



IDAHO JUDICIARY

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Family Court Services

Coordinated Family Services—Meeting the Needs of Families and Children in Court

The legislature has found that an effective response to address the needs of families and children involved in disputes is through the use of coordinated family services. Family Court Services (FCS), Court Assistance Offices (CAO), and Domestic Violence Courts (DVC) were established by Idaho Code Title 32, Chapter 14, to meet the needs of children and families in the courts by fostering family relationships, offering legal assistance, and responding to domestic violence. These services combine to provide innovative case management practices to promote an efficient use of family and court resources and to improve the court process and ultimately, outcomes, for families.

Promoting services to resolve issues in the least adversarial manner and respect the needs of families.

Family Court Services address the unique needs of children and families involved in disputes with a goal of easing the way for families in conflict and mitigating negative impacts on children. FCS assists families by helping parents understand the importance of child-centered parenting plans and providing access to mediation to peacefully resolve child custody and visitation conflicts. Each of the seven Judicial Districts in Idaho has an FCS office that promotes a set of core services throughout the state.

Along with core services, FCS provides community, attorney, and judicial training on topics that improve case management and family well-being. Topics included mediation, parenting plans, challenges relating to parent-child contact, and changes in the Idaho Rules of Family Law Procedure.

Children and Families in the Courts Committee

FCS policy is guided by the Children and Families in the Courts Committee (CFCC) which is tasked by Idaho Code section 32-1403 to help the

FCS Core Services Provided in FY2018

Co-Parent Education: 8,700 parents informed on the needs of their children during divorce proceedings.

Pre-Filing Workshops: 900 parents attended workshops on the court process.

Civil Intake Screenings: 250 individuals screened to identify services that best fit that family's needs.

Mediation: 1,700 cases were referred to mediation with 490 coming to an agreement.

Brief Focused Assessments: 80 cases referred to professionals to answer narrowly defined questions.

Parenting Time Evaluations: over 100 cases ordered to an evaluation.

Supervised Visitation: over 2,200 visits occurred between parents and children with support from supervised access providers.

Court implement a coordinated family court services plan for a comprehensive response to children and families in the courts through recommendations on policies and procedure.

The CFCC consists of a dynamic group of professionals, ranging from attorneys and judges to mental health professionals, all of whom work within the family court system. Each member brings to the table a unique perspective. This allows CFCC to remain relevant and grow and expand policies as needed.

CFCC and FCS look forward to providing continued service for Idaho's families. Future projects include information and classes in Spanish, continued expansion with a focus on rural service providers, and the completion of stakeholder surveys to identify resources gaps and guide future program development.

Improving the civil and criminal justice systems response to domestic violence.

Idaho has eleven active domestic violence courts in five judicial districts.

Idaho's domestic violence courts are characterized by a judge specially trained in domestic violence, dedicated on-site staff, and a coordinated community response between the justice system and community stakeholders. These dedicated courts ensure that offenders are carefully monitored, victims have access to comprehensive services, and judges have the information they need to make prompt and effective decisions. Each component of Idaho's domestic violence courts is designed to promote victim safety and hold offenders accountable.

In FY2018, Idaho's domestic violence court coordinators provided referrals to and assisted over 1,300 victims navigate the court system in both criminal and civil cases.

Domestic violence courts connect victims with advocacy and other services early in the process. Domestic violence courts also hold offenders to a higher level of accountability through judicial oversight, including review hearings. Judicial review hearings require an offender to appear before the judge to demonstrate that he or she is complying with the conditions of probation. Review hearings are regularly scheduled court appearances in which judges publicly evaluate how well offenders are adhering to the terms of their probation. Judges base their reviews on comprehensive reports provided by probation officers and treatment providers who monitor the individual offenders and who seek input from victims. Depending on the contents of these reports, judges use graduated sanctions and rewards to encourage those who are doing well and to assure that those with poor compliance either change or are held accountable. These types of hearings improve offender compliance and victim safety.

Domestic violence courts conducted over 3,700 judicial review hearings in FY2018.

Where judicial reviews are in place, offenders see that they are being supervised, victims and the community see the court is serious about its orders, and the court sends a consistent message: domestic violence is a crime that will not

be tolerated in our community.

As domestic violence courts expand throughout Idaho's judicial districts, they are promoting best practices in effectively handling these difficult civil and criminal cases. More rural counties are incorporating domestic violence court practices.

In order to update the judiciary on recent changes to Idaho law, and to improve judicial responses to civil protection filings, in 2018 judicial bench cards were developed outlining Idaho law related to civil protection orders, including best practices to ensure safety. This valuable judicial resource, paired with statewide mentoring activities, provides for the sharing of ideas, learning, and collaboration. Idaho courts are promoting enhanced victim safety and offender accountability in all domestic violence related cases including protection orders, child protection, family law, and all types of criminal cases throughout the state.

Expanding opportunities for self-represented individuals to access Idaho courts in Family Law Cases

The role of the Court Assistance Office (CAO) is to promote equal and meaningful access to the courts and increase the accessibility of resources and legal information for individuals who represent themselves without an attorney. Each county provides CAO services that can include providing court approved forms, review of court forms, and organizing legal advice clinics. All of these services decrease the demand on other court offices and result in self-represented litigants being better prepared for court.

Many of the forms available through the office involve common family law issues. This helps the large number of individuals in family law cases who appear without legal representation.



Mission Statement of the Idaho Courts

*As the Third Branch
of Government, we
provide access to
justice by ensuring
fair processes and
the timely, impartial
resolution of cases.*

The Idaho Judiciary Stands For:

*Integrity
Fairness
Independence
Respect
Excellence
Innovation*

The Idaho Judiciary Strives To:

*Provide Timely,
Impartial Case
Resolution Through
Legally Fair
Procedures*

*Ensure Access to
Justice*

*Promote Effective,
Innovative Services*

*Increase Public
Trust and
Confidence In
Idaho's Courts*

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