

Keeping Legal Fees Down During a Divorce

According to Forbes, the average price for divorce proceedings in California is \$15,000 to \$30,000 and takes approximately 15 months to complete. A more complex divorce can range from \$50,000 to over \$100,000 and take 24 to 36 months to complete.

At Buncher Family Law, we see everything from the average marital dissolution to the most complicated cases. Our goal is to look at our client's goals and then budget and develop the best strategy for their individual case.

There are many factors that can impact the cost of divorce. Here are a few questions to consider:

- Is there a high level of conflict or animosity between the parties?
- Are there children involved?
- How many issues need to be resolved? How complex are the issues?
- Is there a business or multiple businesses owned that must be vetted?
- How many investments are there and how are they set up?
- Are outside experts needed in addition to your attorney to resolve your case?
- Can an agreement or settlement be reached or will you need to go to trial?
- Is there intentional delay by one party?
- Does one party have a substance abuse issue?
- How backed up is the court's calendar?



As you embark on the journey to resolve your family law matters here are some tips that will assist in keeping costs down.

Effective Communication

- We often suggest clients keep a note pad in a convenient spot in order to write down questions throughout the day and week. Unless there is an immediate urgency, collect all of your questions over a week and send one email or set up one call to address all of the concerns at once rather than sending frequent emails or requesting multiple phone calls, which can be quite costly.



Keeping Legal Fees Down During a Divorce

- Communicate with the firm's paralegal and legal assistants, when possible, as their hourly rate is much lower than the attorney's rate.

Paperwork and the Discovery Process

Compile and make copies of all documents related to your assets, debts, income and expenses. The most common documents include tax returns, bank account statements, retirement accounts, life insurance policies, credit card statements and paycheck stubs. It can be different for every couple. Be thorough and gather all of the information to send to your attorney all at once. Piece mailing everything over weeks or months can cause errors and possibly out of date information.

- Get back to your attorney or attorney's paralegal in a timely manner. The longer it takes you to respond or to obtain necessary information, the more time it will take to effectively review and analyze your documents.

Emotional versus Tactical Decisions

- Remember to weigh your goals with the funds available to proceed with your case. The last thing you want to do is get halfway through the process and get stuck due to a lack of funds to finish because of aggressive tactics taken by either side.
- Understand that attorneys cannot control opposing

counsel or the other party in your dissolution. Sometimes their decisions or actions change the course of action or the plan and this can cause your case to be more costly.

- Pay attention to your billing statements. Be sure to carefully review and discuss any questions you might have with your attorney's office. There should be no charge to discuss invoicing questions.

Listen to your Attorney's advice.

- Family law can be emotional and often the results do not render what most would consider justice. Almost all marital dissolutions experience compromise to successfully complete the process.
- The court system is governed by specific rules. It is important to rely on the expertise of your attorney who understands how to work within the system.
- Fair and family law do not necessarily go hand-in-hand in divorce situations. Your law firm's job is to work within the constraints of the law and doing so takes finesse. There are many factors in dissolutions in which your attorney has little or no control. These include actions or decisions by the judge, opposing counsel, or delays from one of the divorcing spouses. Your lawyer will work with your best interests in mind, always, to the best of their availability with whatever issues arise.