

**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
FAMILY COURT  
Domestic Relations Branch**

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT YOUR NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
STREET ADDRESS

\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY, STATE AND ZIP CODE

☐ **SUBSTITUTE ADDRESS:** CHECK BOX IF YOU  
HAVE WRITTEN SOMEONE ELSE'S ADDRESS BECAUSE  
YOU FEAR HARASSMENT OR HARM.

\_\_\_\_\_ DRB \_\_\_\_\_

JUDGE: \_\_\_\_\_

PLAINTIFF,

v.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT OTHER PARTY'S NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
STREET ADDRESS

\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY, STATE AND ZIP CODE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT OTHER PARTY'S NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
STREET ADDRESS

\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY, STATE AND ZIP CODE

DEFENDANT.

DEFENDANT #2.

**COMPLAINT FOR CUSTODY and/or VISITATION  
Action Involving Child Support    ☐ yes    ☐ no**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am the Plaintiff in this case.  
PRINT YOUR NAME

**1. The child(ren) in this case:**

Child's Full Name	Date of Birth	Gender

**2. My relationship to the child(ren) in this case:** [CHECK ONE]

I am the biological or adoptive parent.

I am the caretaker. My relationship to the child(ren) is: \_\_\_\_\_  
(e.g. grandparent, brother, aunt, etc.).

Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

**3. The other party's relationship to the child(ren) in this case:** [CHECK ONE]

The other party is the biological or adoptive parent.

The other party is the caretaker. His/Her relationship to the child(ren) is  
\_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. grandparent, brother, aunt, etc.)

Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

**4. This Court is the proper place to decide issues of child custody because:** [CHECK ONE]

**Home State.** The District of Columbia is the child(ren)'s "home state" because the child(ren) currently live(s) in the District of Columbia AND has/have lived in the District of Columbia for at least six months immediately before filing this Complaint.

**Home State.** The child(ren) do(es) not currently live in the District of Columbia, BUT the District of Columbia was the "home state" AND the child(ren) has/have been away from the District of Columbia for less than six months before the filing of this Complaint AND a parent or a person acting as a parent continues to live in the District of Columbia.

**Significant Connections.** There is no "home state" or the "home state" has declined to exercise jurisdiction on the grounds that the District of Columbia is the more appropriate forum AND the child(ren) and at least one parent or person acting as a parent have a significant connection with the District of Columbia AND there is substantial evidence available in the District of Columbia concerning the child(ren)'s care, protection, training and personal relationships.

**More Appropriate Court.** All courts with jurisdiction have declined to exercise their jurisdiction in favor of the District of Columbia because this is the more appropriate Court to determine custody of the child(ren).

**No Other Court.** There is no other court with jurisdiction to determine custody of the child(ren).

**Temporary Emergency Jurisdiction.** The District of Columbia is not the “home state” *BUT* the child(ren) is/are present in the District of Columbia *AND* the child(ren) has/have been abandoned *OR* it is necessary in an emergency to protect the child(ren) because the child(ren), or a sibling or parent of the child(ren), is/are subjected to or threatened with mistreatment or abuse.

**5. The minor child(ren) currently live(s) at the following address(es) with the following persons:**

Child(ren)’s Name(s)	Current Address	Since What Date	Child(ren) Live(s) With (names)

**6. Over the last five years, the child(ren) have lived in the following places, with the following persons:**

Child(ren)’s Name(s)	Previous Address	During What Dates	Child(ren) Lived With (name and current address)

**7. The following people, who are not parties to this case, have physical custody of, or claim rights of legal or physical custody of, or visitation with the child(ren):**

Name(s)	Current Address(es)

**8. I state the following about other cases involving the child(ren):** [CHECK ONE]

There are no other cases concerning custody of, or visitation with, the child(ren), and there are no other cases that could affect this proceeding.

The following cases concern custody of, or visitation with, the child(ren), or could affect this proceeding (e.g. divorce, child support, domestic violence, neglect, etc.)

<u>COURT</u>	<u>CASE NO.</u>	<u>CASE TYPE</u>	<u>DATE OF DETERMINATION</u>

**9. I was      I was not a party or witness or participant of any kind in any other proceeding concerning the custody of or visitation with the child(ren).**

**10. Legal Custody.** I am a fit and proper person to have legal custody of the minor child(ren) and make decisions about the well-being of the minor child(ren), and I believe that it is in the best interest of the minor child(ren) that I be awarded: [CHECK ONE]

joint legal custody

sole legal custody

**11. Physical Custody.** I am a fit and proper person to have physical custody of the minor child(ren) and to have responsibility and control of the minor child(ren), and I believe that it is in the best interest of the minor child(ren) that I be awarded: [CHECK ONE]

joint physical custody

sole physical custody

visitation

**12. The presumption in favor of joint custody does not apply in *this* case because:**  
[CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

There has been domestic violence.

There has been child abuse.

There has been child neglect.

There has been parental kidnapping.

*AND/OR*

Joint custody is not in the best interest of the child(ren).

**13. I state the following about visitation:** [CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

We can work out a visitation schedule on our own.

We need a specific schedule of visitation.

Any visitation should be supervised because:

The other party should not receive any visitation because:

**14. I state the following about child support:** [CHECK ONE]

I am ☐ I am not seeking child support on behalf of the child(ren).

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15. I do ☐ / do *not* ☐ know of any proceedings in the District of Columbia or in any state or territory involving the same claim or subject matter as this case. Please list s  
docket number for cases involving the same claim or subject matter.

Court	Case Number	Case Type

# Request for Relief

**I RESPECTFULLY REQUEST that the Court:** [CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

Grant me:

sole

**PHYSICAL CUSTODY**

joint

Grant me:                    sole                    **LEGAL CUSTODY**  
    joint

Allow \_\_\_\_\_ to visit with the child(ren).  
NAME

Allow only supervised visitation.

