

Treatment Courts



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Idahoans in the justice system with significant substance abuse and mental health issues require interventions that address their needs and hold them accountable. Treatment courts provide the support and supervision critical to helping participants achieve stability, reach sobriety, restore family relationships, and learn skills to be valuable members of their communities.

In a treatment court, a judge leads a team including attorneys, coordinators, treatment providers, probation officers, and law enforcement focused on each participant's case. Participants are required to attend frequent treatment sessions, recurring court hearings, and drug test at least twice per week. When participants are held accountable and given opportunities to acquire skills, they have a greater chance at long-term positive improvement.

In FY2022, Idaho operated 68 treatment courts covering 86% of this state's 44 counties. Those included drug courts, juvenile drug treatment courts, veterans treatment courts, DUI courts, and mental health courts. (A map can be found at annualreport.isc.idaho.gov.) These courts served 2,175 individuals, with 493 participants graduating during the year. There were 36 drug-free babies born to female participants in FY2022, paving the way to break generational cycles of addiction and justice involvement.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Increasing access to justice for treatment courts requires us to think beyond the number of participants served, to consider how to best address

participants' unique needs. In FY2022, for example, courts ensured interpreter services were available during counseling sessions, improving access for people with hearing impairments or language barriers.

NEW TREATMENT COURT RULES

The Idaho Rules for Treatment Courts (IRTC) are a new set of comprehensive administrative and procedural rules that provide uniformity while allowing for some localized variance in practice in our adult treatment courts. These rules were drafted over the course of two years with a small workgroup of judges and broad feedback from our Treatment Court Committee, justice system stakeholders, and members of the public. The Idaho Supreme Court unanimously adopted them effective July 1, 2022.

The hope is that these new rules will speed implementation of best practices and move some practices and procedures from being aspirational to enforceable. The rules can be found at isc.idaho.gov/irtc.

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

In FY2022, Idaho treatment court team members had the chance to attend a statewide virtual conference with nationally recognized speakers on the theme "Strong Teams Can Better Support Participants." The virtual format contributed to the highest attendance ever at an Idaho treatment court conference. Other statewide webinars addressed peer support, parolees in treatment court, juvenile treatment court guidelines, and the new treatment court rules.

