

Veterans Treatment Court

Serving

Lakewood, University Place, Steilacoom & DuPont



Participant Handbook



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Court Coordinator-Deana Wright (253) 512-2258 dwright@cityoflakewood.us

Probation Officer-Cameron Himes (253) 983-7825 chimes@cityoflakewood.us

Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator-Randy Turner (253) 583-2836 Randy.turner2@va.gov

Horwath Law Office: P: (253)426-1784 F: 253-507-4196 client.horwathlaw@gmail.com

I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

○ *What is Veterans Treatment Court?*

The Lakewood Veterans Treatment Court is a collaboration of numerous agencies: the court, The Veterans Administration (VA), defense counsel, the prosecutor's office, probation and many other community partners. These agencies, working together have established a viable option for a select group of justice-involved veterans whose needs are better met through treatment intervention rather than incarceration.

The **mission** of the Lakewood Municipal Veterans Treatment Court (Veterans Treatment Court) is to work collaboratively with community partners and resources to help veterans reintegrate back into our community more effectively by connecting them with the services they have earned.

The Goal of the Veterans Treatment Court is:

- Increase community/public safety and awareness.
- Reduce participant contacts with the criminal justice system.
- Reduce costs associated with the criminal case processing and re-arrest.
- Introduce participants to an ongoing process of recovery designed to help them become stable, substance-free and employed, utilizing treatment resources through the VA or other community agencies to address the individual issues issued throughout the Veterans Treatment Court process.

○ *Am I eligible?*

CLINICAL CRITERIA

The Veterans Treatment Court will determine if there is a causal link between the veteran's legal charge, and their military service. The court may accept individuals with a diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Military Sexual Trauma (MST) or other conditions that may have been created, or exacerbated as a result of their military services.

○ *How does Veterans Treatment Court work?*

Veterans Treatment Court is an optional program. It is not intended to serve those who do not want to opt in, or every defendant who is a veteran. Only gross misdemeanor and misdemeanor cases out of the Lakewood Municipal Court are eligible for acceptance into the Veterans Treatment Court pending a review of by the Veterans Treatment Court Team. The team consists of the Judge, Prosecutor, Public Defender, Probation Officer, Veteran Care Coordinator and the Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator.

Exclusions: Charges of sexual or serious violent offenses. Another exclusion includes crimes prohibited from entry as defined in RCW 2.30.030.

○ *What happens during Veterans Treatment Court?*

You must complete all **five phases** in order to graduate from Veterans Treatment Court. Your individual program is subject to change by the Veterans Treatment Court team consistent with your progress through the phases. To advance to the next phase, you must successfully complete the tasks and assignments given by your treatment provider and the Veterans Treatment Court team. The following phase descriptions are not all

inclusive. *Each participant's progress through the program is based solely on their individual performance and compliance with the following:*

PHASE STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAM (5 Phases=12 months)

PHASE 1- STABILITY AND SOBRIETY: 6 Weeks

- 1) A case management plan will be developed for the participant's case.
- 2) The veteran will attend Veterans Treatment Court as requested (exceptions made on a case by case basis).
- 3) The veteran will comply with getting the necessary evaluations and treatment/counseling services in order to comply with court mandated requirements for this program.
- 4) The veteran is required to attend all appointments with treatment providers and case managers as scheduled.
- 5) The veteran is required to take any prescribed medications as ordered to address your physical and mental health needs.
- 6) The veteran is required to provide a list of all medication, prescribed and non-prescribed to the probation officer, and update the list anytime there is a change.
- 7) The veteran will attend a 12 step recovery support group twice per week. Verification of attendance should be turned in to probation the week prior to court (if required by SOC).
- 8) The veteran is required to have a minimum of two random urine analysis (UA's) a week.
- 9) The veteran will be required to engage with your mentor and/or the VJO on a weekly basis by phone, email or in person.
- 10) The veteran will comply with home visits as determined by probation.
- 11) The veteran will be required to write a letter to the courts explaining why you should move to the next phase.

PHASING UP:

- 1) All phase requirements plus each veteran's individual requirements are due the week before court.
- 2) The veteran will have a minimum of 15 consecutive days clean and sober.
- 3) The veteran will have 2 consecutive weeks violation free prior to phase up.
- 4) The veteran will be in compliance with all the conditions of Phase 1. Any exceptions must be granted by the Veterans Treatment Court team.
- 5) The veteran must fill out the application for phase up to be submitted the day of consideration.

