

AN ACT concerning civil law.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The Illinois Marriage and Dissolution of Marriage Act is amended by changing Sections 452, 501, 502, and 503 as follows:

(750 ILCS 5/452)

Sec. 452. Petition. The parties to a dissolution proceeding may file a joint petition for simplified dissolution if they certify that all of the following conditions exist when the proceeding is commenced:

(a) Neither party is dependent on the other party for support or each party is willing to waive the right to support; and the parties understand that consultation with attorneys may help them determine eligibility for spousal support.

(b) Either party has met the residency or military presence requirement of Section 401 of this Act.

(c) The requirements of Section 401 regarding proof of irreconcilable differences have been met.

(d) No children were born of the relationship of the parties or adopted by the parties during the marriage, and the wife, to her knowledge, is not pregnant by the husband.

(e) The duration of the marriage does not exceed 8 years.

(f) Neither party has any interest in real property or retirement benefits unless the retirement benefits are exclusively held in individual retirement accounts and the combined value of the accounts is less than \$10,000.

(g) The parties waive any rights to maintenance.

(h) The total fair market value of all marital property, after deducting all encumbrances, is less than \$50,000, the combined gross annualized income from all sources is less than \$60,000, and neither party has a gross annualized income from all sources in excess of \$30,000.

(i) The parties have disclosed to each other all assets and liabilities and their tax returns for all years of the marriage.

(j) The parties have executed a written agreement dividing all assets in excess of \$100 in value and allocating responsibility for debts and liabilities between the parties.

(k) The parties have executed a written agreement allocating ownership of and responsibility for any companion animals owned by the parties. As used in this Section, "companion animal" does not include a service animal as defined in Section 2.01c of the Humane Care for Animals Act.

(Source: P.A. 99-90, eff. 1-1-16; 99-763, eff. 1-1-17.)

(750 ILCS 5/501) (from Ch. 40, par. 501)

Sec. 501. Temporary relief. In all proceedings under this Act, temporary relief shall be as follows:

(a) Either party may petition or move for:

(1) temporary maintenance or temporary support of a child of the marriage entitled to support, accompanied by an affidavit as to the factual basis for the relief requested. One form of financial affidavit, as determined by the Supreme Court, shall be used statewide. The financial affidavit shall be supported by documentary evidence including, but not limited to, income tax returns, pay stubs, and banking statements. Unless the court otherwise directs, any affidavit or supporting documentary evidence submitted pursuant to this paragraph shall not be made part of the public record of the proceedings but shall be available to the court or an appellate court in which the proceedings are subject to review, to the parties, their attorneys, and such other persons as the court may direct. Upon motion of a party, a court may hold a hearing to determine whether and why there is a disparity between a party's sworn affidavit and the supporting documentation. If a party intentionally or recklessly files an inaccurate or misleading financial affidavit, the court shall impose significant penalties and sanctions including, but not limited to, costs and attorney's fees;

(2) a temporary restraining order or preliminary injunction, accompanied by affidavit showing a factual basis for any of the following relief:

(i) restraining any person from transferring, encumbering, concealing or otherwise disposing of any property except in the usual course of business or for the necessities of life, and, if so restrained, requiring him to notify the moving party and his attorney of any proposed extraordinary expenditures made after the order is issued; however, an order need not include an exception for transferring, encumbering, or otherwise disposing of property in the usual course of business or for the necessities of life if the court enters appropriate orders that enable the parties to pay their necessary personal and business expenses including, but not limited to, appropriate professionals to assist the court pursuant to subsection (1) of Section 503 to administer the payment and accounting of such living and business expenses;

(ii) enjoining a party from removing a child from the jurisdiction of the court for more than 14 days;

(iii) enjoining a party from striking or interfering with the personal liberty of the other party or of any child; or

(iv) providing other injunctive relief proper in the circumstances; or

(3) other appropriate temporary relief including, in the discretion of the court, ordering the purchase or sale of assets and requiring that a party or parties borrow funds in the appropriate circumstances.

Issues concerning temporary maintenance or temporary support of a child entitled to support shall be dealt with on a summary basis based on allocated parenting time, financial affidavits, tax returns, pay stubs, banking statements, and other relevant documentation, except an evidentiary hearing may be held upon a showing of good cause. If a party intentionally or recklessly files an inaccurate or misleading financial affidavit, the court shall impose significant penalties and sanctions including, but not limited to, costs and attorney's fees resulting from the improper representation.

