

Legal & Financial Issues

Being married or not can have huge legal and financial implications. It doesn't matter whether you're unmarried by choice or by not, temporarily or for the long-term -- when it comes to issues like hospital visitation, inheritance, immigration, owning property, taxes, survivors' benefits, and Social Security, your marital status matters. In general, married people receive legal rights and protections -- but also certain obligations -- that unmarried people don't get automatically.

The good news is that people in unmarried relationships can receive most of the important legal protections available to married couples, if they're willing to do the work. That work might involve learning what the issues are (lucky for you, we're here to help), writing some documents or signing some paperwork, and possibly hiring a lawyer to help (that may not be essential, but can be a smart move if there's a lot of property or assets at stake). There are some areas, like immigration and Social Security, where there's no way around it: until the laws are changed, unmarried folks simply can't get access.

Fortunately, there are lots of great resources about legal and financial issues. In this section you'll find:

Legal & Financial FAQ

We're not lawyers, but our lawyer friends have taught us the answers to the most common questions unmarried folks ask.

Legal & Financial Books & Links

Check out these excellent sources of additional information.