

AT A GLANCE

Location of Court

Boise, Idaho

Type of Court

Coordinated Domestic
Violence Court

Project Goals

- Create a fast-track docket
- Ensure offender accountability
- Organize a dedicated group of professionals to respond to domestic violence

ADA COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT

The Ada County Domestic Violence Court (DVC) is an accelerated criminal domestic violence court that includes a permanent civil protective order hearing docket with a separate family law judge.



CENTER

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INNOVATION

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This fact sheet is part of a series describing Domestic Violence Mentor Courts. Selected by the Office on Violence Against Women, Mentor Courts share their expertise and assist other domestic violence courts in implementing promising practices and procedures, and building the capacity of state court systems to respond effectively to these difficult cases.

COURT STAFF

Two **magistrate judges** hear the DVC docket on a rotating weekly schedule. On the off week, one judge hears the child protection docket and if the parties also have a domestic violence case, it will be reassigned into the DVC. The other judge hears the criminal misdemeanor docket on the off week, which includes DVC review hearings. Additionally, a **DVC program administrator** works on both criminal and civil cases to work directly with the two DVC magistrate judges and communicate regularly with community stakeholders. Court staff also include:

Criminal Cases

- **Criminal law magistrate:** presides over criminal cases involving domestic violence
- **County and city deputy prosecutors:** prosecute misdemeanor domestic violence cases for the County and City
- **County and city victim-witness advocates:** provide crisis intervention, support and information, supportive resource referrals to victims/witnesses of domestic battery and related crimes
- **Public defender:** represents indigent defendants at all stages of the court process
- **Misdemeanor probation supervisor:** ensures case load efficiency, assists probationer compliance/case review, and manages probation officers
- **2 dedicated DVC probation officers:** monitor compliance; conduct assessment and link treatment resources based on individual need; enforce court orders; explain court-ordered obligations to individuals and how they can successfully complete probation

Civil Cases

- **Family law magistrate:** presides over weekly permanent civil protective order hearings

CASE MANAGEMENT

Types of cases: The DVC hears misdemeanor domestic violence cases and felony plea case matters that are reduced to misdemeanor domestic violence offenses. The assigned family law judge hears all permanent civil protective order hearings on a weekly basis. The DVC hears child protection cases in which parties also have a domestic violence case.

Case identification, screening, and transfer: The Boise City Attorney's Office and the Ada County Prosecutor's Office independently identify, screen, and transfer cases into the DVC. As the DVC has horizontally-trained family law judges in domestic violence, the family law judges understand the function and importance of the DVC. The family law judges regularly contact the DVC for their public case records to review a party's progress in DVC.

Information sharing: The DVC has involved the criminal bench in general and the family law judges, who use a community provider list for domestic violence evaluations and batterer intervention programs, substance abuse, and mental health treatment. The DVC has provided and will continue to provide training to other judges who handle criminal and family law dockets. Idaho has a statewide computer data base which shares court docket information and all criminal and civil history of court parties that can be viewed by court staff.

Schedule: Every day of the week.

COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

Organizational support was crucial to the formation of the DVC—commitment on behalf of the Ada County Prosecutor’s Office, public defender’s office, misdemeanor probation, and the Boise City Prosecutor’s Office built a strong network of support to get the DVC active and moving forward.

Frequency of stakeholder meetings: Monthly

List of stakeholders: Family law, DVC, and the child protection magistrates; DVC program administrator; prosecutors; public defender; probation; victim-witness coordinators, and a local domestic violence victim advocacy organization.

VICTIM SAFETY

Court security: Upon entry, all persons must clear courthouse security. The Marshall’s Office ensures that the victim leaves at a separate time than the offender to ensure a lack of conflict in/outside of the courthouse.

Risk assessment: Risk assessments are used to provide prosecutors and police officers information about the level of an offender’s dangerousness. In addition, post-trial risk assessments give probation officers information to determine an offender’s level of stability in mental health, substance abuse, and reoccurrence of domestic violence.

Victim services: Victims are linked to case management/referral services, counseling, language access services, and civil legal services. Victims have access to their victim-witness coordinators for hearing notices. A grant service partner receives victim information from victim-witness coordinators and refers victims to the appropriate services upon request. A local agency provides advocates to accompany victims to civil legal matters.

OFFENDER ACCOUNTABILITY

An offender’s case disposition typically takes 65 days from arraignment to disposition and an offender will be placed on supervised probation up to 90% of the time for a two-year period.

Compliance reviews: Compliance reviews are set at each prior hearing to ensure an offender’s notice. Review hearings can be set as frequently as every two weeks up to 120 days, depending on an offender’s progress. Probation officers notify the DVC in between hearings of an offender’s progress.

Offender services: Services include domestic violence evaluations and batterer intervention programs, counseling, Department of Labor workforce assistance, and substance abuse treatment. The defendant is connected to the services via referral to the court program administrator from the probation officer and/or the public defender.

LEGAL SERVICES

All offenders have criminal defense attorneys. Victims are referred by the Women's and Children's Alliance case manager/victim advocate to the court assistance office and the Idaho Volunteer Lawyer's Project. As a refugee relocation center, the DVC provides diverse language access resources in and out of the courtroom.

TRAINING

The DVC staff has participated in training that includes:

- *Enhancing Judicial Skills in Domestic Violence Cases Workshop*
- *International Family Justice Center Conference*
- *Driving Change Conference by Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center*
- *End Violence Against Women International Conference*
- *LGBTQ Domestic Violence Training*

The DVC has provided training that include:

- *Enhance Judicial Skills on Domestic Violence* for local judges

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