

Treatment Courts



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Treatment courts are a vital part of our justice system, helping people with significant substance use and mental health issues achieve stability and find recovery while still holding them accountable. These courts help restore family relationships, teach valuable life skills, and help people become productive members of their communities.

Treatment courts require participants to attend several days a week of counseling, make regular appearances in front of the treatment court judge, and complete randomized drug testing and various educational assignments and activities. When participants do not adhere to the requirements, they may experience sanctions such as community service, additional assignments, or even jail time.

Once a participant has completed all of the program requirements, they are eligible for graduation, where they are recognized for their hard work and dedication to their recovery.

RECENT ACTIVITY

Idaho operates 69 treatment courts covering 38 of this state's 44 counties. These include courts focused on drug and alcohol use, mental health, domestic violence, veterans, and youth mental health and drug use.

In fiscal year 2024, Idaho treatment courts served 2,279 people with 613 participants graduating their respective programs. There were 28 drug-free babies born to participants, representing lifelong health benefits for the child.

Evaluations show these programs create a notable decrease in recidivism. DUI court participants who were studied were 38% less likely to reoffend. Drug court participation decreased recidivism by at least 26%, and mental health court participants charged with felonies were 31% less likely to commit new offenses.

Idaho since 2016 has been ranked in the top three U.S. states in terms of treatment courts per capita. In 2023, Idaho ranked third, sitting behind West Virginia and Montana. Every state in the country has at least one treatment court, proving the importance of these courts is recognized nationwide.

Idaho's newest treatment court is a veterans treatment court established in Kootenai County in fall 2024. Veterans treatment courts focus on people who served their country, developed behavioral health issues and have since ended up in the justice system. "VTC is not 'an easy way out,'" presiding Judge Anna Eckhart said. "They will be forced to address the issues that led them to VTC, and they will learn how to deal with those issues. That will not only put them back on the path to leading a happy life; it will also protect society."

COURT SUPPORT

Treatment court professionals and other court staff from across Idaho attended a treatment court conference and mental health summit in spring 2024. The events provided training on current research-based best practices and a chance for attendees to discuss challenges and successes they have faced.

