

LIFE SPANS

THE BRIDGE DIVORCE STRATEGIES NEWSLETTER

INTERESTING INFO YOU CAN READ OVER A SINGLE CUP OF COFFEE!

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LIFE IN AFI LAND

One of my attorney clients once told me, “The AFI, hands down, is the most important thing you can help with.”

Ah yes, the AFI. The dreaded Affidavit of Financial Information. You know that 12-page doc well: It’s one of the first things you’ll hand to a woman facing divorce, with instructions for her to fill it out.

And then what happens? Maybe she fills it out. Maybe she doesn’t. Maybe she’s still so distraught that she can’t. Maybe she calls your office for help, and what do you do? Assign a paralegal to help her?

Are any of these options optimal, when it comes to building your client’s case? Of course not.

The AFI is the single biggest foundational element when it comes to calculating spousal maintenance and child support. Most women don’t realize just how important this document is.

And it’s intimidating. It’s like a cross between a tax return and a mortgage application. For women who haven’t been engaged in family finances, it’s a nightmare.

This is more than just filling out fields. It’s also a subtle challenge of prediction. Because the AFI asks you to write down, in solid numbers, all about the future. Does that woman know she’ll need a new house—or how much the payments will be? Just because her car has been running well recently, does that mean it won’t need repairs in the future?

What’s worse is that the AFI isn’t very helpful, to your client or to you. It’s not structured to help her complete it—or for you to build a case. It lumps together child expenses as “medical, dental, and child care,” without including things like food. Seriously!

This is where I can, and do, help. I have my own version of the AFI—think of it as a worksheet—that is better structured to help you and your client. I can dig to find out needs and calculate expenses and build your case for negotiating. (For example, I can help calculate “Mom’s grocery expenses” vs. “kids’ grocery expenses.”) Plus, when it’s time to request information from the other party, you can easily “blame” me! “The financial expert wants all this stuff!” My attorney clients love that.

The AFI is such a huge topic, that this newsletter barely even scratches the surface. I’ll have more to say about the AFI—more info that you can put to use—in future editions.

THERE REALLY IS A FREE LUNCH

Given today’s COVID-19 environment, we are now offering online CLE, and will order lunch for the attorneys in your office who would like to participate from their remote locations. What a tasty way to learn things about the financial side of divorce that fly under your radar—and help you earn from one to three hours of CLE credit in the process!

Simply give us a call at (480) 378-2383 (or send an email to carma.hall@bridgefinancialstrategies.com) and say, “Hey! We’d love to take you up on that ingenious remote lunch-and-learn opportunity!” There’s no obligation. Call us today!

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