

**Vigo County
Veterans Treatment Court**

Misdemeanor Track



**Participant
Handbook**



As a participant in the Veterans Treatment Court, you are expected to follow the instructions given to you in Court by the Judge. You will also be responsible for complying with the recovery and treatment plan that will be developed. This handbook will explain what is expected of you and provide general program information.

We encourage you to share this handbook with your family, friends, and significant others so they will know about the work that you are doing to become clean, sober and healthy. Support from those around you will be extremely important throughout your participation in the program.

Orientation

Orientation will take place on Monday or Friday with the Court Coordinator. Orientation will cover the details of the Veterans Treatment Court and will emphasize abstinence, health, family, education, and employment.

At the time of the orientation, you will be able to ask questions or get clarification about any issue related to the program. Legal questions about your case should be directed to your attorney.

What is Veterans Treatment Court?

The Veterans Treatment Court is a specialized court that closely monitors Veterans in the court system who want treatment for alcohol or substance addiction and/or mental health conditions or impairments. You will be required to make regular court appearances.

You will be referred for an Individual Risk Assessment and evaluation conducted by treatment staff.

You must remain clean and sober and lead a law-abiding life. You will be required to follow and successfully complete a treatment plan. **Your case management plan will be made in conjunction with you case manager and address areas and activities which must be completed in order to successfully complete the program. Your treatment plan will be made in conjunction with your treatment provider to address substance use and/or mental health issues.** Your treatment plan may require all or some of the following:

- √ Outpatient treatment
- √ Inpatient treatment/Residential treatment
- √ Halfway House or Transitional housing placement
- √ Regular and random drug testing
- √ Counseling (individual and group)
- √ Mental Health Counseling
- √ Educational/vocational/employment program
- √ **Participation in self-help or peer support groups**
- √ Home visits

The Veterans Treatment Court case management staff will also help you with other areas of your life according to your individual needs. Mentor veterans will also be present at each court proceeding to help ensure that you receive support and assistance. This assistance may include referrals for:

- √ Skills testing and an education assessment
- √ Job Training and job-readiness training
- √ School or other educational services
- √ Job placement services
- √ Family counseling
- √ Life Skills classes
- √ Public Assistance/Medicaid
- √ Recreational activities

You are required to appear in Veterans Treatment Court depending on your phase schedule and/or as ordered by the Judge. The Judge will be given progress reports on you regarding your attendance, drug tests, and participation in your treatment program. These reports will come from Community Corrections, your probation/parole officer, treatment and/or mental health counselor, vocational counselor and members of the support program with whom you are working (such as a housing specialist or family advocate, etc.). The Judge will ask you about your progress and discuss any problems you may be experiencing.

You will be expected to remain arrest free, clean and sober, attend all your scheduled court appearances and all your scheduled treatment appointments.

You must attend all of your scheduled treatment sessions including counseling, substance abuse sessions, education sessions and all other sessions as directed. You will be required to be on time and to fully participate in all sessions.

If you are late, you may not be allowed to attend your appointment or court session and may be considered absent.

Your treatment schedule will vary according to your progress. It is your responsibility to schedule all needed appointments and to arrive on time for all of them. You, along with the Veterans Treatment Court team and your treatment providers, will develop plans to fit your specific needs.

Your treatment plan will specifically address your substance abuse and/or mental health needs, and will address other life issues such as education, vocational training, parenting and family skills. These plans will be evidence based and will serve as a guide or roadmap during your participation in the program. Expect to contribute to them with your thoughts and needs.

One of the primary goals of Veterans Treatment Court is to help you receive treatment for mental health issues or impairments and/or remain abstinent from alcohol and all non-prescribed drugs.

You will be drug tested throughout the entire program.

The Judge will have access to all drug test results including failures, refusals to test and adulterated tests. A drug test may be ordered at anytime. A positive test or admission of alcohol or other drug use will not automatically disqualify you, but may result in a sanction or change in treatment planning. Repeated positive screens can lead to expulsion from the program. Drug tests may be conducted at your drug treatment facility, during court appearances or at any other time.