(b) The court may issue a temporary restraining order without requiring notice to the other party only if it finds, on the basis of the moving affidavit or other evidence, that irreparable injury will result to the moving party if no order is issued until the time for responding has elapsed.

(c) A response hereunder may be filed within 21 days after service of notice of motion or at the time specified in the temporary restraining order.

(c-1) As used in this subsection (c-1), "interim attorney's fees and costs" means attorney's fees and costs assessed from time to time while a case is pending, in favor of the

petitioning party's current counsel, for reasonable fees and costs either already incurred or to be incurred, and "interim award" means an award of interim attorney's fees and costs. Interim awards shall be governed by the following:

(1) Except for good cause shown, a proceeding for (or relating to) interim attorney's fees and costs in a pre-judgment dissolution proceeding shall be nonevidentiary and summary in nature. All hearings for or relating to interim attorney's fees and costs under this subsection shall be scheduled expeditiously by the court. When a party files a petition for interim attorney's fees and costs supported by one or more affidavits that delineate relevant factors, the court (or a hearing officer) shall assess an interim award after affording the opposing party a reasonable opportunity to file a responsive pleading. A responsive pleading shall set out the amount of each retainer or other payment or payments, or both, previously paid to the responding party's counsel by or on behalf of the responding party. A responsive pleading shall include costs incurred, and shall indicate whether the costs are paid or unpaid. In assessing an interim award, the court shall consider all relevant factors, as presented, that appear reasonable and necessary, including to the extent applicable:

(A) the income and property of each party, including alleged marital property within the sole

control of one party and alleged non-marital property within access to a party;

(B) the needs of each party;

(C) the realistic earning capacity of each party;

(D) any impairment to present earning capacity of either party, including age and physical and emotional health;

(E) the standard of living established during the marriage;

(F) the degree of complexity of the issues, including allocation of parental responsibility, valuation or division (or both) of closely held businesses, and tax planning, as well as reasonable needs for expert investigations or expert witnesses, or both;

(G) each party's access to relevant information;

(H) the amount of the payment or payments made or reasonably expected to be made to the attorney for the other party; and

(I) any other factor that the court expressly finds to be just and equitable.

(2) Any assessment of an interim award (including one pursuant to an agreed order) shall be without prejudice to any final allocation and without prejudice as to any claim or right of either party or any counsel of record at the time of the award. Any such claim or right may be presented

by the appropriate party or counsel at a hearing on contribution under subsection (j) of Section 503 or a hearing on counsel's fees under subsection (c) of Section 508. Unless otherwise ordered by the court at the final hearing between the parties or in a hearing under subsection (j) of Section 503 or subsection (c) of Section 508, interim awards, as well as the aggregate of all other payments by each party to counsel and related payments to third parties, shall be deemed to have been advances from the parties' marital estate. Any portion of any interim award constituting an overpayment shall be remitted back to the appropriate party or parties, or, alternatively, to successor counsel, as the court determines and directs, after notice in a form designated by the Supreme Court. An order for the award of interim attorney's fees shall be a standardized form order and labeled "Interim Fee Award Order".

(3) In any proceeding under this subsection (c-1), the court (or hearing officer) shall assess an interim award against an opposing party in an amount necessary to enable the petitioning party to participate adequately in the litigation, upon findings that the party from whom attorney's fees and costs are sought has the financial ability to pay reasonable amounts and that the party seeking attorney's fees and costs lacks sufficient access to assets or income to pay reasonable amounts. In

determining an award, the court shall consider whether adequate participation in the litigation requires expenditure of more fees and costs for a party that is not in control of assets or relevant information. Except for good cause shown, an interim award shall not be less than payments made or reasonably expected to be made to the counsel for the other party. If the court finds that both parties lack financial ability or access to assets or income for reasonable attorney's fees and costs, the court (or hearing officer) shall enter an order that allocates available funds for each party's counsel, including retainers or interim payments, or both, previously paid, in a manner that achieves substantial parity between the parties.

(4) The changes to this Section 501 made by this amendatory Act of 1996 apply to cases pending on or after June 1, 1997, except as otherwise provided in Section 508.

(c-2) Allocation of use of marital residence. Where there is on file a verified complaint or verified petition seeking temporary eviction from the marital residence, the court may, during the pendency of the proceeding, only in cases where the physical or mental well-being of either spouse or his or her children is jeopardized by occupancy of the marital residence by both spouses, and only upon due notice and full hearing, unless waived by the court on good cause shown, enter orders granting the exclusive possession of the marital residence to

either spouse, by eviction from, or restoration of, the marital residence, until the final determination of the cause pursuant to the factors listed in Section 602.7 of this Act. No such order shall in any manner affect any estate in homestead property of either party. In entering orders under this subsection (c-2), the court shall balance hardships to the parties.

