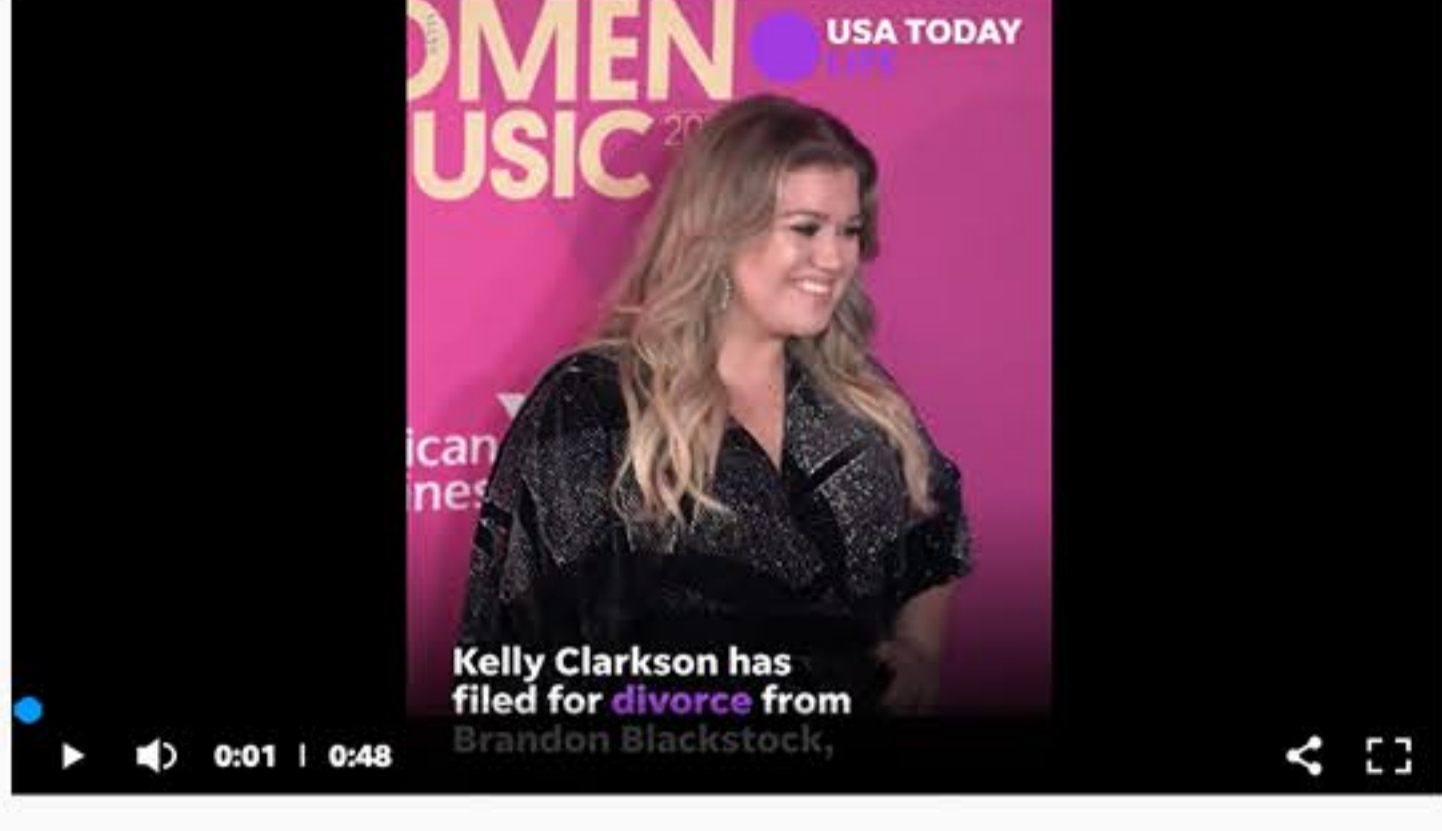


**CELEBRITIES**

# Kelly Clarkson-Brandon Blackstock divorce adds a labor dispute over his management

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Kelly Clarkson and Brandon Blackstock have two children together. Clarkson cited irreconcilable differences as the reason for the split. USA TODAY



The [Kelly Clarkson-Brandon Blackstock](#) divorce has escalated to another acrimonious level: Now the former couple is in a labor dispute over whether Blackstock's talent agency, which managed her for 13 years, failed to obtain a state license as required and overcharged her on management fees.

