the court to end the marriage and adopt the separation agreement signed by the parties. The dissolution of marriage can only be granted if both parties appear in court at a hearing, which is scheduled 30 to 90 days after the petition is filed with the court. This form of action is best if both parties are in agreement and can communicate well enough with one another that they can settle any differences regarding the children or property.

### **III. LEGAL SEPARATION**

A legal separation is a means of asking the court for the same kinds of orders you can be granted in a divorce action. This form of legal action does not require that you live in Ohio for six months first; just in the county for 90 days. It is a way of getting court orders without ending your marriage. For this reason, it is often used by those who do not want to end the marriage for religious or other reasons. However, proceeding with this action results in a permanent order, so it should not be used if reconciliation within a short time is possible. Violation of orders issued in the proceeding is punishable by contempt in Domestic Relations Court.

#### IV. CIVIL PROTECTION ORDER

The purpose of a civil protection order (which you can get whether or not you decide to end the marriage) is to protect you and your family from your abusive spouse. Under the order, the court may tell your spouse to stop abusing you and the family members, evict your spouse from the household, give you temporary custody of the children, give you child and/or spousal support, and require you and/or your spouse to get counseling. The order lasts for the amount of time stated, which can be for up to five years.

The police can help you enforce this order. Violation of one of these orders can result in a fourth degree misdemeanor charge in criminal court. If found guilty, the person could be fined up to \$500, sentenced up to 30 days in jail, or both. The order can also be enforced in contempt proceedings in Domestic Relations Court.

**There are many services in Medina County available to help people in your situation. These include counseling and those which provide emergency financial support. For referral, call any of the following:**

Info Link (list of agencies) .....	723-2434; 273-6552; 334-0276
Battered Women's Shelter (office) .....	723-9610; 336-6657 or 225-7100, ext. 9610
Medina City Prosecutor .....	725-8861
Brunswick City Prosecutor .....	225-9144
Wadsworth City Prosecutor .....	335-1521
Medina Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service .....	725-9794; 336-6657; 225-7100
Dept. of Job & Family Services (ADC, GA, Food Stamps) ....	722-9283; 336-5200; 225-7100
Dept. of Job & Family Services (Children's Services Bureau and Adult Protective Services) .....	722-9350; 225-7100, ext. 9350
Alternative Paths (counseling) .....	725-9195; 336-6657 or 225-7100, ext. 9195
Northland Counseling .....	725-9191; 225-7100, ext. 9191
Catholic Social Services (counseling) .....	723-9615; 336-6657 or 225-7100, ext. 9615
Salvation Army .....	722-6488; 335-2327; 273-9176
Community Action .....	723-2229
Community Services .....	725-4690
MMHA (low-income housing) .....	725-7531; 336-3606