



**Kankakee County  
Veterans Treatment Court**

**Established July 2013**

**PARTICIPANT'S HANDBOOK**

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# **WELCOME TO THE KANKAKEE COUNTY VETERANS TREATMENT COURT PROGRAM!**

As a participant in the Kankakee County Veterans Treatment Court (VTC), you are expected to follow the instructions given to you in Court by the Judge and the Veterans Treatment Court team. 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 (your support network) so they will know about the work that you are doing to become clean and sober. Support from those around you will be extremely important throughout your participation in the program.

VTC meets as scheduled on Thursdays promptly at 2:30p.m. at the Kankakee County Courthouse. On days you are scheduled to be in court, you must arrive on time, be dressed appropriately, and remain in the courtroom until the presiding judge dismisses court for the afternoon.

## **DISCLAIMER**

The information contained in this manual is intended solely for the use of the Kankakee County Veterans Treatment Court program and its participants. All information contained herein is subject to modification as directed by the current Veterans Treatment Court team.

This manual is not intended to answer every question about the Veterans Court program. It is, however, a valuable source of information and we hope participants will use it.

## **THIS MANUAL IS NOT DESIGNED TO PROVIDE OR GIVE LEGAL ADVICE.**

Any questions regarding the status of outstanding criminal case(s), Pretrial, Probation, Parole, or/and Veterans Benefits information, should be reviewed with the appropriate authority – be it an Attorney, Federal, State, or County Probation Officer, or other authority.

# What is Veterans Treatment Court?

The program length is up to YOU! It will be determined by your progress in meeting the treatment goals, but no less than 18 months.

There are certain eligibility criteria that has to be met, as well as exclusionary criteria which must not exist in order for an individual to be considered for entrance into the VTC program. Those criteria are listed below.

## **Eligibility Criteria**

Veterans Treatment Court is limited to defendants who are eligible for VA benefits.

- Veterans who served before September 8, 1980 must have 90 days active duty.
- Veterans who served AFTER September 8, 1980 must have completed 2 years active duty and an Honorable discharge.
- Individual must be charged with a probationable offense.
- Must have a diagnosis with a treatable need. (Drug dependency, Alcohol Dependency, PTSD, etc.)
- Must be a resident of 21<sup>st</sup> Judicial Circuit (Kankakee & Iroquois Counties)

## **Exclusionary Criteria**

While each case will be considered individually, the following offenses will be excluded from the court, pursuant to the provisions Section 20 of the Veterans and Servicemembers Court Treatment Act (730 ILCS 167/20(b) (West 2015)):

- If veteran does not demonstrate a willingness to participant
- If defendant has been convicted of a crime of violence within the past 10 years, excluding incarceration time, including but not limited to: first degree murder, second degree murder, predatory criminal sexual assault of a child, aggravated criminal sexual assault, criminal sexual assault, armed robbery, aggravated arson, arson, aggravated kidnapping and kidnapping, aggravated battery resulting in great bodily harm or permanent disability, stalking, aggravated stalking, or any offense involving the discharge of a firearm or where occurred serious bodily injury or death to any person
- If defendant is currently charged with a crime of violence, including but not limited to: first degree murder, second degree murder, predatory criminal sexual assault of a child, aggravated criminal sexual assault, criminal sexual assault, armed robbery, aggravated arson, arson, aggravated kidnapping and kidnapping, aggravated battery resulting in great bodily harm or permanent disability, stalking, aggravated stalking, or any offense involving the discharge of a firearm or where occurred serious bodily injury or death to any person

## **Confidentiality**

All members of the Veterans Treatment Court team shall comply with confidentiality requirements as set forth in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) (Pub. L.No.104-191, 110 Stat. 1936 as well as Federal confidentiality law 42 C.F.R Part 2 to prevent the unauthorized disclosure or redisclosure of information regarding participants. Case management plans, clinical treatment plans, reports, drug test results and other information disseminated to the VTC team shall not be placed in any part of a court file that is open to examination by members of the public.

# **Program Guidelines and Expectations**

The Veterans Treatment Court Team will meet in advance of each scheduled court date to review the status of participants scheduled for court that day and any other participants who are having difficulty in the program and those being considered for entry.