According to a petition Clarkson filed in October with the California Labor Commissioner's Office and obtained by USA TODAY, she accuses Blackstock, his father Narvel Blackstock and their Starstruck Management Group with a dozen violations of state labor law, including violating the Talent Agencies Act, failure to obtain a proper license, acting against the "best interests" of Clarkson, and "demanding unconscionable fees and compensation (from Clarkson) for illegal services."

Clarkson wants the labor commissioner to get to the bottom of this by demanding a "full and complete accounting" of all the money Clarkson has paid the Blackstocks and Starstruck for services since 2007, and pay it back to her. And she wants a hearing on her complaint.



Kelly Clarkson is divorcing her husband, Brandon Blackstock. (Photo: Evan Agostini/Invision/AP)

Clarkson does not specify in her petition how much she thinks she's owed.

The labor commissioner's office, which enforces the laws relating to talent agencies in California, declined to comment because it's an open case, and an update on the matter will not be available until February, according to Paola Laverde, a spokeswoman for the commission, in an email to USA TODAY.

Clarkson's lawyer, Edwin McPherson, did not return a message from USA TODAY.

Bryan Freedman, who represents Starstruck, told USA TODAY in an email that Clarkson's petition "conveniently ignores" the fact that Clarkson had her own licensed talent agency, CAA, during the period in question.

"While Starstruck Management Group provided talent management services on her behalf, it did so at all times that CAA was her agency of record," Freedman said. "It is unfortunate that Kelly is again attempting to avoid paying commissions that are due and owing to Starstruck to try and achieve some perceived advantage in her ongoing custody and divorce proceedings."



Kelly Clarkson on "The Voice." (Photo: NBC, Trae Patton/NBC)

It's no coincidence this dispute arises after the [Clarkson-Blackstock divorce](#) turned tense. The first "American Idol" champion, Clarkson married Blackstock in 2013, and filed for divorce in June. They have two children: daughter River, 6, and son Remington, 4.

She [won primary physical custody of the kids](#), according to court documents obtained by USA TODAY, on Nov. 30. A judge ruled the couple will share joint physical and legal custody of their children, with Clarkson holding primary physical custody of them in Los Angeles.

"The Court finds that under the circumstances present in this case, the interest in providing stability and continuity for the minor children weighs in favor of Petitioner having primary custody," reads the ruling, in reference to Clarkson.

Additionally, the document states that "the level of conflict between the parents has increased" and that "the parties have a difficult time co-parenting due to issues of trust between them."

In the wake of that decision, [People magazine](#) and [ET](#) reported that Blackstock, 43, is now seeking more than \$400,000 a month from Clarkson, 38, in spousal and child support, plus \$2 million to cover his attorney fees. Her lawyer, Laura Wasser, did not answer an email from USA TODAY.

Clarkson meanwhile has been "opening up," as they say in Hollywood, about how she's coping with the divorce. Last week on "The Kelly Clarkson Show," [she talked about steps she's taking to help her feel good](#), like buying a new house and decorating it.

"I got a new house, it's very white and clean," Clarkson said. Also, she said, she redid her office, with some help from her show's art department.

"I was like, 'Please help me make this make sense. I need to feel cleansed,'" Clarkson continued. "I just wanted to feel happy, and it does. The colors make me feel really good."

Earlier, [in a September interview on the "Today" show](#), she admitted it's been hard.

"I mean, it's no secret. My life has been a little bit of a dumpster," Clarkson said. "Personally, it's been a little hard the last couple months."

She said she spoke to friends who have been through divorces.

"I don't know how people go through that without having some kind of outlet, because it is the worst thing ever for everyone involved."