

**PETITION REGARDING JOINT LEGAL CUSTODY DISPUTE
SAGINAW COUNTY FRIEND OF THE COURT
FORM 80**

Use this Petition if:

- You have a custody order containing a joint legal custody provision in your Judgment of Divorce or Separate Maintenance or your Order of Filiation and you cannot agree with the other party to resolve a joint legal custody dispute and you want to petition the Court to determine the disputed issue (e.g. school change, major medical issue, religion/church change).

You cannot use this form:

- To modify custody or parenting time

If both parties agree to a change in the Order no Petition is necessary. If an agreement is reached please notify your Caseworker in writing indicating the specifics of the agreement. Both parties **MUST** sign the written statement.

FILING THIS PETITION WILL RESULT IN THE FRIEND OF THE COURT CONDUCTING AN INVESTIGATION. PRIOR TO AN INVESTIGATION BEING DONE THE PETITIONING PARTY MUST PAY A **MINIMUM INVESTIGATION FEE OF \$150.00** TO THE FRIEND OF THE COURT. **PLEASE PAY BY MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO THE FRIEND OF THE COURT AND DESIGNATED “CASEWORKER INVESTIGATION FEE”.**

IF IT IS DECIDED THAT A CONTRACTUAL PERSON MUST INVESTIGATE YOUR CASE YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED OF ANY ADDITIONAL COST.

**IF YOU HAVE FILED AN AFFIDAVIT FOR
SUSPENSION OF FILING FEES DUE TO
INDIGENCY AND THE FILING FEES HAVE
BEEN WAIVED, YOU STILL MUST PAY THE
\$150 “CASEWORKER INVESTIGATION FEE”**

This packet is prepared in accordance to the guidelines of the State Court Administrator’s Office Forms.

PETITION CHECKLIST

Use the following checklist to make sure you have done all the steps that are included.

DID YOU...READ THE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST?

1. Fill out all requested information on the Petition? YES
2. Make all the necessary copies? YES
3. Pay the Petition fee to the Circuit Court Clerk?
(located in the basement of the Courthouse). When you filed
the original petition with the Circuit Court Clerk, ask for the
copies of the petition to be stamped (True Copy). YES
4. Mail (serve) a copy of the Petition on the other party? YES
5. Return to the Clerk's office **after** you mailed the Petition
and completed the certificate of mailing? YES
6. Keep one copy of the Petition for yourself? YES
7. Give 1 copy of the completed Petition to the
Circuit Court Clerk with the completed Certificate of Mailing? YES
8. Deliver 1 copy of the completed Petition to the
Friend of the Court with the completed Certificate of Mailing? YES
9. Pay the Friend of the Court Investigation fee? YES

If you cannot answer "YES" to all of the above steps, your Petition may be delayed or your Petition may be dismissed.

By using this Petition packet you are representing yourself in a Court action regarding a joint legal custody dispute. In order to receive the action you seek, you must follow the instructions in this packet. If you fail to do even one of the required steps your Petition may be dismissed.

If you have any question about any steps in the process, refer to page 3 through 5 of this packet for details.

The Friend of the Court does NOT represent either party. In preparation for the Investigation, each party is encouraged to review the CHILD CUSTODY ACT, which may be obtained from the state court administrator's office (989-373-8289) or the public library. The Friend of the Court is NOT authorized to give the parties legal advice or assist in filing of this Petition. Either party may hire an attorney during any point in the process.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILING A PETITION

⇔FILING A PETITION

1. Fill out the Petition.

Use the document on page 6. Follow the instruction on page 5. (Be careful to not make mistakes.) This is a Court document. Please type or print neatly using black or blue pen only.

Make at least 4 copies of the Petition after you have filled it out.

2. File the Petition form with the Circuit Court Clerk (located in the basement of the Courthouse).

Take the original and 4 copies of the Petition to the Circuit Court Clerk.

You must pay \$100.00 using either a money order, cash or personal check (not a starter check) made payable to the "Clerk of the Court" (\$20.00 is the **Motion Fee** and \$80.00 is the fee for entry of the **Order**).

The Clerk will keep the original Petition and any attachments for the Court file and stamp "True Copy" on all other copies. You **MUST** provide the Friend of the Court with a true copy of your Petition. Do not lose your remaining true copies of your Petition.

