

## Who is Eligible?

Eligible participants must:

- Have served in the United States Military
- Have an Axis I diagnosis including co-occurring disorders; (ie: Trauma Spectrum Disorder and substance abuse disorder)
- Charged with applicable felony offenses
- Be competent to stand trial
- Voluntarily participate in the program
- Comply with supervision mandates and directives of the assigned Veterans Court supervising officer
- Adhere to prescribed treatment program
- Submit to random drug and alcohol screening
- Comply with the Veterans Court Agreement



## Why a separate Veterans Court Docket?

Veterans have specialized needs and are able to be attached to the VA and community providers who specialize in the many challenges our veterans face. Time away from home and family is strenuous and often times the veteran is unable to return to work or their regular daily life they were used to prior to becoming a service member. Their relationships are strenuous which can leave them without housing and with this, they feel detached from society and they feel a lack of purpose and are in search of a new purpose. For some their combat experience or time in service and/or multiple deployments may have left them with post traumatic stress disorder which often leads to an increase in substance use and abuse in returning service members.

Having a specialized court for veterans can start the process of healing with the commitment the community has to our veterans. The veteran is able to work closely with community providers and forge a stronger relationship with the VA which enables them to regain their sense of community.

There are many veterans and service members who attend the monthly court docket which gives the veteran the support and hope they desire throughout their experience with the court system. We always make sure their service is appreciated and they are honored for their duty to serve our country.



## MISSION STATEMENT

The Second Judicial District Veterans Court provides a means for veterans to be successfully rehabilitated by diverting them from the traditional criminal justice system and providing them with the tools they need to lead a productive and law-abiding life through treatment, rehabilitative programming reinforcement and judicial monitoring.

Veterans court is an alternative for treatment and sentencing options for defendants suffering from an underlying substance abuse and/or co-occurring mental illness and facing criminal charges. Veterans are identified through specialized screening tools and they must voluntarily participate in a judicially supervised treatment plan developed by the Veterans Administration, court staff, veteran peer mentors and treatment professionals who specialize in veterans needs.

Through monthly status review hearings, a veteran participant's treatment plan and other conditions are reviewed. Incentives for court conditions and immediate sanctions for non-compliance are fairly handed down.

We thank you for your commitment to our veterans and are proud to be the first Veteran's Court in the State of New Mexico.

## Goals for Veterans Court:

1. Divert justice involved veterans from jail to the VA and community based services and resources
2. Reduce criminal recidivism by providing veterans with mental health assessments and treatment for substance abuse.
3. Monitor treatment compliance through collaboration with treatment providers through frequent court contact and supervision.
4. Require strict accountability and compliance from participants and impose a graduated system of rewards and interventions to encourage positive choices and behaviors.

## Benefits for choosing the program:

- Comprehensive and immediate access to the VA Health Care system and community based providers
- Jail Diversion
- Vet to Vet peer mentor program
- Case management
- A dedicated supportive team to assist in reducing barriers to success
- Favorable court case outcomes

**We never should, and I am sure, never shall be niggard of gratitude and benefaction to the soldiers who have endured toil, privations and wounds, that the nation may live.**

***Abraham Lincoln***

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Second Judicial District Court

Veterans Court Program



**Judge Stan Whitaker, Presiding**

**Judge Reed Shepard, Presiding**