

# **PROVE-UP CHECKLISTS FOR THE DOMESTIC RELATIONS DIVISION OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY**

A prove-up is when at least the Petitioner, and sometimes the Respondent, appears in front of a judge to finalize their divorce case. A prove-up is the final step in a divorce case and is mandatory in Illinois. The party or parties who will be attending the prove-up in their case must have certain documents in order to complete their divorce case.

The following checklists are designed to help you prepare for prove-up in the Domestic Relations Division of the Circuit Court of Cook County. *Please note that not all judges require every document listed on the checklist, and some judges may require additional documents that you will be asked to complete in the courtroom the day of your prove-up.* The checklist that you use depends on which type of case you have, so please select only one of the checklist options on the following pages.

## **Special Considerations for Parties with Minor Children**

If you and your spouse have minor children together, then you will both be required to attend a parenting class prior to your prove-up. The parenting class can either be done in-person (FOCUS on Children) or online (Children in Between Online). Please note that each parenting class requires that the parties pay a fee to attend unless the parties have an approved fee waiver. Once the parties have attended the class, then they will receive a Certificate of Completion, which they will either file or bring to court with them the day of their prove-up.

## **Special Considerations for Parties with Retirement Benefits**

If you and/or your spouse have any retirement benefits (pension, 401k, etc.) then those benefits may be divided by your agreement or by order of the judge during your divorce. Please note that if there are retirement benefits that will be divided between the parties during the divorce, then those parties may have to prepare additional documentation, either a Qualified Domestic Relations Order (QDRO) for private retirement benefits or a Qualified Illinois Domestic Relations Order (QILDRO) for government retirement benefits. One or both of the parties may have to meet with an attorney in order to prepare the additional documentation either before or after their divorce is finalized. If the additional documentation has already been drafted, then it can be entered by the judge at the time of prove-up. However, if the additional documentation has not yet been prepared, then it can be entered by the judge at a later date.

## **DO YOU NEED HELP?**

If you find yourself in need of assistance when preparing for your prove-up, please visit the Illinois JusticeCorps volunteers (in blue shirts) stationed at the Resource Center for People without Lawyers – Room CL-16 in the Concourse Level of the Richard J. Daley Center (next to the Starbucks). If you are in need of assistance from home, helpful information and some court forms are also available on Illinois Legal Aid Online.

## **OPTION 1: Parties in Agreement**

*Use this checklist if you and your spouse are in agreement about all issues in the case.*

NAME OF DOCUMENT	WHERE CAN I FIND IT?
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Petition for Dissolution of Marriage</u> (copy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You likely already have a copy.</li> <li>Available in the Domestic Relations clerks' office if you no longer have a copy.**</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Affidavit of Service</u> (copy) <i>Unless service has been waived because both parties are appearing in the case.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If service was done by a Cook County sheriff, then available in the Domestic Relations clerks' office.**</li> <li>If service was done by a sheriff from another county or by a Special Process Server, then you likely have it already or should obtain it from them.**</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Appearance</u> of Respondent (copy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You likely already have a copy.</li> <li>Available in your case file if you no longer have a copy.**</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Certificate and Agreement by Counsel</u> <u>(Stipulation to Hear Uncontested Cause)</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available in the Domestic Relations clerks' office ** or online at <a href="http://cookcountyclerkofcourt.org">cookcountyclerkofcourt.org</a>.</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Notice of Motion/Certificate of Service</u> <i>Unless both parties will be at prove-up.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Order on Prove-Up</u> (28 Day Order)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available in the courtroom the day of your prove-up or online at <a href="http://cookcountyclerkofcourt.org">cookcountyclerkofcourt.org</a>.</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Uniform Prove-Up Sheet</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Order for Free Transcript</u> <i>Only if you have an approved fee waiver.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available in the courtroom the day of your prove-up or online at <a href="http://cookcountycourt.org">cookcountycourt.org</a>.</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Court Reporter Information Sheet</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Proposed Judgment</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available in the Cook County Law Library or online at <a href="http://cookcountycourt.org">cookcountycourt.org</a>.*</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Marital Settlement Agreement</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only if you and your spouse have drafted an agreement that includes additional information not included in the Proposed Judgment in advance of your prove-up.*</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Allocation Judgment of Parental Responsibilities &amp; Parenting Plan</u> <i>Only if there are minor children.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available online at <a href="http://cookcountycourt.org">cookcountycourt.org</a>.*</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Uniform Order of Support</u> <i>Only if there are minor children.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available online at <a href="http://cookcountyclerkofcourt.org">cookcountyclerkofcourt.org</a>.</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Parenting Class (FOCUS or CIBO) Certificate of Completion</u> <i>Only if there are minor children.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You likely already have a copy at home.</li> <li>Available from Parenting Class provider – in-person (FOCUS) or online (CIBO) if you no longer have a copy.**</li> </ul>

**OPTION 2: Service through Summons**  
**(Default with Personal Jurisdiction)**

\*Helpful information and forms may also be available on Illinois Legal Aid Online.

