



news

Colorado Judicial Branch
Michael L. Bender, Chief Justice
Gerald Marroney, State Court Administrator

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Contact: Robert McCallum or Jon Sarché
720-625-5815
720-625-5811

robert.mccallum@judicial.state.co.us
jon.sarche@judicial.state.co.us

Fourth Judicial District opens new Domestic Violence Court *DV Court intended to help offenders complete treatment*

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. – The Fourth Judicial District has opened a new Domestic Violence Court, offering a three-phase program to eligible offenders designed to increase their opportunities to complete state-mandated treatment.

The Domestic Violence (DV) Court is based on the methods typically used in problem-solving courts such as drug courts, which provide eligible offenders a chance to avoid incarceration while protecting public safety, ensuring offender accountability and intensively monitoring participants as they move through the program.

In the DV Court, participants – who enter the three-phase program voluntarily – must regularly appear before the court to monitor their compliance with court orders and treatment requirements. The DV Court team will consider victim input in assessing each defendant's progress and structuring incentives for compliance and consequences for noncompliance.

Participants in the program have been convicted of felony or misdemeanor domestic violence crimes and are serving sentences of supervised probation. The focus is on defendants who are not compliant with their terms and conditions of probation and are at risk of having their probation sentence revoked. The court also may accept offenders whose cases include a negotiated disposition that includes DV Court.

“The problem-solving court model has proved so successful for other types of offenders, we wanted to apply the model to domestic violence,” said El Paso County Court Judge Douglas J. Miles, who presides over the DV Court. “Our multi-disciplinary team has been working carefully and deliberately for many months to open this program. I think this will be a great fit in helping meet the needs of the people of this district and help reduce the numbers of offenders whose probation must be revoked, which can often mean sentences to jail or prison.”

Making up the core DV Court team is the judge, the Fourth Judicial District Probation Department, the Public Defender’s Office, the District Attorney’s Office, treatment providers, and representatives from the Court Appointed Special Advocates of the Pikes Peak Region and TESSA of Colorado Springs.

Offenders who are selected to enter the DV Court program do so voluntarily. They must sign a contract which spells out their requirements to fully comply with terms of their probation and the court, potential consequences for noncompliance, and explains each of the phases. Program completion takes a minimum of one year.