At the time of acceptance into Veterans Treatment Court, all necessary consent forms for waivers of confidentiality are required to have been signed to allow all team members to communicate freely with each other and with the Veterans Treatment Court participant. The Court Coordinator will obtain this release of information. The complete coordination of information is critical to the success of the Veterans Treatment Court participant. At the signing of the participation contract, the participant will receive a copy of the treatment phase that he or she has been initially entered into the program on so that he or she knows and understands what is expected of them at all times.

The process of Veterans Treatment Court is envisioned as consisting of four phases of engagement. The intensity of these phases is developed based on the idea that greater engagement in the early stages of recovery and participation in the court will increase motivation to stick to the agreed upon plan. These phases are also designed to focus more on positive rewards and strengths than on sanctions, though sanctions will be imposed as necessary. While movement through the phases will be individualized, the average length of participation in the court is expected to be 18-24 months, but it is entirely dependent on the participant's efforts.

## **Appearance in Court**

Kankakee County's Veterans Treatment Court meets as scheduled on Thursdays at the Kankakee Court House at 2:30 p.m. All participants who are scheduled to appear must be in the courtroom at this time and are required to stay in the courtroom the entire time VTC is in session. Participants not scheduled to appear before the judge are invited to attend court to show support to their fellow participants. After the scheduled call is completed, the judge may acknowledge the presence of unscheduled participants who, if they chose, may offer insight on how their week has gone in regards to employment/treatment/days clean/etc.

## **Transportation to Court**

Participants are expected to arrive to court on time of their own recognizance. Should transportation to court be an issue due to a participant's lack of a vehicle, insufficient funds to use public transportation, a suspended license, or another reason, that information should be discussed with the court coordinator for arrangements to be made.

Participants receiving residential treatment at Hines VA Hospital who are in the early stages of the program, those that are deemed high risk, or those ordered to do so by the court will be required to ride down to the Kankakee County Courthouse with the VJO to ensure timely arrival to court. Coordination of all transportation to court for those individuals who are in custody at the Jerome Combs Detention Center, whether it be those being considered for the program, those awaiting treatment placement, or participants serving a sanction, will be conducted by the judge's clerk. Telephone calls will be acceptable court appearances for those who are in VA treatment facilities too far to travel to court.

## Incentives, Sanctions and Therapeutic Adjustments

Addiction is a chronic, relapsing condition. A pattern of decreasing frequency of use before sustained abstinence from alcohol and other drugs is common. Eventually, participants learn to manage cravings, avoid or deal more effectively with high-risk situations, and maintain sobriety for increasing length of time. Although the Veterans Treatment Court recognizes that individuals have a tendency to relapse, continuing alcohol and other drug use is not condoned. The VTC team will impose appropriate responses for continuing use. Responses increase in severity for continual failure to abstain.

The VTC rewards cooperation and honesty as well as sanctions for noncompliance. Small rewards for incremental successes have an important effect on a participant's sense of purpose and accomplishment. Praise from the VTC Judge for positive actions as well as certificates of graduation are but examples of recognition for positive behavior. On the other hand, continued non-compliance must be sanctioned as well. The VTC draws the distinction between therapeutic sanctions (imposed when the client is honest about relapse) and behavioral sanctions (imposed when the client misses scheduled treatment or Probation Officer meetings, denies relapse). Therapeutic sanctions may include increased self-help meetings or increased intensity of treatment whereas behavioral sanctions may include writing assignments, community service work hours or jail.

Incentives	Sanctions	Therapeutic Adjustments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Applause</li><li>• Peer Recognition</li><li>• Gift Cards</li><li>• Vouchers for resale shop</li><li>• Program passes</li><li>• Membership to Veteran Service Organization</li><li>• Not have to come to court</li><li>• Verbal recognition from judge</li><li>• Gift closet</li><li>• Gift basket</li><li>• Graduation coins</li><li>• Tuition/Book Voucher</li><li>• Bus Passes</li><li>• Certificates of Accomplishment</li><li>• Gym memberships</li><li>• Day Trips (out of county)</li><li>• T-shirts</li><li>• Phase advancement</li><li>• Fine reduction</li><li>• Commencement</li><li>• Journal</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community Service</li><li>• Public Service</li><li>• Essays/ Journals</li><li>• Verbal admonishment</li><li>• Curfew</li><li>• GPS device on smartphone</li><li>• BAIID (Car inter-lock system)</li><li>• Brief incarceration</li><li>• Termination from the program</li><li>• SCRAM Device</li><li>• Daily reporting</li><li>• Curfew Essays/ Journals</li><li>• Apology letters</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased appearances in court</li><li>• Increased participation in treatment activities</li><li>• Increased reporting to Probation Officer or VJO</li><li>• Increase screenings</li><li>• Increase home visits</li><li>• Increase attendance at self-help or peer recovery groups</li></ul>

