

If you are representing yourself or filling out a Financial Statement for an attorney. A simple thing that the court requires is that all of the boxes be filled out. Therefore, if something is zero (-0-) rather than leaving it blank, you need to put down a zero or the court will likely return that to you. Some of the time, there are difficulties filling out particular boxes, meaning the income changes or bonus changes; what generally makes sense is to make is a good faith estimate as you can and then most importantly is provide a \* or a footnote to see an additional page and then explain on how you came up with the figure and what it is based on. For example, if your bonus fluctuates or your overtime fluctuates, you might say that based on my last years earnings it averaged out to this per week and you put down that figure and explain that it fluctuates year to year, week to week or why it might be higher or lower.

One of the great things people are not aware of is, if things are not easy to explain, then additional sheets to explain those. Generally, you can get a lot of information from a pay stub.

It is important that you list everything weekly when asked, even though sometimes people are paid by-weekly.

Regarding, the expenses you want to give as an exact figure when you can, so for example, if there is a mortgage payment or health insurance costs and things of that nature where there is an exact figure, you want to put provide that. Other ones you might say you make a good faith estimate, such as clothing, food. You also want to be careful not to miss things. So if there is something that is not listed, but you think it is an expense for you whether it might be cable or internet, vacations, gifts or other things that are not listed on some Financial Statements, you want to list those. You can even put down miscellaneous expenses as well, but you want to make sure you list all the real expenses that you have.

Assets are also very important component. You want to be able to list all of your assets and if you're estimating something, putting it down that it is an estimate. If there is a retirement account that you have

that is an estimate, you can put it down that it is an estimate or can put down what date the value of is of such and such a date.

Sometimes you might not be aware of the value, for example a state pension, but you would need to put down a state pension and putting down for the time of the unknown value and at one point you might need to get that appraised, but at least explain or give as much information about that as you can.

Liabilities are also important to list. That can be credit card debt; loans or personal loans and things of that nature and you want to remember that you are signing this under Pains and Penalties of Perjury.

It does not mean that you have to get everything exactly right, but you do want to make sure it is your doing a little bit of research and getting things as accurate as you reasonably can.

You are also obligated to include a copy of your W2 or 1099 from the prior year with the Financial Statement and you should also make a copy of your Financial Statement because each time you go to court, you are going to need to either bring a new Financial Statement or if everything is completely accurate, you will sign an Affidavit, but the court will keep a copy of your Financial Statement and it is not always easily accessible, so if you make sure that you hold onto a copy of that well that would be good.