What you should have when you leave the Clerk's office:

- 1 Copy of the Petition (with any attachments)- for you
- 1 Copy of the Petition (with any attachments)- for the other party
- 1 Copy of the Petition (with any attachments)- for the Court
- 1 Copy of the Petition-(with any attachments)- the Friend of the Court

3. An investigation fee of \$150.00 will be assessed by the Friend of the Court. You must pay the fee prior to the Friend of the Court beginning an investigation. This payment must be made by money order made payable to the Saginaw County Friend of the Court and designated as "Caseworker Investigation fee". IF IT IS DECIDED THAT A CONTRACTUAL PERSON MUST INVESTIGATE YOUR CASE YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED OF ANY ADDITIONAL COST.

4. You must ensure that the address for both parties is the address on file with the Friend of the Court. If you fail to provide the correct address for either party your Petition may be dismissed for lack of service.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SERVING A PETITION

⇔ SERVING THE PETITION ON THE OTHER PARTY OR PARTIES

1. Serve the Petition on the other party.

YOU MUST SERVE (NOTIFY BY MAIL) the other party prior to the Friend of the Court reviewing the Petition. **You CANNOT hand deliver the papers to the other party.**

What you need for service:

1 Copy of the Petition (with any attachments)- with the completed certificate of mailing for you
1 Copy of the Petition (with any attachments)- with the completed certificate of mailing for the other party
1 Copy of the Petition (with any attachments)- with the completed certificate of mailing for the Court
1 Copy of the Petition (with any attachments)- with the completed certificate of mailing for the Friend of the Court

Fill out the Certificate of Mailing (date and sign) on all copies of the Petition. Mail one copy to the other party.

NOTE: Serve the papers by mailing them to the other party by regular, first class mail. **THE DATE ON THE CERTIFICATE OF MAILING MUST BE THE DATE YOU MAILED THE PETITION TO THE OTHER PARTY.**

2. Return to the Circuit Court Clerk

Once you have mailed the Petition to the other party return to the Circuit Court Clerk's office. You will have three copies with the completed certificate of mailing. Give the Circuit Court Clerk one copy for the Court file. Keep 1 copy for your own records. Deliver 1 copy to the Friend of the Court. You **MUST** deliver a copy directly to the Friend of the Court office.

3. Response from the other party.

If you receive a response to your Petition from the other party make sure you read it.

INSTRUCTION FOR COMPLETING “PETITION REGARDING JOINT LEGAL CUSTODY DISPUTE”

Please print neatly. After completing the Petition, you will need to make at least 4 copies.

Items A through J must be completed before your Petition can be filed with the Court. Please read the instruction for each of item. Then fill in the correct information for that item on the Petition.

- A. Before you fill in the Case No., get your Court papers for divorce, separate maintenance, or paternity and copy the Case No. from those Court papers onto this Petition form.
- B. Also use your Court paper to fill in the “Plaintiff” and the “Defendant” boxes. Copy the names from these court papers onto this Petition. For example, if your name is in the box that says “Plaintiff” on the original court document, then you should write your name in the “Plaintiff” box on this Petition form.

You are the person filing the Petition therefore the burden of proving why you should be granted the requested relief lies with you.

You must ensure that the address for both parties is the address on file with the Friend of the Court and if you do not know the address you **must** verify the address with the Friend of the Court.

- C. If you have a judgment or order for custody, separate maintenance, or paternity, read it carefully to find out if there is any information in it about custody.
- D. Read your Court papers for custody, divorce, separate maintenance, or paternity to find out who was ordered to have custody. Write this information here along with the name(s) of the child(ren).
- E. State who the child(ren) are living with now, the address or location where the child(ren), and the date the child(ren) started living there even if it is different than what was ordered.
- F. State the circumstances that require a resolution to a joint legal custody dispute. **Explain in as much detail as possible** what has happened. If you need more space, use a separate sheet of paper. Print this information as neatly as you can. You will need 4 copies of this sheet to attach to 4 copies of the Petition.
- G. Check this box if you and the other party agree about a joint legal custody dispute. Explain in as much detail as possible. If you need more space, use a separate sheet of paper. Print this information as neatly as you can. You will need 4 copies of this sheet to attach to the copies of this Petition.
- H. You need to explain in as much detail as possible what you want the Court to order. If you need more space, use a separate sheet of paper. Print this information as neatly as you can. You will need 4 copies of this sheet to attach to copies of this Petition.
- I. Write in today’s date and sign your name.

GO TO PAGE 3 & 4 FOR FILING AND SERVICE INSTRUCTIONS.

