

## **Ada County Domestic Violence Court**

One of the Domestic Violence Court's ("DVC") stated goals is to instill confidence in the court system when people's lives intersect with violence and crime. This goal largely drives the model and our willingness to have the model evaluated to ensure we continue to be responsive to our local community leaders, partners, and our county citizens.

### **Unique Elements of DVC**

DVC, a criminal misdemeanor domestic violence court, incorporates the following significant elements and features:

1. A highly accelerated criminal court, with cases being set for pretrial conferences one week after the initial arraignment. The prosecuting attorney agencies restructured their internal discovery tracks to accomplish this goal. The public defender also readjusted their usual practice by assigning a designated attorney exclusively to the docket. Cases are typically dispositioned within sixty (60) days from arrest. Defendants are on supervised probation and in treatment about ninety (90) days after the initial arrest.
2. Treatment providers, via contractual agreement, upload their weekly progress reports to an online database. The database is accessed by DVC's two assigned probation officers and the Domestic Violence Court Coordinator.
3. DVC utilizes researched-based risk assessment tools and interventions.
4. DVC incorporates intensive supervision completed by probation officers who are highly qualified and specially trained on domestic violence issues.
5. Intensive judicial reviews follow sentencing and are utilized to review defendants' actual compliance with the terms of probation, reassert victim safety issues, and provide the immediate ability to address any noncompliance by the defendants.

6. DVC researched, requested, and participated in an evaluation of their model. The evaluation was performed by American Humane.
7. DVC researched, requested, and asked for a "Safety Audit", a comprehensive system-wide evaluation of their model's attentiveness to victim safety. The audit was performed by the Center for Court Innovation.
8. In the United States, the DVC was named one of three 2013 "Mentor Sites" by the Department of Justice due to our local hard work, community commitment, and effort hosting other jurisdictions interested in our model.
9. Over fifty percent (50%) of our docket consists of felony remands and defendants which, for the most part, have extensive criminal histories. We do not "cherry pick" cases which get assigned to DVC. Assignments are purely the prosecuting attorneys' province.
10. Nearly twelve percent (12%) of our docket consists of female defendants. In the past, there have not been peer reviewed domestic violence treatments available for female defendants. Our DVCC continues to research upcoming curriculum models. Because of our experience, DVC brought the lack of such treatments to other systems' attention.
11. DVC developed interpreter resources to address that Boise is one of a handful of refugee relocation centers in the United States. Our very large refugee, non-English speaking, population presents a high volume need for interpreters for DVC processes and victim services. The DVC provides interpreter services for non-English speaking defendants so they can fully participate in domestic violence treatment, counseling, and other court-mandated treatment.
12. DVC follows strict guidelines: all rules of criminal procedure and evidence apply to all

proceedings, due process rights are absolutely protected, and there is no ex parte communication. Probation officers are granted the use of discretionary jail time, via the final adjudication, when there is noncompliance with probationary terms. All use of jail time is reviewable by DVC.

13. The DVCC researched and authored three (3) grants, which have been awarded to DVC. The grants provide the DVCC staff assistance and financial assistance for services and treatment for DVC participants and families.
14. The assigned DVC judges provided a podcast, regarding DVC's model and evolution. It is available on the Center for Court Innovation's website.
15. DVC developed additional exit interview and intake forms. These forms identify the statistical relevance of DVC's chosen model and protocols. For statistical relevancy purposes, the DVC requested and has completed an analysis of current exit interviews. Continued scrutiny of DVC's performance evaluations is ongoing.

### **General Information**

The DVC began in 2006 with thirty defendants. It has greatly evolved over the past ten years. Today, the DVC has one judicial position, shared by two judges, which oversees an active docket of more than four hundred (400) defendants. In addition, the DVC partnered with the permanent civil protective order docket and any violations of civil protective orders are misdemeanor citations which are added to the DVC docket. The permanent civil protective order docket is overseen by one magistrate judge.

The DVC's Administrative District Judge determines the docket assignments and the Fourth Judicial District Trial Court Administrator accommodates these assignments. This is truly an Ada County model which functions with the full support of the Ada County

Commissioners and other elected officials. Historically, the DVC has had only a single staff position, our DVCC. The DVCC's salary is paid out of a legislatively created fund to encourage Idaho courts to create relevant and meaningful community interventions for domestic violence issues. The DVCC is an Ada County employee who is responsible for the entire DVC model and all team members. Also, the DVCC facilitates referrals and information forms, which currently are being used statewide and nationally. The DVCC is a licensed attorney whose legal attributes and skills provide thoughtful guidance to DVC and whose work has been used by others in Idaho.

Furthermore, the DVC is dependent upon reaching local consensus on issues involving DVC's operation. The DVCC developed an integrated and committed group of stakeholders, who take their roles very seriously and have a real voice in DVC's functioning. This integrated approach began in 2006, after a failed attempt at creating a relevant court model. Through this approach, DVC is responsive to the taxpayers and leaders of Ada County, and is directed by community stakeholders and partners.

Lastly, much of DVC's work, commitment to research, and evaluation has been and is being used by others. DVC opens their doors, legal research, and hard work to anyone interested in building a local, community driven court system which is willing to be scrutinized for effectiveness.