Idaho Domestic Violence Court Policies and Guidelines

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A. Statement of Purpose:

- 1. Domestic violence causes substantial harm to victims and children, as well as to the community. Family members experiencing violence are often involved in multiple court proceedings that might include divorce, custody, substance abuse, child protection, as well as civil and criminal proceedings regarding violence. Substantial resources are required for the incarceration, supervision and treatment of offenders and to assist victims.[I.C.§32-1408]
- 2. Domestic violence courts increase safety for victims, family members, and the community and hold offenders accountable by: 1) providing greater judicial monitoring, 2) coordination of information, 3) providing individualized, evidence-based treatment and solutions; and 4) effective interaction and use of resources among the courts, justice system personnel and community agencies. Effective case management and coordination ensure that decisions do not conflict in multiple cases and provide courts with the necessary information to protect victims, family members, and the community.[I.C.§32-1408]
- 3. The purpose of this document is to set forth guidelines to provide a sound and consistent foundation for the effective development, operation and evaluation of Idaho's domestic violence courts. These guidelines articulate research-based best practices and identify elements that are correlated with desired results and outcomes, including reducing recidivism, enhancing victim and family member safety and increasing accountability for offenders. Domestic violence courts have proven to benefit victims, family members and the community. These policies and guidelines are intended to utilize the benefits that flow from domestic violence courts, and to foster their development and effective operation statewide. [I.C. §32-1408]¹

B. Essential Elements for Idaho Domestic Violence Courts:

Application of Guidelines: Not all models for domestic violence courts are the same, but all successful models share a number of common elements. These guidelines intend to provide a sound and consistent foundation for the effective operation and ongoing evaluation of Idaho's domestic violence courts and incorporate research-based criteria to provide the optimum opportunity for success.

1. Case Assignment

a. Each district shall develop written standards for admission into domestic violence court including the types of cases that will be identified for inclusion, i.e., criminal domestic violence, civil and criminal orders of

¹ This document has been developed for internal purposes only to assist in the operation of Idaho's domestic violence courts.

protection involving the same parties, divorce, custody, child protection, and any other criminal cases that may impact the well-being of family members such as substance abuse charges, etc. No person has a right to be admitted into a domestic violence court. [I.C. §32-1409(3)]

b. Each domestic violence court shall establish written criteria for eligibility, protocol or processes for screening parties for eligibility and discharge of participants, if participation is restricted.

2. Expedited Hearings

Offender's arraignment, pre-trial, motion hearings, and trial setting are set and heard within a short time period of the date of alleged offense. Accelerated disposition of criminal domestic violence cases speeds resolution of the case, expedites the offender's entrance into treatment, protects the victim and family members from the trauma of being in limbo, and provides additional judicial contact, increasing the court's ability to monitor the offender and provide safety for the victim. Even as other family member issues and cases are addressed, criminal arraignment, motion hearings, and trial should occur very quickly.

3. Case Management/Case Coordination

- a. A coordinator is essential to the effective operation of a domestic violence court. The coordinator shall receive general supervision and direction from the Administrative District Judge, Trial Court Administrator and Domestic Violence Court Judge. The coordinator shall receive training, guidance and support from the Statewide Domestic Violence Court Coordinator. The coordinator will also work closely with and receive support and assistance from Family Court Services. See Attachment B Responsibilities of the Domestic Violence Court Coordinator.
- b. The deputy clerk is critical to the effective operation of domestic violence court, under the direction of the presiding Domestic Violence Court Judge and the elected clerk. See Attachment C Responsibilities of the Domestic Violence Court Clerk.
- c. The deputy court clerk shall provide the judge and coordinator with information concerning all related cases, including but not limited to the criminal histories of the parties available through ISTARS, the Statewide Data Repository and, whenever possible, an NCIC (National Crime Information Center) check so that to the extent possible, the coordinator may coordinate all related matters including evaluations, treatment, recovery and family member services.

