



8 Essential Steps After You've Been Served (Georgia Family Law Cases)



Review What You Were Served

Read the Petition, Summons, and any attachments so you understand what the other party is asking for and what deadlines or hearings are already scheduled.



Identify Your Response Deadline

Georgia law gives you 30 days from the date of service to file an Answer. Missing this deadline can result in a default judgment, so mark the date immediately.



Stay Calm — Nothing Is Decided Yet

The petition is only a list of requests from the other party. You do not need to agree, react, or negotiate before you are ready.



Gather Key Information Early

Collect any documents you may need for your response, including income and insurance information, childcare and school details, prior court orders or agreements, and any messages or schedules related to parenting. Being organized now will make the next steps much easier and help you respond effectively.



Avoid Harmful Communication

Do not send angry texts, argue about the case, or threaten changes to parenting or finances. Assume everything written could be shown to a judge.



Maintain Stability for Children

If children are involved, keep routines, school attendance, and parenting schedules steady unless safety is a concern. Courts look closely at consistency.



Consult With an Attorney Early

A brief consultation can help you understand your rights, your options, whether filing counterclaims is appropriate, and what outcomes are realistic in your county. Flat Fee Family Law.com offers clear, predictable pricing and flexible payment options, making it easy to get the guidance you need early in the process.



Prepare Your Response & Any Temporary Hearing Needs

Before your deadline, you may need to file an Answer, any counterclaims, a proposed parenting plan, and your financial affidavits or child support worksheets. If temporary orders were requested, prepare quickly—these early decisions often shape the direction of the entire case.