



Orange County Veterans Treatment Court Participant Handbook

Superior Court of California
County of Orange





Welcome to the Orange County Veterans Treatment Court. This handbook will provide you with a description of what is expected of you as a Veterans Treatment Court participant. Participants are encouraged to share this handbook with family and friends. Three simple rules will insure success:

1. Show up

2. Try hard

3. Be honest

VETERANS TREATMENT COURT DESCRIPTION

The Orange County Veterans Treatment Court is a voluntary program that includes regular court appearances before the Judge. Treatment includes weekly individual and group counseling, drug and alcohol testing, mental health treatment, medical treatment and regular attendance at recovery support/self-help meetings. You will be provided with referrals for vocational training, education and/or job placement services. The program's length is a minimum of 18 months. Ongoing aftercare services will be available to all graduates.

Entry into the Veterans Treatment Court is voluntary and will require that you enter a guilty plea. You will be placed on formal probation. Probation supervision will include random drug and alcohol testing, and unannounced home visits, during which both you and your place of residence are subject to search. Your defense counsel will continue to represent you throughout your participation in the Veterans Treatment Court.

There is an initial 14-day “window period”, in which you may withdraw your plea and request prosecution of your case, or during which an eligibility or suitability issue may arise which may disqualify you. Successful completion and graduation from the program usually results in a dismissal of the charges, termination of probation and sealing your criminal record. Failure or discharge from the program will result in the imposition of your sentence.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Orange County Veterans Treatment Court is to provide an inter-agency, collaborative, non-adversarial treatment strategy for Veterans in the criminal justice system who suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), psychological issues, sexual trauma, or substance abuse problems as a result of having served in the United States military.

SUPERVISION

You will be required to appear in court for progress reviews. The Judge will be given a progress report prepared by your Probation Officer and VA case manager, with input from other agencies, regarding your performance in the program. If you are doing well, you will be encouraged to continue with the program, and to work with your treatment team toward success. If you are not doing well, the Judge will discuss this with you and your treatment team, and further action will be determined. With repeated violations or the failure to progress satisfactorily, the Judge may discharge you from the program at which point you are entitled to a hearing.

PROGRAM RULES

1. Attend all ordered treatment sessions.

This includes individual and group counseling, educational sessions, doctor appointments, recovery support/self-help meetings, and any other treatment requirements.

2. Report to your Probation Officer as directed.

You must comply with all conditions of probation as directed by your Probation Officer. You must also notify your Probation Officer prior to any change in residence. If you are unable to report as directed, contact your Probation Officer immediately.

3. Submit to drug and alcohol testing.

Sobriety is a primary focus of this program. Maintaining a lifestyle free of drugs and alcohol is very important in your recovery process. Do not use or possess any drugs or alcohol. You must be prepared to provide a urine sample at each visit to the VA and Probation. If you fail to provide a monitored urine sample, this will be considered a positive drug test.

You must notify your treatment team of any prescription or over-the-counter medication or supplements prior to taking any, unless it is a medical emergency.

4. Be on time to all appointments including court appearances.

If you are late for a counseling session or testing, you may not be allowed to participate or test and will be considered non-compliant.

PROGRAM FEES



As a participant on formal probation, you will be required to pay the cost of probation supervision. The cost is based upon your ability to pay or as directed by the Court. Payments will be made directly to the Probation Department. Treatment providers and/or residential treatment programs may also impose their own fees on a sliding scale. No one will be refused services due to an inability to pay.

TREATMENT PROCEDURES

The treatment team will assess what level of treatment will best meet your needs and recommend to the Judge that you receive either outpatient or residential treatment. If you are admitted to a residential treatment program, your treatment plan will include the requirements of that program. Upon release from a residential program, you will continue your participation in the program as directed by the Judge and treatment team. If you are not admitted into a residential treatment program, you will participate in a multi-component, outpatient program developed through the VA, which includes developing a treatment plan, drug testing, counseling, recovery support services, recovery support/self-help meetings, and working with your mentor.

Drug Testing

You will be tested for drug and alcohol use at random times throughout the entire treatment process. During Phase 1, you may be tested a minimum of three times weekly. As you progress through the phases of the program, you may be tested less frequently. Additionally, you may be required to wear a drug test patch (a 24-hour drug testing device). The Judge will have access to all drug test results, including any failures to test, and may order a drug test at any time. Relapse may occur in recovery; however, a positive, dilute or missed test will result in a court-imposed sanction. Tampering with any drug test will be deemed a positive test. The Judge will review your overall performance in the program; repeated offenses may result in progressively severe sanctions.

