

Family Law

Why Family Law Clients Feel at Home at Gray Reed

Legal issues surrounding the family can be challenging. At Gray Reed, we strive to guide clients through the process as smoothly as possible. We educate our clients, both individuals and [family offices](#), about their options, learn their objectives, and work to resolve the legal issues with our client's goals in mind. Our family law attorneys, seven of whom are Board Certified in Family Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization, have the experience and determination to be prepared - no matter what the situation entails.

Gray Reed Legal Services in Family Law

Our family law practice and family law mediation practice were ranked in the *U.S. News & World Report* and *Best Lawyers* (a Woodward/White company) 2019 "Best Law Firms" ranking.



Adoptions

Adoption is a golden opportunity for all parties. A child is placed with a family who needs him, and parents who are not quite ready for the experience of raising him can give another couple their chance. However, while an adoption can be a joyous event, there are many legal issues that can stop the proceeding in its tracks. Working with an experienced adoption attorney is important in any type of adoption. The laws governing the adoption process are complex. There are specific requirements and limitations on what attorneys and prospective adoptive parents can do. This is especially true in interstate adoptions because there are at least two states involved and the laws may differ and even conflict. If the wrong legal documents are used, or if state or federal statutes are violated, the adoption could be challenged at a later date or a court may refuse to finalize the adoption.

At Gray Reed, we are intimately familiar with the procedures and laws surrounding adoptions. We will make sure that you understand adoption requirements for independent, stepparent, relative, or international adoptions, as well as legal issues involved in adopting from an agency.

Asset Protection

Asset protection is nothing other than the use of legal instruments for the preservation and accumulation of wealth. In essence, asset protection planning revolves around the minimization of risk and careful analysis of all client exposure. When implemented by a qualified, competent attorney, asset protection is a powerful legal tool that can protect clients from future unforeseen risks. Gray Reed provides private counseling to clients on the

tools and techniques of asset protection and privacy planning. There are numerous tools available to assist you in protecting your assets. Firm services include the formation and maintenance of various legal vehicles to accomplish the tax planning and estate planning goals and objectives of individual clients.

Child Support

Our attorneys are considered experts in negotiating child support payments in high-income cases. When the parties are unable to resolve child support issues, we can explore alternative ways of reaching a settlement such as mediation and arbitration, and collaborative law. Our attorneys are experienced with collection of past due support, defense of county Child Support Enforcement actions, and other arrearage issues.

Collaborative Law

Collaborative law is a relatively new way to resolve divorce issues such as asset division, child custody and support, and maintenance out of court. Like mediation, the outcome of the collaborative law process is not binding on either party unless and until a final agreement is signed. The entire process is confidential information exchanged in collaborative law is not public record or admissible in court. This may be appealing to public figures or persons of high net worth.

In a collaborative law divorce, the parties use specially trained lawyers and neutral experts. The parties commit to achieving a settlement without litigation. Those professionals also commit to work cooperatively to make the divorce process as much of a “win-win” situation as possible. If the parties don’t reach a settlement but proceed to litigation, the parties agree that the lawyers will have to withdraw from the case. This creates a huge incentive for all parties to settle, and the lawyers do not benefit from prolonging the case in court.

If both parties are committed to the collaborative process, this option creates a setting that allows for the give and take that can result in an amicable divorce settlement. Oftentimes those settlements include terms a court could not have ordered.

However, collaborative divorce is not for everybody. Success depends on the personalities of the parties and their attorneys. If one party or lawyer has a combative personality, is dishonest or cannot refrain from threats or violence, the case is not right for the collaborative process.

For more information, visit our [Collaborative Law](#) section.

Custody

At Gray Reed, all child custody and support issues are determined based upon what is in the best interest of the child. We advocate for our client’s rights in mediation or fight for their interests in trial to determine parental

rights and resolve all issues involving child custody including legal custody, physical custody, visitation/parenting time child support, and post judgment modifications.

Division of Estate

Asset division in divorce is complex and requires an attorney with knowledge of accounting, asset valuation, tax issues, and other financial matters. It also requires an attorney who has experience with family law judges and understands how they tend to treat various items of property. When it comes to the division of an estate, our asset valuation and division lawyers have handled divorce cases with assets ranging from very modest holdings to hundreds of millions of dollars.

Divorce

Every client engaged in divorce has unique set of needs and priorities. Gray Reed is committed to addressing those needs on an individualized basis. While thorough and aggressive, we counsel clients to resolve their cases in ways to minimize the emotional strife attendant to divorce.

We work hard to protect your parental rights and property interests. We are committed to doing whatever is necessary to help you and your children achieve the best possible outcome in an otherwise difficult situation.

Enforcement

Although it is unfortunate, circumstances arise when parents who are supposed to pay child support do not meet their obligations. Our child support attorneys work with clients who are not receiving the amount of child support they are entitled to and helps them collect that support from the parent ordered to pay it.

Mediation

A mediator is a neutral third person who helps the two parties in a divorce resolve issues such as asset division, child custody and support, and maintenance out of court. Mediation can be particularly useful when only a small number of issues remain to be resolved to reach a divorce settlement. The mediator could be a lawyer or another professional. If the issues involve parenting time and decision-making responsibilities, the mediator could be a mental health professional. If the issue is financial, a mediator could be certified public accountant (CPA). Our lawyers also serve as mediators. Mediation is not binding on either party unless a signed agreement is reached, and either party can proceed to litigate the issues in court if no resolution is reached. However, judicial decisions can be unpredictable, so it's often better to attempt mediation first. A skillful lawyer can discuss with the party, before and during mediation, the pros and cons of various settlement options. The parties frequently have their lawyers attend mediation sessions with them.

Child Support Modifications

In any divorce, child support is subject to the continuing jurisdiction of the court. Things like changes in a parent's income, changes in the need for or cost of childcare, or other major financial changes may justify a reexamination of child support. What is in the best interests of a child will evolve over time, as they grow and their needs change. We have a great deal of experience requesting these kinds of modifications to child support and custody orders.

Paternity

Proving paternity has become much easier because of DNA fingerprinting. Such technologically advanced techniques can establish paternity to a 99 percent probability. Our firm's attorneys are experienced and knowledgeable with respect to each step in a paternity proceeding and the resulting child support payments and parenting time issues if paternity is established.

Prenuptial Agreements

For those concerned about the possibility of divorce down the road, premarital agreements or "prenups" are a perfectly reasonable response. Prenups are most popular with people who enter a marriage with large assets. Some of these assets are not easily divisible, such as an interest in a family owned business or a large tract of real estate.