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Dear Family Law Client:

One very important phase of any matter dealing with domestic relations is the compilation and analysis of financial information. The client's assistance in this phase is critical since clearly the client is in a much better position to know about their financial situation than is the attorney. In one sense this phase literally "evolves" from what may be rather rough "guesstimates" of the family's assets all the way to the possibility of professional appraisers and the use of a CPA to analyze the data. Obviously, some cases require more expertise and some can be handled without the requirement of expert witnesses. In any case I have found that the earlier accurate information is obtained, the better the chance for there to be a good settlement as well as the likelihood that the costs associated may be controlled.

In order to begin this process you should compile the following information in as much detail as possible.

1. Your full name (f/m/l), full address and phone number (H).
2. Social Security Number.
3. Date of birth.
4. Place of employment including address, phone number and position or title.
5. Salary (annual/gross weekly).
6. Spouse's full name (f/m/l), full address and phone number (H) (Adverse party)
7. Spouse's Social Security Number.

8. Spouse's date of birth.
9. Spouse's place of employment including address, phone number and position or title.
10. Spouse's salary (annual/gross weekly).
11. Children's full name and address.
12. Children's date of birth.
13. Children's Social Security Numbers
14. Children's occupation or school (including grade).
15. Date of your Marriage.
16. Have you or your spouse been previously married? If so, please state names, dates, children, ages and support being paid and provide a copy of the most recent Order establishing the same. (In a modification or post dissolution matter please answer for present and former spouse if applicable).
17. Do either you or your spouse have any other children or dependents not otherwise listed? If so, please state names, ages, relationship, and support being paid and provide a copy of the most recent Order establishing the same.
18. Please provide us with your last four (4) income tax returns both State and Federal including all attachments and Schedules.
19. Please provide us with your last four (4) pay stubs.

20. As of the date of the filing of the last Petition (e.g. Petition for Dissolution of Marriage, Petition for Modification, Petition for Support) please obtain a statement from all financial institutions including banks, brokerage houses, Plan Administrators or life insurance companies stating the value of your account(s) as of the date of the filing. Those documents should be on letterhead or an official report e.g. a quarterly statement. You will eventually also need a statement of values at or about the date of the hearing.

On a separate piece of paper please prepare a financial statement indicating all of your assets including account numbers, values, in whose name they are held e.g. H/W/J. This would include 401K plans, IRAs, bank accounts, checking accounts, savings accounts, stocks, bonds, brokerage accounts, life insurance cash values, cash, tangible personal property, automobiles, real estate and the like.

On a third sheet of paper please prepare a financial statement outlining the debts that you have. Again, these would be listed by name, account number and amount. Please also show whether they are in the name of H/W/J and whether or not you or your spouse have used that account.

It may be appropriate to examine tax and financial records to see if there have been any particularly unusual transactions. (An non-exhaustive list would include: the sale or purchase of items, large deposits or withdraws, settlements in unrelated lawsuits, etc.) Please advise me if any of those situations exist.

On a separate piece of paper please list your tax and financial advisors or any other attorney that you are currently using. These would include unrelated legal matters, tax advisors or accountants, brokers and financial advisors or life insurance agents. You should list their names, addresses and phone numbers. You should also advise each of those persons that we are representing you and that they should give us full access to your records and also should be aware that this matter is presently pending and that they should not give any further information to any other person including your spouse (or former spouse). Please confirm with them that any authorizations that you may have previously given to allow your spouse (or former spouse) to communicate with them have been revoked.

Please list the name, address and phone number of your health care professionals including doctors, psychiatrists/psychologists/counselors/marital counselors/pastors that you have seen or that are currently assisting you. You should also advise each of those persons that we are representing you and that they should give us full access to your records but should be aware that this matter is presently pending and that they should not give any further information to any other person including your spouse (or former spouse). Please confirm with them that any authorizations that you may have previously given to allow your spouse (or former spouse) to communicate with them have been revoked.

Because there may be some urgency in your situation I would suggest that not all of the above information can be obtained quickly. You may want to make an initial outline as

suggested and forward that to me for our preliminary review. You should then follow up with the revisions and additions as soon as possible.

You have either previously received or have received with this outline a document entitled "Financial Declaration". This will duplicate some of the information you have provided for us however you will note that it also outlines your budget. Please complete that document and return it to me as soon as possible. Please treat this document and your Financial Declaration as private and do not disclose it to your spouse (or former spouse). I will go over these documents with you to be sure that they accurately reflect your financial situation before they are filed or shared with third parties.

If your case is an initial Petition for Dissolution of Marriage or Legal Separation involving a minor child(ren) you will be required to attend a seminar entitled "Children Coping with Divorce". Generally speaking, you will need to make an appointment and complete that seminar. This is not something that you and your spouse (or former spouse) will have to attend together. If you have not received information on that seminar please let me know and we will provide you with the Court's Standing Order. More information on this can be found on my website.

Please feel free to contact me or anyone in our office as we may be able to answer any questions or assist you in any way.

Sincerely yours,

Steven J. Kasyjanski, Esquire