## **Opportunity to Be Heard**

Participants are given the opportunity to explain their perspectives concerning factual controversies and the imposition of incentives, sanctions, and therapeutic adjustments. If a participant has difficulty expressing him/her self of such factors a language barrier, nervousness, or cognitive limitation, the judge permits the participant's attorney or legal representative in providing such explanations. Participants receive a clear justification for why a particular consequence is or is not being imposed. Participants are allowed to speak before the sanction is handed down and the VTC Judge has the right to reconsider the sanction.

## **Equivalent Consequences**

Participants receive consequences that are equivalent to those received by other participants in the same phase of the program who are engaged in comparable conduct. Unless it is necessary to protect the individual from harm, participants receive consequences without regard to the gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation.

## **Progressive Sanctions**

The VTC has a range of sanctions of varying magnitude that may be administered in response to infractions in the program. For goals that are difficult for participants to accomplish, such as abstaining from substance use or obtaining employment, the sanctions increase progressively in magnitude over successive infractions. For goals that are relatively easy for participants to accomplish, such as being truthful or attending counseling sessions, higher magnitude sanctions may be administered after only a few infractions.

## **Licit Addictive or Intoxication Substances**

Participants are not allowed to use drugs while in Veterans Treatment Court. Consequences are imposed for non-medically indicated use of intoxicating or addictive substances, including alcohol, cannabis (marijuana) and prescription medications, regardless of the licit or illicit status of the substance. The VTC team relies of expert medical input to determine whether a prescription for an addictive or intoxicating medication is medically indicated and whether non-addictive, non-intoxicating, and medically safe alternative treatments are available.

## **Therapeutic Adjustments**

Participants do not receive punitive sanctions if they are otherwise compliant with their treatment and supervision requirements but are not responding to the treatment interventions. Under such circumstances, the appropriate course of action may be to reassess the individual and adjust the treatment plan accordingly. Adjustments to treatment plans are based on the recommendations of duly trained treatment professionals.

## **Incentivizing Productivity**

The VTC places as much emphasis on incentivizing productive behaviors as it does on reducing crime, substance abuse, and other infractions. Criterion for phase advancement and graduation includes objective evidence that participants are engaged in productive activities as employment, education, or attendance in peer support groups.

## Phase Promotion

Phase promotion is predicted on the achievement of realistic and defined behavioral objectives, such as completing a treatment regimen or remaining drug-abstinent for a specified period of time. As participants advance through the phases of the program, sanctions for infractions may increase in magnitude, rewards for achievements may decrease, and supervision services may be reduced. Treatment is reduced only if it is determined clinically that a reduction in treatment is unlikely to precipitate a relapse to substance use. The frequency of drug and alcohol testing is not reduced until after other treatment and supervisory services have been reduced and relapse has not occurred.

## Jail Sanctions

Jail sanctions are imposed judiciously and sparingly. Unless a participant poses an immediate risk to public safety, jail sanctions are administered after less severe consequences have been ineffective at deterring infractions. Jail sanctions are definite in duration and typically last no more than three to five days. Participants are given access to counsel and fair hearing if a jail sanction might be imposed because of significant liberty interest is at stake

## Possible Program Outcomes from Veterans Treatment Court

Veterans Treatment Court is a voluntary program. The decision to discharge a court participant either voluntarily or involuntarily is the judge's decision to make after consultation with the entire team.

### *Successful Discharge*

To successfully complete the program, the participant must complete all of the following criteria:

- Successfully complete all treatment as required by treatment provider
- Successfully established a relapse prevention plan
- Active involvement in recovery support groups or self-help groups
- Have negative drops for six (6) consecutive months or more
- Have a stable living environment
- Have either full time or part-time employment, school or vocational training, or volunteer opportunities
- Have a financial plan

## ***Unsuccessful Discharge***

Prior to unsuccessful discharge from a PSC, a participant shall be served with a petition to terminate the participant from the PSC or to revoke the participant's probation. The petition shall set forth the claimed violations of PSC program requirements or probation, together with the relief sought. The VTC judge shall ensure that all participants who become subject to proceedings that could result in unsuccessful discharge from a PSC are advised of and accorded the rights set forth in Supreme Court Rule 402A, including, but not limited to, the right to counsel and a hearing.