(d) A temporary order entered under this Section:

(1) does not prejudice the rights of the parties or the child which are to be adjudicated at subsequent hearings in the proceeding;

(2) may be revoked or modified before final judgment, on a showing by affidavit and upon hearing; and

(3) terminates when the final judgment is entered or when the petition for dissolution of marriage or legal separation or declaration of invalidity of marriage is dismissed.

(e) The fees or costs of mediation shall be borne by the parties and may be assessed by the court as it deems equitable without prejudice and are subject to reallocation at the conclusion of the case.

(f) Companion animals. Either party may petition or move for the temporary allocation of sole or joint possession of and responsibility for a companion animal jointly owned by the parties. In issuing an order under this subsection, the court shall take into consideration the well-being of the companion

animal. As used in this Section, "companion animal" does not include a service animal as defined in Section 2.01c of the Humane Care for Animals Act.

(Source: P.A. 99-90, eff. 1-1-16; 99-763, eff. 1-1-17.)

(750 ILCS 5/502) (from Ch. 40, par. 502)

Sec. 502. Agreement.

(a) To promote amicable settlement of disputes between parties to a marriage attendant upon the dissolution of their marriage, the parties may enter into an agreement containing provisions for disposition of any property owned by either of them, maintenance of either of them, support, parental responsibility allocation of their children, and support of their children as provided in Sections 513 and 513.5 after the children attain majority. The parties may also enter into an agreement allocating the sole or joint ownership of or responsibility for a companion animal. As used in this Section, "companion animal" does not include a service animal as defined in Section 2.01c of the Humane Care for Animals Act. Any agreement pursuant to this Section must be in writing, except for good cause shown with the approval of the court, before proceeding to an oral prove up.

(b) The terms of the agreement, except those providing for the support and parental responsibility allocation of children, are binding upon the court unless it finds, after considering the economic circumstances of the parties and any

other relevant evidence produced by the parties, on their own motion or on request of the court, that the agreement is unconscionable. The terms of the agreement incorporated into the judgment are binding if there is any conflict between the terms of the agreement and any testimony made at an uncontested prove-up hearing on the grounds or the substance of the agreement.

(c) If the court finds the agreement unconscionable, it may request the parties to submit a revised agreement or upon hearing, may make orders for the disposition of property, maintenance, child support and other matters.

(d) Unless the agreement provides to the contrary, its terms shall be set forth in the judgment, and the parties shall be ordered to perform under such terms, or if the agreement provides that its terms shall not be set forth in the judgment, the judgment shall identify the agreement and state that the court has approved its terms.

(e) Terms of the agreement set forth in the judgment are enforceable by all remedies available for enforcement of a judgment, including contempt, and are enforceable as contract terms.

(f) Child support, support of children as provided in Sections 513 and 513.5 after the children attain majority, and parental responsibility allocation of children may be modified upon a showing of a substantial change in circumstances. The parties may provide that maintenance is non-modifiable in

amount, duration, or both. If the parties do not provide that maintenance is non-modifiable in amount, duration, or both, then those terms are modifiable upon a substantial change of circumstances. Property provisions of an agreement are never modifiable. The judgment may expressly preclude or limit modification of other terms set forth in the judgment if the agreement so provides. Otherwise, terms of an agreement set forth in the judgment are automatically modified by modification of the judgment.

(Source: P.A. 99-90, eff. 1-1-16; 99-763, eff. 1-1-17.)

(750 ILCS 5/503) (from Ch. 40, par. 503)

Sec. 503. Disposition of property and debts.

(a) For purposes of this Act, "marital property" means all property, including debts and other obligations, acquired by either spouse subsequent to the marriage, except the following, which is known as "non-marital property":

(1) property acquired by gift, legacy or descent or property acquired in exchange for such property;

(2) property acquired in exchange for property acquired before the marriage;

(3) property acquired by a spouse after a judgment of legal separation;

(4) property excluded by valid agreement of the parties, including a premarital agreement or a postnuptial agreement;

(5) any judgment or property obtained by judgment awarded to a spouse from the other spouse except, however, when a spouse is required to sue the other spouse in order to obtain insurance coverage or otherwise recover from a third party and the recovery is directly related to amounts advanced by the marital estate, the judgment shall be considered marital property;