Mentors

An essential part of the Veterans Treatment Court are the volunteer veteran mentors who are assigned to participants to support timely and successful completion of the program. These trained mentors will connect you with community based benefits, assistance and support services and act to problem solve with you any obstacles to your complete recovery and return to a healthy and productive lifestyle. For example, the mentors may be able to help you reduce stress associated with housing or family needs, VA benefits, educational assistance, and civil legal services. Volunteer veteran mentors are committed to leave no veteran behind.

What benefit will I receive?

Benefits of the Program:

In many cases, successful completion of Veterans Treatment Court will result in: (1) a reduced sentence imposed in your case, i.e. no jail time or no probation; or (2) a reduction or dismissal of the original charge. Your attorney will be able to discuss the particulars of your specific case. Veterans Treatment Court offers you the chance to move forward in your life with the new skills you have learned. The program will help you take control of your life in many ways. Equally important to learning the skills about how to stop abusing drugs and alcohol, how to manage mental

health issues, and how to stop committing crimes, are the things you will learn how to do: eating right, reducing stress, becoming fully employed, rebuilding family relationships, and becoming a productive member of the community.

Veterans Treatment Court Purpose

The purpose of the Veterans Treatment Court team is to make resources available that will help you and your family overcome stress, problems and conflicts that may block your recovery process. The team is here to help you and your family to build the skills that you may need to succeed in the program. **The members of the team only want to see you succeed.**



If you take advantage of the assistance offered by the Veterans Treatment Court Team, you will discover many new ways to make a better life.

Program Expectations

If you follow the rules and structure of the program, your life will get better. Tools will be made available to you to remain free of the never-ending cycle of getting high to escape problems, and to successfully manage your mental health challenges.

Arrive on time. You must arrive on time for court and all of your scheduled appointments. Court sessions start promptly at 1:15 p.m. Participants are called in the order of arrival. If you arrive 15 minutes after a session begins you will be admonished and may be subject to sanctions.

Attend all scheduled sessions or appointments. You must attend any and all scheduled court dates, treatment sessions, support groups, meetings or conferences. If you miss due to medical issues, you must: (1) call the Court, (812) 462-3295, to notify so a bench warrant is not issued; and (2)

provide medical verification to the Veterans Treatment Court and the treatment counselor.

Contact a Veterans Treatment Court Case Manager. If you are having any kind of difficulty, including making your appointments on time, contact your Case Manager. You cannot change your treatment plan on your own. Contact your Case Manager right away if a problem arises.

Meet with your attorney. Keep your scheduled appointments with your attorney to ask questions of him or her, especially if you are confused or uncertain about the Court process.

Participants are required to be clean, sober and healthy, abstaining from all drugs and alcohol. All prescription medications shall be administered and monitored by treating physicians.

Non-alcoholic beer contains alcohol. No alcohol means no alcohol!!!

You must identify to the Veterans Treatment Court each physician currently being seen, and you must notify the Veterans Treatment Court of any medications that are prescribed to you. You must also provide, and keep current with any changes, medical documentation of said medication for the Court file.

Do not take any alcohol based fluids. Alcohol based fluids are, for example, cough syrup, Listerine, etc. There are items sold over the counter that contain no alcohol.

Expect to take random and scheduled drug tests and breathalyzers. Do not tamper with urine samples as they are fully observed. Tampering with your sample may lead to a jail sanction.

You are not to travel outside of your home county unless you receive the Judge's approval. If an event or emergency arises, you must contact your case manager and/or attorney to make appropriate arrangements.

*If your personal information changes (residence, location, phone number, etc), contact a Case Manager with a full update. **This update must be made within three days of the change.***

If you need a letter written on your behalf for another court, Division of Family & Children, etc, you must contact the Court no later than one week before you need it.

Upon entry into the program, you must sign a release of information so that treatment providers can provide Team Members with information about your progress. Your participation in the Program requires this release, and it cannot be revoked if you want to remain a participant in the program. You may want information shared with family members. You may sign releases for those to whom you want information shared. At anytime, you may add or delete any of these releases. No information will be shared without releases. As required by law, releases of information for friends of family may be revoked at any time. 42 CFR Part 2.

Dress appropriately for Court and all treatment sessions. No shorts, undershirts or offensive, violent, alcohol or drug related clothing items may be worn or brought to any session. If you are unsure as to what is appropriate dress, ask a Case Manager.

Do not argue with the Judge or staff. If you disagree with something, state your position in a calm manner and accept what is being asked of you.

