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New York Divorce and Family Law Blog

[New York Courts Have Jurisdiction To Dissolve Civil Unions](#)

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A New York court has jurisdiction to hear an action to dissolve a civil union validly entered into outside of this state and to equitably distribute the property acquired during the civil union.

New York courts have recognized and been increasingly accepting of the rights of same sex couples. New York will, for instance recognize, as valid, an out-of-state same-sex marriage even though the marriage could not have been solemnized in New York.

In [Dickerson v. Thompson](#), the parties traveled to Vermont and entered into a civil union. Both parties were residents of New York throughout their relationship; neither party ever resided in Vermont. After the parties' relationship began to deteriorate, the plaintiff sought to dissolve the civil union in New York. (The civil union could not be dissolved in Vermont because neither party was a resident for a year prior to the commencement of the action.)

The Appellate Division, Third Department, noted that although the New York court has jurisdiction to entertain the action to dissolve the civil union, it left open the issue “to what extent relief may ultimately be afforded to the parties.”