PHASE 2- CONTINUED STABILITY AND MENTOR INVOLVMENT: 8 Weeks

- 1) The veteran will attend Veterans Treatment Court as requested (exceptions made on a case by case basis).
- 2) The veteran is required to have a minimum of two random urine analysis (UA's) a week.
- 3) The veteran is required to attend all appointments with treatment providers and case managers as scheduled.
- 4) The veteran will be required to take any prescribed medications as ordered to address your physical and mental health needs.

- 5) The veteran is required to update the list of all medication, prescribed and non-prescribed to the probation officer anytime there is a change of medications.
- 6) The veteran's case management plan will be reviewed and updated as necessary.
- 7) The veteran will attend weekly probation appointments (exceptions made on a case by case basis).
- 8) The veteran will comply with home visits as determined by probation.
- 9) The veteran will attend a 12 step recovery support group twice per week. Verification of attendance should be turned in to probation the week prior to court (if required by SOC).
- 10) The veteran will be required to engage with your mentor and/or the VJO on a weekly basis by phone, email or in person.
- 11) The veteran will be required to write a letter to the court explaining why you should move to the next phase.

PHASING UP:

- 1) All phase requirements plus each veteran's individual requirements are due the week before court.
- 2) The veteran will be required to have 30 consecutive days clean and sober.
- 3) The veteran will have 4 consecutive weeks violation free prior to phase up.
- 4) The veteran will be in compliance with all the conditions of Phase 2. Any exceptions must be granted by the Veterans Treatment Court team.
- 5) The veteran must fill out the application for phase up to be submitted the day of consideration.

PHASE 3- CONTINUED STABILITY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVMENT: 8 Weeks

- 1) The veteran will attend Veterans Treatment Court as requested (exceptions made on a case by case basis).
- 2) The veteran is required to have a minimum of two random urine analysis (UA's) a week.
- 3) The veteran is required to attend all appointments with treatment providers and case managers as scheduled.
- 4) The veteran will be required to take any prescribed medications as ordered to address your physical and mental health needs.
- 5) The veteran is required to update the list of all medication, prescribed and non-prescribed to the probation officer anytime there is a change of medications.
- 6) The veteran's case management plan will be reviewed and updated as necessary.
- 7) The veteran will attend bi-weekly probation appointments (exceptions made on a case by case basis at probations discretion).
- 8) The veteran will comply with home visits as determined by probation.
- 9) The veteran will work on prosocial activities (i.e. employment search/volunteering [4 hours between court sessions]/vocational training/ education).
- 10) The veteran will attend a 12 step recovery support group twice per week. Verification of attendance should be turned in to probation the week prior to court (if required by SOC).
- 11) The veteran will be required to engage with your mentor and/or the VJO on a weekly basis by phone, email or in person.

- 12) The veteran will be required to write a letter to the court explaining why you should move to the next phase.

PHASING UP:

- 1) All phase requirements plus each veteran's individual requirements are due the week before court.
- 2) The veteran will be required to have 45 consecutive days clean and sober.
- 3) The veteran will have 5 consecutive weeks violation free prior to phase up.
- 4) The veteran will be in compliance with all the conditions of Phase 3. Any exceptions must be granted by the Veterans Treatment Court team.
- 5) The veteran must fill out the application for phase up to be submitted the day of consideration.

PHASE 4- MAINTENANCE: 12 Weeks

- 1) The veteran will attend Veterans Treatment Court as requested (exceptions made on a case by case basis).
- 2) The veteran is required to have a minimum of two random urine analysis (UA's) a week.
- 3) The veteran is required to attend all appointments with treatment providers and case managers as scheduled, as well as taking any doctor-prescribed medications necessary to ensure your physical and mental health needs.
- 4) The veteran is required to meet bi-weekly with probation (exceptions at probations discretion).
- 5) The veteran is required to comply with home visits requested by probation.
- 6) The veteran will be involved with work/school/volunteer activities (4 hours) or have reasonable cause for being excused from activities.
- 7) The veteran will attend a 12 step recovery support group twice per week. Verification of attendance should be turned in to probation the week prior to court (if required by SOC).
- 8) The veteran will be required to engage with your mentor and/or the VJO on a weekly basis by phone, email or in person.
- 9) The veteran will be required to write a letter describing how being involved in this program has helped you.

PHASING UP:

- 1) All phase requirements plus each veteran's individual requirements are due the week before court.
- 2) The veteran will have to have complied with all the conditions of Phase 4.
- 3) The veteran will have a minimum of 90 consecutive days clean and sober.
- 4) The veteran will have 6 consecutive weeks violation free prior to phase up.
- 5) The veteran must fill out the application for phase up to be submitted the day of consideration.