4. Supervision of Progress

- a. Judicial Review
 - 1. Immediate consequences for violations and infractions are important to increase offender accountability. Quick recognition of offender progress encourages other positive steps. (See Table D).
 - 2. In the judicial review process, sanctions and rewards might be discussed with key stakeholders.
 - 3. Effective calendar management is required to assure regular and frequent review hearings.
 - b. Probation
 - 1. Dedicated probation officer(s) with specialized training and familiarity with domestic violence court procedures are recommended to assist the court with judicial monitoring, provide quick response to violations, and to assist in improving victim safety.
 - 2. The domestic violence probation officer's presence at judicial reviews hearings enhances quick response to both positive and negative behavior by an offender and can assist the court in developing appropriate requirements for each probationer.

5. Evaluation and Assessment of Offenders

- a. In criminal cases, formal domestic violence evaluations are required by an evaluator on the Idaho Supreme Court roster. Mental health and substance abuse evaluations may also be necessary for individual success.
- b. Depending upon the model, evaluation of the offender's level of risk may need to happen before or immediately after the offender is determined to be eligible for the domestic violence court.
- c. The greatest predictor of future violence is past violence, so a comprehensive history is important. In addition, a quality evaluation reflects an efficient use of proven objective tools as well as effective victim and offender interview techniques. The evaluation must address safety, lethality, and risk for recidivism, while meeting the requirements of Criminal Rule 33.3. Recognized up-to-date tools that should be considered include, but are not limited to, Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Guide (SARA), Domestic Violence Inventory (DVI), and Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell's Danger Assessment. Evaluators should be

familiar with current literature in the field, and should give consideration to information provided in the Idaho Model Risk Assessment Tool whenever possible.

d. Risk assessment is crucial to the court in responding to requests to modify or quash civil protection/restraining orders and no contact orders as well as in deciding appropriate treatment interventions.

6. Treatment and Treatment Providers

- a. Treatment providers shall demonstrate they have a plan in place for obtaining and reporting data related to treatment program outcomes.
- b. Treatment providers should provide regular progress reports to probation and the court.
- c. In order to be effective, providers should be able to demonstrate application of current evidence-based research, professional literature, or other promising practices related to effective program delivery and evaluation.
- d. Substance abuse, anger management, and mental health treatment are not substitutes for domestic violence offender intervention though they may be necessary components of successful recovery. If the initial or ongoing evaluation of domestic violence offenders indicates the offender has co-occurring mental health issues, substance abuse and/or chemical dependency, this shall be reported to probation and the court through the process report indicated above.
- e. The Domestic Violence Court should facilitate and promote a treatment implementation strategy that ensures the co-occurring issues of domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental health be treated under one comprehensive treatment plan. Treatment providers shall contribute to the development of a comprehensive treatment plan for the offender and communicate with other providers and the Domestic Violence Court regarding the progress and co-occurring issues of the offender.
- f. The domestic violence court shall consider referral of offenders to other appropriate community resources when additional concerns are identified such as substance abuse, parenting, mental health, physical health, employment, education, vocational rehabilitation, public benefits, housing, and transportation.

g. The domestic violence court should consider referral of family members to appropriate community resources to address other identified service needs, such as safety planning, family and individual counseling (as appropriate), counseling for children, immigration, as well as other resources listed in 6 (c).

7. Collaboration with Key Stakeholders

- a. Collaboration between prosecutors, public defenders, victim witness coordinators, Family Court Services, victim service agencies, treatment providers, probation, law enforcement, and other relevant stakeholders who represent or have on-going relationships with victims and offenders is critical to ensure the successful and effective operation of domestic violence courts.
- b. On-going collaboration requires an intensive effort and active participation from all stakeholders to ensure an effective community response to domestic violence. Key stakeholder's participation is needed at two different levels. First, on a broader policy level to develop and oversee the domestic violence court, a Domestic Violence Court Implementation and Oversight Team shall be formed. Second, on an individual level, a Domestic Violence Court Treatment Team shall be formed to develop treatment and service recommendations for specific offenders.
 - The Domestic Violence Court Implementation and Oversight Team is defined as persons designated by the presiding domestic violence court judge to participate in meetings and develop and evaluate the functioning of the domestic violence court. This may include but is not limited to the presiding judge, Administrative District Judge, Trial Court Administrator, public defender, prosecutor, probation, Family Court Services, and the Domestic Violence Court Coordinator. It is recommended that, whenever possible, the Domestic Violence Court Implementation and Oversight Team include members of an existing local domestic violence task force and/or coordinated community response and law enforcement.
 - 2. The Domestic Violence Court Treatment Team is defined as persons involved in an individual offender's case that may provide supervision, treatment, oversight and/or coordination of services. This may include but is not limited to the presiding domestic violence court judge, the assigned probation officer, the prosecutor, the public defender, the victim witness

coordinator, the Domestic Violence Court Coordinator, and designated treatment providers.

