



Report to Governor  
C.L. "Butch" Otter  
and the 1st Regular  
Session of the 63rd  
Idaho Legislature

# Problem-Solving Courts

## Drug Courts Reduce Recidivism and Save Tax Dollars

A recent statewide outcome evaluation of Idaho's felony drug courts found that the combined rate of recidivism and program failure is significantly lower for offenders in felony drug courts than for offenders who were sentenced to probation or served a term under retained jurisdiction. This finding provides added evidence that Idaho's drug courts save tax dollars which otherwise would be spent for longer periods of incarceration. The full study can be found at [www.isc.idaho.gov/solve-court/rd](http://www.isc.idaho.gov/solve-court/rd).

Combined Rates of Recidivism and Program Failure



### 16 YEARS OF PROBLEM-SOLVING COURTS IN IDAHO

Since Idaho's first two drug courts were established in 1998, the drug court model has expanded to provide a variety of sentencing alternatives for offenders with alcohol, drug and mental health problems and to improve community safety, reduce recidivism, and save taxpayers' dollars. More importantly drug courts have saved lives, prevented drug-affected births, and returned individuals to lives as productive citizens. After sixteen years of operation, Idaho now has 66 drug and mental health courts, operating under Standards and Guidelines adopted by the Statewide Drug Court and Mental Health Court Coordinating Committee. As of June 30, 2014, Idaho's 66 problem-solving courts include:

- » 27 Felony Drug Courts
- » 11 Adult Mental Health Courts
- » 1 Juvenile Mental Health Court
- » 6 Misdemeanor/DUI Courts
- » 6 DUI Courts
- » 7 Juvenile Drug Courts
- » 4 Veterans Courts

### AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE FOR PROBLEM-SOLVING COURTS

Not only have drug and mental health courts served over 15,642 offenders since 1998, there have now been nearly 6,000 graduates with 578 graduates in FY2014. Of those served in drug court, 58% were felony offenders. If this sentencing alternative was not available to district court judges, these offenders would likely have been sentenced to the penitentiary, incurring costs in excess of \$20,000 per year per offender just for incarceration.

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## VETERANS TREATMENT COURTS GAIN MOMENTUM

Men and women who honorably serve their country may return from combat service with mental health issues, substance use disorders and/or post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injuries. These problems may in turn lead to justice system involvement. In FY2014, 87 Idaho veterans participated in a veterans treatment court for a total of 181 veterans served since the courts started in FY2012. The creative partnerships these courts have established with four regional Veterans Administration Medical Centers and the Idaho Division of Veterans Services has significantly expanded the crucial resources necessary for these veteran participants to restore their lives and regain their honor. Veterans courts are now operating in Ada, Bannock, Canyon and Nez Perce counties and planning or needs analysis is underway in Bonneville, Kootenai and Twin Falls Counties.

## IDAHO COUNTED AMONG NATIONAL LEADERS

The Bonneville County, 7th Judicial District Mental Health Court began in 2002, under the leadership of Judge Brent Moss. Since 2005 the Bonneville County mental health court has served as a national mental health court learning site by the Council of State Governments Justice Center. Jurisdictions across the country wanting to start a mental health court travel to Idaho Falls to visit the court and learn from its multidisciplinary team. Similarly, the Nez Perce County Felony Drug Court was selected to be a national drug court mentor court to assist other courts who will visit Lewiston and observe best practices and evidence-based operational procedures in action.

## PROTECTING PRECIOUS RESOURCES: SUCCESS WITH FAMILIES / DRUG-FREE BABIES

Child protection drug courts seek to engage families to end the cycle of intergenerational trauma and antisocial attitudes, restore families and build productive individuals. Idaho's four child protection drug courts served 77 parents last year in Lewiston, Twin Falls, Pocatello and Idaho Falls. In addition, 22 babies were born to clean and sober women in Idaho drug and mental health courts this year, bringing the total to 323 drug-free births, since the beginning of Idaho's problem-solving courts. National estimates project that a baby born drug-free will save taxpayers as much as one million dollars in lifetime costs and the child will avoid many learning and behavioral challenges throughout their life.

## DRUG COURT SUCCESS STORY

Staci M. is truly an inspiration. She graduated from the Kootenai County Drug Court program in October of 2007. Approximately a year after her graduation, she joined the drug court team and attended every session to offer peer support for several years until her work schedule conflicted with the sessions. Staci's insight helped the team to shape appropriate sanctions and incentives. She has achieved over eight years of sobriety and remains active in the recovery community. To top this, Staci completed the Coeur d'Alene Ironman Triathlon in June 2014.

Staci has come a long way since the methamphetamine addiction which brought her into the drug court. Pictures are worth 1000 words. The photos show Staci in her June 2006 booking photograph and today!



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