

WHAT ARE THE LATEST FACTS, FIGURES AND TRENDS IN DIVORCE?



California is one of the most populous US States, at more than 32 million residents. A large population also means a lot of divorces. According to the latest US Census, **195,000 people reported getting divorced**¹ in the previous year. That's enough to fill SoFi Stadium (home of the Rams and Chargers) 2.78 times! Here are some updates on trends in divorce in Orange County, California and the rest of the country.

Divorce in Orange County

Eleven percent of adults² in Orange County are divorced, ranking it

18th

In percentage of divorced people for counties in California

36th

In the 50 most populous counties in the United States.

Within Orange County, the highest percentage of divorces is in Laguna Woods at 19%, followed by Los Alamitos, Seal Beach, Laguna Beach and Dana Point. The lowest percentage of divorced people is in Luna Park at 5%.

The age range with the highest percentage of divorces in Orange County is age 60-64, with 22.6% of women and 14.4% of men.



- The hit show *The Real Housewives of Orange County* is infamous for instigating divorce. A total of eleven cast members divorced after appearing on the show. Across the franchise, vow renewals predict the couple divorcing soon after renewing their nuptials on the show – the first being housewife Vicki Gunvalson, a resident of Coto de Caza.
- Other famous residents from Orange County who had high profile divorces include singers Gwen Stefani and Gavin Rossdale and golfer Tiger Woods.

California Divorce Facts



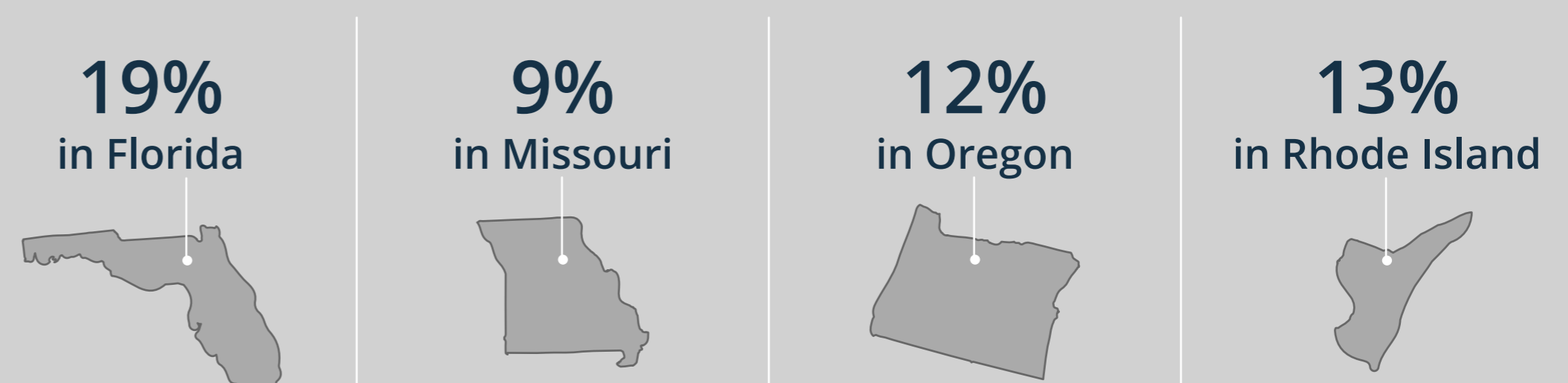
In 2019, California ranked 40th in the number of divorces per 1,000 women, at 13.4.

- About 67% of California parents are married,³ compared to 63% parents nationwide. Likewise, 65% of children ages 0-17 in California live with their biological, married parents, compared to 62% of children in the United States. This shows that the stability of family life in California is higher than the rest of the country.
- A marriage in California⁴ can be ended by divorce, legal separation, or annulment.
- One spouse or domestic partner can choose to end the marriage without the other's participation.
- California is a "no fault" divorce state. To get a no fault divorce, one person claims "irreconcilable differences" as a reason to dissolve the marriage.
- It does not matter who is the first to file the divorce or separation case. The court does not give any preference to the first person to file or a disadvantage to the person who responds to the case.

Divorce and the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected divorce in a number of ways.

Overall, divorce rates have continued to decline during the pandemic. In 2020, divorce filings were down



- In fact, according to data from the American Family Survey, a majority of married Americans (58%) said that the pandemic has made them appreciate their spouse more,⁵ and fifty percent of couples surveyed reported that their commitment to marriage has deepened.
- Attorney Leslie Barbara reported an upswing in divorces based on extramarital affairs⁶ after COVID restrictions were eased. This is due to hotel closures and the lack of business travel during lockdowns - making it a lot harder to carry an affair.
- Custody cases during the pandemic also raised new issues - such as disagreements between parents about children wearing masks at playdates, nannies being vaccinated or whether or not children should attend school remotely.

US Divorce Trends



In 2019, the most recent year that statistics are available, the US divorce⁷ rate was 15.5 divorces per 1,000 married women, down from a divorce rate of 15.7 in 2018. This was a 40-year low in the number of divorces in the country. Just over one million women (1,042,174) divorced in 2019.

