

City of St. Louis

VETERANS TREATMENT COURT

Participant's Handbook

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MISSION STATEMENT

To divert veteran offenders with mental health and/or substance abuse disorders from the normal criminal justice process by providing frequent judicial oversight, intensive supervision and treatment through a holistic approach to positively impact offender lifestyle and community safety.

I. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 22nd Judicial Circuit St. Louis Veterans Treatment Court (VTC). VTC is a court-supervised treatment program for those who are serving or have served in the United States Armed Forces, and who are charged with an offense motivated by alcohol or other drug abuse and/or mental health disorders. This handbook is designed to answer your questions about VTC and provide overall information about the program and what is expected of participants.

Participants accepted on a pre-plea basis are recommended by the Circuit Attorney and approved by the VTC team. Participants entering on a post-plea basis are referred by judicial officers, based on certain guidelines, and are deemed eligible by the VTC team. The team is under the direction of the Drug Court Commissioner. Other members of the team include the prosecutor, your defense attorney, probation officers, the Drug Court Administrator, a Veteran Judicial Outreach Worker, veteran mentors and a treatment specialist.

VTC is a voluntary program; however, once you enter the program you are bound by the orders and jurisdiction of the Court. As a participant, you will be expected to follow the instructions given by the Commissioner, to comply with the treatment plan

developed for you and to respect all members of the team. Participation includes regular court appearances, drug testing, treatment counseling, probation officer appointments, meeting with veteran mentors, and attendance at recovery meetings. Participants may also be assisted with education and skills assessments, referrals for vocational training, education and/or job placement services, mental health assessments, and other appropriate referrals.

The program length is determined by each participant's individual progress, but is at least fifteen (15) months. Upon completion of the program, the Circuit Attorney will drop the case against all successful "graduates" accepted on a pre-plea basis. For participants admitted on a post-plea basis, proof of the participant's graduation will be provided to the sentencing judge for consideration at sentencing or as satisfaction of a condition of probation.

Veteran mentors are a valuable part of the VTC team and are available to assist you and answer your questions. You should begin meeting with mentors immediately upon entering the program and regularly throughout your time in VTC.

II. CONFIDENTIALITY

Your privacy is respected in VTC. We are bound to make every effort to protect your identity and maintain confidentiality about your VTC participation. However, upon your entry into VTC, you sign a **Consent to Release Information** form which gives VTC permission to share information among VTC members concerning your mental health and drug treatment and your progress in the program without you being present.

As necessary and with your full knowledge, you shall allow us to access medical and other records of care and service to you that may impact your participation in VTC. Also be aware that if you fail the program and thereafter appear before a judge for sentencing on your case, Missouri law provides that your sentencing judge may consider the reason(s) you were terminated from VTC.

III. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

A. Drug Testing

You will be drug tested throughout the entire program at least once per week and often more.

Testing will be on a random basis any day of the week.

On the day you enter VTC, you will be assigned a **color**. You must call the drug testing telephone number, **314-549-8793**, everyday to find out if your color is called, and, if so, you are to test that day. You must call every morning, seven days a week, including holidays. When you call, you will get a recording which will provide you with the color(s) for that day. Listen to the complete recorded message. The primary site for urine drops is **Avertest, 400 N. Tucker**, (231-8029) in downtown St. Louis. If your color is called, you must report to Avertest on that day and complete the test between the hours of **7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.** only. Mandatory drops must be provided weekdays between **9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.**

B. Court Appearances

As a VTC participant, you will be required to appear in court on a regular basis. At each appearance, the Commissioner will be given a report about your progress prepared by your probation officer. The report will include drug test results, recovery meeting attendance, participation in treatment, probation

officer appointment attendance, successes and/or problems you are having, your health, and your attitude. The Commissioner may ask you questions about your progress and discuss any problems you experience. **If you are doing well**, you will be called early on the docket and encouraged to continue working with your treatment team toward graduation from VTC. You may also receive an incentive.

If you are not doing well, the Commissioner will discuss this with you and impose the proper response.

If you cannot appear in court as scheduled, you must notify your probation officer as soon as possible to get permission from the Commissioner. Unexcused failure to appear in court on the date and time you are scheduled is a crime. It will result in a warrant being issued for your arrest.

C. Fees

There is a **\$40.00 per month** VTC fee that you must pay while in the program. Payments are to be made directly to the clerk/cashier on the first floor of the civil courts building. The cashier will give you a receipt to show to the Commissioner each time you make a payment. Try to make a payment every time you come to court.