(6) property acquired before the marriage, except as it relates to retirement plans that may have both marital and non-marital characteristics;

(6.5) all property acquired by a spouse by the sole use of non-marital property as collateral for a loan that then is used to acquire property during the marriage; to the extent that the marital estate repays any portion of the loan, it shall be considered a contribution from the marital estate to the non-marital estate subject to reimbursement;

(7) the increase in value of non-marital property, irrespective of whether the increase results from a contribution of marital property, non-marital property, the personal effort of a spouse, or otherwise, subject to the right of reimbursement provided in subsection (c) of this Section; and

(8) income from property acquired by a method listed in paragraphs (1) through (7) of this subsection if the income is not attributable to the personal effort of a spouse.

Property acquired prior to a marriage that would otherwise be non-marital property shall not be deemed to be marital property solely because the property was acquired in contemplation of marriage.

The court shall make specific factual findings as to its classification of assets as marital or non-marital property, values, and other factual findings supporting its property award.

(b)(1) For purposes of distribution of property, all property acquired by either spouse after the marriage and before a judgment of dissolution of marriage or declaration of invalidity of marriage is presumed marital property. This presumption includes non-marital property transferred into some form of co-ownership between the spouses, regardless of whether title is held individually or by the spouses in some form of co-ownership such as joint tenancy, tenancy in common, tenancy by the entirety, or community property. The presumption of marital property is overcome by showing through clear and convincing evidence that the property was acquired by a method listed in subsection (a) of this Section or was done for estate or tax planning purposes or for other reasons that establish that a transfer between spouses was not intended to be a gift.

(2) For purposes of distribution of property pursuant to this Section, all pension benefits (including pension benefits under the Illinois Pension Code, defined benefit plans, defined contribution plans and accounts, individual retirement

accounts, and non-qualified plans) acquired by or participated in by either spouse after the marriage and before a judgment of dissolution of marriage or legal separation or declaration of invalidity of the marriage are presumed to be marital property. A spouse may overcome the presumption that these pension benefits are marital property by showing through clear and convincing evidence that the pension benefits were acquired by a method listed in subsection (a) of this Section. The right to a division of pension benefits in just proportions under this Section is enforceable under Section 1-119 of the Illinois Pension Code.

The value of pension benefits in a retirement system subject to the Illinois Pension Code shall be determined in accordance with the valuation procedures established by the retirement system.

The recognition of pension benefits as marital property and the division of those benefits pursuant to a Qualified Illinois Domestic Relations Order shall not be deemed to be a diminishment, alienation, or impairment of those benefits. The division of pension benefits is an allocation of property in which each spouse has a species of common ownership.

(3) For purposes of distribution of property under this Section, all stock options and restricted stock or similar form of benefit granted to either spouse after the marriage and before a judgment of dissolution of marriage or legal separation or declaration of invalidity of marriage, whether

vested or non-vested or whether their value is ascertainable, are presumed to be marital property. This presumption of marital property is overcome by a showing that the stock options or restricted stock or similar form of benefit were acquired by a method listed in subsection (a) of this Section. The court shall allocate stock options and restricted stock or similar form of benefit between the parties at the time of the judgment of dissolution of marriage or declaration of invalidity of marriage recognizing that the value of the stock options and restricted stock or similar form of benefit may not be then determinable and that the actual division of the options may not occur until a future date. In making the allocation between the parties, the court shall consider, in addition to the factors set forth in subsection (d) of this Section, the following:

(i) All circumstances underlying the grant of the stock option and restricted stock or similar form of benefit including but not limited to the vesting schedule, whether the grant was for past, present, or future efforts, whether the grant is designed to promote future performance or employment, or any combination thereof.

(ii) The length of time from the grant of the option to the time the option is exercisable.

(b-5) As to any existing policy of life insurance insuring the life of either spouse, or any interest in such policy, that constitutes marital property, whether whole life, term life,

group term life, universal life, or other form of life insurance policy, and whether or not the value is ascertainable, the court shall allocate ownership, death benefits or the right to assign death benefits, and the obligation for premium payments, if any, equitably between the parties at the time of the judgment for dissolution or declaration of invalidity of marriage.

(c) Commingled marital and non-marital property shall be treated in the following manner, unless otherwise agreed by the spouses:

(1) (A) If marital and non-marital property are commingled by one estate being contributed into the other, the following shall apply:

(i) If the contributed property loses its identity, the contributed property transmutes to the estate receiving the property, subject to the provisions of paragraph (2) of this subsection (c).