\*\*Please note that there may be an additional charge to obtaining a copy of this document.

Use this checklist if your spouse (or someone who resides with them) has been served but has **not** filed an Answer and/or Appearance in the case.

NAME OF DOCUMENT	WHERE CAN I FIND IT?
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Petition for Dissolution of Marriage</u> (copy) <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Affidavit as to Military Service</u> (copy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You likely already have a copy.</li> <li>Available in the Domestic Relations clerks' office if you no longer have a copy.**</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Affidavit of Service</u> (copy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If service was done by a Cook County sheriff, then available in the Domestic Relations clerks' office.**</li> <li>If service was done by a sheriff from another county or by a Special Process Server, then you likely have it already or should obtain it from them.**</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Certificate and Motion for Default</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Notice of Motion/Certificate of Service</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Certificate and Agreement by Counsel (Stipulation to Hear Uncontested Cause)</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available in the Domestic Relations clerks' office ** or online at <a href="http://cookcountyclerkofcourt.org">cookcountyclerkofcourt.org</a>.</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Notice of Motion/Certificate of Service</u> <i>Unless both parties will be at prove-up.</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Order for Free Transcript</u> <i>Only if you have an approved fee waiver.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available in the courtroom the day of your prove-up or online at <a href="http://cookcountycourt.org">cookcountycourt.org</a>.</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Court Reporter Information Sheet</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Proposed Judgment</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available in the Cook County Law Library or online at <a href="http://cookcountycourt.org">cookcountycourt.org</a>.*</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Allocation Judgment of Parental Responsibilities &amp; Parenting Plan</u> <i>Only if there are minor children.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available online at <a href="http://cookcountycourt.org">cookcountycourt.org</a>.*</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Uniform Order of Support</u> <i>Only if there are minor children.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available online at <a href="http://cookcountyclerkofcourt.org">cookcountyclerkofcourt.org</a>.</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Parenting Class (FOCUS or CIBO) Certificate of Completion</u> <i>Only if there are minor children.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You likely already have a copy.</li> <li>Available from Parenting Class provider – in-person (FOCUS) or online (CIBO) if you no longer have a copy.**</li> </ul>

**OPTION 3: Service by Publication**  
**(Default without Personal Jurisdiction)**

\*Helpful information and forms may also be available on Illinois Legal Aid Online.

\*\*Please note that there may be an additional charge to obtaining a copy of this document.

Use this checklist if your spouse's whereabouts were unknown  
and you completed service by publication.

NAME OF DOCUMENT	WHERE CAN I FIND IT?
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Petition for Dissolution of Marriage</u> (copy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You likely already have a copy.</li> <li>Available in the Domestic Relations clerks' office if you no longer have a copy.**</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Affidavit as to Military Service</u> (copy)	
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Copy of Publication</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You likely already have a copy.</li> <li>Available at the Chicago Daily Law Bulletin or the local newspaper that you used for service by publication if you no longer have a copy.**</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Certificate and Motion for Default</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available in the Domestic Relations clerks' office** or online at <a href="http://cookcountyclerkofcourt.org">cookcountyclerkofcourt.org</a>.</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Notice of Motion/Certificate of Service</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Proposed Judgment</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available in the Cook County Law Library or online at <a href="http://cookcountycourt.org">cookcountycourt.org</a>.*</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Order on Prove-Up</u> (28 Day Order)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available in the courtroom the day of your prove-up or online at <a href="http://cookcountyclerkofcourt.org">cookcountyclerkofcourt.org</a>.</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Uniform Prove-Up Sheet</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Order for Free Transcript</u> <i>Only if you have an approved fee waiver.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available in the courtroom the day of your prove-up or online at <a href="http://cookcountycourt.org">cookcountycourt.org</a>.</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Court Reporter Information Sheet</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Parenting Class (FOCUS or CIBO) Certificate of Completion</u> <i>Only if there are minor children.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You likely already have a copy.</li> <li>Available from Parenting Class provider – in-person (FOCUS) or online (CIBO) if you no longer have a copy.**</li> </ul>

\*Helpful information and forms may also be available on Illinois Legal Aid Online.

\*\*Please note that there may be an additional charge to obtaining a copy of this document.