



Rule 17.200—Form 216: General Answer to a Petition for Dissolution of Marriage with Children

Respondent: You must file an Answer in the county where the Petition was filed within **20 days** after receiving the Petition and Original Notice, or the **court may enter a judgment against Respondent** giving Petitioner what he or she asked for in the Petition.

If the Petition you received is on form 201, use form 215 for your Answer.

Read the [Guide to Representing Yourself in an Iowa Divorce Case](#) on the Iowa Judicial Branch website before using this form.

 *If filing electronically and you include protected information on this form, fill out or update the Protected Information Disclosure form (211).*

 *If filing in paper, you may use form 211 to provide any protected information in full.*

If you do not understand how to use this form, or if you should use this form, talk to an attorney.

In the Iowa District Court for _____ County
County where Petition is filed

Upon the Petition of

Petitioner *You spouse's full name: first, middle, last*

and concerning

Respondent *Your full name: first, middle, last*

Equity case no. _____

**General Answer to a Petition
for Dissolution of Marriage
with Children**

1. Respondent's Answer *You are Respondent.*

A. Respondent admits that the following paragraphs in the Petition are true:

List the numbers of the paragraphs in the Petition that you think are true. If you decide later that the paragraphs you list here are not true, it may be too late to change your answer.

B. Respondent denies that the following paragraphs in the Petition are true:

List the numbers of the paragraphs in the Petition that you think are false.

C. Respondent does not know whether the following paragraphs in the Petition are true:

List the numbers of the paragraphs in the Petition that you are not sure about. If you cannot say a paragraph or a part of a paragraph is true or not true, it may be because you do not know something, such as a date, place, or when something happened.

D. Children's living arrangements

Places where the children have lived during the last five years and the parent(s) or adult(s) who acted as parents:

(1) Children: _____
Initials Initials Initials Initials Initials

Lived with _____ from ____/____/____ to ____/____/____
Adult name mm dd yyyy mm dd yyyy

At _____
City State

(2) Children: _____
Initials Initials Initials Initials Initials

Lived with _____ from ____/____/____ to ____/____/____
Adult name mm dd yyyy mm dd yyyy

At _____
City State

(3) Children: _____
Initials Initials Initials Initials Initials

Lived with _____ from ____/____/____ to ____/____/____
Adult name mm dd yyyy mm dd yyyy

At _____
City State

(4) Children: _____
Initials Initials Initials Initials Initials

Lived with _____ from ____/____/____ to ____/____/____
Adult name mm dd yyyy mm dd yyyy

At _____
City State

(5) Children: _____
Initials Initials Initials Initials Initials

Lived with _____ from ____/____/____ to ____/____/____
Adult name mm dd yyyy mm dd yyyy

At _____
City State

Check this box if you have attached a separate sheet listing additional children.

If the children have not lived in Iowa for six months, you may be able to get a divorce, but you might not be able to get custody. The rules are complicated and you may need to talk to an attorney.

E. Protective or no contact orders

Check one

- (1) There is neither a “protective order” nor a “no contact order” between Respondent (you) and Petitioner (your spouse).
- (2) There is a “protective order” or “no contact order” between Respondent and Petitioner.

If you check (2), fill in the following information:

a. County and state where the order came from: _____
County State

b. Court case number: _____

F. Other cases about the children

Check (1) or (2)

- (1) There are no other cases about the children. *If you check (1), skip to G.*
- (2) There are other cases about the children.

If there is an order from out of state about the children, an Iowa court may not be able to issue an order about custody or visitation. The rules are complicated and you may need to talk to an attorney.

If you check F(2), fill in the applicable information below.

a. Juvenile court

Check i or ii.

- i. There is no juvenile court case.
- ii. There is a juvenile court case.

If you check ii, fill in the following information:

(a) County and state of the juvenile court case: _____
County State

(b) Juvenile court case number: _____

Check (i) or (ii)

- (i) Concurrent jurisdiction has been granted.
- (ii) Concurrent jurisdiction has not been granted.

If the juvenile court has not given concurrent jurisdiction (permission,) then child custody cannot be decided in this case. You should talk to an attorney.

b. Custody order

You might not be able to get custody in Iowa if there is a custody order entered in another state.

Check i or ii.

- i. There is no custody order.
- ii. There is a custody order.

If you check ii, fill in the following information:

(a) County and state where the custody order came from: _____
County State

(b) Court case number: _____



c. Child support order

Check i or ii.

