



**Rule 17.400—Form 416: General Answer to a Petition for Custody and Visitation**

**Respondent:** You must file an Answer in the county where the Petition was filed within **20 days** after receiving the Petition and Original Notice, or the **court may enter a judgment against you** giving the Petitioner what he or she asked for in the Petition.

If the Petition you received is on form 401, use form 415 for your Answer.

Read the [Guide to Representing Yourself in an Iowa Custody and Visitation Case \(Parents not Married\)](#) on the Iowa Judicial Branch website before using this form.

 *If filing electronically and you include protected information on this form, fill out or update the Protected Information Disclosure (form 411).*

 *If filing in paper, you may use form 411 to provide any protected information in full.*

**If you do not understand how to use this form, or if you should use this form, talk to an attorney.**

**In the Iowa District Court for \_\_\_\_\_ County**  
*County where the Petition was filed*

**Upon the Petition of**

**Petitioner**

*The other parent's full name: first, middle, last*

and concerning

**Respondent**

*Your full name: first, middle, last*

Equity case no. \_\_\_\_\_

**General Answer to a Petition for  
Custody and Visitation**

**1. Respondent's Answer**     *You are Respondent.*

**A. Respondent admits that the following paragraphs in the Petition are true:**

*List the numbers of the paragraphs in the Petition that you think are true. If you decide later that the paragraphs you list here are not true, it may be too late to change your answer.*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**B. Respondent denies that the following paragraphs in the Petition are true:**

*List the numbers of the paragraphs in the Petition that you think are false.*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**C. Respondent does not know whether the following paragraphs in the Petition are true:**

*List the numbers of the paragraphs in the Petition that you are not sure about. If you cannot say a paragraph or a part of a paragraph is true or not true, it may be because you do not know something, such as a date, place, or when something happened.*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**D. Children's living arrangements**

Places where the children have lived during the last five years and the parent(s) or adult(s) who acted as parents:

(1)		<b>Child (1)</b>	<b>Child (2)</b>	<b>Child (3)</b>	<b>Child (4)</b>	<b>Child (5)</b>	<b>Child (6)</b>
	<b>Children's initials</b>						
	<b>Lived with</b>	<i>Adult Name</i>			<i>City</i>		<i>State</i>
	<b>Dates</b>	<i>From mm/dd/yyyy</i>		<i>To mm/dd/yyyy</i>			

(2)		<b>Child (1)</b>	<b>Child (2)</b>	<b>Child (3)</b>	<b>Child (4)</b>	<b>Child (5)</b>	<b>Child (6)</b>
	<b>Children's initials</b>						
	<b>Lived with</b>	<i>Adult Name</i>			<i>City</i>		<i>State</i>
	<b>Dates</b>	<i>From mm/dd/yyyy</i>		<i>To mm/dd/yyyy</i>			

(3)		<b>Child (1)</b>	<b>Child (2)</b>	<b>Child (3)</b>	<b>Child (4)</b>	<b>Child (5)</b>	<b>Child (6)</b>
	<b>Children's initials</b>						
	<b>Lived with</b>	<i>Adult Name</i>			<i>City</i>		<i>State</i>
	<b>Dates</b>	<i>From mm/dd/yyyy</i>		<i>To mm/dd/yyyy</i>			

(4)		<b>Child (1)</b>	<b>Child (2)</b>	<b>Child (3)</b>	<b>Child (4)</b>	<b>Child (5)</b>	<b>Child (6)</b>
	<b>Children's initials</b>						
	<b>Lived with</b>	<i>Adult Name</i>			<i>City</i>		<i>State</i>
	<b>Dates</b>	<i>From mm/dd/yyyy</i>		<i>To mm/dd/yyyy</i>			

(5)		<b>Child (1)</b>	<b>Child (2)</b>	<b>Child (3)</b>	<b>Child (4)</b>	<b>Child (5)</b>	<b>Child (6)</b>
	<b>Children's initials</b>						
	<b>Lived with</b>	<i>Adult Name</i>			<i>City</i>		<i>State</i>
	<b>Dates</b>	<i>From mm/dd/yyyy</i>		<i>To mm/dd/yyyy</i>			

Check this box if you have attached a separate sheet listing additional children.

**Note: If the children have not lived in Iowa for six months, you might not be able to get custody. The rules are complicated and you may need to talk to an attorney.**

E. Protective or no contact orders

*Check one*

- (1)  There is neither a “protective order” nor a “no contact order” between Respondent (you) and Petitioner (the other parent).
- (2)  There is a “protective order” or “no contact order” between Respondent and Petitioner.

*If you check (2), fill in the following information:*

a. County and state where the order came from: \_\_\_\_\_  
*County State*

b. Court case number: \_\_\_\_\_

F. Other cases about the children

*Check (1) or (2)*

- (1)  There are no other cases about the children. *If you check (1), skip to G.*
- (2)  There are other cases about the children.

**If there is an order from out of state about the children, an Iowa court may not be able to issue an order about custody or visitation. The rules are complicated and you may need to talk to an attorney.**

*If you check F(2), fill in the applicable information below.*

a. Juvenile court

*Check i or ii.*

- i.  There is no juvenile court case.
- ii.  There is a juvenile court case.

