

Family Violence Criminal Case Functions:

- **Family Violence Arraignment Proceedings**
 - Family Relations Counselors conduct pre-arraignment family violence intake assessments and screen all family violence arraignment cases. This process includes:
 - Collecting demographic information
 - Reviewing criminal histories
 - Reviewing the Protective Order Registry
 - Screening for handguns and firearms
 - Screening for risk of continued violence
 - Interviewing the defendant and victim
 - Coordinating with Family Violence Victim Advocates
 - Recommending the level of Protective Orders
 - Recommending treatment/services
- **Family Violence Case Assessments-** Family Relations Counselors assess all cases that are referred to Family Services subsequent to the arraignment process. Assessments include:
 - In-depth victim interview
 - In-depth defendant interview
 - Coordination with the Family Violence Victim Advocate
 - Preparation of detailed case assessment and recommendations for the Court
- **Pre-trial Case Management Services-** Family Relations Counselors oversee diversionary programs for cases referred to Family Services and perform the following functions:
 - Administrative monitoring/supervision
 - Monthly contact with the defendant

- Coordination of the Family Violence Education Program (FVEP) and other court-ordered contracted and non-contracted services
- Coordination with the Family Violence Victim Advocates

Family Services Administration and Staffing

Central Office Administrative Staff: An Executive Director oversees all aspects of the Court Support Services Division (CSSD). The Family Services Unit of CSSD is centrally administered to support field function/operations, coordinate initiatives, and oversee intervention/sanction programs, as well as contracted services providers. The unit consists of a Director, two Regional Managers, and a Program Manager.

Court Based Employees:

Family Services Supervisors
Lead Family Relations Counselors
Family Relations Counselors
Family Intake Assistants
Clerical Support Staff

The Judicial Branch of the State of Connecticut complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you need a reasonable accommodation, in accordance with the ADA, contact a Judicial Branch employee or an ADA contact person listed at www.jud.ct.gov/ada/.

Court Support Services Division Family Services Family Services Programs



Our Role in Family Civil Court

The role of Family Services is to assist the Court and clients in the timely and fair resolution of family and interpersonal conflicts through a comprehensive program of dispute resolution services, evaluation and education.

Family Civil Case Processing Functions:

- **Family Civil Intake Screen-** The screening instrument is designed to assist Family Service staff with identifying the level of conflict and complexity of issues. This facilitates differentiated case management by matching the appropriate intervention in accordance with evidence-based practices.

Alternative Dispute Resolutions Services:

- **Pre-trial Settlement Negotiations-** In all Judicial Districts, Family Relations Counselors conduct pre-trial and final judgment settlement conferences with attorneys and litigants in conjunction with their attendance at Family Short Calendar and other Family Civil Court dockets.
- **Mediation-** Family Relations Counselors mediate custody and access disputes for up to three 2-hour sessions. These efforts are geared toward assisting parents in resolving differences in a self-determining, non-coercive, and confidential manner.

- **Conflict Resolution Conference-** This is a confidential, directive process utilizing negotiation and mediation techniques to resolve the primary issues of custody and access. Parents and attorneys participate in the conferences and information from professional sources may be included. The Family Relations Counselor may offer recommendations to the parents at the conclusion of the process if the parties are unable to resolve their dispute. These recommendations are not provided to the Court.
- **Conciliation Counseling-**Family Relations Counselors conduct conciliation sessions with parties upon referral from the Court. The focus of these sessions is to explore the possibility of the parties reconciling.
- **Pre-trial Mediation Settlement Services-** Connecticut's Judicial Branch recognizes that unmarried couples who are ending domestic partnerships must sometimes utilize the Court to resolve issues about the division of property. The Branch offers a pre-trial mediation program through Family Services for those who have a pending Civil Court action.

Evaluative Services:

- **Issue-Focused Evaluation-** This is a non-confidential process of assessing a limited issue impacting a family and/or parenting plan. The goal of an Issue-Focused Evaluation is to explore the defined parenting dispute, gather information regarding only this issue and provide a recommendation to the parents and the Court. This evaluation format is limited in scope, involvement, and duration.

- **Comprehensive Evaluation-** This is an in-depth, non-confidential assessment of the family system by the Family Relations Counselor. The information gathered by the counselor, the assessment of the family, and the resulting recommended parenting plan is shared with the parents and attorneys. This recommendation may be used to form the basis of an agreement. At the conclusion of the process, a report with recommendations is filed with the Court.

Education:

- **Parent Education Program-** Family Services is responsible for monitoring the statutorily-mandated Parent Education Program (PEP) for separating and divorcing parents. With guidance from an Advisory Committee appointed by the Chief Justice, Family Services contracts with community and private agencies throughout the state to provide this program. The PEP is a six-hour, psycho-educational course that provides information about the impact of family restructuring on children. The program places an emphasis on child development and cultural competence.

Our Role In Criminal Court

The role of Family Services is to assist the Court and clients in the timely and fair disposition of family violence criminal cases through a comprehensive assessment and intervention plan to prevent, reduce, and stop the frequency and severity of violence against victim/complainants.