Allow no visitation.

Award child support according to the Child Support Guideline of the District of Columbia and other applicable laws, including: [CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

☐ current child support (support starting today and continuing into the future)

☐ retroactive child support (support for time before today)

☐ health insurance

Hold a hearing on my request for child support within 45 days of filing and issue a Notice of Hearing and Order Directing Appearance (“NOHODA”) to the other party with the date and time of the hearing.

Note that we have a written agreement. I request that the Court: [CHECK ONE]  
*include* our written agreement as a part of its order.  
*not include* our written agreement as a part of its order.

**I ALSO REQUEST that the Court award any other relief it considers fair and proper.**

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

*If this document is to be signed outside the geographic boundaries of the United States, Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, and any territory or insular possession subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, additional requirements must be met prior to signing. See Super. Ct. Dom. Rel. R. 2(c)(1)(B).*

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SIGN YOUR NAME

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DATE

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PRINT YOUR NAME

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PHONE NUMBER

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HOME ADDRESS 1

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EMAIL ADDRESS

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HOME ADDRESS 2

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BECAUSE YOU FEAR HARASSMENT OR HARM.

## Service of Your Complaint: Domestic Relations Rule 4

You start a case by filing papers called a **complaint** at the **Family Court Central Intake Center**. When you file a **complaint**, the Family Court Central Intake Center will give you a **summons**. A **summons** is a paper that you must give to the person you are filing against. The person you file against is called an **opposing party** or other **party**. You must make sure that the **opposing party** gets a copy of the **summons** and your **complaint** and any orders. This is called **service of your complaint**. You cannot give the papers to the **opposing party** yourself; someone else must give them to the **opposing party**. **The chart below gives instructions on how to serve the complaint and summons.**

After you make sure that someone else gives the papers to the other party, you must prove to the Court that you did this. You can prove this to the Court by filing an **Affidavit of Service** form. **You must serve the papers and file an Affidavit of Service form within 60 days after you file your complaint.** If you have questions about serving these documents, go to the **Family Court Self Help Center** at DC Superior Court or visit [www.LawHelp.org/DC](http://www.LawHelp.org/DC).

Remember to always keep a copy of the papers for yourself. And, you may need to make more copies to serve the other party in a different way.

**Below are the ways you can serve your complaint and summons and prove to the Court that you did it.** All of the forms discussed below can be found at the **Family Court Self Help Center** at DC Superior Court or at [www.LawHelp.org/DC](http://www.LawHelp.org/DC).

Type of Service	Proof of Service
<b>Have someone</b> who is over 18 years old and not a party to the case (NOT you): <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Hand a copy of the papers to the other party;</b> or</li><li>• <b>Leave a copy of the papers at the other party's home</b> with a person of suitable age and discretion who lives there (someone who you think is old enough or responsible enough to give the papers to the other party).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The person who served the papers must fill out an <b>Affidavit of Service by Individual</b>.</li><li>• The completed Affidavit must be filed at the <b>Family Court Central Intake Center</b>.</li></ul>
<b>Mail a copy of the papers to the other party by certified mail, return receipt requested.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Send a copy of the papers to the other party's home.</li><li>• You can do this yourself at the post office. Someone else can do this for you too.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep the <b>return receipt</b> ("green card") if it comes back to you;</li><li>• Fill out an <b>Affidavit of Service by Certified Mail</b>; and</li><li>• File the completed Affidavit with the <b>return receipt</b> attached at the <b>Family Court Central Intake Center</b>.</li><li>• <b>Note:</b> If you do not receive a return receipt or it comes back saying your papers cannot be delivered, you will need to serve the papers a different way.</li></ul>



<p><b>Mail the papers to the other party by first class mail</b> (postage prepaid) and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An envelope addressed to you with a stamp on it (so that the other party can mail the Court's <b>Notice and Acknowledgement form</b> back to you); and</li> <li>• Two (2) copies of the Court's <b>Notice and Acknowledgment form</b> (one for the other party to keep and one for you).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The signed <b>Notice and Acknowledgement form</b> is the proof of service.</li> <li>• The other party has 21 days from the date the letter is mailed to sign and return the Notice and Acknowledgement form to you.</li> <li>• If the other party returns the completed form, file the completed <b>Notice and Acknowledgement form</b> at the <b>Family Court Central Intake Center</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Note:</b> If the other party does not return the form, you will need to serve the papers in a different way. If this happens, you can ask the Court to order the other party to pay you back any money you spend serving the papers in another way.</li> </ul>
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**If you are asking for child support or to establish parentage of a child**, the **Family Court Central Intake Center** will issue you a Notice of Hearing and Order Directing Appearance (also called a NOHODA). There are special instructions for serving a NOHODA, these can be found at the Family Court Self Help Center and online at [www.ProBono.center/NOHODAIstructions](http://www.ProBono.center/NOHODAIstructions)

**If you need more than 60 days to serve the papers**, you can ask the judge to give you more time. You can ask for more time by filing a **Motion for Additional Time to Serve**. You must ask for more time to serve and a new summons before the first summons expires. If you do not do this, the **Family Court Central Intake Center** may dismiss your **complaint**. You can get a **Motion for Additional Time to Serve** at the **Family Court Self Help Center** at DC Superior Court or visit [www.LawHelp.org/DC](http://www.LawHelp.org/DC).

**If you tried but were not able to serve the other party or parties using any of the methods above**, you can ask the judge to let you serve the parties in a different way by filing a **Motion for Alternative Service**. You can get a **Motion for Alternative Service** at the **Family Court Self Help Center** at DC Superior Court or visit [www.LawHelp.org/DC](http://www.LawHelp.org/DC).