PHASE 5- AFTERCARE: 18 Weeks

- 1) The veteran will attend Veterans Treatment Court as requested (exceptions made on a case by case basis).
- 2) The veteran is required to have a minimum of two random urine analysis (UA's) a week.

- 3) The veteran is required to attend all appointments with treatment providers and case managers as scheduled, as well as taking any doctor-prescribed medications necessary to ensure your physical and mental health needs.
- 4) The veteran is required to meet monthly with probation (exceptions at probations discretion).
- 5) The veteran is required to comply with home visits requested by probation.
- 6) The veteran will be involved with work/school/volunteer activities (4 hours) or have reasonable cause for being excused from activities.
- 7) The veteran will attend a 12 step recovery support group twice per week. Verification of attendance should be turned in to probation the week prior to court (if required by SOC).
- 8) The veteran will be required to engage with your mentor and/or the VJO on a weekly basis by phone, email or in person.
- 9) The veteran will be required to write a letter describing how being involved in this program has helped you (graduation letter).

REQUIREMENTS TO GRADUATE:

- 1) All phase requirements plus each veteran's individual requirements are due the week before court.
- 2) The veteran must fill out the application for phase up to be submitted the day of consideration.
- 3) The veteran will have to have complied with all the conditions of Phase 4.
- 4) The veteran will have to have attended a minimum of 3 veterans' treatment court forums.
- 5) The veteran will have a minimum of 120 consecutive days clean and sober.
- 6) The veteran will have 8 consecutive weeks violation free prior to phase up.
- 7) The veteran will be given an optional exit survey to be completed and submitted on the day of graduation.
- 8) The veteran will be required to have paid all court costs in full.

This program will last for 1 year, however may be extended in cases of relapse or until satisfactory completion of all requirements have been achieved. It is also possible that an SOC may remain open for the remainder of the jurisdiction prior to being dismissed or amended.

VETERANS TREATMENT COURT FORUM:

The purpose of the veterans' treatment court forum is to provide veteran participants with a chance to meet and have dinner with their mentor and to learn about veteran service organizations in the area and things they can do to assist veterans. The forums topics can cover a wide variety of issues all somehow related to veterans' health and well-being. Dinner is provided by the Lakewood Officers Charity Fund and is served to participants by the veterans' court team. After dinner, new participants can be paired up and introduced to volunteer mentors. Then presenters will present on various veteran issues. In order to successfully graduate from veterans' treatment court, a participant will be required to attend 3 forums in a 12 month period. Attendance rosters will be signed by participants at each forum they attend. The sign in logs will be maintained by probation for accountability purposes. The forums will be held every other month in the evening on the same day as a veterans' treatment court calendar. Veterans who assist with set up and take down of the forums are able to work off UA fees they have accumulated while in the program.

VETERAN MENTOR PROGRAM:

The purpose of the mentor program is to provide our participants with a peer support system (battle buddy) while participating in veterans court. The participant and the mentor are to communicate weekly beginning in phase two of the program. The weekly communication can be in the form of a phone call, e-mail or in person. It is the participant's responsibility to make contact with the volunteer mentor however this doesn't prohibit the volunteer mentor from reaching out to the participant.

BIKE PROGRAM:

The bike program is for veteran participants and others designated by the court to use while the participant is active in veterans' court. The intent of the program is to provide a method of transportation to be able to get to appointment and for use for physical exercise. The bikes are checked out through the probation department and the privilege can be revoked at any time by probation for any reason.

DRESS TO IMPRESS:

Dress for success is a program that is optional for court participants but always encouraged. The idea behind the program is to have participants dress for court like they would for a job interview. If their appearance is noticed by someone on the Veterans treatment court team, they will have the fees associated with one UA deducted from their balance. This is an option extended to all Veterans in the program allowing two UA fees to be removed from their overall balance.

○ *What are the benefits of Veterans Treatment Court?*

- 1) Possibility of reduction and/or dismissal of charges (for those who qualify).
- 2) Veterans related community resources
- 3) Therapeutic team approach (incarceration used as a last resort)
- 4) Camaraderie with other participant
- 5) Therapeutic rather than punitive
- 6) Assistance with employment, housing, VA benefits and disability.

II. **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

○ *What if I relapse?*

Veteran's court does not allow the use of any alcohol, marijuana or drugs unless prescribed by a physician and in accordance with VA treatment policies and procedures. The court understands that relapse is a part of the recovery process. Traditional court systems have placed an emphasis on using incarceration as an immediate sanction for relapse. Veterans Treatment Court uses incarceration as a last resort unless you are dishonest or do not self-report a relapse. ***Self-reporting is contacting your probation officer before they get or find out the information from another source.*** The severity of a sanction for a relapse all depends on your honesty to the court. **If you lie or hide use and are caught, harsher sanctions may be imposed.**

○ *Team Response to Violations*

In the event of a violation, a hearing will be held where all pertinent information will be presented. You will have an opportunity to present your version of the alleged events and the judge will make a determination if the violation did or didn't occur and will impose sanctions if necessary.

