

# THE NORFOLK COUNTY VETERANS TREATMENT COURT

## INFORMATION PACKET



## BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in the Norfolk County Veterans Treatment Court. This packet of information is intended to provide additional details about the program goals, structure, entry process and completion criteria. If you have any questions, please see the “Contact Us” section at the end of this packet.

The Veterans Treatment Court is a voluntary 12-24 month program intended to serve veterans who are struggling with addiction, mental health issues and/or other co-occurring disorders. The program involves ongoing judicial and probation supervision with input from a multidisciplinary team of professionals led by the judge. The Court promotes sobriety, recovery and stability through a collaboration with VA and community based treatment providers. In addition, all participants are matched with a veteran peer mentor who will act as an advocate, mentor, and ally.

The Veterans Treatment Court session is held on Tuesday’s at 2:30pm. Participants are encouraged to come early to meet with probation, their mentor, and other veterans prior to the session.

## MISSION STATEMENT

To support veterans and their families through a coordinated effort among the veterans services delivery system, community based providers, and the Court, thereby improving public safety while leaving no veteran behind.

## GOALS OF THE VETERANS TREATMENT COURT

- Reduce recidivism
- Stabilize mental health and increase compliance with treatment
- Facilitate participant sobriety
- Improve access to VA benefits and services
- Achieve stable housing
- Improve family relationships and social support connections
- Improve employment and/or educational status

## ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility is evaluated by the Veterans Treatment Court Team on a case-by-case basis. To qualify for the Norfolk County Veterans Treatment Court, the veteran can be from any branch of service and with any discharge status. The participant can be charged with a misdemeanor or felony in Norfolk County, however, the charge must be probationable and if it’s a felony, it must stay at the district court level (i.e. not yet indicted). All participants must enter the program voluntarily and agree to participate in any and all recommendations of the court team.

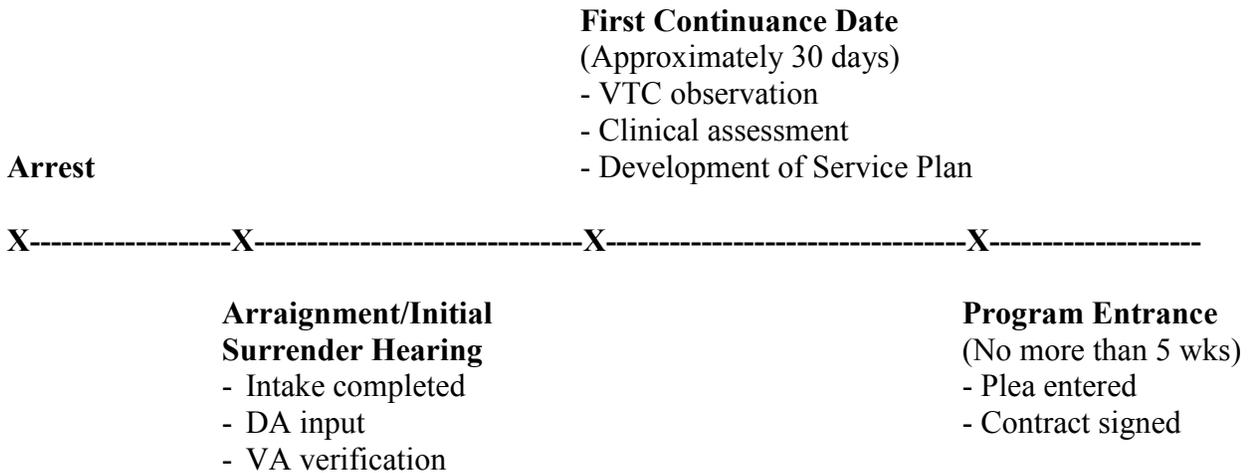
A veteran may not qualify if they are a registered sex offender or if the current charge is a sex offense, if they have a history of fire setting, or if they have a lengthy history of violence. In certain cases, a victim must also support the veteran’s participation in the Veterans Treatment Court. If a veteran does not qualify for the Veterans Treatment Court, team members will still provide referrals to VA benefits and services.

## VETERANS TREATMENT COURT ENTRY PROCESS

- 1) A referral form is submitted to the Veterans Treatment Court located in Dedham.
- 2) The veteran will be called to schedule an intake assessment. The Veteran will be provided a copy of the participant handbook and may ask questions about the program.
- 3) The veteran observes a Veterans Treatment Court session at the Dedham Court.
- 4) The District Attorney determines the veteran's legal eligibility based on their criminal history and current charges.
- 5) The Court approves the veteran's legal and clinical eligibility.
- 6) The veteran reviews and accepts the plea agreement with their attorney and signs the Veterans Treatment Court Contract.

## ADJUDICATION AND CASE LOGISTICS

The Norfolk County Veterans Treatment Court will utilize a post-adjudication model. All participants will be arraigned on their charges. Some may be placed on pre-trial probation while others may plead guilty or admit to sufficient facts (CWOFF). In addition, participants may enter the program after they have stipulated to a violation of probation. If applicable, the case will then be transferred to the Dedham District Court for supervision.



