

| Check when completed | Steps for Voluntary Entry of Appearance |
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| | File Petition with clerk of the court |
| | Fill out "Request and Service Instructions Form" and file with Clerk, selecting service by Voluntary Entry of Appearance |
| | Clerk issues a summons with the deadline for filing a response |
| | Give a copy of the service packet, including summons, petition, and all pleadings, to opposing party with "Voluntary Entry of Appearance" form |
| | Opposing party signs in front of a Notary Public |
| | Opposing party sends a copy of the "Voluntary Entry of Appearance" back to petitioner. |
| | Petitioner MUST file the signed and notarized "Voluntary Entry of Appearance" form with the clerk of the court. |

| Check when completed | Steps for Residence Service |
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| | Residence Service is accomplished by following the Personal Service steps 1-4, including requesting Personal Service. |
| | A sheriff deputy will take the Service Packet to the address of the residence you provide. |
| | If the opposing party is not present when the deputy comes, the deputy will leave the packet with a person of "suitable age and discretion" who also lives at the residence. |
| | The deputy will fill out the Return of Service Form, and return it to the Clerk. |
| | The Clerk will file it in your case |
| | You should check regularly with the court, either online or by phone, to find out if the service was successful. |

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| Check when completed | Steps for Personal Service |
| | File Petition with clerk of the court |
| | Fill out "Request and Service Instructions Form" and file with Clerk, selecting service by Personal Service |
| | Clerk issues a summons with the deadline for filing a reply to the Petition. |
| | Either leave Service Packet and \$15 per defendant as Sheriff's fee with the Clerk, who will deliver it to the Sheriff, or take the Service Packet, including summons, petition, all pleadings, a Return of Service Form, and \$15 per defendant to the Sheriff's Office. |
| | A sheriff deputy will take the Service Packet and attempt to deliver it to the opposing party. They only attempt to serve people between 8 – 4, so make sure they have an address that will work during that time frame. Service of someone at work is fine with the Sheriff. |
| | The deputy will fill out the Return of Service Form, and return it to the Clerk. |
| | The Clerk will file it in your case |
| | You should check regularly with the court, either online or by phone, to find out if the service was successful. |

| Check when completed | Steps for Certified Mail Service with Return Receipt |
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| | Certified Mail Service can be performed by you, as the party, or by Sheriff, if you request it. |
| | File Petition with clerk of the court and request a hearing |
| | Fill out "Request and Service Instructions Form" and file with Clerk, selecting service by Certified Mail with Return Receipt |
| | Clerk issues a summons with the deadline for filing a reply to the Petition. |
| | Take entire Service Packet, including the file-stamped summons, petition, and all pleadings, and mail to the opposing party by Certified Mail with Return Receipt. You may use the United States Postal Service or a commercial service like UPS or Fed Ex, so long as the package is signed for and you request a return receipt showing who received the package, delivery date, address delivered, and who made the delivery. |
| | After delivery, the return receipt will be returned you. |
| | If the return receipt says "undelivered", service has not been performed |
| | If the delivery was successful, fill out the "Return of Service for Certified Mail" form |
| | Attach one copy of the return receipt ("green card" for USPS) to the middle of the page of "Return of Service for Certified Mail" form. |
| | Bring "Return of Service for Certified Mail" to the Clerk to be filed in your case. |
| | Service is completed. |

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| Check when completed | Service by Publication |
| | <p>Service by Publication may be appropriate as a last resort. Note that Service by Publication is only allowed in certain types of cases. For example, with Publication you can get a divorce, custody order, or divide property within the state, but you CANNOT divide property located in a different state, receive an alimony award, receive a child support order, or direct the adverse party to do something personally. Service by Publication is also substantially more expensive than requesting the Sheriff's to serve the opposite party. Publication may run from \$150-200, whereas service by Sheriff will cost \$15 in state. An order issued in a case with service by publication can be set aside for one year from filing.</p> |
| | <p>To perform Service by Publication, you must receive an order from the judge allowing you to publish notice. You first file an Affidavit stating that you have tried to find the person and have no idea about how to do that.</p> |
| | <p>Before requesting Service by Publication, the Judge may want you to try service by Personal Service and Certified Mail with Return Receipt</p> |
| | <p>You must fill out an "Affidavit for Service by Publication" and sign it before a Notary Public</p> |
| | <p>You must also fill out a "Notice of Suit" form</p> |
| | <p>The "Affidavit for Service by Publication" must be filed with the Clerk of the court</p> |
| | <p>After the Affidavit is reviewed, the Judge may allow you to use this form of service. You know that because the Judge signs an "Order Allowing Service by Publication".</p> |
| | <p>You must contact the local Legal Newspaper. This is likely a newspaper you have never heard of. You should ask the Clerk of the Court what newspaper is used in your county for service of legal process. Provide the paper with the "Notice of Suit", and the cost for publication. The cost for Service by Publication varies by newspaper, but you should expect \$150 - \$200.</p> |
| | <p>The notice must be published once a week for three consecutive weeks.</p> |
| | <p>You MUST then mail the notice from the paper WITHIN 7 days of the first publication, to an address of at least one person you think might know where the other party is. That could be one of their family members, the last place you knew they lived (in case they have mail forwarding in place) or to one of their friends.</p> |
| | <p>Service is completed.</p> |