INSTRUCTIONS

Protecting Your Address: If the other party has committed or threatened to commit physical violence against you or your children, and you do not want the other party to know your address: 1) use a post office box on all your court forms or 2) see Rule 7, Arizona Rules of Family Law Procedure. See the Self-Help Center packet *Order of Protection* if you need a court to order the other party to stay away from you.

STEP 1: DETERMINE IF THE CHILDREN'S PATERNITY HAS BEEN LEGALLY ESTABLISHED

Paternity has been legally established if either of the following is true.

1. A court order names Father as the children's father.
2. Mother and Father signed an Acknowledgment of Paternity through the Hospital Paternity Program or other means provided by law after July 18, 1996, and a birth certificate listing Father as the father was issued as a result.

STEP 2: READ THE FAMILY COURT SERVICES INFORMATION SHEET

STEP 3: DECIDE ON CUSTODY AND PARENTING TIME

You will enter this information on the Petition later in these instructions.

Joint Legal Custody: Both parents must want joint custody and agree on all major issues regarding parenting time, education, religion, and medical decisions, including, but not limited to:

- Enrollment or termination of enrollment in a particular school or school program.
- Advancing or holding back in school.
- Authorizing sex education for the child.
- Arranging or permitting regularly occurring extracurricular activities for the child.
- Beginning or ending the regular practice of a religion.
- Arranging for child care providers for long term and/or after school child care.
- Selecting non-emergency medical, dental, and/or psychological services.
- Authorizing the child's driver's license.
- Authorizing the purchase of an automobile for the child.
- Authorizing employment for the child.
- Authorizing the child's marriage.
- Authorizing the child's enlistment into the Armed Forces.
- Passport application for the child.
- Authorizing the child's giving blood.

The court will not order joint custody if the court determines there has been significant domestic violence. Joint legal custody does not necessarily mean equal parenting time and does not change either parent's duty to pay child support.

Sole Legal Custody: The parent with sole custody will make the major decisions in the children's lives. Parents still must exchange health care, school, and other important information

about the children, and the parent without sole custody can usually get the information directly from the medical providers and schools.

Parenting Time (Visitation): For both joint and sole custody, come up with a schedule for the child to spend time with the other parent. The guide called *Planning for Parenting Time* can help you find a schedule that's right for your family. You can find the guide at the Law Library, or online at http://tinyurl.com/planningforparentingtime. If unsupervised parenting time would seriously endanger the children, you may request supervised or no parenting time for the other parent. There must be good reasons for these extreme restrictions, such as sexual crimes, child abuse or domestic violence, persistent drug or alcohol abuse, or serious mental or physical problems that make parenting risky or impossible. If you request supervised parenting time, decide who will supervise and who will pay for the supervision if payment is necessary.

STEP 4: IF YOU WANT JOINT CUSTODY:
FILL OUT THE JOINT CUSTODY AGREEMENT

STEP 5: FILL OUT THE CHILD SUPPORT INFORMATION FORM

Fill in all the blanks to the best of your knowledge.

STEP 6: FILL OUT THE DOMESTIC RELATIONS COVER SHEET

You are the Petitioner. The other parent is the Respondent. Fill in as much information as you know.

STEP 7: FILL OUT THE FOLLOWING FORMS

[ ] Confidential Sensitive Data Form
[ ] Petition For Child Custody, Parenting Time, And Child Support
[ ] Summons

STEP 8: SCHEDULE A PRE-FILING MEETING

YOU MUST READ AND FOLLOW ALL OF THE INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE THIS STEP BEFORE YOU SCHEDULE YOUR PRE-FILING MEETING.

At this free court service, an attorney will meet with you one-on-one to do the following:

- Make sure you have everything you need to start your case
- Explain what steps you need to take after you start your case
- Help you prepare child support forms, if you have children

Call 928-773-4952 to schedule your Pre-Filing Meeting.

STEP 9: GO TO THE PRE-FILING MEETING

Bring the following, completed according to the instructions:

[ ] Joint Custody Agreement, if applicable
[ ] Domestic Relations Cover Sheet
[ ] Confidential Sensitive Data Form
[ ] Petition for Child Custody, Parenting Time, and Child Support with the following attached:
  [ ] A copy of each child's birth certificate
  And the following attached if applicable:
  [ ] A copy of the paternity order
  [ ] A copy of the Acknowledgment of Paternity from the hospital
  [ ] A copy of the genetic test results showing at least a 95% probability of paternity
  [ ] A copy of the billing statements for the cost of pregnancy, childbirth, and the children's past medical expenses
[ ] Summons
[ ] Child Support Information Form

Getting Copies of Birth Certificates: Usually you can get copies of birth certificates from the Department of Vital Records in the state where the children were born. The Arizona Office of Vital Records is at 888-816-5907 or P.O. Box 3887, Phoenix, AZ 85030. Contact information for other states' Vital Records is online at www.azdhs.gov/vitalrcd/states.htm.

Respondent cannot attend the Meeting with you.

If you want to start your case immediately after your Pre-Filing Meeting, also bring the following:

[ ] Money to make copies
[ ] The filing fee listed below beside your case type: (The Clerk's Office accepts cash, money orders, and cashier's checks payable to "Clerk of Superior Court". If you can't afford the fee, see the Self-Help Center packet *Paying a Filing Fee in Installments*.)
  Child Custody, paternity has not been legally established yet: $261
  Child Custody, paternity has already been legally established: $196