A participant has the right to move for substitution of the PSC judge pursuant to section 114-5(d) of the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1963 (725 ILCS 5/114-5(d)) for purposes of a hearing on a petition to terminate a participant from a PSC or to revoke probation.

## **NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROGRAM**

Behaviors that may result in court sanctioning and with continued failure to rehab or to make progress could result in termination hearing:

- Positive test
- Diluted or falsified test
- Failure to submit required sample
- Unexcused absence and/or absences from counseling session or support group
- Failure to follow treatment conduct rules
- Failure to make reasonable progress in treatment
- Failure to attend scheduled statute hearings
- Arrest for non-violent offense
- Failure to comply with Veterans Treatment Court recommendations
- Any other conduct that would be deemed as non-compliant with the Consent to Participant
- Leaving the State of Illinois without permission from the court or Probation Officer
- Drinking alcohol
- Entering an establishment where the primary sales are alcoholic beverages (ie; liquor store or bar)
- Being near, around or in the presence of drug or alcohol use
- Use or consumption of inhalants
- Use or consumption of prescription drugs without a valid script
- All Prescriptions must be reported to your Probation Case manager PRIOR to getting them filled

Behaviors that will result in court sanctions or termination hearing include:

- Arrest for possession or delivery of drugs or alcohol at treatment site
- Violence at treatment site
- Arrest for violent offense
- Failure to comply with directives given by Veterans Treatment Court

### ***Neutral Discharge***

A participant is discharged under this category when:

- They are unable to continue to make court appointments due to a medical condition
- They have passed away
- When they move out of the 21<sup>st</sup> Judicial Circuit

### ***Voluntary Withdrawal***

- A participant shall have the right to withdrawal from the Veterans Treatment Court
- Prior to allowing the participant to withdraw the Veterans Treatment Court judge shall:
  1. Ensure the participant has the right to consult with counsel
  2. Determine in open court that the withdrawal is made voluntarily and knowingly
  3. Admonish the participant in open court as to the consequences, actual or potential, which will result from withdrawal.

### ***Program Completion***

A participant that successfully completes all four phases of Veterans Treatment Court will be recognized during a short graduation ceremony. The Veterans Treatment Court Team will make the determination when all program requirements have been satisfied.

Participants completing Veterans Treatment Court may have the court consider dismissing or reducing their charges. The determination of these factors will be based on a case-by-case assessment of prior record and nature of the offense(s) by the judge.

# PHASE STRUCTURE

When a defendant is formally accepted into Veterans Treatment Court, the defendant must enter a plea of guilty and the judge will read the Consent to Participate to the defendant. Thereafter the defendant will proceed through the four phases.

Upon successful completion of the Veterans Treatment Court program, the defendant's charges may be reduced or dropped all together.

It is understood that each individual's needs are different and therefore, these following phases are designed to be a guideline or a starting baseline when developing a treatment plan for a participating veteran. Decisions on recommended or required treatment will depend on the individual's initial assessments, and can vary based on growing needs or successful completion of treatment/tasks.

**It should be of note that no requirement for phase advancement is meant to be seen or treated as a punishment. Anything listed in the forthcoming treatment phases is meant to be a means to progress recovery and help the participant gain life skills needed to make their way through treatment and to become a more productive member of the community.**

## Phase I 90 Days

The following are standards for Phase I compliance:

- Weekly appearance in Veterans Treatment Court
- Weekly contact with Probation Office
- Announced/Unannounced home visits (2x month minimum)
- Follow the orders of treatment goals
- Attend appointments
- Take medication as prescribed
- Attending recovery support meetings
- Meet with assigned Mentor.
- Assess housing needs.
- Job Assessment
- Education Assessment
- Vocational Assessment
- Submit to drug screens as directed
- Identify and access VA benefits
- Participate in community activity
- No travel outside of the jurisdiction except for treatment, unless as a part of an earned pass from treatment facility
- Curfew

Movement to Phase II happens when the veteran has consistently demonstrated clear signs of stability in the above areas plus:

- Remaining drug/alcohol/crime free or consequences of returning to beginning of Phase

## **Phase II 180 Days**

The following are standards for Phase II compliance:

- Weekly appearance in Veterans Treatment Court
- Follow the orders of Veterans Treatment Court plan and recovery plans (developed with treatment provider)
- Weekly contact with Probation Officer
- Announced/Unannounced home visits (1x month minimum)
- Follow the orders of treatment goals
- Attend appointments
- Take medication as prescribed
- Attending recovery support meetings
- Meet with assigned volunteer mentor.
- Assess housing needs.
- Job Assessment
- Education Assessment
- Vocational Assessment
- Submit to drug screens as directed
- Maintain access VA benefits
- Participate in pro-social activity
- Develop & begin financial management
- Seek employment, education or financial stability.
- Curfew
- No travel outside of the jurisdiction except for treatment, unless as a part of an earned pass from treatment facility.