Do not force or coerce any other program participant into doing anything that may harm or interfere with their recovery.

Do not make threats toward other participants, staff, the Judge or behave in a violent manner.

Do not bring drugs, alcohol, or weapons into any treatment program, meeting, appointment, or event.

How can I participate in Veterans Court?

At some point following your arrest, you were provided several choices (1) participating in the Veterans Treatment Court Program or (2) remaining in criminal court for prosecution and sentencing on your pending charges. If

you are accepted into the Veterans Treatment Court, successful completion and graduation from the program may result in reduced sentences or dismissal of charges.

Always keep in mind that removal from the Veterans Treatment Court may result in a return to criminal court for sentencing on charge(s) for which you have been convicted.

The amount of time you spend in the program will be determined by your charges and by your individual progress, but it will be no less than 18 – 24 months.

How will I be Supervised?

You will be required to appear in front of the Veterans Treatment Court Judge on a regular basis. The Judge will be given progress reports regarding your drug tests, attendance, and participation in your treatment program. These reports will come from your treatment and/or mental health counselor, Community Corrections, your probation officer, parole officer, and the members of the Team with whom you are working (such as Housing Specialist, Family Advocate, etc.). The Judge will ask you about your progress and discuss any problems you may be experiencing. If you make progress, your court appearance schedule may be reduced.

You are required to arrive on time and stay until court is finished unless the Judge dismisses you earlier.

Regular Attendance

As a Veterans Treatment Court participant you are required to attend all of your scheduled treatment sessions, all of your other appointments, and all of your scheduled court dates.

Treatment sessions include counseling, substance abuse sessions, education sessions and all other sessions as directed. You will be required

to be on time for all sessions. If you are late, you may not be allowed to attend and may be considered absent.

You treatment schedule will vary according to your progress. It is your responsibility to schedule all needed appointments and to arrive on time



Drug and Alcohol Screening

One of the primary goals of Veterans Treatment Court is to help you remain abstinent from alcohol and all non-prescribed drugs. You will be tested throughout the entire program. **Testing is conducted at Vigo Community Corrections between the hours of 7:30am and 11am. You will call in to the drug screen line 7 days a week, which will notify you if you have been selected to screen. If selected to screen, you must report no later than 11am.**

- Toxicology tests require “direct observation.” Drug tests not witnessed are of no value and will not be accepted.
- The Judge will have access to all drug test results including failures, refusals to test, and adulterated/diluted tests.
- A drug test may be ordered at any time. Drug tests may be conducted at your drug treatment facility, during court appearances, or at any other time. You will call in for random drug tests, and if selected, you must timely report or it will be considered dirty (positive) and can result in a sanction.
- A positive test or admission of alcohol or other drug use may not automatically disqualify you, but may result in a sanction or change in treatment planning. Repeated positive drug screens can result in expulsion from the program.

- If the specimen appears to be “diluted” as a result of excessive amounts of fluid ingested, you can be sanctioned. Substituting or altering your specimen or trying in any way to modify bodily fluids for the purpose of changing the drug testing results will be considered a positive test and a sanction will be implemented.

You will be required to voluntarily report all drug or alcohol use to the Judge at each court appearance.

REMEMBER: BE UP FRONT AND HONEST

Repeated substance use will result in a sanction that may include jail, a higher level of care or both. Failure to report drug or alcohol use can result in a jail sanction. Any drugs that a doctor prescribes for you must be reported to your Case Manager. You may want to consider informing your doctor that you are in recovery and are not able to take narcotics.

Required Paperwork

Release of Information:

All Veterans Treatment Court Team Members must be able to communicate with your treatment providers about your eligibility and progress in the program. Upon entry into Veterans Treatment Court, you will be required to sign “releases of information” to allow this to happen. You must also sign additional releases as needed to arrange further treatment counseling or support services referrals.

Confidentiality:

State and federal laws require strict confidentiality regarding issues related to substance abuse and treatment. In response to these regulations, the Veterans Treatment Court has policies and procedures that guard your privacy. You will be asked to sign consent forms for the various agencies and staff working on your team to communicate with one another. We will not agree to keep any information secret from the Judge or another Team member. You are not to share the names of any other treatment court participants, nor any information they disclose. This is true also of others

you meet in treatment or in self-help/support groups. You may share Court reports or documents or information about your own personal treatment with family.

