



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURTS

# CASE COORDINATORS IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURTS: FIVE KEY ROLES

This fact sheet is one in a series to support the development of domestic violence court initiatives. For other documents in the series, please visit [www.courtinnovation.org/domesticviolencecourt.html](http://www.courtinnovation.org/domesticviolencecourt.html)

Specialized domestic violence courts can be an effective tool to enhance victim safety and offender accountability. To help achieve these goals, domestic violence courts work to strengthen relationships with stakeholder agencies, create protocols for information sharing, and ensure offender compliance with mandates. Traditionally, judges and other court staff often took a reactive position in these cases—waiting to hear from attorneys, probation, or other programs and rarely interacting with victim service providers. Without staff dedicated to reaching out, there was little opportunity to discuss courtroom safety, re-offending, compliance calendars, crafting effective protective orders, or other critical issues unless a violation or other complication arose. While many domestic violence courts have been successful without additional staff, a court-based case coordinator allows the court to act proactively and collaboratively, to gather information, and to make the best decisions possible.

Case coordinators often come from either the advocacy community or community corrections. Whatever their background, case coordinators should come to the job with an understanding of both court and service provider systems. But according to at least two judges, having a flexible and approachable demeanor is the most important quality of a good resource coordinator. Judge Tandra L. Dawson, who presides in the New York County Integrated Domestic Violence Court, said of her coordinator: “Her personality is just amazing—she is cheerful and engaging and able to interface with a lot of different types of people—which is helpful in getting people to cooperate with her and give her all the information.”

Judge John Rowley from Ithaca County, N.Y., summarized the job description as, “This is a special kind of job you are doing. I think it has a big impact on the community. You must be a very effective organizer and coordinator of information to make the court work. It could not work without this.... You really have to be persistent to do this job well and when it is done well, we are effective. When it is not done well, the community is at risk.”

## FIVE CORE RESPONSIBILITIES OF CASE COORDINATORS

### 1 Case Identification

A case coordinator works with court clerks to make sure all domestic violence and/or sex assault cases—however defined—are identified and are transferred to the specialized court’s docket.



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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Listen to taped interviews with judges who explain how much they value their case coordinator's work, visit [www.courtinnovation.org/research/judges-discuss-case-coordinators](http://www.courtinnovation.org/research/judges-discuss-case-coordinators)

Visit the Center for Court Innovation's National Domestic Violence Technical Assistance Program at [www.courtinnovation.org/domestic-violence-technical-assistance](http://www.courtinnovation.org/domestic-violence-technical-assistance)

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### 2 Service Referrals

A case coordinator gathers and organizes all related court information pertaining to the litigants and assists with intake assessments to determine appropriate legal services or program referral.

### 3 Quality Control

Case coordinators maintain an in-depth working knowledge of programs in the community, their eligibility requirements, and their appropriateness for referral.

### 4 Support Compliance Reviews

The case coordinator assists the judge in monitoring defendants/respondents' compliance with mandated programs and reports this information back to the court prior to compliance reviews.

### 5 Community Collaboration

Case coordinators serve as a liaison between the court and the community through coordinating on-going community response meetings with the court and stakeholders, planning trainings, and ensuring proper communication. In addition, many Resource Coordinators have an active role in maintaining court data for evaluation and/or grant reporting.



## FURTHER READING

### ***Civil Domestic Violence Courts: Key Principles***

[http://www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/documents/DV\\_Civil\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](http://www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/documents/DV_Civil_Fact_Sheet.pdf)

### ***Criminal Domestic Violence Courts: Key Principles***

[http://www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/documents/DV\\_Criminal\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](http://www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/documents/DV_Criminal_Fact_Sheet.pdf)

### ***Integrated Domestic Violence Courts: Key Principles***

[http://www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/documents/IDV\\_FACT\\_SHEET.pdf](http://www.courtinnovation.org/sites/default/files/documents/IDV_FACT_SHEET.pdf)

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