Movement to Phase III happens when the veteran has consistently demonstrated clear signs of stability in the above areas plus:

- Remaining drug/alcohol/crime free or consequences of returning to beginning of Phase

## **Phase III 90 Days**

Veterans will be required to meet the following standards for Phase III compliance:

- Weekly appearance in Veterans Treatment Court
- Weekly contact with Probation Officer
- Announced/Unannounced home visits (1x month minimum)
- Follow the orders of treatment goals
- Attend appointments
- Take medication as prescribed
- Attending recovery support meetings
- Meet with assigned volunteer mentor.
- Assess housing needs.
- Job Assessment
- Education Assessment
- Vocational Assessment
- Submit to drug screens as directed
- Identify and access VA benefits
- Participate in community activity

- Develop budget & begin
- Continue to actively carry out their Veterans Treatment Court plan and recovery plans (developed with treatment provider)
- Secure employment, education or financial stability
- Demonstrate ongoing stability with regard to housing
- Demonstrate continued abstinence from drugs/alcohol
- Complete Recovery Plan
- Establish a recovery network

Movement to Phase IV happens when the veteran has consistently demonstrated clear signs of stability in the above areas plus:

- Remaining drug/alcohol/crime free or consequences of returning to beginning of Phase

## **Phase IV 180 Days**

Veterans will be required to meet the following standards for Phase IV compliance:

- Weekly appearance in Veterans Treatment Court
- Weekly contact with Probation Officer
- Announced/Unannounced home visits
- Follow the orders of treatment goals
- Attend appointments
- Take medication as prescribed
- Maintain peer recovery support meetings
- Maintain contact with assigned volunteer mentor.
- Maintain housing needs
- Maintain financial plan
- Maintain employment, school, vocational training or volunteer opportunities
- Maintain a recovery network
- Maintain a recovery plan
- Submit to drug screens as directed
- Continued abstinence from drugs/alcohol

### **In order to successfully commence:**

- Compliant with all the above.
- Remaining drug/alcohol/crime free or consequences of returning to beginning of Phase

## **Discharge from Veterans Treatment Court**

The decision to discharge a court participant is the judge's decision to make after consultation with the entire team.

A court participant may also be discharged involuntarily for violation of program rules and regulations and/or for new criminal charge(s). In the event of an involuntary discharge, Diversion cases are then relisted for sentencing. Recovery case court participants are then sentenced on their outstanding charge of probation, parole, and/or intermediate punishment violation and may be incarcerated.

# The Veterans Treatment Court Team

## Judge

The Veterans Treatment Court Judge heads the collaborative team. He regularly reviews the case status reports, leads the weekly team meetings and is the final arbiter in any decision on which there is not agreement of the team. During the court process the judge administers graduated sanctions, incentives, and therapeutic adjustments.

## Court Coordinator

The Court Coordinator works in close consultation with the judge. The coordinator reviews all referrals to the court for the initial eligibility and coordinates the assessment process. The Coordinator coordinates all information for new referrals to present to the court team and gathers relevant information for the weekly meetings of the team. He/she advocates for effective incentives, sanctions and therapeutic adjustments during the team meetings in fulfilling this responsibility; his/her duties are varied and include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Organizes and coordinates training for VTC team members.
2. Maintains cooperative relationships with treatment agencies, community organizations and other involved partners.
3. Assists in the screening of potential participants to determine eligibility and interest.
4. Attends case staffings and court hearings, reports compliance/noncompliance and recommends incentives and sanctions.
5. Facilitates community presentations.
6. Promotes team integrity.
7. Develops community resources.
8. Assist in the collection of data/statistics and works closely with any program evaluator.
9. In conjunction with team members, researches and writes grant proposals.

