

STANDARDS FOR VETERANS TREATMENT DOCKETS IN VIRGINIA

Standard 1: *Administration.* A circuit or district court which intends to establish a Veterans docket must petition the Supreme Court of Virginia for authorization before beginning operation of a specialty docket or, in the instance of an existing specialty docket, continuing its operation. A petitioning court must demonstrate sufficient local support for the establishment of this specialty docket, as well as adequate planning for its establishment and continuation. Each docket must have a policy and procedure manual that sets forth its goals and objectives, general administration, organization, personnel, and budget matters.

Standard 2: *Team.* A veterans treatment court program team should include, at a minimum, the judge, Commonwealth's Attorney, Defense Attorney, and a representative from local treatment providers, a Veterans Justice Liaison, a representative from the local Department of Veterans Services, a veteran mentor coordinator, and a representative from community corrections.

Standard 3: *Evidence-Based Practices.* The docket should establish and adhere to practices that are evidence-based and outcome-driven and should be able to articulate the research basis for the practices it uses.

Standard 4: *Voluntary and Informed Participation.* All docket participants should be provided with a clear explanation of the docket process. Participation in the docket must be completely voluntary. Participants must have capacity to consent to participation in the docket.

Standard 5: *Eligibility Criteria.* Criteria regarding eligibility for participation in the docket must be well-defined and written, and must address public safety and the locality's treatment capacity. The criteria should focus on high risk/high need veterans who are at risk for criminal recidivism and in need of treatment services.

Standard 6: *Program Structure.* A veterans treatment court program should be structured to integrate alcohol, drug treatment and mental health services with justice system processing. Participants should progress through phases of orientation, stabilization, community reintegration, maintenance, successful completion and transition out of the program. All participants shall be paired with a veteran mentor to navigate them through the program and assist with VA healthcare.

Standard 7: *Treatment and Support Services.* Veterans Treatment Court Programs must provide prompt admission to continuous, comprehensive, evidence-based treatment and rehabilitation services to participants. All treatment providers used by the docket should be appropriately licensed by the applicable state regulatory authority or the equivalent federal governing agency when applicable and trained to deliver the necessary services according to the standards of their profession.

Standard 8: *Participant Compliance.* Veterans Treatment Court Programs should have written procedures for incentives, rewards, sanctions, and therapeutic responses to participant behavior while under court supervision. These procedures must be provided to all team members and the participant at the start of a participant's participation in the program.

Standard 9: *Confidentiality.* Veterans Treatment Court Programs must protect confidentiality and privacy rights of individuals and proactively inform them about those rights. Information gathered as part of a participant's court-ordered treatment program or services should be safeguarded in the event that the participant is returned to traditional court processing.

Standard 10: *Evaluation and Monitoring.* Veterans Treatment Court Programs must establish case tracking and data collection practices. At a minimum, data should be collected regarding 1) Characteristics of the Participants, 2) Clinical Outcomes, and 3) Legal Outcomes. All veteran treatment court programs are subject to annual fiscal and program monitoring by the Office of the Executive Secretary.

Standard 11: *Education.* All team members, including the judge, should be generally knowledgeable about mental illness, service-related issues, trauma, substance abuse disorders, and pharmacology, as relevant to the docket. All Veterans Treatment Court Programs must complete the facilitated training, Virginia Veterans Treatment Dockets Implementation Training. All team members should attend continuing education programs or training opportunities to stay current regarding the legal aspects of a veterans' treatment court program and the unique clinical challenges facing veterans.