- i. There is no child support order.
- ii. There is a child support order.

If you check ii, fill in the following information:

(a) County and state where the child support order came from: _____
County State

(b) Court case number: _____

G. Respondent denies anything in the Petition that is not admitted in this Answer.

H. Other information: _____

2. Respondent's Request *If you do not know what you want, talk to an attorney.*

Respondent asks the court to: *Write here what you would like the court to do. For example, tell the court if you want a divorce. Be brief. Do not write long descriptions.*

Continued on next page

3. Attorney Help

Check one

- A. An attorney did not help me prepare or fill in this paper.
- B. An attorney helped me prepare or fill in this paper.

If you check B, you must fill in the following information:

Name of attorney or organization, if any Attorney's P.I.N. # – Ask the attorney

Business address of attorney or organization City State ZIP code

(_____) _____ (_____) _____ _____
Attorney's phone number Attorney's fax number – optional Attorney's email address – optional

4. Service Instructions

If Respondent is filing in paper

Check one

- A. Respondent will accept service of documents at the attorney's address listed above; or
- B. Respondent will accept service of documents in this case at the mailing address below.

5. Certification of Service by Mailing or Delivery

Section 5 to be completed only if filing in paper or if the other party is exempt from electronic filing.
This document, if filed electronically, will automatically be served on registered parties.

I, _____, certify that on _____, 20_____
Print your name Month Day Year

I mailed or gave a copy of this Answer to the other party or the other party's attorney at this address:

Name of person to whom I delivered or mailed it

Party's or attorney's mailing address City State ZIP code

6. Oath and Signature

I, _____, have read this Answer, and I certify under penalty
Print your name
of perjury and pursuant to the laws of the State of Iowa that the information I have provided
in this Answer is true and correct.

_____, 20_____
Signed on: Month Day Year Your signature*

Mailing address City State ZIP code

(_____) _____ _____
Phone number Email address Additional email address, if applicable

* Whether filing electronically or in paper, you must handwrite your signature on this form. If you are filing electronically, scan the form after signing it and then file electronically

Important Instructions for filing this form on next page.

Instructions for Filing an Answer to a Petition for Dissolution of Marriage with Children

The Iowa Judicial Branch is converting the court system to electronic filing county by county. The electronic filing system is also known as EDMS. To determine if this case is in a county using electronic filing, [check the map](#) available on the Iowa Judicial Branch website under eFiling, or call the clerk of court office in your county. If your county accepts electronic filing, **you must file electronically** unless you get permission from the court to file in paper. Contact the clerk of court in your county if you are unable to file electronically.

Filing your Answer electronically

- If your divorce case was filed in a county that uses electronic filing, you must register to electronically file. For help with registration, see the eFiler's User Guide [How to Register Pro Se \(Self Represented\) for eFiling](#) on the Iowa Judicial Branch website.
- Scan the signed Answer form and save it as a .pdf. (Save it in a place that will be accessible to you when you electronically file.)
- Log in to EDMS on the Iowa Judicial Branch website and file your Answer. The login page can be accessed from two different paths: you may [directly log in to EDMS](#); or from the judicial branch website menu, you may select "eFiling > eFile (EDMS) Login."
- For help, see [How to eFile to an Existing Case](#).
- You will receive a Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) when the clerk of court has approved the eFiling of your Answer and other documents. You can then open the Answer and print a copy for your records.
- If there was a problem with your filing, EDMS will send you a Retraction Notice. You can then log in to My Filings, correct the error, and resubmit your Answer. For help, see [How to Resubmit a Returned Filing](#).
- The NEF will indicate if your spouse is exempt from electronic filing requirements, in which case, you must mail or serve in paper a copy of the document on your spouse if he or she does not have an attorney.

Filing your Answer in paper

- Make two photocopies of the original.
- Take your original Answer form and the photocopies to the clerk of court's office in the county where the Petition was filed. The county is listed at the top of the Petition (form 201).
- The clerk will time-stamp your forms and copies.
- The clerk will take the original and give the copies back to you.
- Keep one of the copies for your records.
- Serve one of the copies of your Answer on your spouse (Petitioner).
- You can hand one of the copies of the Answer form to your spouse, **or** mail a copy to your spouse at the address shown on the Petition.
- If your spouse has an attorney, you may serve the Petition by mailing a copy to the attorney at the attorney's address.

Do not file these instructions

