

All Alimony Awards are Not the Same

[Section 61.08, Florida Statutes](#), and relevant case law, provides for different types of alimony awards. The likelihood of receiving each type of award depends on several factors, including the need of one spouse for support, the ability of the other spouse to pay for that support, and the length of the marriage. Below is a brief description of available types of alimony:

- **Permanent Periodic Alimony-** This type of alimony is regularly ordered for long-term marriages, defined as lasting for 17 years or more. However, it may be awarded in (i) medium-term marriages (7-16 years) depending on certain factors such as the contribution of each party during the marriage and the standard of living during the marriage or (ii) short-term marriages (up to 6 years) if there are exception circumstances such as a spouse contracting a debilitating disease. As the name suggests, this award last for an indefinite amount of time and is paid on a regular basis. However, it may later be modified or terminated by court order if there is a substantial change in circumstances.

- **Durational Alimony-** This type of alimony is generally reserved for medium-term marriages or where permanent periodic alimony is inappropriate. Durational alimony lasts no longer than the length of the marriage (so, for example, if the marriage lasted for 8 years, then a durational alimony award will only be paid for, at most, 8 years after divorce). Like permanent periodic alimony, durational alimony may be modified or terminated if there is a substantial change in circumstances.

- **Rehabilitative Alimony-** This type of alimony is mostly associated with short- or medium-term marriages and is designed to help a party become self-supporting through education or redevelopment of previous skills that may have gone unused during the marriage. A party asking for rehabilitative alimony must provide an education or training plan that

demonstrates how rehabilitation will be accomplished. Rehabilitative alimony will be terminated upon completion of the plan. Additionally, it may be modified or terminated upon a showing of non-completion of the plan or a substantial change in circumstances.

- **Bridge-the-Gap Alimony-** This type of alimony is mainly associated with short- or medium-term marriages, and is designed to help a spouse cope with legitimate, identifiable short-term needs. This alimony is meant to help a spouse go from being married to be single (in other words, bridge the gap from married life to single life). An award of bridge-the-gap alimony may not exceed 2 years, and may not be modified.

- **Lump Sum Alimony-** This type of alimony is generally used to settle property issues, and may be awarded in long-, medium-, or short-term marriages. This alimony is generally paid from one spouse to another in one lump sum, though it may be broken up into more than one payment. Lump sum alimony is non-modifiable.

- **Temporary Alimony-** Pursuant to [section 61.071, Florida Statutes](#), a judge may award this type of alimony during the divorce or family proceeding. Temporary alimony is designed to provide for living expenses while the case is ongoing, and is more likely to be awarded in a long- or medium-term marriage. Temporary alimony may be modified or terminated at any time if found appropriate by the presiding judge. Additionally, this type of alimony terminates once a final judgment is entered (at which point, one of the other types of alimony may commence).

Adam B. Cordover is a family law attorney and managing shareholder of The Law Firm of Adam B. Cordover, P.A. To learn more about The Law Firm of Adam B. Cordover, P.A. or to

schedule a free consultation, call us at 813.443.0615 or visit us online at www.abcfamilylaw.com.

Attorney Adam B. Cordover is admitted to the Florida Bar and the United States District Court, Middle District of Florida. His office is located at 3839 West Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33609.