**What are the fees?**

The initial consultation fee is $200. Our hourly rates vary between $175-$275 per hour. The hourly rate varies based on which attorney is working on your case and what work the attorney is doing (document drafting is cheaper than actually going to court). Our paralegals also bill at $125 per hour and whatever drafting they can do we have them do on your case in order to save you attorney’s fees.

When we meet at the initial consultation you will be quoted an advanced fee deposit (or retainer) of between $500-$20,000. The average retainer in our office is $5,000.

You will have to pay the advanced fee deposit before our office starts work on your case. We will not have been retained by you until you pay the advanced fee deposit (or retainer).

We have had divorces cost as little as $500 and cost as much as $100,000. The average cost of a divorce in our office is $7,500.

The advanced fee deposit is money you pay up front for us to work on your case. We have to charge an advanced fee deposit because of the history of clients being unable to pay at the end of their case. This is the only way that we ensure we are paid for the work that we do on your behalf. Because of this once we quote the advanced fee deposit we do not accept payments towards that advanced fee deposit. You must pay the entire quoted advanced fee deposit before we start work on your case.

After you have paid the retainer you then receive an itemized monthly statement from our office that shows how much of your advanced fee deposit has been used. When you receive that monthly statement you should review it and if you have a dispute with any charges then you should contact us immediately. If you don’t need our legal services (ex. you get back together with your husband) or your case is resolved for less than the advanced fee deposit that you paid then you receive a refund of whatever amount is left of your advanced fee deposit. You know how much this is because you are receiving itemized billing statements every month that show how much of your retainer has been used.

Oftentimes we deplete the advanced fee deposit that you paid. Then, we ask for more money or another retainer to be paid. This happens because your case is more contested than we anticipated or there is more work that needs to be done that we didn’t know about. It can also happen when new legal issues arise.

It all sounds very expensive and it is. What can you do to keep your fees down and avoid having to pay anything beyond the initial retainer? 1. Write down all your questions and ask them one time of your attorney. 2. Don’t make your attorney ask you more than once for any document she needs. 3. Do not email your attorney multiple times in one day. You face being billed for every email. 4. Avoid court if at all possible. 5. Consider mediation. 6. Keep the communication lines open with the other side. The one factor that all high conflict, expensive cases have in common is the inability of the parties to communicate directly and resolve issues between themselves. Do whatever you can to try to promote a positive agenda with the other party.