(ii) If the contributed property retains its identity, it does not transmute and remains property of the contributing estate.

(B) If marital and non-marital property are commingled into newly acquired property resulting in a loss of identity of the contributing estates, the commingled property shall be deemed transmuted to marital property, subject to the provisions of paragraph (2) of this subsection (c).

(2) (A) When one estate of property makes a contribution to another estate of property, the contributing estate shall be reimbursed from the estate receiving the contribution notwithstanding any transmutation. No such reimbursement shall be made with respect to a contribution that is not traceable by clear and convincing evidence or that was a gift. The court may provide for reimbursement out of the marital property to be divided or by imposing a lien against the non-marital property that received the contribution.

(B) When a spouse contributes personal effort to non-marital property, it shall be deemed a contribution from the marital estate, which shall receive reimbursement for the efforts if the efforts are significant and result in substantial appreciation to the non-marital property except that if the marital estate reasonably has been compensated for his or her efforts, it shall not be deemed a contribution to the marital estate and there shall be no reimbursement to the marital estate. The court may provide for reimbursement out of the marital property to be divided or by imposing a lien against the non-marital property which received the contribution.

(d) In a proceeding for dissolution of marriage or declaration of invalidity of marriage, or in a proceeding for disposition of property following dissolution of marriage by a court that lacked personal jurisdiction over the absent spouse

or lacked jurisdiction to dispose of the property, the court shall assign each spouse's non-marital property to that spouse. It also shall divide the marital property without regard to marital misconduct in just proportions considering all relevant factors, including:

(1) each party's contribution to the acquisition, preservation, or increase or decrease in value of the marital or non-marital property, including (i) any decrease attributable to an advance from the parties' marital estate under subsection (c-1)(2) of Section 501; (ii) the contribution of a spouse as a homemaker or to the family unit; and (iii) whether the contribution is after the commencement of a proceeding for dissolution of marriage or declaration of invalidity of marriage;

(2) the dissipation by each party of the marital property, provided that a party's claim of dissipation is subject to the following conditions:

(i) a notice of intent to claim dissipation shall be given no later than 60 days before trial or 30 days after discovery closes, whichever is later;

(ii) the notice of intent to claim dissipation shall contain, at a minimum, a date or period of time during which the marriage began undergoing an irretrievable breakdown, an identification of the property dissipated, and a date or period of time during which the dissipation occurred;

(iii) a certificate or service of the notice of intent to claim dissipation shall be filed with the clerk of the court and be served pursuant to applicable rules;

(iv) no dissipation shall be deemed to have occurred prior to 3 years after the party claiming dissipation knew or should have known of the dissipation, but in no event prior to 5 years before the filing of the petition for dissolution of marriage;

(3) the value of the property assigned to each spouse;

(4) the duration of the marriage;

(5) the relevant economic circumstances of each spouse when the division of property is to become effective, including the desirability of awarding the family home, or the right to live therein for reasonable periods, to the spouse having the primary residence of the children;

(6) any obligations and rights arising from a prior marriage of either party;

(7) any prenuptial or postnuptial agreement of the parties;

(8) the age, health, station, occupation, amount and sources of income, vocational skills, employability, estate, liabilities, and needs of each of the parties;

(9) the custodial provisions for any children;

(10) whether the apportionment is in lieu of or in addition to maintenance;

(11) the reasonable opportunity of each spouse for future acquisition of capital assets and income; and

(12) the tax consequences of the property division upon the respective economic circumstances of the parties.

(e) Each spouse has a species of common ownership in the marital property which vests at the time dissolution proceedings are commenced and continues only during the pendency of the action. Any such interest in marital property shall not encumber that property so as to restrict its transfer, assignment or conveyance by the title holder unless such title holder is specifically enjoined from making such transfer, assignment or conveyance.

(f) In a proceeding for dissolution of marriage or declaration of invalidity of marriage or in a proceeding for disposition of property following dissolution of marriage by a court that lacked personal jurisdiction over the absent spouse or lacked jurisdiction to dispose of the property, the court, in determining the value of the marital and non-marital property for purposes of dividing the property, has the discretion to use the date of the trial or such other date as agreed upon by the parties, or ordered by the court within its discretion, for purposes of determining the value of assets or property.

