

Coordinated Family Services



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In 2001, Title 32, Chapter 14 of the Idaho Code established Coordinated Family Services to promote timely and effective resolutions of family-related disputes involving civil and criminal cases. Coordinated Family Services covers three collaborative yet distinct service areas: Family Court Services (FCS), Court Assistance Offices, and Domestic Violence Courts.

FAMILY COURT SERVICES

The Legislature established the Drug Court, Mental Health Court, and Family Court Services Fund to support a variety of court services, including FCS. In FY2021, the fund supplied \$233,858 to support the work involved and offset the cost of services such as supervised visitation, co-parent education, mediation, focused assessments and parenting time evaluations for parents.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURTS

Idaho's domestic violence courts are designed to promote safety by connecting victims with advocacy and other services while holding offenders accountable through judicial oversight. Currently, Idaho has ten active domestic violence courts in five judicial districts.

The Kootenai County Domestic Violence Court was selected in FY2021 for the Mentor Court Initiative by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women. This follows the Ada County Domestic Violence Court's selection in 2013. The designation of two national Domestic Violence Mentor Courts demonstrates Idaho's innovation, leadership, and dedication to best practices, victim safety and offender accountability.

REDUCING CONFLICT

When parents file for a divorce, they receive education on the importance of parenting plans and reducing the effects of conflict on children. In FY2021, the courts ordered over 5,200 cases to co-parent education. The primary education tool is the Focus on Children class, which has been freshly updated following an analysis of current research. The new standardized curriculum was reviewed by psychologists, mental health professionals, mediators, education professionals, attorneys, and judges prior to being approved by the Idaho Supreme Court for use statewide in FY2022.

IDAHO RULES OF FAMILY LAW PROCEDURE

After about five years in use, the Idaho Rules of Family Law Procedure were revised this past year to become more concise and their meaning clearer. Ninety percent of the rules were reworked in response to feedback from attorneys, judges and self-represented litigants; the revision also incorporated public comment. The Idaho Supreme Court approved the amended rules for use starting in July 2021.

GUIDE & FILE

The Guide & File program allows people to complete and file many court forms themselves, including for a civil protection order, divorce without children, minor guardianship, small claims, or changes to a no-contact order. In FY2021, over 7,500 people opened a court case in Idaho using Guide & File.