Counseling

Counseling is comprised of two separate formats: individual and group. As part of your treatment plan, you will be required to participate in both types of counseling if it is appropriate. You may be required to attend additional treatment such as Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) groups, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) treatment, anger management, parenting classes, or any other topic the treatment team recognizes as needed. Your attendance at both individual and group counseling sessions will be reported to the Judge as part of your progress report. You must have prior permission from your VA case manager to be excused from any counseling sessions.

Mentor Program

You will be assigned a volunteer veteran mentor from the community to support your efforts to create a better life.

Recovery Support/Self-Help Meetings

You may be required to attend recovery support/self-help meetings. The frequency of required attendance is determined by your progress in the program and your phase level. Attendance is an important part of the recovery process. The meetings will familiarize you with the recovery support/self-help philosophy, and help you to create social bonds with other recovering addicts. Your treatment team will provide you with information regarding the time and location of these meetings and will also direct you to special interest and recovery events in your community. You must provide proof of attendance to your VA case manager and Probation Officer prior to each court appearance. The program requires you to have a sponsor and work the 12 steps.

TREATMENT PHASES

Veterans Treatment Court is a four-phase, highly-structured program, lasting for a minimum of 18 months. Individual progress will vary. Each phase consists of specified treatment objectives and specific requirements for advancement into the next phase.

Window Period- 14 days

The window period is a fourteen-day period during which you will decide whether or not Veterans Treatment Court is appropriate for you. At the same time, the Veterans Treatment Court team will evaluate your appropriateness for the program. During the window period, you will actively participate in the program. The Judge may extend this window if deemed necessary. Phase 1 includes this window period.

You are subject to all Veterans Treatment Court, VA, and Probation rules during the window period. If the rules are violated, you are subject to sanctions.

Phase I - Treatment Plan Development

Length: Minimum of 120 days

In Phase I, You will be assigned a VA case manager and a probation officer. Your needs will be assessed by the treatment team. Your progress will be closely monitored and reported to the Judge. Requirements include:

- Participate in full assessment in order to determine treatment needs. Course of treatment is individualized according to participant needs.
- Participate in all forms of treatment as directed by the treatment team.
- Comply with additional case management services as determined by the treatment team.
- Drug and alcohol test three times per week minimum. Drug test patch and immediate result drug tests may be used at the treatment team's discretion.
- Take non-narcotic medication as directed by medical and mental health professionals.
- Attend daily or as ordered recovery support/self-help meetings and actively seek a recovery support/self-help sponsor.
- Report to the VA case manager and the probation officer weekly.
- Participate in clean & sober recreation.
- Attend weekly court appearances as determined by the Judge.
- Most participants will be assigned a mentor during Phase 1. Each participant is required to meet with a mentor at each court appearance.
- Curfew is set at the discretion of the team.

Advancement Criteria:

- No positive drug test results (including missed, tampered or diluted tests) for 90 consecutive days.
- No unexcused absences from scheduled services for 30 consecutive days.
- Non-narcotic medication taken as directed.
- Employment or productive use of time such as community service or school attendance.
- Documentation of required minimum attendance at recovery support/self-help meetings.
- Must have a recovery support/self-help sponsor.
- Demonstrate a positive adjustment to treatment.
- Submit a Phase II Promotion Request.
- Submit a written Phase II advancement essay.

Phase II - Ongoing Treatment

Length: Minimum of 90 days

In Phase II, Your treatment plan will be updated to identify ongoing treatment goals. Counseling and meetings will focus on areas that are challenging for you, and will identify ways of coping with stressful situations. Phase II requirements include:

- Participate in all forms of treatment as directed by the treatment team.
- Comply with additional case management services as determined by the treatment team.
- Drug and alcohol test as directed. Drug test patch and immediate result drug tests may be used at the treatment team's discretion.
- Take non-narcotic medication as directed by medical and mental health professionals.
- Attend a minimum of four recovery support/self-help meetings per week, maintain a recovery support/self-help sponsor and start working the self-help steps.
- Report to the VA case manager and the probation officer weekly or as instructed.
- Participate in clean and sober recreation.
- Maintain employment or engage in productive use of time such as community service and school attendance.
- Formulate personal goals in conjunction with the treatment team such as vocational/educational counseling, psychotherapy, exercise, anger management, parenting skills.