## State's Attorney

In Veterans Treatment Court, all parties share the common goal of helping participants be successful in treatment and in avoiding future criminal recidivism. The prosecutor participates in the participant staffings in a non-adversarial manner. The eligibility assessment includes a review of the defendant's criminal history, consultation with victims, legal eligibility and appropriate dispositions upon the defendant's entry into Veterans Treatment Court.

As part of the collaborative team, the prosecutor monitors participant progress and can make recommendations regarding sanctions and incentives. If a participant is re-arrested, the prosecutor investigates the new criminal charges and assesses the appropriateness of continued participation in Veterans Treatment Court. Upon the participant's discharge or if found ineligible, the State's Attorney's office will delete or destroy any confidential information of the participant so that it cannot be used in any other civil or criminal proceedings.

## Public Defender

The Public Defender represents and advises the defendant in all court preceding and is mindful of the defendant's constitutional rights as a criminal defendant and the defendant's civil rights. The Public Defender seeks to find treatment solutions for the defendant that minimize the defendant's exposure to incarceration, reduce the risk of re-arrest or new charges, and mitigate

the consequence of a criminal conviction. The Public Defender participates in the participant staffings in a non-adversarial manner

Participants are required to be represented by the Public Defender to keep the flow, consistency, and confidential nature of the team discussions and promote a smooth-running program.

## **Probation Officer**

A specialized Probation Officer oversees those participants in Veterans Treatment Court. The Probation Officer works closely with defendants and provides updates to the team regarding compliance with terms and conditions of probation/supervision. The Probation Officer focuses on community involvement, including meetings with defendants in the field, interacting with community-based organizations, overseeing restitution (payment of assessed fees, if any), and networking with treatment providers. In fulfilling this responsibility, his/her duties are varied and include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Plans and implements in collaboration with the licensed treatment providers, the day-today activities of the [Problem-Solving Court] participant.
2. Conducts interviews and explains program requirements to participants.
3. Monitors participant compliance with VTC rules; communicates with participants in accordance with the program requirements.
4. Attends case staffings and court hearings on a regular basis, reporting compliance/noncompliance and recommends incentives and sanctions.
5. Assists in the promotion of team integrity.
6. Assists in the development of community resources.
7. Collects data/statistics.

## **County Sheriff's Office**

A representative of the Kankakee County Sheriff's office /correctional facility participates to assist the team in the diversion of defendants from the facility to a more appropriate placement in the most effective and efficient manner possible. The representative acts as a liaison between the correctional facility and the Veterans Treatment Court team. In this role he/she provides relevant information regarding the conduct of the defendant and treatment information.

## **Licensed Treatment Provider – VA Medical Center**

### **Veteran Justice Outreach Specialist (VJO)**

The Veteran Justice Specialist (VJO) is the initial VA contact after consultation with the defendant. The VJO is to monitor the services Veteran Treatment Court participants are receiving, to identify individual supports as needed, and to identify potential gaps in the service system that need to be addressed.

1. Provides screening, assessment and/ or treatment to participants.
2. Coordinates treatment with other treatment provider(s).
3. Develops treatment plans.
4. Provides therapy services.
5. Attends staffings and court hearings for VTC participants.
6. Refers participants for medical treatment and medication management to appropriate local agencies.

## **Veterans Assistance Commission of Kankakee County (VACKC)**

The Veterans Assistance Commission of Kankakee County (VACKC) will provide representation on multiple avenues.

Many veterans may be unaware of their eligibility for VA compensation or pension. The claim system is complicated and veterans often require additional expertise in navigating filing and/or appealing a claim. A Veteran Service Officer (VSO) will provide the valuable linkage and education necessary for veterans to file timely and complete claims.

1. Assists participants in applying for county, state, and federal veterans benefits
2. Assists participants in applying for housing, unemployment and educational programs
3. Assists with housing and transportation

A representative from the VACKC will act as the mentor coordinator for the Veterans Treatment Court. A list of available mentors will be maintained by VACKC.

### **Mentor Coordinator**

The Mentor Coordinator will match a veteran defendant with a volunteer mentor from the community, all of whom are also veterans. The concept of the veteran mentoring component is to re-engage the veteran defendant with a positive sense of veteran identity, as well to offer practical advice and services in addition to what the veteran receives in the context of his or her treatment plan. A mentor will be available for each veteran upon admission into Veterans Treatment Court. A veteran will have a mentor through the consideration process.

### **VTC Evaluator**

The Evaluator will monitor the court process verifying that it is run according to the guidelines, provide annual outcomes and recommendations for positive change. Olivet University Criminal Justice Program will be the evaluator for the VTC program. The VTC Court Coordinator shall be the primary liaison to the University.

