

The Resource Center Newsletter

State-by-State Legislative Responses to Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Custody

A Spotlight on the Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Custody's (RCDV: CPC) State-Focused Resources for Advocates and Advocacy Communities

The RCDV: CPC is a special interest resource center focused on policy and systemic responses to children exposed to domestic violence. Housed in the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges' Family Violence and Domestic Relations program, the goals of the RCDV: CPC are to improve outcomes for victims of domestic violence and their children in the child protection and custody systems, chart a future that provides protection and relief for all victims of family violence, and, ultimately, seek an end to the violence.

During its almost 27-year history, the RCDV: CPC has developed a comprehensive approach to achieve its goals, including advancing public policy and systems change, increasing awareness, and resource development. It seeks to reach across systems and target its outreach to a multitude of professionals working with survivors of domestic violence and their children.

Community-based advocates and advocacy communities are essential resources for domestic violence victims and their families, helping them navigate complex systems and providing for their safety. In its collaborations with advocacy communities across the country, the RCDV: CPC heard about the need for information on how other states and communities are implementing laws and policies that impact domestic violence victims and their families in order to enhance their local responses and their ability to respond to and advocate for their clients effectively.

The RCDV: CPC responded by developing, compiling, and distributing multiple state-focused charts, maps, and other resources such as quarterly legislative updates.

Originally provided in print, these resources are now available online in user-friendly formats. The RCDV: CPC's state-specific information webpage can be found [here](#).

The state maps allow advocates and other stakeholders working with domestic violence victims to search for and find overviews of state laws as well as information on each state's and U.S. territory's laws on such topics as:

- [Child-related relief in protection orders](#);
- ["Friendly-parent" provisions and exceptions for domestic violence](#); and

- [Child abuse and exposure to domestic violence.](#)

The RCDV: CPC's state charts are downloadable PDFs that provide the language in each state's laws addressing the intersection of domestic violence and child welfare and custody in various ways, including the [duties of child protective service workers in domestic violence cases](#) and child custody provisions with [domestic violence considerations as part of the "best interests of the child" analysis](#).

The legislative updates or [Legislative News](#) provides a quarterly picture of recent laws passed in each state and territory addressing domestic violence, child welfare, and child custody. In an effort to provide an overview of emerging trends across states, the RCDV: CPC hosted a [webinar](#) providing an overview of recent bills and resulting statutes, considering both their similarities and differences.

The RCDV: CPC's work on development of state-specific legislative resources started from individual requests for technical assistance. It is now ongoing and seeks to assist advocates, leaders, and others with information and analysis that can promote policies to ensure better outcomes for domestic violence victims, their children, and their families. Advocates and other professionals interested in additional charts, maps, or other state-specific legislative information should feel free to contact the RCDV: CPC with their request.

Other State- and Tribal-Specific Legislative Resources:

- [National Conference on State Legislatures, State Statutes Defining Domestic Violence/Abuse \(Criminal\).](#)
- [National Conference on State Legislatures, State Statutes on Cooperation Requirements for Child Support for Public Assistance Applications.](#)
- [Tribal Codes and Implementation of the Violence Against Women Act's Special Domestic Violence Criminal Jurisdiction.](#)
- National Network to End Domestic Violence WomensLaw.org Project, which includes [State Laws on Restraining Orders](#), [Parental Kidnapping](#), and other topics.

Lynelle Hartway, JD, is a program manager for the Family Violence and Domestic Relations program of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

August 2020

This project was made possible by Grant Number 90EV039-04-00 from the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.