

Last 3 pay stubs  
Last 2 tax returns

## HOW TO FILL OUT A FINANCIAL INFORMATION STATEMENT

In any hearing involving child support or temporary spousal support, you will be asked to prepare a financial information statement for the court. So that you will understand how that statement should be completed, we have prepared the following explanation that goes through this statement line by line giving you specific instructions for its preparation.

At the time of the hearing on temporary support, the Court wants to know what your monthly expenses and income are currently. If you have the children, include those expenses, also. Do not include any expenses for your spouse or ex-spouse or anyone who is not living with you. If possible, you need to go back through your checks for at least the previous six-month period and take averages of some specific items in order to present information to the court that will be accurate. Items easily averaged are utilities, telephone bills, gasoline and oil, groceries, and medical bills. Go through and figure out the average cost of each of these items per month for the past six or twelve-month period. Then use the financial information statement to set out those expenses. This will be beneficial to you in that it will show the judge you have been careful and thorough.

Another important principle you should keep in mind when preparing your financial statement is that the more numbers you have on your financial information statement that end in zero, the less believable it will be to the judge. For example, how often do you go out to the grocery store and have the bill for groceries total exactly \$100? Most often the numbers for groceries, utilities, and such are numbers of dollar and odd cents. The judge has the same experience you do. If all of the numbers on your expense sheet that are rounded off, this suggests to the court that it is an estimate or guess and is not, in fact, accurate. One way to achieve odd numbers in situations where you have estimates is to remember that there are 4.3 weeks in each month. Thus, you should multiply your expenses per week by 4.3 weeks. If you do not have access to the documentation to allow you to average expenses over an extended period, let us know and we will advise you on the best method to use to make this Financial Information Statement as accurate as possible.

### A. HOUSING

1. House payments/Rent - If you pay rent, just list the rent that you are presently paying on this blank. You might ask whether or not you are going to have an increase in your rent in the foreseeable future. If you have a lease and your lease contract expires soon, you need to find out if there will be an increase in the lease payment or rental payment in the forthcoming year. If the landlord tells you there will be an increase, then you should average-in this increased amount over the next

12 months. If you are still looking for an apartment, find out what the rents are in the area you intend to move to.

We do not want to inflate the payment, but we want the court to know the actual amount you will be paying over the next year. A house payment typically includes interest, principal, taxes and insurance. If your taxes and insurance payments are not included in your monthly mortgage payment, then average them on a monthly basis and include it with your mortgage payment in this category.

2. Utilities - Utilities include gas, water, electricity, and telephone. Please average those expenses for at least six months, preferably longer. Remember that an average of utility costs based upon a six-month average of January through June may be less than the period that includes the hot summer months of July and August. We want to fairly represent to the court what your costs will be. YOU need documentation that shows the court the average costs of utilities for the previous June, July, August, and September. With telephone bills, take an average of at least six months for telephone service so that you arrive at an exact number, and show what the average is for both regular service and long distance service. It is helpful to bring your receipts to Court to prove what those bills have been.
3. Maintenance, repair - Many times expenses are overlooked which belong in this category and are not listed elsewhere. Include the following expenses here:
  - a. yard--including mowing, weeding, trimming, edging, tree service, fertilizing, spraying.
  - b. house--including plumbing, electrical repairs airconditioning, heating, appliance repair and service, lighting, exterminator service, pool, hot tub, burglar alarm, homeowners' association dues.

## B. TRANSPORTATION

1. Car payments - Enter the amount of your monthly car payment here. If you have car payment coupons that you send with your payment each month, it is helpful to have a copy of one to show the court, if the need arises. If you have another type of car payment where you pay interest only quarterly, annually or otherwise, calculate the total cost for an entire year and average that figure to show a monthly payment, even though you don't make a monthly payment, since that would be the average