8. Courthouse Safety

a. The domestic violence court should maintain a security plan that ensures a safe and secure environment (with security personnel) that includes the separation of parties when appropriate.

9. Evaluation and Monitoring of Domestic Violence Courts

a. Evaluation and assessment of domestic violence courts is critical for effective operation and the realization of program goals. Domestic violence courts shall cooperate in statewide data collection so that reports can be created for the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Governor and Legislature and for local monitoring and assessment. Additional statistical and data reporting requirements may be required by federal grant authorities.

At a minimum, domestic violence courts shall submit monthly reports to the Administrative Office of the Courts on the following indicators:

- 1. Number of victims served.
- 2. Total number of offender review hearings held and average per offender;
- 3. Total number of judicial contacts with offenders and average per offender;
- 4. Probation violations, reasons for violation and sanctions received;
- 5. Demographics of victims/offenders, including but not limited to, age, relationship, gender;
- 6. Number of new cases filed on current and past domestic violence court participants;
- 7. Number of domestic violence cases filed, dismissed, acquitted, disposed;
- 8. Number of civil cases heard by the domestic violence court (when applicable);
- 9. Time from date of alleged offense to disposition;
- 10. Time from date of offense to implementation of offender's treatment plan and court ordered treatment;
- 11. Time between minor violation and imposition of discretionary time or intermediate sanctions;
- 12. Date of probation violations and time until appearance in domestic violence court.

- b. In cooperation with the Administrative Office of the Courts and the Children and Families in the Courts Committee (CFCC) Domestic Violence Court Subcommittee, domestic violence courts shall define additional statistics that are needed to demonstrate success. Performance indicators shall reflect the program's goals, which include but are not limited to lowering recidivism rates.
- c. Domestic violence court models that take on a problem-solving approach may also focus on data collection that demonstrates a modification of participant's behaviors as well as resolving the case.

C. Formation of Domestic Violence Courts:

- 1. Application requests for implementation of a domestic violence court and funding for a domestic violence court coordinator (coordinator) shall be submitted to the CFCC Domestic Violence Court Subcommittee for preliminary review.
- 2. Each application shall include a detailed plan which incorporates the elements of these guidelines deemed essential for the operation of all domestic violence courts.
- 3. The application shall also include:
 - a. A detailed budget for domestic violence court, which includes the domestic violence court coordinator position and expenses to operate the domestic violence court including resources available from the county and other sources.
 - b. The role of the coordinator, key stakeholders and their primary responsibilities, and the community resources available for each domestic violence court.
- 4. The process shall begin with a Domestic Violence Court Implementation and Oversight Team to write the application and create operational protocols that will address the particular needs of a new domestic violence court. The application shall address the following standards of operation:
 - a. eligibility of participants;
 - b. identification and screening;
 - c. assessment;
 - d. treatment and treatment providers;
 - e. case management and supervision;
 - f. judicial monitoring;
 - g. supervision of progress; and
 - h. court evaluation. [I.C. §32-1409]

- 5. The application shall list the members of the Domestic Violence Court Implementation and Oversight Team as defined in these Policies and Guidelines on page 6, b.1.
- 6. The application will include a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and shall be submitted to the CFCC Domestic Violence Court Subcommittee by the Administrative District Judge and Trial Court Administrator. The MOA must include support by county commissioners, public defender's office, prosecuting attorney's office, probation, and may include any other stakeholders.
- 7. The CFCC Domestic Violence Court Subcommittee shall review the proposed application and MOA and, when necessary, consult with the applicant prior to issuing a written recommendation to CFCC.
- 8. The CFCC Domestic Violence Court Subcommittee shall also recommend funding priorities to CFCC for each judicial district. In addition, the CFCC Domestic Violence Court Subcommittee will identify, recommend, and coordinate national and state training opportunities to ensure the effective operation of domestic violence courts as required by I. C. § 32-1409.