# **The Ten Key Components of Veterans Treatment Court**

Kankakee County's Veterans Court has adopted the Ten Key Components.

## **Key Component #1**

**Veterans Treatment Court integrates alcohol, drug treatment, and mental health services with justice system case processing.**

Veterans Court promotes sobriety, recovery and stability through a coordinated response to veteran's dependency on alcohol, drugs, and/or management of any mental health issues. Realization of these goals requires a team approach. This approach includes the cooperation and collaboration of the traditional partners found in drug treatment courts and mental health treatment courts with the addition of the Veteran Justice Organization/Veteran's Administration, veterans and veterans family support organizations, and veteran volunteer mentors.

## **Key Component #2**

**Using a non-adversarial approach, prosecution and defense counsel promote public safety while protecting participants' due process rights.**

To facilitate the Veterans progress in treatment, the prosecutor and defense counsel shed their traditional adversarial courtroom relationship and work together as a team. Once a veteran is accepted into the treatment court program, the team's focus is on the veteran's recovery and law-abiding behavior—not on the merits of the underlying case.

## **Key Component #3**

**Eligible participants are identified early and promptly placed in the Veterans Court program.**

Early identification of veterans entering the criminal justice system is an integral part of the process of placement in the Veterans Court program. Arrest can be a traumatic event in a person's life. It creates an immediate crisis and can compel recognition of inappropriate behavior into the open, making denial by the veteran of the need for treatment difficult.

## **Key Component #4**

**Veterans Court provides access to a continuum of alcohol, drug, mental health and other related treatment and rehabilitation services.**

While primarily concerned with criminal activity, alcohol and drug use, and mental illness, the Veterans Court team also consider co-occurring problems such as primary medical problems, transmittable diseases, homelessness, basic educational deficits, unemployment and poor job preparation, spouse and family troubles—especially domestic violence—and the ongoing effects of war time trauma.

Veteran peer mentors are essential to the Veterans Treatment Court team. Ongoing veteran peer mentors interaction with the Veterans Treatment Court participants is essential. Their active, supportive relationship, maintained throughout treatment, increases the likelihood that a veteran will remain in treatment and improves the chances for sobriety and law-abiding behavior.

## **Key Component #5**

### **Abstinence is monitored by frequent alcohol and other drug testing.**

Frequent court-ordered drug testing is essential. An accurate testing program is the most objective and efficient way to establish a framework for accountability and to gauge each participant's progress.

## **Key Component #6**

### **A coordinated strategy governs Veterans Court responses to participants' compliance.**

A veteran's progress through the treatment court experience is measured by his or her compliance with the treatment regimen. Veterans Court rewards cooperation and sanctions noncompliance. Veterans Court establishes a coordinated strategy, including a continuum of graduated responses, to continuing drug use and other noncompliant behavior.

## **Key Component #7**

### **Ongoing judicial interaction with each Veteran is essential.**

The judge is the leader of the Veterans Court team. This active, supervising relationship, maintained throughout treatment, increases the likelihood that a veteran will remain in treatment and improves the chances for sobriety and law-abiding behavior. Ongoing judicial supervision also communicates to veterans that someone in authority cares about them and is closely watching what they do.

## **Key Component #8**

### **Monitoring and evaluation measure the achievement of program goals and gauge effectiveness.**

Management and monitoring systems provide timely and accurate information about program progress. Program monitoring provides oversight and periodic measurements of the program's performance against its stated goals and objectives. Information and conclusions developed from periodic monitoring reports, process evaluation activities, and longitudinal evaluation studies may be used to modify program.

## **Key Component #9**

**Continuing interdisciplinary education promotes effective Veteran's Court planning, implementation, and operations.**

All Veterans Court staff should be involved in education and training. Interdisciplinary education exposes criminal justice officials to veteran treatment issues, and Veteran Administration, veteran volunteer mentors, and treatment staff to criminal justice issues. It also develops shared understandings of the values, goals, and operating procedures of both the veteran administration, treatment and the justice system components.

Education and training programs help maintain a high level of professionalism, provide a forum for solidifying relationships among criminal justice, Veteran Administration, veteran volunteer mentors, and treatment personnel, and promote a spirit of commitment and collaboration.

