



Domestic Violence Courts

A National Leader in Best Practices to Enhance Victim Safety, Increase Offender Accountability, and Reduce Recidivism

A growing number of states have established specialized Domestic Violence Courts. According to the Center for Court Innovation, there are over 200 Domestic Violence Courts across the nation. Idaho is proud to administer 8 of those 200 courts.

Domestic Violence Courts are characterized by a single presiding judge; dedicated on-site staff (including a court coordinator, victim advocate, probation officer and representatives from defense and prosecution); and a coordinated community response between the justice system and community stakeholders. Each component of Idaho's Domestic Violence Courts is designed to promote enhanced victim safety and offender accountability.

Domestic Violence Courts Operational in Six Judicial

Districts: Idaho Domestic Violence Courts monitored over 1,400 offenders in FY2013. Domestic Violence Court Coordinators assisted over 1,100 victims navigate the court system in both criminal and civil cases.

Dedicated Domestic Violence Courts have many advantages. Because the same judges, prosecutors, and probation officers handle all domestic violence cases in jurisdictions with a domestic violence court, these individuals gain expertise in domestic violence issues, ensuring greater consistency in the processing of these cases. Domestic Violence Courts have altered business practices to ensure that domestic violence cases are managed in a way that maximizes victim safety and offender accountability. For example, Domestic Violence Courts schedule and process domestic violence cases separately from other court cases. This ensures that cases are processed quickly, which

expedites the offender's entrance into treatment and provides victims with early access to advocacy and services.

Judicial review hearings are scheduled so offenders are monitored regularly and victim safety is addressed on an on-going basis, even after sentencing occurs. By specializing in domestic violence offenses, these courts also incorporate a stronger focus on rehabilitation of offenders.

"I have never had a better life, this truly has been a blessing in disguise, my relationships with my wife and children are better than it has ever been, the system truly worked in this case."

~ Domestic Violence
Court Offender

Idaho Selected for the Domestic Violence Mentor Court Initiative

The Ada County Domestic Violence Court was one of only three courts in the nation chosen by the Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women for the new Mentor Court Initiative. This well-established court will serve as a role model and disseminate proven strategies to other courts across the nation. Ada County will share their expertise by hosting site visits and linking courts with peers facing similar challenges. The Ada County Domestic Violence Court team will help other Domestic Violence Courts implement best practices, improve procedures, replicate relevant programming, and build overall capacity of state court systems to respond effectively to these difficult cases. The Ada County Domestic Violence Court handles more than 300 cases a year, using intensive supervised probation, post-sentencing judicial monitoring, specialized offender assessment and treatment, and comprehensive case planning. Ada County's Domestic Violence Court will serve as an example for mid-size and rural communities that often face a distinct set of challenges when developing and operating specialized courts.

**Report to Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter
and the 2nd Regular Session of the 62nd Idaho Legislature**

Quotes from Judges and other who attended the Domestic Violence Court Conference

- *Choices of the presenters was just outstanding. Each one of them is absolutely on top of the game and knowledgeable. Really worthwhile overall.*
- *... excellent opportunity for us to get information to setup our newly funded DV court. The entire conference is invaluable and a great tool to assist us.*
- *This was an excellent opportunity for me to learn more about DV Courts and how they work. We are starting a DV Court in our county and attending this conference and learning more specifically about my role as a probation office in the DV Court has been helpful and exciting.*

Office on Violence Against Women Court Training and Improvements Program Grant Awarded to the First Judicial District

The 1st Judicial District was awarded a three year grant to develop and implement a Domestic Violence Court in Kootenai County. The new Domestic Violence Court, started in April 2013, is designed to handle all misdemeanor domestic violence cases filed in Kootenai County. Through extensive planning this court implemented accelerated disposition of domestic violence cases, intense offender monitoring, on-site victim advocacy, and a coordinated team approach to domestic violence cases.

Updated Court Resources for Victims of Domestic Violence Now Available

The civil protection order video and brochure were updated and are available on the Supreme Court's website at: www.isc.idaho.gov/problem-solving/brochures-videos. Both resources, also available in Spanish, explain what a civil protection order is, how it differs from a criminal no-contact order, how to petition for a protection order and other resources that are available to help victims of domestic violence. The brochure contains important information and resources that will assist victims of domestic violence through the civil court process.