○ *What sanctions are given?*

If you do not comply with your treatment program, miss mandatory meetings, receive new criminal charges, failed to take urine analysis as scheduled, court hearings, probation appointments, relapse, or violate any other terms of your individual supervision plan, the judge will sanction your actions.

Sanctions include:

- Reflective essays
- Increased frequency in random urine analysis testing
- SCRAM (alcohol intake monitoring anklet) or GPS device
- Community service
- Daily reporting
- Work Crew
- Jail (not to exceed more than 5 days)
- Discharged from veterans' court

○ ***How do alcohol/drug screens work?***

If you are in treatment, the agency can require you to test at any time. Your probation officer can also require you to test at their discretion regardless of your charge. Any refusal or missed test will be considered a violation and a letter will be sent to the court for non-compliance. You may be required to submit to portable breath tests and/or urine analysis testing upon request.

While participating in Veterans Treatment Court, you *may not* consume any alcohol or non-prescribed illegal drugs at any time for any reason. Be careful not to ingest any other substance containing alcohol, illegal drugs or non-prescribed drugs that may show positive if tested. If you are unsure if a product will cause you to test positive, it is *your* responsibility to consult with a physician or a pharmacist and to notify the probation officer.

○ ***Can I use prescription medications?***

In general, Veterans Treatment Court participants are expected to remain drug free. If your doctor puts you on any mind-altering medication, it must be reviewing by probation staff and may be monitored for misuse.

○ ***What if I want to travel?***

If you need to travel, you must first contact your probation officer to get approval. Generally you will be required to meet on a regular basis with probation and mandatory court appearances will happen monthly. Any extended vacations will need to get approval during Veterans Treatment Court.

○ ***What if I have contact with Law Enforcement?***

You must report all police contact to your probation officer within 48 hours of contact. Police contact includes any situation in which police officers have asked you for your name. It includes new arrests and citations. It also includes situations in which you have been involved and the police have been notified to include being a witness to an accident or a crime. If you learn while in Veterans Treatment Court that you a warrant for your arrest or are the subject of an investigation, you must report such instances to your probation officer.

III. RULES AND REPSONSIBILITY

○ ***Confidentiality***

You will be required to sign release of Information forms to allow written and oral communication between the Veterans Treatment Court, including the Judge; Prosecuting attorney; Defense counsel; Probation department; and Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator with the Department of Veterans Affairs and other individuals or community agencies providing services to you that may be relevant to this court matter. Your privacy is respected and the team will make every effort to protect your identity.

○ ***Court Attendance/Behavior***

Attendance in court is mandatory on any date you are given to appear in court. You are expected to be on time and remain for the entire docket. You are expected to maintain appropriate behavior at all times in the courtroom and courthouse.

IV. GRADUATION

You will be eligible for graduation once you have completed all 5 phases as outlined above. The time-frame varies according to your performance and will be determined by the Veterans Treatment Court Team. Your family, friends, employers, counselors and sponsor are welcome to attend the court hearing to support your achievement. There will be a graduation ceremony in which you will receive a certificate demonstrating your successful completion of Veterans Treatment Court.

Phasing Up Letters (Incentives):

Phasing letters are an important part of explaining what your participation in the Veterans Treatment Court has meant/done for you. This is your chance to be honest and talk about what you have learned, your struggles, and where you are heading throughout the program. There is no right or wrong answer. There is also no limit on how long or much you must cover. The suggestions below are just that, if you feel like there is something else you want to add or include please feel free to do so.

- 1) How you came to the decision to enter Vet Court (phase 1)
- 2) How you felt about treatment

- 3) What you have learned in treatment (highlighting some of the keys points you have taken away within the phase you are currently in).
- 4) How many consecutive days sober you have had.
- 5) What current issues (not necessarily just treatment related) that you have and what steps you are taking to work towards solving those issues as you transition into the next phase.
- 6) What are your goals (not just treatment related) that you will work on throughout the next phase of the Veterans Treatment Court? How do you plan to meet these goals?
- 7) If you have a mentor what impact if any have they been on you.