D. Probation Officer

Every participant will be assigned a probation officer from the Department of Probation and Parole. You are to schedule regular appointments with your probation officer as directed by your probation officer. You are expected to be on time and have all requested documentation. Your probation officer will give continuous updates to the Commissioner and team about your progress. The probation officer may make home visits and check in with your work place, school, physician, counselor and any other person working with you while you are in VTC. Information shared with or obtained by the probation officer can and will be shared with the team.

E. Treatment

Every VTC participant will be assessed and an individual **treatment plan** will be developed between you and your primary counselor. Helping you achieve the goals in this plan will be a team approach using the resources of the VTC and network of treatment providers. The plan will serve as a guide for you throughout treatment and will be updated regularly. The treatment assessment will determine the initial intensity of treatment that will best meet your needs.

You may be placed in detoxification, residential treatment or outpatient services. Most participants

initially enter outpatient services. This will include both individual and group counseling. If you are placed in detoxification and/or residential treatment, a court order will be issued requiring your presence at the treatment facility.

You must participate fully in your treatment plan. VTC programs are designed to help you develop self-awareness, self-discipline and realize your self-worth. Your treatment plan will include recognition of your problems and strengths and will help resolve issues.

F. Recovery Meetings

Attendance at **recovery meetings**, like Narcotics Anonymous or Alcoholics Anonymous, or another approved recovery type program is required throughout the program. These meetings are a vitally important part of your recovery/treatment. You must provide proof of attendance at your probation officer appointment prior to each court appearance.

You must also obtain a sponsor of your same sex. A sponsor must have a minimum of one year sobriety, who assists you on a personal level with sobriety and working the steps.

IV. COURT RULES

As a VTC participant, you will be required to abide by some basic rules:

1. Always tell the truth. Your success in VTC will take your best effort, including constant truthfulness on your part. The VTC team will tell you the truth and will expect the truth in return. For example,

a. Do not forge documents such as recovery meeting attendance sheets. Forgery is not only a lie, it is a crime.

b. Do not miss urine drops or attempt to subvert any urine test in any way. Missed drops are considered dirty drops. Tampering with urine specimens will not be tolerated. Both are dishonest and will be sanctioned

2. Possess NO alcohol or consume any substance that contains alcohol or other mood altering substance not prescribed for you. Sobriety is the primary focus of this program. Maintaining a drug-free lifestyle is very important to your recovery process.

3. Do not gamble or enter a gambling casino.

4. Follow the treatment plan designed for you by your counselor and attend all assigned assessment and treatment sessions, which include individual and group counseling, education sessions and recovery meetings. If you are unable to attend a scheduled

session, you must contact your treatment counselor in advance.

5. Be on time! You must not be late for treatment or court sessions. Late for treatment may mean you miss the session. Contact your treatment counselor if there is a possibility that you may be late. The Commissioner will sanction you for being late to court, treatment, probation officer appointment or other appointments related to VTC. Keep scheduled appointments with your probation officer. Do not just “drop in”.

6. Behave appropriately in court and at treatment.

- a. Inappropriate physical and/or verbal behavior** will not be tolerated and may result in your termination from VTC. Do not make threats toward other participants, counselors or court team members or behave in a violent or aggressive manner.
- b.** Avoid bringing your **children** to court.
- c.** Turn off **beepers or cell phones** while in court.
- d.** No **gum, food, or drink** is allowed in the courtroom.
- e. Dress appropriately** in court and at treatment. The sheriffs will require that you dress appropriately in the court building. This means wearing shirts, pants, dresses of reasonable length. No shorts, tank tops or clothing with drug or

alcohol themes are acceptable. Gang attire is unacceptable. Sunglasses should not be worn inside without medical approval. Speak with your treatment team if you need assistance with clothing.

- f. Do not establish romantic relationships or have sexual contact with other program participants.

7. Obey all laws and pay outstanding traffic fines.

- a. Do NOT drive a vehicle without a valid **driver's license**.
- b. A **new arrest** and/or criminal charge may result in your termination from VTC. Remember that drug use or sale is illegal.
- c. Take care of all outstanding cases you may have in traffic, municipal and county courts. Outstanding warrants can interrupt your VTC participation and ruin your chance for success. If you need help, let your defense attorney and the Commissioner know the extent of your problem right away.

8. Do not travel away from the St. Louis metropolitan area, which includes City of St. Louis, St. Louis County, Jefferson County, and St. Charles County, without permission from the Commissioner.

