



# Fact Sheet: Marriage and Emancipation

## Rights and Responsibilities of an emancipated minor

A minor who gets married is fully emancipated. What is “emancipation” or what does it mean to be “emancipated”? It means you have all the rights and responsibilities of an adult, such as:

- Your parents no longer have control or authority over you.
- Your parents are not required to support you, including providing housing or insurance, or pay your taxes.
- You are no longer required by law to attend school.
- You may manage your own property.
- You have the right to your own earnings, income, or salary.
- You may sue and you may be sued.
- You may enter into contracts (such as to lease an apartment or borrow money).
- You may engage in a profession or vocation as if you were 18 years old.
- Even if you divorce, or the marriage is annulled, before you turn 18 years old, you remain emancipated.

HOWEVER,

- You may not legally drink/purchase alcohol until you are 21 years of age.
- You may not vote until you are 18 years old.

## Rights and Responsibilities of parties to a marriage

- Only parties 17 years old or older may be issued a marriage license.
- Parties may file for divorce for certain reasons.
- Being married could affect how you file your income tax return.
- You may be able to obtain health benefits through your spouse’s employer.
- You have a legal responsibility for a child born during the marriage.
- If you divorce after having a child or children, you may be responsible for the payment of child support.
- If you divorce, you may be responsible for the payment of alimony to the other party.
- Being a married person affects how property is distributed upon the death of a spouse.
- Marriage could affect your financial responsibilities for debts incurred during the marriage.
- You may be entitled to receive certain government benefits (such as Social Security, disability benefits) for spouses.
- You may be entitled to other benefits as a spouse of certain qualifying persons (such as veterans, members of the military).

**The rights and responsibilities listed are not necessarily exhaustive and you are encouraged to contact one of the offices below if you have questions or would like more information.**

**Statewide: [www.justiceforalltn.com](http://www.justiceforalltn.com) or [www.tals.org](http://www.tals.org), 1-844-HELP4TN**

### **Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland**

(Offices in Clarksville, Columbia, Cookeville, Gallatin, Murfreesboro, Nashville, Oak Ridge, Tullahoma)  
1321 Murfreesboro Pike, Suite 400, Nashville, TN 37217  
Nashville: (615) 244-6610; Toll Free: (800) 238-1443  
[www.las.org](http://www.las.org)

### **West TN Legal Services, Inc.**

(Offices in Jackson, Dyersburg, Huntington, and Selmer)  
210 W. Main Street; P. O. Box 2066  
Jackson, TN 38302-2066  
Jackson: (731) 423-0616; Toll Free: (800) 372-8346  
[www.wtls.org](http://www.wtls.org)

### **Legal Aid of East Tennessee**

(Offices in Knoxville, Chattanooga, Cleveland, Maryville, Johnson City, and Morristown)  
607 W Summit Hill Dr. SW, Knoxville, TN 37902  
Knoxville: (865) 637-0484; [www.laet.org](http://www.laet.org)

### **Memphis Area Legal Services, Inc.**

(Offices in Memphis and Covington)  
22 N. Front St., 11th Floor  
Memphis, TN 38103  
Memphis: (901) 523-8822; [www.malsi.org](http://www.malsi.org)

## **Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault**

If you are a victim of domestic violence and are in immediate danger, call 9-1-1. You may seek an Order of Protection if you are a victim of domestic abuse or violence. Contact your county’s Circuit Court or General Sessions Court Clerk’s office. You should also contact law enforcement.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline  
1-800-799-SAFE (7233)  
[www.theHotline.org](http://www.theHotline.org)

The National Sexual Assault Hotline  
1-800-656-HOPE (4673)  
[www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)