

# Paternity Preparation Checklist: Establishing Rights in Washington State

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This checklist is for parents in Washington seeking to establish or challenge paternity and asking, "What documents do I need for paternity in Washington?" or "How do I prepare for DNA testing in Tacoma?" It helps organize information for efficient processes under [Chapter 26.26A RCW](#), potentially saving time/costs (average court case \$1,000-\$5,000). This is not legal advice; please consult an attorney, such as Morgan Hill PC, for personalized guidance.

## 1. Gather Basic Identification and Records

- Child's birth certificate: Obtain a certified copy from the WA Department of Health (~\$20 fee).
- Parents' IDs: Driver's licenses, passports, or birth certificates for both alleged father and mother.
- Marriage/divorce records: If applicable, to show presumption or prior status.
- Acknowledgment form: If voluntary, get a Paternity Acknowledgment from the hospital or DOH.

## 2. Prepare for Voluntary Acknowledgment (If Cooperative)

- Both parents' agreement: Discuss and prepare to sign the form together (free at DOH or hospital).
- Child's info: Full name, birth date, place for form completion.
- Witness/notary: Some forms require; arrange if needed.
- Post-signing updates: Plan for birth certificate amendment and benefit notifications.

## 3. Prepare for Court Petition (If Disputed)

- Petition forms: Download Petition to Establish Parentage from the WA Courts site; complete with child/parent details.
- Financial declarations: Income/expense forms if support involved (e.g., for child support calc under [Chapter 26.19 RCW](#)).
- Evidence of relationship: Photos, messages, or affidavits from witnesses supporting paternity claim.
- Service documents: Prepare for serving the other party (fee \$50-\$100).

## 4. Plan for DNA Testing and Evidence

- DNA test info: Research accredited labs (cost \$300-\$500; state may cover if low-income).
- Medical records: Child's health history or prenatal care showing father's involvement.
- Timeline evidence: Dates of conception, birth, any prior acknowledgments.
- Challenge prep: If disestablishing, gather prior DNA or fraud proof within 4-year limit.

## 5. Address Related Issues and Challenges

- Custody/support plans: Outline desired parenting time or support needs post-paternity.
- Background prep: Criminal/CPS records; address any issues early.
- Military considerations (JBLM): Deployment docs for SCRA delays.
- Financial budget: Estimate costs (filing \$260, attorney \$1,500+); check for waivers.
- Emotional support: List counselors or resources for family stress.

## Additional Resources

- Washington State Courts Paternity Forms: [courts.wa.gov/forms](https://courts.wa.gov/forms)
- Pierce County Superior Court: [piercecountywa.gov/122/Superior-Court](https://piercecountywa.gov/122/Superior-Court)
- For paternity help, [contact Morgan Hill PC for a consultation](#).

Thank you for using this checklist—it can streamline your case and reduce stress. Download and print for easy reference.

This is not legal advice. Always consult an attorney. All fees and timelines are only estimates and are subject to change at any time.

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