V. CONSEQUENCES OF BEHAVIOR

This section is designed to let you know the consequences of both your good and bad behaviors.

A. Incentives

When you consistently cooperate and participate in the VTC program, you may be recognized, at the Commissioner's discretion, in one or more of the following ways:

1. Credit on your VTC fee
2. Call you early on the docket
3. Certificate for path advancement
4. Allow travel privileges
5. Movie tickets, gift certificates, or other incentives
6. Give you applause and praise in the courtroom
7. Enter drawing for prizes
8. Fish bowl drawing for clean drug test
9. Recognition from Veterans Affairs, such as certificates, flags, and ribbons
10. Individualized incentives

B. Sanctions

When you fail to comply with the VTC program, the Court may, at the Commissioner's discretion, order one or more of the following sanctions:

MISSED DROP SANCTIONS:

Requirement Not Met	Path I	Path II	Path III & IV
1 st missed drop during the entire program	8 hours community service	one day in jail	sanction imposed at discretion of the Court with minimum of 4 days in jail
2 nd missed drop during the entire program	one day in jail	2 days in jail	sanction imposed at discretion of the Court with minimum of one week in jail
3 rd missed drop during the entire program	2 days in jail	minimum of 4 days in jail	sanction imposed at discretion of the Court
All subsequent missed drops during the entire program	sanction imposed at discretion of the Court	sanction imposed at discretion of the Court	sanction imposed at discretion of the Court

PROGRAM NON-COMPLIANCE SANCTIONS:

Actions Contrary to Program Principles	Consequence for Actions Contrary to Program Principles
Tampering with or dilution of urine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community service • jail time at the discretion of the Court
Missed probation officer appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community service
Missed recovery meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make up meeting • community service
Missed Pre-Treatment or missed treatment sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make up session • increase recovery meetings • journaling • workbook assignment • community service • restart path • jail • termination
Positive drug test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase urine drops • increase recovery meetings • journaling • electronic monitoring and curfew

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • workbook assignment • increase outpatient treatment • change outpatient treatment location • restart path • return to previous path • residential treatment • jail • termination
Inappropriate behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apology • community service • restart path • return to previous path • • jail • termination
Leaving residential treatment without permission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arrest warrant issued • sent back to residential • restart the path • return to previous path • jail • termination
Missing court appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arrest warrant issued • electronic monitoring and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> curfew • jail • termination
Forging recovery meeting sheets, treatment attendance sheets, or other written documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • jail • termination
New arrest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • jail • possible termination

VI. PATHS TOWARD GRADUATION

There are four paths in the VTC program. Each must be completed before you can “graduate” from VTC.

A. Path I/Basic Requirements (Minimum of 1 month):

In Path I, you will be assigned a probation officer. You will also attend pre-treatment for intake assessment and to learn VTC rules and regulations. This program is held weekday mornings or evenings, depending on your schedule. You will be expected to participate in Pre-Treatment until you are assigned to primary treatment. In Path I, your problems and

needs will be assessed and a treatment plan will be developed.

- Complete Pre-Treatment;
- Attend a pre-self help presentation as directed by the Court or probation officer;
- Appear in court as directed;
- Comply with all court orders and directives;
- Attend treatment as directed by the Court;
- Meet with probation officer as directed;
- Call the drop line daily and give a urine and breath sample for testing according to procedure or as directed by the Commissioner or probation officer;
- Keep all medical appointments;
- Medication compliant, if applicable;
- Demonstrate weekly mentor contact and VA involvement or other veteran resources as directed by the Court;
- Demonstrate awareness and ability to meet proximal goals and exercise the cornerstone concept of VTC---honesty;
- Meet all basic requirements.

B. Path II/Intermediate Requirements (Minimum of 4 months):

Path II is your **primary treatment path**. In Path II, you will begin the process of developing strategies and patterns of behavior to achieve long-term sobriety. You will develop an individual treatment plan and a Relapse Prevention Plan (RPP) with your counselor that you will use throughout the program.