Reflective Essays (Sanctions):

The point of a reflective essay as a sanction is to make the person who is ordered to do one reflect on the issue they were sanctioned on. Why and when it happened and what the Veteran plans to do in the future to avoid finding themselves in that situation again. It is important to note that just because you turn in a reflective essay doesn't mean that the court has to accept it the first time, so please be thoughtful with your message. Below are some suggestions for things to include, they are however not all inclusive and you should consider putting your own thoughts into the letter as well.

- 1) What was going on the day of your violation?
- 2) Who was with you when the violation occurred?
- 3) What were you thinking when you were violating?
- 4) What have you learned from the violation and/or the response from the court?
- 5) What are your plans in the future to deal with similar situations when they occur?

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS OUTLINED ABOVE IN THE PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK.

<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> PRINT NAME
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> SIGN NAME

TODAY'S DATE

Veterans Treatment Court-Phase Up Grid

PHASES	PHASE LENGTH	SOBRIETY REQUIREMENT	SANCTION FREE REQUIREMENT
PHASE 1	6 WEEKS	15 CONSECUTIVE DAYS	2 CONSECUTIVE WEEKS
PHASE 2	8 WEEKS	30 CONSECUTIVE DAYS	4 CONSECUTIVE WEEKS
PHASE 3	8 WEEKS	45 CONSECUTIVE DAYS	5 CONSECUTIVE WEEKS
PHASE 4	12 WEEKS	90 CONSECUTIVE DAYS	6 CONSECUTIVE WEEKS
PHASE 5	18 WEEKS	120 CONSECUTIVE DAYS	8 CONSECUTIVE WEEKS

*****The Veterans treatment court reserves the right to take into considerations any special circumstances in each individual case in order to make a group decision.*****

Veterans Treatment Court-Sanctions Grid

Dishonesty/Disrespect Violations	1st Offense:	2nd Offense:	3rd Offense:	4th Offense:
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Late to court (Without extenuating circumstances or without permission)	probation discusses being on time with Veteran	Mentioned by the Judge on the record and asked to explain	Reflective essay on time management/ or 2 hours CSE if phase eligible	extra 4 hours CSE if phase eligible/or 1 day work crew
Community Service Violations	1st Offense:	2nd Offense:	3rd Offense:	4th Offense:
Incomplete volunteer hours	Reflective essay with action plan	1 day of WC	EHM or additional WC days	Phase demotion/ ineligible to phase up until total hours completed
Drug/Alcohol Testing Violations	1st Offense:	2nd Offense:	3rd Offense:	4th Offense:
Missed or failure to show	Reflective essay	CSE if phase eligible or WC	Additional UA per week or EHM	Jail
Diluted (without positive screening)	Discussion with the Judge on the record of concern with diluted UA	reflective essay	CSE if phase eligible or WC	Additional UA per week or EHM
Positive ETG/ETS	Reflective essay (with admission) WC (without admission)	CSE if phase eligible or WC	Additional UA per week or EHM	Jail
Positive for non-prescribed drugs	Reflective essay	CSE if phase eligible or WC	Additional UA per week or EHM	Jail
Law Violations	1st Offense:	2nd Offense:	3rd Offense:	4th Offense:
New Criminal Charges	Reflective essay plan of action on how to avoid future behavior	No phase up until resolution on new charge	Phase demotion or Jail	Removal from program
Electronic Home Monitoring Violations	1st Offense:	2nd Offense:	3rd Offense:	4th Offense:

Confirmed Alcohol Event	Reflective essay	WC	Phase demotion	Jail
Schedule Violations	Reflective essay	CSE if phase eligible or 1 day WC	WC	Phase demotion or jail
Removal of equipment without authorization	Jail (without extenuating circumstance)	Phase demotion	Removal from program	
Supervision Violations	1st Offense:	2nd Offense:	3rd Offense:	4th Offense:
Failure to appear	Reflective essay	CSE if phase eligible or 1 day of WC	Additional UA per week or EHM	Jail
Failure to appear for random UA's	Reflective essay	CSE if phase eligible or 1 day of WC	Additional UA per week or EHM	Jail
Failure to report relapse	Reflective essay + increase in UA's	EHM with alcohol sensor + increase in UA's	WC + additional UA's	Jail
Failure to report new LAB or LE contact	Reflective Essay	CSE if phase eligible or WC	EHM with alcohol sensor	Jail
Treatment Violations	1st Offense:	2nd Offense:	3rd Offense:	4th Offense:
Failure to appear for treatment/Be in compliance	Reflective essay	WC or Additional CSE	New CD assessment/ required revised tx plan/phase demotion	Jail with admonishment or future FTA= removal from program

******The VTC may deviate from specific sanctions listed to accommodate each cases unique circumstances.******