- Attend biweekly or monthly court appearances as determined by the Judge.
- Meet with a mentor at each court appearance.
- Curfew is set at the discretion of the team.

Advancement Criteria:

- No positive drug test results (including missed, tampered or diluted tests) for 90 consecutive days.
- No unexcused absences from scheduled services for 30 consecutive days.
- Non-narcotic medication taken as directed.
- Employment or productive use of time such as community service or school attendance.
- Documentation of attendance at no fewer than four recovery support/self-help meetings per week, maintenance of a recovery support/self-help sponsor, and working the steps.
- Demonstrate a positive adjustment to ongoing treatment.
- Have a clear understanding of recovery support/self-help concepts.
- Progress toward treatment plan goals.
- Meet with the Probation Financial Officer and sign the Orange County Probation Department Adult Financial Statement and sign stipulations for payments of fines, fees, cost of probation and restitution if owed.
- Submit a Phase III Promotion Request.
- Submit a written Phase III advancement essay.

Phase III – Stabilization

Length: Minimum of 150 days

Phase III will address ongoing recovery needs. The focus will be on daily living skills. This phase is designed to support you as a productive and responsible member of our community. Phase III requirements include:

- Participate in all forms of treatment as directed by the treatment team.
- Attend other treatment services as determined to be necessary by the treatment team.
- Drug and alcohol test as directed. Drug test patch and immediate result drug tests used at the treatment team's discretion.
- Take non-narcotic medication as directed by medical and mental health professionals.

- Attend a minimum of at least three recovery support/self-help meetings per week, maintain a recovery support/self-help sponsor and work the steps.
- Report to VA case manager and the probation officer as directed.
- Participate in clean and sober recreation.
- Maintain full-time employment and/or progress toward an educational goal.
- Participate in community service as determined by the team.
- Attend court as determined by the Judge.
- Meet with a mentor at each court appearance.
- Curfew is set at the discretion of the team.

Advancement Criteria:

- No positive drug test results (including missed, tampered or diluted tests) for 90 consecutive days.
- No unexcused absences from scheduled services for 30 consecutive days.
- Take non-narcotic medication as directed.
- Employment or actively pursuing a vocational/academic degree.
- Documentation of required attendance at no fewer than three recovery support/self-help meetings each week, maintenance of a recovery support/self-help sponsor and working the steps.
- Progress towards treatment plan goals.
- Have a clear understanding of recovery support/self-help concepts.
- Demonstrate positive adjustment to treatment.
- Submit a Phase IV promotion request.
- Submit a written Phase IV advancement essay.

Phase IV – Achievement/Graduation

Length: Minimum of 6 months

Phase IV You will transition from the Veterans Treatment Court structure to a lifestyle more representative of what you will experience following graduation. Phase IV requirements include:

- Participate in all forms of treatment as directed/instructed by the treatment team. Attend individual counseling session to complete an exit plan.
- Attend other treatment services as determined to be necessary by the treatment team.
- Drug and alcohol test on a random basis.

- Take non-narcotic medication as directed by medical and mental health professionals.
- Attend a minimum of at least two recovery support/self-help meetings each week, maintain a recovery support/self-help sponsor and work the steps.
- Report to VA case manager and your probation officer as directed.
- Participate in clean and sober recreation.
- Maintain full-time employment and/or progress toward a vocational/educational goal.
- Continue established mentoring relationships.
- Attend court as directed by the Judge.
- Meet with a mentor at each court appearance.
- Prepare a graduation speech.

Graduation Criteria:

- No positive drug test results (including missed, tampered, or diluted tests) for 180 consecutive days.
- No unexcused absences from scheduled services for 45 consecutive days.
- Gainful employment or productive use of time including community service or school attendance.
- Take non-narcotic medication as directed.
- Maintain consistent attendance at all court appearances and treatment team appointments.
- Achievement of stable living arrangements and healthy interpersonal relationships.
- A definitive aftercare plan, which may include recovery support/self-help meetings, VA outpatient counseling, group attendance at a former residential program, or active participation in a Veterans Treatment Court alumni group.
- Fulfillment of goals as stated in the individual treatment plan.
- Proof of a valid California Driver's License.
- Proof of attendance at all other events or courses as required by the Judge.
- Submit a Graduation Request.
- Submit a written graduation essay.