15.5

US divorce rate

In 2019, New Mexico held the top ranking for the highest divorce rate, with nearly 23 divorces per 1,000 married women.

Maine had the lowest divorce rate in 2019, with around 9.6 marriages per 1,000 ending in divorce.

Between 1990 and 2019, the divorce rate decreased for those aged 15 to 44, whereas it increased for those aged 45 and older.

For both men and women, divorce rates declined with age

The Big Bucks in Celebrity Divorce

- 2021 was a big year for celebrity divorces and big financial settlements. In their settlement, Jeff Bezos kept three-quarters of the couple's share of Amazon stock⁸, and his ex-wife Mackenzie Scott was awarded the rest, totaling 4% of the company.
- Melinda Gates' net worth was \$3.2 billion when she split from Bill Gates (his was \$131 billion). It has not been decided who will get the 66,000 acre lakefront estate outside of Seattle.
- Another celebrity couple made headlines when the singer Kelly Clarkson split with her husband Brandon Blackstock, raising questions about men receiving spousal support.9 Blackstock was awarded \$150,000 per month in alimony, half his original request.

Kim Kardashian, and Kanye West have yet to reach a divorce settlement, but when they do, they will divide \$2.1 billion in assets.

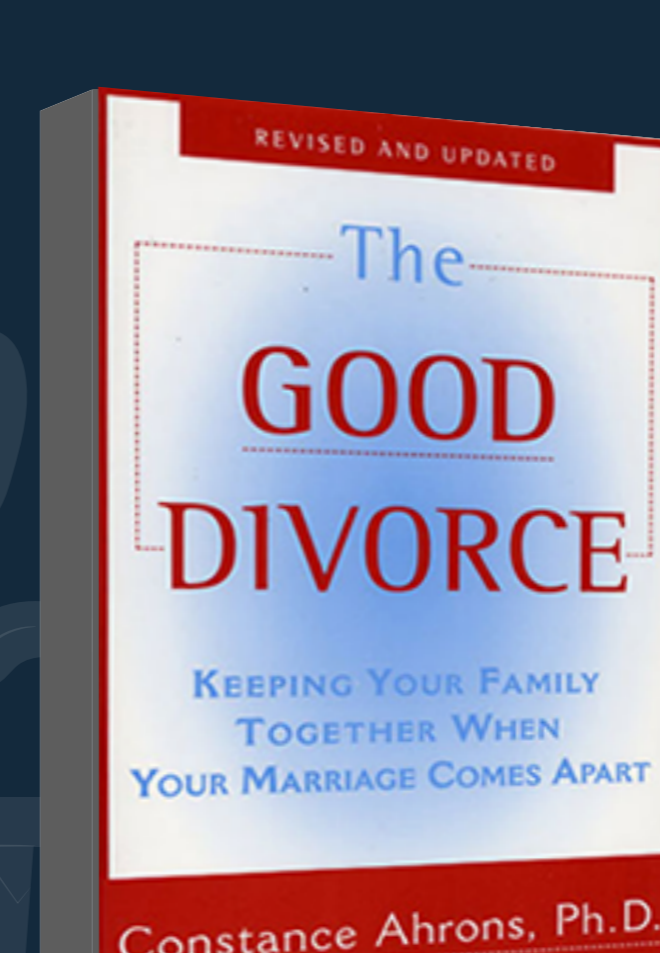
\$2.1 Billion

Divorce Icons



Two important divorce researchers passed away in 2021. Rosalind Cartwright was a scientist who studied divorced women's dreams. After her second divorce she couldn't sleep, which inspired her to perform overnight sleep studies in her Chicago lab with newly divorced women.

Constance Ahrons was a psychotherapist who wrote the book "The Good Divorce" in 1994. It was a groundbreaking publication that guided couples in handling their divorce amicably and maintaining good relationships with their children.



Sources

1. [https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=divorce in last year&t=Marital Status and Marital History&g=0400000U0506,06%24050000&tid=ACSDT1Y2019.B12503](https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=divorce%20in%20last%20year&t=Marital%20Status%20and%20Marital%20History&g=0400000U0506,06%24050000&tid=ACSDT1Y2019.B12503)
2. <https://statisticalatlas.com/county/California/Orange-County/Marital-Status#overview>
3. <https://ifstudies.org/blog/state-of-contradiction-progressive-family-culture-traditional-family-structure-in-california>
4. <https://www.courts.ca.gov/1040.htm>
5. <https://ifstudies.org/blog/divorce-is-down-during-covid>
6. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/09/style/as-courts-reopen-divorce-filings-are-on-the-rise.html>
7. <https://www.bgsu.edu/ncfmr/resources/data/family-profiles/reynolds-divorce-rate-geographic-variation-2019-fp-20-25.html>
8. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/04/technology/bezos-divorce-mackenzie.html>
9. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/30/style/men-alimony-spousal-support.html?searchResultPosition=10>
10. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/12/22/magazine/rosalind-cartwright-death.html?searchResultPosition=4>

Though trends in divorce are always changing, the need for support through your divorce does not. Whether it's mediation, child custody, spousal support or property division, we are here to help.