



What is Veterans Court?

Clark County's Veterans Therapeutic Court (VETCO) provides a means to successfully rehabilitate veterans by diverting them from the traditional criminal justice system and providing them with the tools they need to lead productive and law-abiding lives through treatment, rehabilitative programming, reinforcement and judicial monitoring.

The program is an alternative treatment and sentencing option for defendants suffering from an underlying substance disorder and/or mental illness and facing criminal charges. Veterans must voluntarily participate in a judicially supervised treatment plan developed by a team of court staff, probation and law enforcement officers, veteran peer mentors, veteran resource professionals, and treatment professionals. The program is divided into four phases and is a minimum of one year in length.

As of 06/03/2019, VETCO now includes a "pre-plea" program that accepts both misdemeanor and felony offenses. The Court still accepts post-plea cases as well for District Court only. To participate on a pre-plea basis, the defendant must voluntarily agree to waive his or her rights to a speedy and jury trial. The participant will also agree to a stipulated facts trial in the event of termination or opting out of the program. Finally, the defendant agrees to enter and abide by the conditions set forth in the program contract. If a participant successfully completes the program (graduates), the pending charges will be dismissed, with prejudice.

Goals for Veterans Therapeutic Court:

1. Reduce criminal recidivism by providing assessment, education, and treatment to drug/alcohol addicted veterans in our criminal system.
2. Monitor treatment compliance through frequent court contact and supervision.
3. Require strict accountability from participants and impose a graduated system of rewards and interventions to encourage positive choices and behaviors.

For more information contact:

Beth Robinson
Therapeutic Specialty Courts Coordinator
Phone: (564) 397-2431
Fax: (360) 759-6869
Beth.Robinson@clark.wa.gov

For more information on drug and veterans courts nationwide, please visit:

www.allrise.org



FOR ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:

Clark County ADA Compliance Office
(360) 397-2025; Washington Relay
Service 711 or (800) 833-6388
Fax: (360) 397-6165
E-mail: ADA@clark.wa.gov

Clark County, WA

VETERANS THERAPEUTIC COURT



District Court — Mondays at 10am
Superior Court — Mondays at 10:30am

Who is Eligible?

The participant must be an adult who resides in Clark County and admits to having a substance use disorder and/or a mental health condition that is driving his or her criminal behavior. The potential candidate must also pass a background check with confirmation of honorable veteran discharge status (must be eligible for medical benefits through the VA) and must be non-violent / non-sex offender status. The participant must volunteer for the program and serve any mandatory minimums (post-plea program) and clear any/all outstanding warrants prior to entering.

BENEFITS for choosing this program:

- ◆ Charge dismissed upon completion of pre-plea program
- ◆ Comprehensive and immediate access to the VA Health Care system and all other associated programs
- ◆ Reduced fines and fees
- ◆ Vet-to-Vet peer mentor program (in development)
- ◆ A team of support and case management to help reduce any barriers to your success



Why a separate docket for Veterans?

Honor, Duty, Courage, Bravery, Leadership, Commitment, Respect, and Obedience.

These words are instilled in the men and women of our Nation's Armed Forces.

For some veterans, however, the return home may be a bit more challenging. Time away from home can strain relationships, leave the veteran unemployed, feel detached from society, a loss of service camaraderie felt while on active duty, a search for new purpose. For others, perhaps it was their combat experience or time in service or multiple deployments that may have circumstantially left them with some heightened anxiety, depression or post traumatic stress disorder. Many studies report an alarming increase in the prevalence of substance use/abuse in returning service members.

Creating a specialized court calendar just for veterans can start the process of healing. Because each branch of the military has its own culture, its own language, code of conduct, rules, regulations, norms, ranks, stories, legends, rituals and rites, we feel we are justified in creating a separate specialized court docket dedicated solely to address the specific needs of our service men and women and forge a stronger relationship with the VA.



Thank You for Your Service!

Graduate's Personal Story

Initially, I was just jumping through the hoops and doing what I had to get through the process. I had been an active alcoholic for 20 years. You see, some of you may not know that prior to being arrested and charged with DUI, I didn't care. I was at one of the lowest points in my life, and I didn't care if I woke up in the morning or not. I drank with Methadone and oxycodone, knowing full well that I could go into respiratory arrest in my sleep, and I didn't care. Showing up for work as a Department Supervisor, still fully drunk from the night before, and staggering when I showed up to work. I didn't care. I very nearly alienated my entire family through a violent temper, unpredictable outburst, and intimidation. I didn't care.

The Veteran's Court process, and those who work within, and along with the SATP, showed me that others do care, and I learned to care as well. My psychologist with the Vet Center, used to ask me "Are you worth it?", meaning am I worth it enough to stop drinking. It took me a long time to give an answer other than "I don't know". At some point I learned that life is worth living, and I did care.

This past September 14 marked my birthday of two years. I have been sober for over 734 days at this writing, and I can not think of a better place to be than sober today. I don't even think about drinking, as any memories that I have of alcohol are bad ones. And those are only the ones that I remember.

Everyone has seen black and white movies, and that's what my life was like for over 20 years. I saw everything in gray. Once I sobered up, and realized that the world is actually in color, I was amazed! As simple as it is, I was floored! I love living in color, and caring.

In conclusion, I wish to thank all of those in the program, whether they directly interacted with me or not. This program saved my life, and I thank you for that.

- Rodney Clem, Veterans Court Graduate