



Report to the Governor
C.L. "Butch" Otter
and the
1st Regular Session of the
64th Idaho Legislature

IDAHO JUDICIARY

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IDAHO'S PROBLEM-SOLVING COURTS FY2017 ANNUAL REPORT

Problem Solving Courts At-a-Glance

Since the first two drug courts began in Idaho in 1998, problem-solving courts (PSC) have expanded to a total of 69 courts dealing with offenders who are at high risk of recidivism and who have significant behavioral health treatment needs. The majority of these offenders are at risk of incarceration in a prison system that is becoming increasingly overcrowded and costly. Without proper intervention, these high risk offenders present elevated public safety concerns. These 69 problem-solving courts offer an important sentencing option for Idaho courts. There are now:

- 30 Felony Drug Courts
- 5 Juvenile Drug Courts
- 6 DUI Courts
- 2 Child Protection Drug Courts
- 1 Young Adult Drug Court
- 12 Adult Mental Health Courts
- 4 Misdemeanor/DUI Courts
- 6 Veterans' Treatment Courts
- 2 Juvenile Mental Health Courts
- 1 Domestic Violence Drug Court

Idaho's problem-solving courts have served a total of 21,973 individuals as of the end of FY2017, with over 7,600 graduates. There were 664 graduates in FY2017 alone.

Veterans Treatment Courts Continue to Save Lives and Restore Honor

Idaho now has six Veterans Treatment Courts: Ada, Bannock, Bonneville, Canyon, Nez Perce, and Twin Falls Counties. These courts have funding to serve 80 veterans at any given time. During FY2017, a total of 151 veterans participated in these veterans courts, and 40 of these veterans graduated. Partnerships with the Veterans Administration and the Idaho Division of Veterans Services have created additional resources to serve this population, though more veterans in need could be served with additional funding. Idaho is home to 121,172 veterans with 77% of these veterans serving during wartime. When an Idaho veteran becomes involved with the justice system, it is only fair to assess how his or her service to the country, and particularly combat experiences, might have contributed to involvement with the criminal justice system. This assessment will help determine whether effective treatment combined with court-managed accountability might provide the best long-term outcome.

Idaho's Problem-Solving Courts Yield Positive Outcomes

- According to a 2014 study, the recidivism rate for felony drug court participants is 12% lower than that of felony probationers. The combined rate of recidivism and early program termination is 39% for drug court participants as compared to 54% for felony probationers and 51% for offenders on retained jurisdiction.

https://isc.idaho.gov/psc/reports/Id_Felony_DC_Eval_Report_2014.pdf

- A 2015 study found that juvenile drug court participants assessed as high or very high risk are 13% less likely to reoffend than juvenile probationers with similar risk levels.

<https://isc.idaho.gov/psc/reports/Juvenile%20Drug%20Court%20Evaluation%20Report%202015%20Courts.pdf>

- In FY2017, the number of drug-free babies born to mothers in problem-solving courts grew to a total of 425 with 42 births in FY2017 alone.
- These better outcomes achieved by drug court participants not only reduced victimization but saved real tax dollars that would otherwise be spent on incarceration.

Strengthening Substance Use Disorder Funding

Drug Courts, Veterans' Courts, DUI Courts and Mental Health Courts in Idaho are at capacity, and growth is limited primarily by inadequate treatment funds and probation supervision. More individuals meet criteria for enrollment and could be served, resulting in additional reductions in recidivism and victimization, should dollars for treatment and probation officers be increased.

Current funding is insufficient to provide the level of treatment for offenders that research indicates is most likely to affect positive outcomes.

<http://www.allrise.org/sites/default/files/nadcp/AdultDrugCourtBestPracticeStandards.pdf> (pg. 39).

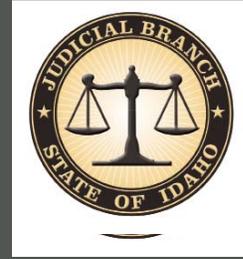
Research suggests that drug courts should offer a full continuum of care, to include detoxification, residential treatment, medication-assisted treatment for opiate dependence, and critical recovery support services. It is not possible, under the current funding structure, to make these services available to all offenders who need them. Judges, attorneys, and probation officers across the state report that some participants fail because appropriate treatment and recovery support services were not available. Expansion of available services will support long-term recovery and help ensure that the investment in treatment made during participation in drug court continues to pay long-term dividends to individuals, families and the communities in Idaho.

The Courts have had some success expanding resources by accessing federal grants and by partnering with other Idaho government entities, such as the Department of Health and Welfare, the Office of Highway Safety, and the Division of Veterans Services. However, long-term, sustainable solutions are needed.

National Recognition for Idaho Drug Courts

The Nez Perce County Drug Court has again been recognized as a national model to guide other drug courts in best practices. The National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) selected the Nez Perce County Drug Court in a national search effort. This recognition means that NADCP will facilitate visits from courts across the U.S., especially new and rural drug courts, to Lewiston to observe court operations and to interview team members. Along with consulting with these visiting courts, the Nez Perce County Drug Court will be an exhibiting mentor court at the national drug court conference each year and will be provided scholarships for some team members to attend the conference.

The Bonneville County Mental Health Court has also once again been recognized as a national model to guide other mental health courts in best practices. The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center selected the eastern Idaho court as one of three National Learning Sites. CSG will facilitate visits from courts across the U.S., especially new mental health courts, to Idaho Falls to observe court operations and to interview team members. The Bonneville County Mental Health Court provides particularly strong leadership in working with felony offenders with serious mental illness who are at high risk for recidivism and has developed tailored approaches that are effective at changing behavior and reducing future criminal offenses.



Mission Statement of the Idaho Courts

As the Third Branch of Government, we provide access to justice by ensuring fair processes and the timely, impartial resolution of cases.

The Idaho Courts stand for:
Integrity
Fairness
Independence
Respect
Excellence
Innovation

The Idaho Courts strive to:

**Provide Timely,
Impartial Case
Resolution through
Legally Fair Procedures**

Ensure Access to Justice

**Promote Effective,
Innovative Services**

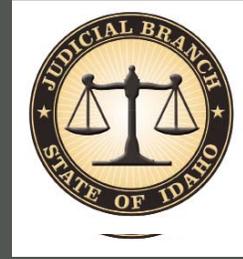
**Increase Public Trust
and Confidence in
Idaho Courts**

Adopted by the
Supreme Court
October 31, 2011
and revised
April 25, 2016

A Special Success Story - Brandi

Brandi began using alcohol and drugs at age 13, when her parents' divorce turned her world upside down. By age 15 Brandi was addicted to opiates. In 2013 she faced her first jail stay. It would not be her last. She was 20 years old. Despite voluntary treatment, additional jail time and, ultimately, six months at the Boise Women's Correctional Center, her best intentions fell short. A probation violation, potentially carrying heavy prison time, led her, now pregnant, instead to the Kootenai County Mental Health Court. Brandi credits the mental health court and her resolution to be "a good mom" with finally finding recovery and success. Brandi is now a trained recovery coach and certified peer support specialist, able to share her failures and her successes with others who struggle. In 2016, Brandi shared her story on a panel discussion at the Coeur d'Alene Kroc Community Center. Also on the panel was Idaho first lady, Lori Otter. After hearing Brandi's courageous story, Lori Otter said "I'll pay for your school." A stunned Brandi eagerly accepted. She will soon be returning for her second semester in the social work program at North Idaho College, where her first semester ended with a 3.7 GPA. Brandi continues to work at the Kootenai Recovery Center, offering her strength and hope to others, and continues to be "a good mom" to 2 year old Niko.

*For more information, contact
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