Participation Agreement:

You will be required to sign a Participation Agreement. Each Participation Agreement is written specifically for the individual participant based on the person's current charges, situation, and prior criminal and/or treatment history. Your agreement may require more than is listed in this handbook. Before you sign your agreement, you will have an opportunity to review the agreement with your defense attorney and have your questions answered.

Veterans Treatment Court participants are required to pay all fees, including a one hundred dollar (\$100.00) administration fee; **beginning the second month** of the program monthly problem-solving court services fees of fifty dollars (\$50.00) per month; a transfer fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) if applicable; and drug screening fees.

Recovery and Treatment Planning

YOU, the Veterans Treatment Court Team, and your treatment providers will develop plans to fit your specific needs. The plan will specifically address substance abuse problems, mental health problems, and life issues such as education, vocational training, parenting and family skills. The plan will be evidence based and will serve as a guide or roadmap during your participation in the program. **Your case management plan will be made in conjunction with you case manager. This plan will address areas and activities which must be completed in order to successfully complete the program. These activities will be based upon the risk and needs assessment, if required, and in conjunction with other assessments, your participation agreement and other court orders.** Your treatment plan will be made in conjunction with your treatment provider to address substance use and/or mental health issues. This plan will look to identify areas of strength and needs through assessment.

Develop goals and objectives to address issues, and develop services to address these goals.

It is important to remember that treatment will work if you work your treatment plan.

As a Veterans Treatment Court participant, it is expected that you participate in self-help groups or peer support groups. It is essential that you develop the support as well as the skills that will allow you to build a lasting recovery that will help you for the rest of your life. The team recognizes that recovery is not an easy process, but we recognize your effort and courage to change. Together, we can make it work.

Graduate and Live a Healthy Lifestyle

The final decision about your readiness to graduate will be made by the Veterans Treatment Court Team. Your Case Manager will let you know when the Team and Judge have decided that you are eligible for graduation. You must then complete your Graduation Exit Interview Form and submit it as directed.

Your graduation from Veterans Treatment Court is a time to celebrate your transition to a healthy lifestyle. It does not mean the end of working hard at your recovery, for staying sober is a life-long pursuit. You will be able to invite your family and friends to join you at your Graduation Ceremony. This special event is in recognition of your accomplishments and marks the beginning of your new way of life. At your graduation you will be encouraged to maintain ties with the staff and other successful participants. This will give you a chance to help new participants, maintain positive relationships with people who can help you with your relapse prevention plan, and socialize in a clean, sober and healthy environment with your program friends.

These are some steps you can take to help you begin this program.

- Get to know the names of all of the staff associated with the Veterans Treatment Court.
- Develop a folder or notebook to keep this handbook and other forms and papers that will be given to you.
- Know how you will travel to Court and have a back-up plan if you are relying on another person to bring you here.
- Begin to organize things at home. Being organized where you reside helps you to be organized in the way you approach other areas of your life.
- If you need to help with reading or understanding any of the forms, papers, or proceedings, make sure you let us know so we can help you.
- Obtain a calendar and keep it up-to-date with your court dates, meeting dates, etc. and bring it with you to Court.

My notes and important names, numbers and appointments to remember _____

Important names and numbers to know:

My Attorney: _____ Phone # _____

My first appointment: _____ Phone # _____

My counselor: _____ Phone # _____

My Case Manager: _____ Phone # _____

Phases: What are the phases of Veterans Treatment Court?

Vigo County Veterans Treatment Court – Misdemeanor Track 8 – 12 Months – Four Phases

Phase 1: Focus on stabilization, orientation, and assessment

- ◆ The participant complies with a High Random Frequency drug screening program, with twice-weekly drug screens. The participant is required to call the drug screening line every day.
- ◆ The participant shall comply with all orders for treatment.
- ◆ The participant shall comply with all orders for supervision.
- ◆ The participant appears in Veterans Treatment Court for all bi-monthly court hearings.
- ◆ The participant attends weekly office visits with Case Manager.
- ◆ The participant meets with his assigned mentor as ordered.
- ◆ The participant complies with Case Management Plan

Moving from Phase One to Phase Two

- ◆ Phase One is a minimum of 30 to 60 days, and the participant must have 14 consecutive days of Sobriety before advancing to Phase Two.
- ◆ The participant must have a payment plan in place.
- ◆ The participant must be in compliance with the treatment program including meetings with the case manager, without any unexcused absences.
- ◆ The participant must be in compliance with the terms and conditions of his or her participation in the Veterans Treatment Court Program.

