



## Id DV Court History

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### **PILOT PROJECT LAUNCHED IN ADA COUNTY**

In July 2002, a pilot program was launched by the state of Idaho in Ada County to concentrate on the challenges that the court must face in managing domestic violence cases. The pilot program was called the Ada County Family Violence Court and focused on strengthening families that are facing multiple issues, with the use of one judge to process cases and through early intervention strategies. This “One Judge-One Family” practice was designed to facilitate access to, and sharing of, accurate information pertaining to families within the court system, increase consistency when there are multiple court orders, and allow the judge to apply expertise to meet the unique needs of each family. The Family Violence Court handled domestic violence cases, also referred to as protection or restraining order cases, that involve children, as well as any of the family’s related divorce, custody, and child support cases, along with any family violence criminal misdemeanor cases. The purpose of the Court was to provide a safe environment for families at risk and for the Judge to be able to create a coordinated response that factors in all of the familial issues, removing the possibility of separate judges providing different rulings that are confusing and have negative consequences to the family.

### **ADA COUNTY AWARDED GRANT**

In the beginning of 2003, the Family Violence Court was awarded a three-year grant funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through the Rocky Mountain Quality Improvement Center. The Family Violence Court Grant Project allowed the Court to provide case management, as well as funding for services and treatment to families who participate in the grant project. The program was a research project, so participation was voluntary. While participants could not be court-ordered to participate in the grant project, they may have been court-ordered to undergo evaluation and treatment, regardless of participation in the project. If they participated in the grant project, these services were coordinated and funding was provided. In Ada County, the Family Violence Court was implemented under the direction of Senior Judge Lowell D. Castleton. The Family Violence Court Grant Project was housed within the Ada County Family Violence Court. Civil domestic violence cases involving children were coordinated with the family’s related divorce, custody and child support cases, as well as any related misdemeanor domestic assault and battery, violation of no contact orders, or injury to child cases in an effort to protect children and other victims from violence. These were the types of cases handled by this Court and thus were eligible for potential enrollment in the Family Violence Court Grant Project.

### **FIRST COMPREHENSIVE STUDY CONDUCTED**

[The Ada County Family Violence Court Comprehensive Evaluation Report](#) [1] includes an extensive review of the literature in support of the project’s purpose, a detailed design of the research approach, and a comprehensive examination of the project’s outcomes. The [Project Replication Manual](#) [2] and [Case Coordinator Handbook](#) [3] provide information in regards to the Ada County pilot project’s processes and procedures.

### **EXPANSION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURTS**

In late 2005, the Idaho Supreme Court was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) for the expansion of Domestic Violence Courts in Idaho. In 2006, the Sixth Judicial District developed a Domestic Violence Court in Bannock County and the Seventh Judicial District developed Domestic Violence Courts in Bonneville, Bingham, and Jefferson Counties. The goal was to improve the handling of domestic violence cases throughout the state of Idaho. These newly developed Domestic Violence Courts sought to facilitate improved coordination of cases involving domestic violence by creating an integrated system involving victim services, judicial monitoring, offender accountability, and coordinated community response. The two primary initiatives were to establish a Domestic Violence Court Coordinator in each Judicial District and to create a “One Judge-One



Family” model for domestic violence cases. In 2006, Ada County also reconstructed their domestic violence court model to include a fast-track criminal court process and judicial monitoring of domestic violence offenders.

### **STATE-LEVEL POSITION DEVELOPED**

In 2006, a part-time, state-level position at the Idaho Supreme Court was developed to provide coordination and support to the Idaho’s Domestic Violence Courts, technical assistance on issues related to domestic violence and the courts, and to provide education and training on domestic violence and the courts throughout the state. In 2010, this position was increased to full-time due to the expansion of Domestic Violence Courts in Idaho and the growing need for a statewide, single point-of-contact related to domestic violence for all of Idaho’s courts.

### **SIXTH AND SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICTS INDEPENDENT EVALUATION**

In a 2008, an independent [evaluation](#) [4] of the Sixth and Seventh District Domestic Violence Courts, evaluators concluded: “The Domestic Violence Coordinators are perceived as vital to the various stakeholders in the court system. They have proven to be invaluable to judges, victims, and service providers. The benefits of their efforts to increase collaboration, case coordination, and expediency of the courts have been clearly articulated across stakeholders. We recommend that the Domestic Violence Coordinator positions be maintained in the 6th and 7th Judicial Districts if the type of collaboration and coordination described is desired by the legislature and the Idaho Supreme Court. ”

### **BANNOCK COUNTY’S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT RECEIVES AWARD**

In June 2009, at the Idaho Council on Domestic Violence and Victim Assistance’s annual Two Days in June conference, Bannock County’s Domestic Violence Court received the “Public Sector Recognition Award.” This award was presented to the court for their exemplary work strengthening community partnerships, coordinating criminal domestic violence and other related cases for families, working with domestic violence victims, and changing the way the criminal justice system approaches domestic violence cases in Bannock County.

### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT LEGISLATION**

Thanks to the exceptional support of the legislature, legislation was passed allowing for the expansion of domestic violence courts effective July 1, 2009. The legislature found that, “Domestic violence courts have proven effective in reducing recidivism and increasing victim safety.” “It is in the best interests of the citizens of this state to expand domestic violence courts to each judicial district.” ([Idaho Code 32 - 1408\(3\)](#) [5]). The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, Family Violence Department, and the Center for Court Innovation found that Idaho was the first state in the nation to adopt legislation authorizing the establishment of Domestic Violence Courts statewide. Not only is Idaho’s provision regarding statewide Domestic Violence Courts legislatively distinctive, the creation and legislative support of a Domestic Violence Court Coordinator is innovative and is currently the only such legislation in the country.