The graduation ceremony, conducted in the courtroom, is a time to celebrate your success and to allow others in earlier stages to become encouraged and motivated to succeed as well.

INCENTIVES

If you are in compliance during the program, the Veterans Treatment Court Judge may reward your positive progress with one or more of the following:

- Court-announced perfect compliance list
- Drawings for gift certificates
- Applause/Praise from Judge & team
- Sports/Concert tickets
- Advancement to next phase
- Fewer court appearances
- Called first & leave early
- Adjust curfew
- Fun sober events
- Grant travel privileges
- Reduce some felonies to misdemeanors
- Probable dismissal of charges
- Graduation ceremony
- Sealing your criminal record



Graduation from Program/Possible Dismissal of Charges/Sealing of Record

The Veterans Treatment Court team will determine the candidate's qualification for graduation. At the time of the graduation ceremony, the Court may dismiss some charges to which the participant previously pled guilty. Under CA Penal Code 1170.9. (D) A dismissal pursuant to this subdivision may, in the discretion of the court, order the sealing of police records of the arrest and court records of the dismissed action, thereafter viewable by the public only in accordance with a court order.

SANCTIONS

If you are out of compliance, the Veterans Treatment Court Judge may impose one or more of the following:

- Admonishment from the Judge
- Write an essay and read it aloud
- Increased drug testing
- Increased frequency of court appearances
- Demotion to an earlier program phase
- Community Service
- Lengthen time in program, requiring an admission of a probation violation
- Periods of incarceration
- Residential treatment program



SOCIAL SERVICES

Upon your entry into the Veterans Treatment Court, your treatment team will assess your housing, transportation, family situation and general living needs. When appropriate, the team will refer you to local, state and/or county agencies for additional assistance.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your identity and privacy will be protected consistent with Federal Regulations and State laws (e.g., 42CFR, Part 2; 45CFR, Parts 160 and 164; CA Health & Safety Code Sections 11812(c) and 5328). You will be asked to sign a waiver authorizing the transfer of information among all participating agencies. An identification number will be assigned to you that will be used in all research and evaluation activities to insure confidentiality.

GRADUATION



Once you have successfully completed the criteria for each Phase, you will advance to the next level and eventually be a candidate to graduate from the Veterans Treatment Court. The final decision regarding advancement from each phase and graduation is determined solely by the Judge, assisted by input from the team. At graduation, most cases will be dismissed and your criminal record sealed. Your family will be invited to join you as the Judge congratulates you.

CONCLUSION

The Veterans Treatment Court program is designed to help you live in our community as a productive and responsible citizen. The Judge, the Court staff, and the treatment team will guide and assist you, but the final responsibility is yours. You must be committed to a better life. Remember the three basic rules:

1. Show up

2. Try hard

3. Be honest

GRIEVANCES

All parties participating in the Orange County Veterans Treatment Court have the right to express opinions, recommendations and grievances. In addition, all parties have the right to request and receive responses via a procedure of due process. Anyone who wishes to file a complaint or grievance may do so without fear of negative repercussions. Grievances should be submitted in writing to the Veterans Treatment Court coordinator.

PHASE REQUIREMENTS AT-A-GLANCE

PHASE	MINIMUM NUMBER OF DAYS	RECOVERY SUPPORT MEETINGS PER WEEK	DRUG TESTING	VA and PROBATION MEETINGS	TREATMENT and COUNSELING MEETINGS
WINDOW	14	Daily	3x/week	1/week or TBD	1 to 2 x/week, or more as needed
PHASE I	120	Daily or as ordered	3x/week	1/week or TBD	1 to 2 x/week, or more as needed
PHASE II	90	4	2x/week	1/week or TBD	1 to 2 x/week, or more as needed
PHASE III	150	3	1x/week	1/week or TBD	1 to 2 x/week, or more as needed
PHASE IV	180	2	2x/month	1/week or TBD	1 to 2 x/week, or more as needed

*The table above lists the **minimum** requirements of each phase. Participants may be required to complete more than what is listed, as determined by the treatment team and the Judge.

**VETERANS TREATMENT COURT
TEAM PHONE NUMBERS**

Orange County Public Defender's Office
Monday – Friday
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

(714) 568-4860

Orange County Probation Department
Monday – Friday
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Santa Ana Office (714) 569-2000

Veterans case manager
Monday – Friday
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Santa Ana Office (562) 480-7860

Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator
Monday – Friday
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

(657) 622-5816



NOTES