- ◆ So long as consistent with the goals of the Veterans Treatment Court, the Supervising Judge can advance the participant to Phase Two during court appearance.

Phase 2: Focus on decision making and a generalized dedication to treatment

- ◆ The participant complies with a High Random Frequency drug screening program with minimum twice-weekly drug screen. The participant is required to call the drug screening line every day.
- ◆ The participant shall comply with all orders for treatment.
- ◆ The participant shall comply with all orders for supervision.
- ◆ The participant appears in Veterans Treatment Court for all bi-monthly court hearings.
- ◆ The participant meets with his assigned mentor as ordered.
- ◆ The participant attends weekly office visits with Case Manager.
- ◆ The participant is in compliance with the terms and conditions of his participation in the Veterans Treatment Court Program.
- ◆ The participant is making payments as outlined in the payment plan.
- ◆ The participant begins building pro-social support, including working on community giveback hours ordered by the Veterans Treatment Court Supervising Judge.
- ◆ The participant is developing employment, vocational and educational goals.
- ◆ The participant is meeting personal and program related financial obligations.

Moving from Phase Two to Phase Three

- ◆ Phase Two is a minimum of 60 to 90 Days, and the participant

must have 30 consecutive days of Sobriety before advancing to Phase Three.

- ◆ The participant must be in compliance with established payment plan.
- ◆ The participant must be in compliance with treatment program, including meetings with case manager, without any un-excused absences.
- ◆ The participant must be engaged in pro-social activities, including required community give-back hours.
- ◆ The participant must obtain employment or positive response(s) to vocational and educational goals.
- ◆ So long as consistent with the goals of the Veterans Treatment Court, the Supervising Judge can advance the participant to Phase Three during court appearance.

Phase 3: Focus on transition and continuing care.

- ◆ The participant complies with a High Random Frequency drug screening program **minimum twice-weekly drug screens**. The participant is required to call the drug screening line every day.
- ◆ The participant shall comply with all orders for treatment.
- ◆ The participant shall comply with all orders for supervision.
- ◆ The participant appears in Veterans Treatment Court for once monthly court hearings.
- ◆ The participant meets with his assigned mentor as ordered.
- ◆ The participant attends once monthly office visits with Case Manager as scheduled.
- ◆ The participant continues building pro-social supports, including completion of all ordered community give back hours.
- ◆ The participant addresses specific Criminogenic needs.
- ◆ The participant is in compliance with requirements of the Veterans Court program.

Moving from Phase Three to Phase Four

- ◆ Phase Three is a minimum 90 to 120 days and the participant must have 60 consecutive days of Sobriety before advancing to Phase Four.
- ◆ The participant must be in compliance with established payment plan.
- ◆ The participant must be in compliance with treatment program, including meetings with case manager, without any un-excused absences, and fulfilled all treatment objectives.
- ◆ The participant must be employed or participating in a vocational or educational program.
- ◆ So long as consistent with the goals of the Veterans Treatment Court, the Supervising Judge can advance the participant to Phase Four during court appearance.

Phase 4: Graduation Phase

- ◆ **The participant complies with a High Random Frequency drug screening program with a minimum of 1 drug screen per week. The participant is required to call the drug screening line every day.**
- ◆ Phase Four is a minimum of 60 days, and the participant must have 60 consecutive days of sobriety before graduating.
- ◆ The participant must have fulfilled their financial obligation in accordance with their established payment plan.
- ◆ The participant shall comply with all orders for supervision.
- ◆ The participant appears in Veterans Treatment Court as ordered.
- ◆ The participant meets with his assigned mentor as ordered.
- ◆ The participant attends monthly office visit with Case Manager.
- ◆ The participant continues building pro-social supports, including completion of all ordered community give back hours.
- ◆ The participant addresses specific Criminogenic needs.

- ◆ The participant is in compliance with requirements of the Veterans Treatment Court program.
- ◆ So long as consistent with the goals of the Veterans Treatment Court, the Supervising Judge will graduate the participant.

