

FAQ Based on Results of International Academy of Collaborative Professionals Crescent Research Project

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What are the characteristics of people who choose collaborative divorce?

Among IACP Survey responders, 59% of all husbands and 60% of all wives were between 40 and 54 years of age. There were more wives than husbands 39 years of age or younger (27% vs. 21%), and more husbands than wives 55 years or older (20% vs. 13%).

Seventy-eight percent (78%) of all clients had a 4-year college education or higher. This percentage does not vary between husbands and wives (80% of husbands and 77% of wives had a 4-year college education or higher). Twenty-nine percent (29%) of all clients (25% of wives and 32% of husbands), had an advanced/graduate or doctoral (or equivalent) degree. Only seven percent (7%) of clients had a high school diploma or less.

The earnings of clients varied greatly with gender. Fifty-three percent (53%) of husbands earned \$100,000 or more; 15% of husbands earned less than \$50,000. Thirteen percent (13%) of wives earned \$100,000 or more; 63% of wives earned less than \$50,000.

The value of assets in 81% of cases⁹ was \$200,000 or more, with a significant majority¹⁰ having a value of \$500,000 or more: 25% of participants' estates were valued between \$200,000 and \$499,000; 20% between \$500,000 and \$999,000; 18% between \$1,000,000 and \$1,999,999; and 18% at or above \$2,000,000. Only five percent (5%) of all cases involved assets less than \$50,000.

Eighty-four percent (84%) of all reported collaborative law cases in the IACP Survey involved children, and 72% had children subject to legal process. Of all reported cases involving children, 21% involved one child, 56% involved two children, and 23% involved three or more children.

How much does a collaborative divorce cost?

The IACP Survey results show that the average total cost for all core collaborative professionals of a collaborative case was \$23,963. Broken down by profession, the cost to clients for both lawyers averaged \$20,711. In cases using additional professionals, the cost for financial professionals averaged \$4,201, the cost for mental health professionals averaged \$3,619, and the cost for mediators averaged \$1,970.20.

⁹ 590 of 783 cases.

¹⁰ 366 of 527 cases.

What factors determine how much a collaborative divorce will cost?

One of the most significant factors that impact the overall cost of a collaborative divorce is its degree of difficulty. Based on survey results, the average cost of a “difficult” case was \$32,892 for all professionals, the average cost for a “moderate” case was \$21,405 and the average cost for an “easy” case was \$12,126. The other indicator of the likely cost of a collaborative case is the case model structure employed. In other words, are there only lawyers, some additional professionals, or an interdisciplinary team? The average lawyer-only case cost \$15,426, the average referral model case was \$22,466 and the average team model case was \$34,860.

How long does a collaborative case take?

The time needed to complete a collaborative case varies greatly. Fifteen percent (15%) took less than 3 months. Fourteen percent (14%) took 3-4 months. Nineteen percent (19%) took 5-6 months. Fourteen percent (14%) took 7-8 months. Eighteen percent (18%) took 9-12 months. Thirteen percent (13%) took 13-18 months, and seven percent (7%) took more than 18 months.

How many meetings does it usually take?

Looking at the cases reported to IACP, 96% of all cases have meetings with both parties present as well as differing combinations of professionals. In fifty-two percent (52%) of the cases, professionals reported that the case had one or more meetings with all core professionals. In the cases reporting meeting data for all core professionals, the average number of these joint meetings is 4.

If the case involves professionals other than the lawyers, other face-to-face meetings likely will occur involving both clients and at least one but not all core professionals, such as: both lawyers and both clients – 64% of cases with an average of 4 meetings; the financial professional and both clients – 25% of cases with an average of 2 meetings; mental health professionals and both clients – 23% of cases with an average of 3 meetings; lawyers, clients and the financial specialist – 17% of cases with an average of 2 meetings, and lawyers, clients and the mental health professional(s) – 10% of the cases with an average of 3 meetings.

On average, such meetings last approximately 2 hours. Team meetings that include all core professionals averaged 2.5 hours in length.

Thirty-five percent (35%) of all cases involve a meeting with only one client and a mental health professional and/or a financial professional. In addition, clients also meet privately with their lawyers.