D. Procedures for Termination of a Domestic Violence Court

- 1. Any judicial district planning to terminate a domestic violence court shall submit a letter of planned termination with an explanation of reasons for termination of the domestic violence court to the CFCC, Domestic Violence Court Subcommittee chairperson. The notice of termination shall be signed by the Administrative District Judge and Trial Court Administrator and sent as soon as reasonably possible prior to the proposed ending date.
- 2. The Children and Families in the Courts Committee shall approve or disapprove the planned termination and may adjust the proposed termination date. Once the termination plan has been approved, the domestic violence court shall continue to process all of the current domestic violence court offenders and shall discontinue accepting offenders into domestic violence court.

Attachment A

Supporting Research for Essential Elements of Domestic Violence Courts

Domestic violence courts should be tailored to the needs and resources of the locality in which they operate. Not all models for domestic violence court are the same, but there are best practices and research available to help define key components for the successful and effective operation of domestic violence courts. These key components include:

- 1. Specialized staff and judges trained in domestic violence and relevant law as well as the needs of families affected by domestic violence.
 - a. To the extent possible, trained, specialized staff includes a designated domestic violence court clerk(s) and key partners who appear in court, such as a specialized domestic violence prosecutor, public defender, advocates, batterer treatment provider, and probation officer.²
 - b. It is critical that a judge selected to serve on a domestic violence court be highly interested in taking on the job and willing to be educated on the complex issues surrounding domestic violence. Moreover, domestic violence court procedures and best practices should be institutionalized in a domestic violence court manual to ensure consistency and aid judges in fulfilling this leadership role (*See footnote 2 below*).

2. Expedited Hearings

- a. In a review of the literature, the only outcome measure which has consistently been found to reduce recidivism is reduced time to disposition. Failure to process cases at greater speed, has been associated with increased recidivism.
- **3.** Institutionalized procedures that promote victim, family member and community safety, ensure accountability for those committing domestic violence, and enhance informed, educated judicial decision making. (*See footnote 2, below.*)
 - a. Coordination of cases and services must include routine informationsharing between agencies and courts. An information management system, such as Sharepoint allows key information to be shared among judges, court staff, probation and other relevant agencies.

² Emily Sack, Creating a Domestic Violence Court: Guidelines and Best Practices (2002).

- 4. Ongoing judicial contacts and supervision is essential to each domestic violence court participant whether accomplished through the judicial review hearing process or regular interaction between participants and probation.
 - a. In order for a court to hold offenders accountable for their actions, two things must occur: First, offenders must be closely monitored in order to ensure that they are in compliance with all court conditions. Second, offenders must face swift and certain consequences if they fail to comply with these conditions. \dots^3
 - b. Studies show that judicial review hearings are an effective tool in monitoring and holding offenders accountable.⁴ The court review process for batterer program referrals appears to substantially reduce non-compliance⁵.
 - c. Depending upon issues of compliance, offenders may appear before the court for frequent review. Judges base their reviews on comprehensive reports provided by treatment providers and probation officers who monitor the individual offenders and who seek input from victims.⁶
 - d. In addition to judicial review hearings, a domestic violence court judge should rely on probation, treatment provider reports and the coordinator, to help monitor offender compliance between judicial review hearings.

5. Coordination of court operations through a domestic violence court coordinator.

- a. Courts need to be aware of pending and past actions that occur in other courts and outcomes, including those of courts in other states.⁷
- b. Case coordination reduces conflicting orders and assures that effective, coordinated and enhanced safety measures are put into place for victims

³ Emily Sack, Creating a Domestic Violence Court: Guidelines and Best Practices (2002).

⁴ Vera Institute of Justice, *Judicial Review Hearings: Keeping Courts on the Case* (2006). The Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA and the Family Violence Prevention Fund and State Justice Institute *Creating a Domestic Violence Court: Guidelines and Best Practices, 2002*) recommends that offenders should be held accountable through regularly scheduled review hearings following disposition.