Treatment may deviate from the schedule outlined above based on the participant's progress. Drug screening can be ordered at any time there is suspected drug or alcohol use. Graduation from Veterans Treatment Court will be determined when all treatment plan goals and legal requirements are met.

Rules: What are the rules of Veterans Treatment Court?

**You must follow all of the rules
to remain in Veterans Treatment Court**



1. You must participate in regular court supervision (in other words, you must show up at Veterans Treatment Court and meetings with your Veterans Court Case Manager on time.
2. You must live a law abiding life. (In other words, you must not get re-arrested.)
3. You must attend and participate in all scheduled treatment and support services appointments.
4. **You must successfully complete all phases of the program.**
5. You must remain clean and sober.
6. You must complete all required paperwork.

What if I don't follow the rules?



If you break the rules you may be subjected to a sanction.

Doing any of the following may result in a sanction:

- New arrest
- Leaving a treatment program against medical advice
- Breaking the rules at a Treatment Program (not resulting in termination)
- Positive urine or alco-sensor tests, or admission of use
- Failure to take a drug test (urine screen and/or alcohol tests)
- Attempts to falsify drug tests
- Missing or arriving late for group or individual treatment appointments or any other Veterans Treatment Court appointments
- Missing or arriving late for Veterans Treatment Court Appearances
- Failure to follow the direction of the Judge, Case Managers or probation officers
- Demonstrating a lack of program progress.

Failure to appear in court will result in a sanction that may include incarceration.

Sanctions in Veterans Treatment Court may include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Jail stay
- Electronic Home Monitoring/Global Positioning System
- Day reporting
- Ignition Interlock
- Reprimand, Verbal warning or admonishment by the Judge
- Full day spent in court
- An essay writing assignment
- Increased drug testing
- Increased attendance at Court sessions
- Community Service
- Open apology to Judge, Team or group
- Extended duration of Veterans Treatment Court
- Dismissal from Veterans Treatment Court

Incentives for progress in Veterans Treatment Court may include:

- Verbal praise and Recognition by the Judge
- Candy
- Applause
- Fishbowl entry
- Gas Cards

- Fee reductions
- Bus passes
- Certificates of completion and Veterans Treatment Court Challenge Coins
- Graduation
- Dismissal or reduction of charges
- Capable of living law-abiding life, sober, drug free and healthy

Common errors or myths that you should be aware of in order to avoid misunderstandings that could lead to sanctions are:

- I don't have to stop using until I begin treatment. **FALSE!** Stop using today.
- I completed treatment so I don't have to come to court. **FALSE!**

It is the Judge who tells you when to come to Court.

- I can miss treatment appointments because I need to travel out of town for a family gathering, vacation or work assignment. **FALSE!** You cannot leave your home county without the permission of the Judge and/or recommendation by the Veterans Treatment Court Team.
- I can change treatment agencies because I did not like the treatment plan or I don't like my counselor. **FALSE!** These decisions will be made in conjunction with the Veterans Treatment Court Team, your primary case manager and with the approval of the Judge.

- I don't have to know my next court date or treatment appointment. **FALSE!** You are completely responsible for knowing these dates and times. Losing your appointment card is not an acceptable excuse.

Relapse Triggers and Relapse Prevention

Relapse and situations that trigger your substance use can happen at any time in many different ways. Your Case Manager, treatment counselors, probation officer and others will help you identify your triggers and discuss ways to either prevent bad situations or to work through them when they cannot be avoided.

Relapse triggers can include:

- Going to places and hanging around with people who are drinking and drugging
- Money in your pocket
- Spending time thinking about "the parties" and forgetting about the problems your use created
- Arguments with loved ones
- Bad luck, disappointments
- Good luck, celebration events, holidays
- Medicine, even prescription drugs, that can get you high



Remember! For people in recovery, triggers and cravings are not an excuse to use- they are a reason to go to a meeting and to call a recovering friend to get more support!

My signature below indicates that I have received a copy of the *Veterans Treatment Court Handbook*. The Veterans Treatment Court has reviewed its contents with me. I understand the information provided in this handbook, and I agree to comply with the Veterans Treatment Court program requirements.

DATE: _____

Signature of Participant

Printed Name of Participant