- Appear in court as directed;
- Comply with all court orders and directives;
- Attend a minimum of two (2) recovery meetings per week and get a sponsor as ordered, or other resource as directed by the Court;
- Meet the probation officer as directed;
- Call the drop line daily and give a urine and breath sample according to procedure or as directed by the Commissioner or probation officer;
- Attend treatment as directed by the Court;
- Have a completed individual treatment plan;
- Be in compliance with the individual treatment plan including medication compliance, if applicable;
- Prepare a Relapse Prevention Plan (RPP) with the aid of the treatment counselor and submit a RPP to the Court for consideration of advancement to Path III;

- Maintain weekly mentor contact and VA involvement or other veteran resources as directed by the Court;
- Verify completion of eight (8) hours of volunteer service;
- Make regular payments toward restitution, if any, and regular payments toward the VTC fees;
- Have no major sanction, including a positive drug or alcohol test, for the last four (4) weeks in order to be eligible for advancement to Path III;
- Prepare a written or oral promotion request for review by the Court.

C. Path III/Advanced Requirements (Minimum of 6 months):

Path III is the **recovery phase** of treatment. Your treatment plan will be updated by you and your counselor to identify your treatment goals and objectives and your adherence to the Relapse Prevention Plan (RPP) monitored for compliance. Your personal Sustainable Recovery Plan will focus on your problem areas and help you to identify ways of coping with stressful situations to build a strong recovery program.

- Appear in court as directed;
- Comply with all court orders and directives;
- Attend a minimum of two (2) recovery meetings per week;
- Maintain weekly sponsor contact, if applicable and verify contact;
- Meet with probation officer as directed;
- Call the drop line daily and give a urine and breath sample for testing according to procedure or as directed by Commissioner or probation officer;
- Make regular payments toward restitution, if any, and regular payments toward VTC fees;
- Resolve all outstanding warrants;
- Verify completion of twelve (12) hours of volunteer service;
- Attend treatment as directed by the Court;
- Be in compliance with the individual treatment plan, including medication compliance;

- Be in compliance with the Relapse Prevention Plan (RPP) and review document with counselor;
- Maintain weekly mentor contact and VA involvement or other veteran resources as directed by the Commissioner;
- Obtain or maintain employment and/or a training program or a formal academic program approved by the Court;
- Have no major sanctions, including a positive drug or alcohol test, for the last eight (8) weeks in order to be eligible for advancement to Path IV;
- Prepare and submit a personal Sustainable Recovery Plan to the Commissioner and request permission to advance to Path IV.

D. Path IV / Senior requirements (Minimum of 4 months):

Path IV is a **sustainable recovery** phase. It is designed to address your ongoing recovery needs including total abstinence from drugs and alcohol through relapse prevention by using your Sustainable Recovery Plan. The goal is to support your return to the community as a productive and responsible

person. The focus will be on daily living skills and on receiving training on how to assist others as a mentor. Path IV lasts a minimum of 4 months, of which at least the last twelve (12) weeks must be free of drug and alcohol use and without major sanctions.

- Appear in court as directed;
- Comply with all court orders and directives;
- Attend a minimum of one (1) recovery meeting per week;
- Maintain weekly sponsor contact, if applicable, and verify contact;
- Call the drop line daily and give a urine and breath sample for testing according to procedure or as directed by the Commissioner or probation officer;
- Attend treatment as directed by the Court;
- Meet with probation officer as directed;
- Pay all restitution, if any, and pay all VTC fees;
- Attend two (2) veteran specific, mentor, court sponsored or alumni activities per month;
- Complete mentor training;
- Maintain mentor contact and VA involvement or other veteran resources as directed by the Commissioner;

- Maintain employment and/or a training or a formal academic program approved by the court for a minimum of the last eight (8) consecutive weeks in the program;
- Be major sanction free for the last twelve (12) consecutive weeks; and be viewed by the Operations Committee to have sufficiently integrated the necessary information to support long term recovery to be eligible to graduate from VTC;
- Prepare a written request to graduate for the Operation's Team review;
- Be in compliance with the:
 1. Individual Treatment Plan, including medication compliance, if applicable;
 2. Relapse Prevention Plan;
 3. Sustainable Recovery Plan.

The VTC team must agree that you have met all of these requirements and that you have sufficiently integrated the necessary information to support long-term recovery in order for you to GRADUATE FROM VETERANS TREATMENT COURT.

VI. IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Phone Numbers:

Drug Testing Daily Drop Line	314-549-8793
Probation Officer's Office	314-340-6999
Treatment Court Office	314-622-4924
Public Defender's Office	314-340-7625
Circuit Attorney's Office	314-622-4941

VII. PERSONAL INFORMATION

My probation officer is

I can reach him/her at

My treatment program is

My treatment counselor is

I can reach him/her at

My color for urine testing is
