

- **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. Family Services court-based staff includes Family Services Supervisors, Family Relations Counselors, and Family Intake Assistants/Clerical Support.

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/.



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Family Services Programs

Connecticut Judicial Branch
Court Support Services Division
Family Services



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 alternative dispute resolution services, case management, evaluation and education. With this purpose in mind the Family Relations Counselors will utilize the **Family Civil Intake Screen** to identify the appropriate service to assist your family.

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.

Case Management Services:

- **General Case Management** – A Family Relations Counselor will be assigned distinct responsibilities to assist parties in resolving their parenting issues with a report back to the Court. Some components include gathering specific information regarding the family, monitoring compliance with court orders, facilitating settlement conferences to develop parenting plans, conducting home visits, or completing other court-ordered tasks.
- **Intensive Case Management** – This service offers litigants in the early stages of post judgement court involvement the opportunity to enhance collaboration between the parents and formulate mutual decisions regarding the well-being/care of their children. The role of the Family Relations Counselor is to work with the parents as needed to reduce conflict, offer skills for enhanced communication, reinforce positive parenting, and report progress to the Court.

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 (PEP)** – Family Services contracts with community and private agencies throughout the state to provide this program. The PEP is a six-hour statutorily-mandated, psycho-educational course for separating and divorcing parents that provides information about the impact of family restructuring on children.

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.

- **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