



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
OF THE COURTS
455 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, CA
94102-3688
Tel 415-865-4200
TDD 415-865-4272
Fax 415-865-4205
www.courts.ca.gov

FACT SHEET

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Veterans Courts

A veterans court, also known as a veterans treatment court, is a problem-solving court intended to serve veterans who are involved with the justice system and whose court cases are affected by issues such as addiction, mental illness, and/or co-occurring disorders. These courts promote sobriety, recovery, and stability through a coordinated response involving cooperation and collaboration with prosecutors, defense lawyers, probation departments, county veterans service offices, the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA), health-care networks, employment and housing agencies and groups, volunteer mentors who are usually also veterans, and family support organizations. Typical veterans court services include one-on-one judicial supervision, group evaluation by the collaborative team, intensive probation supervision, employment and housing assistance, medication monitoring, counseling and mentoring.

Benefits of Veterans Court

- Reduce criminal recidivism
- Facilitate participant sobriety
- Increase compliance with treatment and other court-ordered conditions
- Improve access to VA benefits and services
- Improve family relationships and social support connections
- Improve life stability
- Regain lost pride
- Honor those who have served our nation by helping them remove criminal convictions from their record

California Veterans Courts

To date, there are veterans courts in the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, San Diego County, Santa Clara, Tulare, and Ventura.

Collaborative Court Model

Veterans courts are modeled after collaborative justice court programs, such as drug and mental health courts, and incorporate the 11 Guiding Principles of Collaborative Justice Courts identified by the Judicial Council of California's Collaborative Justice Courts Advisory Committee. These guiding principles include integrating services with justice system processing; using ongoing judicial interaction with participants; using a less adversarial, team-based approach; incorporating graduated sanctions and incentives; and using evaluation to monitor effectiveness. Research has shown that drug and mental health courts reduce recidivism and save resources in the criminal justice system.

Veterans Court Resources

National Association of Drug Court Professionals:

www.nadcp.org/JusticeForVets

California Department of Veterans Affairs:

www.cdva.ca.gov/newhome.aspx

www.cdva.ca.gov/VetService/Default.aspx

www.veterans.ca.gov/homeless_information.shtml

www.veterans.ca.gov/stand_downs.shtml

www.cdva.ca.gov/VetService/DocsAndImages/Oct%20Newsletter_2010.pdf

www.cdva.ca.gov/AboutUs/DocsAndImages/StrategicPlan.pdf

California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs:

www.adp.ca.gov/veteran/VAL.shtml

Contact:

Michael Roosevelt, Senior Court Services Analyst, Center for Families, Children & the Courts, michael.roosevelt@jud.ca.gov