⁵ Edward Gondolf, *The Impact of Mandatory Court Review on Batterer Program Compliance: An evaluation of the Pittsburgh Municipal Courts and Domestic Abuse Counseling Center*, (April 1998).

⁶ Vera Institute of Justice, *Judicial Review Hearings: Keeping Courts on the Case* (2006).

⁷ C.R Flango, V.E Flango, and H.T Rubin, *How are Courts Coordinating Family Cases*? National Center for State Courts, (1999).

and children. Often the involved parties are experiencing other legal and/or social problems such as substance abuse, child protection and/or juvenile justice concerns, custody disputes, divorce and post divorce issues, and mental illness. A coordinator can assist parties in navigating otherwise complicated court processes.

- c. Studies have shown that when victims receive resources and assistance early in the court process, they are much more likely to remain engaged in their cases. Victims are more likely to follow through with a case when they clearly understand the legal process.⁸
- 6. A process that connects participants and family members with appropriate and community services throughout the court process.
 - a. Coordinators provide much needed assistance, resources and referrals to victims and offenders throughout the court process.
 - b. Following disposition, the coordinator may work with probation and victim/witness personnel to adjust probation recommendations to ensure offender accountability and victim service referrals to achieve optimal use of available community resources to increase victim safety.

7. Collaboration between domestic violence courts, public agencies, and community-based organizations to generate local support and enhance court effectiveness.

- a. Interagency collaboration is crucial to ensuring communication, consistency, and continuing education about the court and domestic violence.⁹
 - 1) Key stakeholders can assist in identifying existing and new resources and can help bring other key stakeholders to the table.
- b. The domestic violence court judge provides leadership to the inter-agency collaboration by inviting key stakeholders to participate in regular domestic violence court and task force meetings.
 - 1) The meetings create an opportunity to clarify and understand the court's expectation of everyone's roles. Stakeholder meetings can also focus on strengthening

⁸ Robyn Mazur and Liberty Aldrich, *What Makes a Domestic Violence Court Work? Lessons from New York*, ABA, Number 2, Volume 42, (Spring 2003).

⁹ Robyn Mazur and Liberty Aldrich, *What Makes a Domestic Violence Court Work? Lessons from New York*, ABA, Number 2, Volume 42, (Spring 2003).

outreach to underserved communities and devising preventive education models.

c. Be aware that cross system or multi-disciplinary collaboration can be very rewarding and also difficult because of differing interests and goals, which may be perceived as duplication to already existing services and service providers.

8. On-going evaluation and assessment of each domestic violence court is critical for the effective operation, realization of program goals.

a. Developing a set of performance measures provides a means of objectively assessing programs, products, activities, or services. A formal system for measuring the performance of domestic violence courts is also an essential step in long-term institutionalization of these courts.¹⁰

9. Appropriate courthouse security and safety protocols to ensure safety for all.

a. Court planners should recognize the need for victim safety and provide security and comfort for victims accordingly.¹¹

¹⁰ The Center For Court Innovation, *Performance Measures for Specialized Domestic Violence Courts* at www.courtinnovation.org.

¹¹ Robyn Mazur and Liberty Aldrich, *What Makes a Domestic Violence Court Work? Lessons from New York*, ABA, Number 2, Volume 42, (Spring 2003).

<u>Attachment B</u> <u>Responsibilities of the Domestic Violence Court Coordinator</u>