(g) The court if necessary to protect and promote the best interests of the children may set aside a portion of the jointly or separately held estates of the parties in a separate

fund or trust for the support, maintenance, education, physical and mental health, and general welfare of any minor, dependent, or incompetent child of the parties. In making a determination under this subsection, the court may consider, among other things, the conviction of a party of any of the offenses set forth in Section 11-1.20, 11-1.30, 11-1.40, 11-1.50, 11-1.60, 12-3.3, 12-4, 12-4.1, 12-4.2, 12-4.3, 12-13, 12-14, 12-14.1, 12-15, or 12-16, or Section 12-3.05 except for subdivision (a) (4) or (g) (1), of the Criminal Code of 1961 or the Criminal Code of 2012 if the victim is a child of one or both of the parties, and there is a need for, and cost of, care, healing and counseling for the child who is the victim of the crime.

(h) Unless specifically directed by a reviewing court, or upon good cause shown, the court shall not on remand consider any increase or decrease in the value of any "marital" or "non-marital" property occurring since the assessment of such property at the original trial or hearing, but shall use only that assessment made at the original trial or hearing.

(i) The court may make such judgments affecting the marital property as may be just and may enforce such judgments by ordering a sale of marital property, with proceeds therefrom to be applied as determined by the court.

(j) After proofs have closed in the final hearing on all other issues between the parties (or in conjunction with the final hearing, if all parties so stipulate) and before judgment is entered, a party's petition for contribution to fees and

costs incurred in the proceeding shall be heard and decided, in accordance with the following provisions:

(1) A petition for contribution, if not filed before the final hearing on other issues between the parties, shall be filed no later than 14 days after the closing of proofs in the final hearing or within such other period as the court orders.

(2) Any award of contribution to one party from the other party shall be based on the criteria for division of marital property under this Section 503 and, if maintenance has been awarded, on the criteria for an award of maintenance under Section 504.

(3) The filing of a petition for contribution shall not be deemed to constitute a waiver of the attorney-client privilege between the petitioning party and current or former counsel; and such a waiver shall not constitute a prerequisite to a hearing for contribution. If either party's presentation on contribution, however, includes evidence within the scope of the attorney-client privilege, the disclosure or disclosures shall be narrowly construed and shall not be deemed by the court to constitute a general waiver of the privilege as to matters beyond the scope of the presentation.

(4) No finding on which a contribution award is based or denied shall be asserted against counsel or former counsel for purposes of any hearing under subsection (c) or

(e) of Section 508.

(5) A contribution award (payable to either the petitioning party or the party's counsel, or jointly, as the court determines) may be in the form of either a set dollar amount or a percentage of fees and costs (or a portion of fees and costs) to be subsequently agreed upon by the petitioning party and counsel or, alternatively, thereafter determined in a hearing pursuant to subsection (c) of Section 508 or previously or thereafter determined in an independent proceeding under subsection (e) of Section 508.

(6) The changes to this Section 503 made by this amendatory Act of 1996 apply to cases pending on or after June 1, 1997, except as otherwise provided in Section 508.

(k) In determining the value of assets or property under this Section, the court shall employ a fair market value standard. The date of valuation for the purposes of division of assets shall be the date of trial or such other date as agreed by the parties or ordered by the court, within its discretion. If the court grants a petition brought under Section 2-1401 of the Code of Civil Procedure, then the court has the discretion to use the date of the trial or such other date as agreed upon by the parties, or ordered by the court within its discretion, for purposes of determining the value of assets or property.

(l) The court may seek the advice of financial experts or other professionals, whether or not employed by the court on a

regular basis. The advice given shall be in writing and made available by the court to counsel. Counsel may examine as a witness any professional consulted by the court designated as the court's witness. Professional personnel consulted by the court are subject to subpoena for the purposes of discovery, trial, or both. The court shall allocate the costs and fees of those professional personnel between the parties based upon the financial ability of each party and any other criteria the court considers appropriate, and the allocation is subject to reallocation under subsection (a) of Section 508. Upon the request of any party or upon the court's own motion, the court may conduct a hearing as to the reasonableness of those fees and costs.

(m) The changes made to this Section by Public Act 97-941 apply only to petitions for dissolution of marriage filed on or after January 1, 2013 (the effective date of Public Act 97-941).

(n) If the court finds that a companion animal of the parties is a marital asset, it shall allocate the sole or joint ownership of and responsibility for a companion animal of the parties. In issuing an order under this subsection, the court shall take into consideration the well-being of the companion animal. As used in this Section, "companion animal" does not include a service animal as defined in Section 2.01c of the Humane Care for Animals Act.

(Source: P.A. 99-78, eff. 7-20-15; 99-90, eff. 1-1-16; 99-763,

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