*If you check ii, fill in the following information:*

(a) County and state of the juvenile court case: \_\_\_\_\_  
*County State*

(b) Juvenile court case number: \_\_\_\_\_

*Check (i) or (ii)*

- (i)  Concurrent jurisdiction has been granted.
- (ii)  Concurrent jurisdiction has not been granted.

**Note: If the juvenile court has not given concurrent jurisdiction (permission,) then child custody cannot be decided in this case. You should talk to an attorney.**

b. Custody order

You might not be able to get custody in Iowa if there is a custody order entered in another state.

*Check i or ii.*

- i.  There is no custody order.
- ii.  There is a custody order.

*If you check ii, fill in the following information:*

(a) County and state where the custody order came from: \_\_\_\_\_  
*County State*

(b) Court case number: \_\_\_\_\_

c. Child support order

*Check i or ii.*

- i.  There is no child support order.
- ii.  There is a child support order.

*If you check ii, fill in the following information:*

(a) County and state where the child support order came from: \_\_\_\_\_  
*County* *State*

(b) Court case number: \_\_\_\_\_

G. Respondent denies anything in the Petition that is not admitted in this Answer.

H. Other information:

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**2. Respondent's Request** *If you do not know what you want, talk to an attorney.*

Respondent asks the court to: *Write here what you would like the court to do. For example, tell the court what you want for custody and visitation. Be brief. Do not write long descriptions.*

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*Continued on next page*

**3. Attorney Help**

*Check one*

- A.  An attorney did not help me prepare or fill in this paper.
- B.  An attorney helped me prepare or fill in this paper.

*If you check B, you must fill in the following information:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name of attorney or organization, if any* *Attorney's PIN – Ask attorney*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Business address of attorney or organization* *City* *State* *ZIP code*

(\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
*Attorney's phone no.* *Attorney's fax no. – optional* *Attorney's email address – optional*

**4. Service Instructions**

If Respondent is filing in paper

*Check one*

- A.  Respondent will accept service of documents at the attorney's address listed above; or
- B.  Respondent will accept service of documents in this case at the mailing address below.

**5. Certification of Service by Mailing or Delivery**

*Section 5 to be completed only if filing in paper or if the other party is exempt from electronic filing.*

*This document, if filed electronically, will automatically be served on registered parties.*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify that on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_  
*Print your name* *Month* *Day* *Year*

I mailed or gave a copy of this Answer to the other party or the other party's attorney at this address:

\_\_\_\_\_

*Name of person to whom I delivered or mailed it*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Party's or attorney's mailing address* *City* *State* *ZIP code*

**6. Oath and Signature**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read this Answer, and I certify under penalty  
*Print your name*  
of perjury and pursuant to the laws of the State of Iowa that the information I have provided in this Answer is true and correct.

Signed on: \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_  
*Month* *Day* *Year* *Your signature\**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Mailing address* *City* *State* *ZIP code*

(\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
*Phone number* *Email address* *Additional email address – if available*

*\* Whether filing electronically or in paper, you must handwrite your signature on this form. If you are filing electronically, scan the form after signing it and then file electronically.*

**Important Instructions for filing this form on next page.**

## Instructions for Filing an Answer to a Petition for Custody and Visitation

The Iowa Judicial Branch uses an electronic filing court system known as the eFile System. **You must file electronically** unless you get permission from the court to file in paper. Contact the clerk of court in your county if you are unable to file electronically.

### Filing your Answer electronically

- You must register to file electronically. For help, see the [eFile User Guide](#) and the instructions on the [eFile Instructions page](#) on the Iowa Judicial Branch website.
- Scan the signed Answer form and save it as a .pdf. (Save it in a place that will be accessible to you when you file electronically.)
- Log in to the eFile System on the Iowa Judicial Branch website and file your Answer. The login page can be accessed from two different paths: you may [directly log in to eFile](#); or from the judicial branch website menu, you may select "eFile Login."
- You will receive a Notice of Electronic Filing when the clerk of court has approved the filing of your Answer and other documents. You can then open the Answer and print a copy for your records.
- If there was a problem with your filing, you will receive a Notification of Electronic Filing in your eFile account. Log into My Filings, correct the error, and resubmit your filing. For help, see [Resubmitting a Returned Filing](#).
- The Notice of Electronic Filing will indicate if the other parent is exempt from electronic filing requirements, in which case, you must mail or serve in paper a copy of the document on the other parent if he or she does not have an attorney.

### Filing your Answer in paper

- Make two photocopies of the original.
- Take your original Answer form and the photocopies to the clerk of court's office in the county where the Petition was filed. The county is listed at the top of the Petition.
- The clerk will time-stamp your forms and copies.
- The clerk will take the original and give the copies back to you.
- Keep one of the copies for your records.
- Serve one of the copies of your Answer on the other parent (Petitioner).
- You can hand one of the copies of the Answer form to the other parent, **or** mail a copy to the other parent at the address shown on the Petition.
- If the other parent has an attorney, you may serve the Petition by mailing a copy to the attorney at the attorney's address.

**Do not file these instructions**