- Assist in the development of written domestic violence court objectives, policies, and procedures for program operation and program implementation;
- Develop written explanation of the roles and responsibilities of the Domestic Violence Court Team members;
- Help facilitate communication between the assigned court clerk and the Domestic Violence Court Judge to keep them informed of other civil and criminal cases related to the victim and offender;
- Coordinate efforts with local victim service agencies to provide safety planning, victim services, resource and referrals to victims, including but not limited to assist with accessing social service agencies, emergency shelter, food and civil services, referrals to long-term services including counseling, job training, immigration services, child services, and other programs aimed at improving self-sufficiency;
- Assist with supervision and monitoring of offender compliance with treatment programs and other resource referrals; collaborate with off-site organizations to track offender compliance with court orders and probation;
- Monitor effectiveness of victim services and offender court ordered services and make recommendations to the court, community and Regional Domestic Violence Task Force to improve response to victims and improve services if needed;
- Work with probation, the court, and victim/witness personnel to adjust probation recommendations to ensure offender accountability and victim service referrals to achieve optimal use of available community resources to increase safety for all;
- Assist the court in the reassessment of offender risk at different points during the probationary period;
- Participate in, and when necessary, organize monthly meetings of the local domestic violence task force;
- Assist in the development of domestic violence court forms for victims/petitioners;
- Assist in the development of statistical data forms as required by the Idaho Supreme Court;
- Monitor and evaluate program effectiveness;
- Collect data, surveys, prepare reports and other support needed to conduct a program evaluation;
- Apply laws, rules and policies and comply with professional and ethical standards;
- Promote public understanding and acceptance of the district's domestic violence court(s) and its programs;
- Work closely with Family Court Services to coordinate services for all members of the family;
- Work closely with the statewide domestic violence coordinator and the statewide children and families in the courts coordinator to promote effective operation of the Domestic Violence Court.

<u>Attachment C</u> <u>Responsibilities of the Domestic Violence Court Clerk</u>

A deputy clerk shall provide the judge and coordinator with information concerning all related cases, including but not limited to, the criminal histories of the parties available through ISTARS, the statewide data repository and, whenever possible, a National Crime Information Center (NCIC) check.

In addition to the general duties outlined in the clerks' manual, a domestic violence court clerk may have the following duties:

Criminal Cases

- 1) Verify accuracy of no-contact order information in ISTARS with appropriate expiration dates and compliance with requirements for reporting to the ISC repository.
- 2) Monitor criminal domestic violence cases for compliance with speedy trial dates as reported on the monthly CLASS reports.
- 3) Act as resource for other court clerks regarding criminal domestic violence.
- 4) Work closely with domestic violence court coordinator and other clerks.

Civil Cases

- 1) Verify Respondent has been served.
- 2) Process extensions or dismissals of temporary orders and provide copies to parties, attorneys, law enforcement and domestic violence court coordinator.
- 3) Verify accuracy of ISTARS entries with appropriate expiration dates and compliance with requirements for reporting on the ISC repository and appropriate law enforcement agencies.
- 4) Ensure proper assignment of related cases.
- 5) Work closely with domestic violence court coordinator and other clerks.

<u>Attachment D</u> <u>Table of Possible Reinforcements/Rewards and Sanctions</u>

ACHIEVEMENTS	POTENTIAL REINFORCEMENTS
 Attending Court Hearings Negative Urinalysis Results Attendance/Participation in Treatment Attendance/Participation in AA/NA or other recommended support groups by probation Compliance with Treatment Plan Zero Alcohol/Drug Use Compliance with Probation Requirements Payment of assessed fines/fees 	 Acknowledgement by Judge and Probation Officer Decreased Court Appearances Decreased Urinalysis Testing Phase Advancement (if applicable) Lifting of no-contact order when requested by victim AND defendant has been compliant with all court- ordered requirements such as Batterers Treatment Programs, drug and alcohol treatment and other requirements set forth by probation * Note: Lifting no-contact orders should only happen at the request of the victim and after a period of defendant proving achievements and compliance
INFRACTIONS	POTENTIAL SANCTIONS
 Violation of Order(s) Violation of Terms of Probation Dishonest Statement(s) Failure to Perform Sanctions Failure to Comply with court-ordered interventions Non-compliance with treatment, (i.e. leaving treatment, treatment termination for infractions) Positive Urinalysis Missed Urinalysis Tampering with Urine New reports of domestic violence 	 Discretionary Jail Time Reprimand from Court Increased Court Appearances Reading of specific articles (provided by FCSC) on how domestic violence impacts children, or watch video "The impact of D.V. on the Child's Developing Brain" and write a reflection paper on how domestic violence in the parties relationship has impacted their children and their relationship with their children (note this may not be appropriate for some offenders and only in cases involving children) Community Service Hours – Community Justice Model Phase Demotion (if applicable with your model) Increased Intensity in Treatment and/or Increased Treatment Time in Program Jail (weekends or straight time) Fines may be appropriate if it will not impact victim and children