

Coordinated Family Services



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Title 32, Chapter 14 of Idaho Code recognizes a need to coordinate services for families caught up in complex court proceedings.

Coordinated Family Services includes a range of programs created to quickly and effectively resolve family-related court cases. To pay for these programs, the Legislature created the Drug Court, Mental Health Court, and Family Court Services Fund.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURTS

Families experiencing domestic violence are often involved in multiple cases — divorce/custody, child protection, and various criminal proceedings. Domestic violence courts hold offenders accountable, connect victims with advocacy and support services, and coordinate resources among courts and community agencies.

Idaho has 10 of these courts spread across five judicial districts. A 2023 evaluation of Idaho's domestic violence courts revealed that participation in a domestic violence court reduces the likelihood of future domestic violence charges by 23% after three years.

COURT EDUCATION

The Idaho Judicial Branch emphasizes continuous education, starting with classes for all new judges when they take office.

More than 300 judges, attorneys, court staff, and service providers attended the 2025 Children and Families Institute, learning about cross-system collaboration and ways to identify both stalking in family court cases and the dynamics abusers exercise in family court.

REDUCING FAMILY CONFLICT

Only a small percentage of divorce cases go through a trial, reflecting both the parties' and the court's interests in finding more efficient ways to resolve disputes — and ways that are less emotionally taxing to the parties. Cases that do reach trial typically involve complex financial issues, contested custody matters, or high levels of conflict that complicate efforts to resolve them.

Idaho families in FY2025 filed 4,175 divorce or custody cases involving minor children. Judges formally referred 31% of those cases to mediation to seek resolution outside of formal court proceedings. In 14% of cases, judges ordered parties to attend parenting classes, one example of how Idaho's programs emphasize educating parents on the harmful effects of conflict on children.

Judges have other tools available for the most complicated cases, but they are rarely used. This speaks to the effectiveness of other methods of resolution. In 2% or fewer of cases, judges:

- Ordered brief assessments of specific issues they believed would help resolve a custody dispute.
- Ordered parenting time evaluations — a tool that can navigate disputes and give additional information to the judge.
- Appointed parenting coordinators.
- Ordered other evaluations (psychological, domestic violence).

In the end, of the nearly 4,200 cases filed, only 4% went to trial during FY2025.