If a participant has a violation, the violation of probation hearing will be held in the Veterans Treatment Court session. If a participant is terminated from the program the case will be returned to the original court and docket list.

## PHASES

The Norfolk County Veterans Treatment Court is composed of five different phases which will take a minimum of one year to complete. Participants must satisfy a set of pre-determined requirements to advance through the various phases. Any new arrest may result in the repetition of the current phase or termination from the program

Phase	Court Appearances	Phase Requirements	Completion Criteria
I. Orientation  Approximate length: 4-8 weeks	Weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meet with probation and mentor weekly</li> <li>- Twice weekly drug/alcohol testing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attend court as directed</li> <li>- Provide a minimum of 8 urine and breathalyzer samples</li> </ul>
II. Introduction to Treatment  Approximate length: 4-8 weeks	Weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participate in the development of the service plan</li> <li>- Verify/Apply for Veterans Benefits</li> <li>- Twice weekly testing</li> <li>- Meet with probation weekly</li> <li>- Check-in with mentor weekly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Service Plan in place</li> <li>- Attend all appointments in conjunction with developing the service plan</li> <li>- VHA/VBA benefits verified or application pending</li> <li>- 30 days of sobriety</li> </ul>
III. Initiation to Treatment  Approximate length: 4-8 weeks	At least bi-weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Comply with service plan</li> <li>- Meet with Probation and mentor as scheduled</li> <li>- Address residency issues</li> <li>- Twice weekly testing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No unexcused missed appointments for 30 days</li> <li>- Full compliance with service plan</li> <li>- Stable residence</li> <li>- 90 days of sobriety</li> </ul>
IV. Full Engagement in Treatment  Approximate length: 3-6 months	At least every three weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintain a schedule for court-based appointments</li> <li>- Comply with treatment</li> <li>- Develop educational and/or vocational plan</li> <li>- Participate in community service</li> <li>- Plan for long term housing</li> <li>- Develop a payment plan for fees/fines</li> <li>- Twice weekly testing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No unexcused missed appointments for 60 days</li> <li>- Implement an educational/vocational plan</li> <li>- Complete at least 40 hours of community service</li> <li>- Develop and maintain stable housing</li> <li>- Agree to a payment plan for fees/fines</li> <li>- 6 months of sobriety</li> </ul>
V. Step Down From Treatment and Community Integration  Approximate length: 6 months-1 year	At least monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintain schedule for court-based appointments</li> <li>- Maintain compliance in treatment if indicated</li> <li>- Implementation of on-going educational/ vocational plan for productive activity</li> <li>- Develop and implement a community based, post program completion service plan</li> <li>- Drug testing as ordered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No unexcused missed appointments for 90 days</li> <li>- Stable educational/vocational plan or activity</li> <li>- Stable, long term housing</li> <li>- Three months implementation of community based service plan</li> <li>- An acceptable level of sobriety as determined by the VTC team, which will include at least one year of total sobriety and six months of sobriety prior to graduation</li> </ul>

## INCENTIVES AND SANCTIONS

The Veterans Treatment Court will use incentives focused on consistent compliance with the service plan, negative drug screens, periods of sobriety, absence of criminal activity, involvement in the community, improvement in educational/vocational status, stable housing, etc. Examples of incentives include, recognition by the Judge, decrease in drug and alcohol testing, decrease in attendance, certificates of completion, extended curfew.

Sanctions will be focused on positive drug screens, missed unexcused appointments or treatment sessions, new criminal activity, failure to comply with the service plan and/or a breach of confidentiality. Examples of sanctions include, verbal warning or admonishment, an essay writing assignment, increased drug and alcohol testing, community service, incarceration.

## TREATMENT PROVIDERS

The Veterans Treatment Court will primarily rely on the VA healthcare system. If a person is not eligible to receive services through the VA, they will be referred to community based treatment providers. Each veteran's participation in treatment will be monitored collaboratively by their probation officer, the VJO, and peer mentor. A more detailed list of VA and non-VA resources can be found in the Veterans Treatment Court Resource Guide.

## PROBATION SUPERVISION PROTOCOL

The level of supervision and community monitoring will be dependent on the veteran's current phase. Initially, all veterans will meet with probation weekly. Probation staff will also conduct visits in the field, sometimes in collaboration with local police departments.

## TESTING PROTOCOL

Veterans will be required to submit to drug and alcohol testing twice weekly through Phase IV and as directed in Phase V. The Dedham District Court uses a color coded testing system, whereby each veteran is assigned a color. They will be required to call the testing hotline every morning and if their color is called, they must report in person that day. The court will also allow veterans to participate in drug testing at their substance abuse treatment program or at the Office of Community Corrections (OCC).

## CONTACT US

For additional questions, please call the Veterans Treatment Court Hotline at (781)329-4777 x412. You may leave a confidential voicemail and a Veterans Treatment Court Team Member will return your call. If you need to speak with someone immediately, call (781)329-4777 x425 and ask to speak with a Veterans Treatment Court Team Member. You may also email the Team Coordinator, Assistant Chief Probation Officer Jeffrey Jarasitis, at [jeffrey.jarasitis@jud.state.ma.us](mailto:jeffrey.jarasitis@jud.state.ma.us)