### **HIGH-INTENSITY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT IN BONNEVILLE COUNTY**

In 2009, the Seventh Judicial District was awarded a grant to develop and implement a high-intensity Domestic Violence Court in Bonneville County. One core element of this problem-solving court is to provide a unified approach for the treatment of high-risk domestic violence offenders with mental health and substance abuse issues.

### **IDAHO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

In January 2010, the Idaho Domestic Violence Court Policies and Guidelines were finalized to articulate research-based best practices and identify essential elements for Domestic Violence Courts. These policies and guidelines also established a process for the development and [application](#) [6] of a Domestic Violence Court in Idaho.

### **ADA COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT DREW NATIONAL ATTENTION**

The Ada County Domestic Violence Court drew national attention for its work, progress, and innovation.



In June 2010, a team from the court was highlighted at a nationally recognized conference attended by judges and professionals from around the country, as well as such places as England, Israel, and New Zealand.

### **ADA COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT UNDERGOES COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION**

In July, 2010 an [Evaluation Report](#) [7] was completed on the Ada County Domestic Violence Court. This evaluation found that the Court is effective in decreasing the number of cases dismissed and increasing the number of cases disposed by a guilty plea, resulting in increased offender accountability and offenders receiving treatment. The study also found that cases in Domestic Violence Court from arrest to disposition were accelerated. In addition, the study reported that court professionals and community treatment providers expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the Ada County Domestic Violence Court's effectiveness.

### **FIRST STATEWIDE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT CONFERENCE**

The first Idaho Domestic Violence Court Conference was held in Twin Falls, Idaho in October, 2010. This was an opportunity for Idaho Judges, along with their Domestic Violence Court county teams, to meet others in their discipline involved in Domestic Violence Courts. The conference agenda, made possible through an OVW grant, included several technical assistance consultants from around the country in a plenary session, panel discussion, and breakout sessions. Over 80 Domestic Violence Court team members from around the state of Idaho were in attendance. The Statewide Idaho Domestic Violence Court Conference has been held every other year (2012 and 2014) with the same level of success!

### **NEW DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURTS IN FIRST, THIRD, AND FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICTS**

In 2010, the Third Judicial District developed a Domestic Violence Court in Canyon County. In 2011, the Fifth Judicial District also developed a Domestic Violence Court to serve Cassia and Minidoka Counties. In 2012, the 1st Judicial District was awarded a three year grant through the Office on Violence Against Women Court Training and Improvements Program to develop and implement a Domestic Violence Court in Kootenai County. The new Domestic Violence Court, started in April 2013, is designed to handle all misdemeanor domestic violence cases filed in Kootenai County. Through extensive planning this court implemented accelerated disposition of domestic violence cases, intense offender monitoring, on-site victim advocacy, and a coordinated team approach to domestic violence cases.

### **IDAHO SELECTED FOR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MENTOR COURT INITIATIVE**

The Ada County Domestic Violence Court was one of only three courts in the nation chosen by the Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women for the new Mentor Court Initiative. This well-established court will serve as a role model and disseminate proven strategies to other courts across the nation. Ada County will share their expertise by hosting site visits and linking courts with peers facing similar challenges. The Ada County Domestic Violence Court team will help other Domestic Violence Courts implement best practices, improve procedures, replicate relevant programming, and build overall capacity of state court systems to respond effectively to these difficult cases.

### **IDAHO HOSTS NATIONAL SITE VISITS**

In June 2014, Ada County hosted a national site visit with the Center for Court Innovation, the other two Mentor Court sites from Texas and New York, and newly established domestic violence courts from Guam, Oklahoma, Iowa, California, Missouri, Colorado, and Minnesota. Idaho has also hosted other site visits over the last few years with representatives from the U.S. Department of Justice, the National Center for State Courts, Center for Court Innovation, Minnesota and North Carolina.

**Source URL:** <https://isc.idaho.gov/domestic-violence/dvc-court-history>

### **Links**



- [1] [https://isc.idaho.gov/./dv\\_courts/FVC\\_Comprehensive\\_Eval\\_Report.pdf](https://isc.idaho.gov/./dv_courts/FVC_Comprehensive_Eval_Report.pdf)
- [2] [https://isc.idaho.gov/./dv\\_courts/FVC\\_Replication\\_Manual.pdf](https://isc.idaho.gov/./dv_courts/FVC_Replication_Manual.pdf)
- [3] [https://isc.idaho.gov/./dv\\_courts/FVC\\_Case\\_Coordinator\\_Handbook.pdf](https://isc.idaho.gov/./dv_courts/FVC_Case_Coordinator_Handbook.pdf)
- [4] [https://isc.idaho.gov/./dv\\_courts/6th\\_7th\\_Dist\\_Evaluation.pdf](https://isc.idaho.gov/./dv_courts/6th_7th_Dist_Evaluation.pdf)
- [5] <https://legislature.idaho.gov/statutesrules/idstat/Title32/T32CH14/SECT32-1408/>
- [6] [https://isc.idaho.gov/./dv\\_courts/DV\\_Court\\_Application.pdf](https://isc.idaho.gov/./dv_courts/DV_Court_Application.pdf)
- [7] [https://isc.idaho.gov/./dv\\_courts/AdaCo\\_DV\\_Court\\_Program\\_Eval\\_Report.pdf](https://isc.idaho.gov/./dv_courts/AdaCo_DV_Court_Program_Eval_Report.pdf)