## **Key Component #10**

**Forging partnerships among Veteran's Court, Veteran's Administration, public agencies, and community-based organizations generates local support and enhances Veteran's Court effectiveness.**

Because of its unique position in the criminal justice system, Veterans Court is well suited to develop coalitions among private community-based organizations, public criminal justice agencies, the Veteran Administration/Veteran's Justice Outreach, veterans and Veterans families support organizations, and drug & alcohol and mental health treatment delivery systems. Forming such coalitions expands the continuum of services available to Veterans Court participants and informs the community about Veterans Court concepts. The Veterans Court fosters system wide involvement through its commitment to share responsibility and participation of program partners.

# List of VTC Resources

## Most Commonly Used Resources

- VAMC Edward Hines,Jr. Hospital
- FCC James Lovell Hospital
- Way Back Inn

Veterans Assistance Commission of Kankakee County  
189 E Court St, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Kankakee, IL 60901  
815-937-8489

Can provide financial support via food vouchers, rental assistance, and utility payments  
Can assist with applying for VA benefits, i.e. Service Connected compensation, Non-Service Connected pension, Aid and Attendance  
Linkage to Veterans Treatment Court for justice-involved Veterans

## Additional Resources

### Veteran Specific Organizations

Catholic Charities

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) – Grant based

Intake Line: 815-933-7791 ext 9903

Can provide financial assistance for rapid rehousing and homeless prevention and linkage to other community providers

VAMC Edward Hines, Jr Hospital- Kankakee Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC)  
581 William Latham Drive, Suite 301, Bourbonnais, IL 60914  
815-932-3823

### Basic Needs

Catholic Charities

Emergency Services/ Homeless Prevention Program

249 S. Schuyler, Kankakee, IL 60901

815-933-7791

Can provide vouchers for food, clothing, furniture, and travel

Can provide financial assistance for prescription and rent/mortgage assistance

### Education

Kankakee Community College

Kendra Souligne

Coordinator of Financial Aid- Veteran Benefits

815-802-8550

## **Employment**

Illinois Department of Employment Security

Veterans Employment Representative

450 N. Kinzie Ave, Bradley, IL 60915

815-802-8268

Can assist with resume building, interview skills, job searching, and computer literacy

## **Food Assistance/ Pantries**

Center of Hope

895 S. Washington, Kankakee, IL 60901

815-937-4277

Mon, Tues, Wed 9:30am-1:30pm

Salvation Army

148 N. Harrison Ave, Kankakee, IL 60901

815-933-8421

Mon-Fri 9:00am-5:00pm

St. Vincent DePaul

361 N. St. Joseph Ave, Kankakee, IL 60901

815-933-7683

Fri 9:00am-12:00pm

Kankakee County Community Services (KCCSI)

657 E. Court St, Kankakee, IL 60901

815-933-7883

Wed, Fri 2:30-4:30pm

Gift of God Street Church – Vietnam-Veteran Owned

660 North 5th Avenue Kankakee, IL 60901

815-614-3785

Meals served at 7pm

## **Housing Assistance/ Subsidized**

**Note: If you apply for housing assistance through the VAC office or Catholic Charities, as a veteran, you get preference and will be moved to the top of the list.**

*Housing Authority of Kankakee County*

185 St. Joseph Ave, Kankakee, IL 60901

815-939-7125

Can apply for subsidized (rent is 30% of income) and Section-8 housing, access apartments available for rent

*US Department of Agriculture*  
Office of Rural Development  
685 Larry Power Road, Bourbonnais, IL 60914  
815-937-8940  
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/Home.html>

**Legal**

*Prairie State Legal Services*  
815-935-2750  
Toll free- 800-346-2864

*John Marshall Law School*  
Veterans Legal Support Center and Clinic  
312-360-2656  
312-427-2737

Illinois Armed Forces Legal Aid Network  
855-IL-AFLAN (452-3526)  
[www.ilaflan.org](http://www.ilaflan.org)

U of I Illinois Law – Veterans Legal Clinic  
217-244-9494  
[clinic@law.illinois.edu](mailto:clinic@law.illinois.edu)

## **KANKAKEE COUNTY VETERANS TREATMENT COURT**

### **Acknowledgement of Receipt of Participant Handbook**

I acknowledge that I have received the Kankakee County Veterans Treatment Court Participant Handbook. I also understand that I am responsible for reviewing the policies and complying with all of its provisions.

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Defendant Name (Please Print)

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Defendant Signature

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Date

## **NOTES:**