Improving the Civil and Criminal Justice Systems Response to Domestic Violence

The 2012 Domestic Violence Court Conference included national speakers, networking opportunities, and breakout sessions that were invaluable to Domestic Violence Court teams around the state of Idaho. This was an opportunity for Idaho judges, along with their Domestic Violence Court teams, to meet others in their discipline involved in Domestic Violence Courts.

The two-day conference included several expert presenters from around the country for plenary sessions, panel discussions, and breakout sessions. The conference addressed research and current trends of domestic violence courts; best practices and guidelines for responding to domestic violence; and the Idaho risk assessment of dangerousness. The conference was attended by approximately 100 professionals involved in Idaho's Domestic Violence Courts.

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Domestic Violence Courts

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Welcome to the Idaho Domestic Violence Court Website

Idaho Domestic Violence Courts seek to improve the civil and criminal justice systems response to domestic violence by enhancing victim safety and offender accountability, and providing effective case management and coordination of information when families are involved in multiple cases. Idaho Domestic Violence Court Policies and Guidelines were developed to articulate research-based best practices and identify essential elements for Domestic Violence Courts.

Here you will find information about the Domestic Violence Courts in Idaho, resources to assist those who manage and staff Idaho Domestic Violence Courts, and links to a wealth of additional web-based information, articles, & publications. For further information or to comment, contact Amber Niles, Statewide Domestic Violence Courts Manager at: amni@iscourts.net

HELP IS AVAILABLE - LOVE SHOULDN'T HURT.

If you or someone you know have been or are currently a victim of domestic violence, please click here to go to the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence to obtain additional information on domestic violence and how to protect yourself and your family.

Idaho's Domestic Violence Courts are Changing the Culture of Victim Safety and Offender Accountability

Domestic violence victims face many barriers to safety and independence. Incomprehensible and complex court processes should not be among these barriers. Domestic Violence Courts assign families with a criminal domestic violence case and a divorce, custody, or child protection case to a single judge. This practice ensures accurate information for judicial decisions; compatible, consistent court orders; and improved outcomes for families. A fast-track criminal case disposition is combined with ongoing judicial reviews. This process enhances victim and children safety while holding offenders accountable. Domestic Violence Courts hold offenders to a higher level of accountability by concentrating responsibility for defendant oversight in the hands of a single judge who can monitor compliance with court orders and program mandates. In addition, victims gain a greater voice in their cases and are better able to address critical family issues—such as safe visitation—that often impede safety and independence. Additionally, resources and referrals for victims are coordinated early in the court process.

The Domestic Violence Court Coordinator is fundamental to the effective operation of Domestic Violence Courts. Domestic Violence Court Coordinators identify gaps and barriers in services for victims, create services and treatment options for victims and offenders in rural areas, and facilitate the development of a coordinated community response to improve the handling of domestic violence cases within the justice system.

Currently Idaho has Domestic Violence Courts in 6 Judicial Districts. [Learn more](#) about each Domestic Violence Court model.

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, Family Violence Department and the Center for Court Innovation found that Idaho was the first state in the nation to adopt legislation authorizing the establishment of Domestic Violence Courts statewide. Not only is Idaho's provision regarding statewide Domestic Violence Courts legislatively distinctive, the creation and legislative support of a Domestic Violence Court Coordinator is innovative and is currently the only such legislation in the country.

Find out more about Idaho Legislation and Domestic Violence Courts

- Domestic Relations Coordinated Family Services Domestic Violence Courts
- Idaho Domestic Violence Crime Prevention Statutes
- Idaho Crimes and Punishments Assault & Battery Statutes

Idaho Domestic Violence Courts
Essential Elements

- Case Assignment
- Expedited Hearings
- Case Coordination
- Supervision of Offender Progress
- Evaluation and Assessment of Offenders
- Treatment and Treatment Providers
- Collaboration with Key Stakeholders
- Courthouse Safety
- Evaluation and Monitoring of Domestic Violence Courts

Quick Links

- Civil Protection Order Brochure & Video (English & Spanish) Available
- DV Courts Policies & Guidelines
- DV Court Application
- Domestic Violence Court Coordinator Roster
- Domestic Assault & Battery Evaluator Roster
- Idaho Approved Domestic Violence Offender Intervention Programs
- Idaho Approved Programs for Victims of Crime
- Court Assistance Office
- Family Court Services
- Problem Solving Courts
- Legislative Reports
- Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence
- Idaho Council on Domestic Violence & Victim Assistance

