



DAUPHIN COUNTY

VET COURT PROGRAM

PARTICIPANT MANUAL

Updated 2015

DISCLAIMER

The information contained in this manual is intended solely for the use of the Dauphin County Veterans' Court program and its participants. All information contained herein is subject to modification as directed by the Honorable President or/and Presiding Veterans' Court Judge of Dauphin County. This manual is not intended to answer every question about the Veterans' Court program. It is, however, a valuable source of information and we hope participants will use it. This manual is not designed to provide or give legal advice. Any questions regarding the status of outstanding criminal case(s), Pre-trial, Probation, Parole, or/and Veterans' Benefits information, should be reviewed with the appropriate authority – be it an Attorney, Federal, State, or County Probation Officer, or other authority.

Information about this program, as well as forms and applications, can also be found on the Dauphin County website under the Office of the District Attorney link. Please go to the following web address and click on "Criminal Justice, District Attorney" for more information:

<http://www.dauphincounty.org/government/Publicly-Elected-Officials/District-Attorney/Pages/Veterans-Court.aspx>

Purpose of the Veterans' Court Program

The Dauphin County Veterans' Court Program is specifically designed for veterans involved in the Criminal Justice System. The intention is to place you, as related to your individually developed treatment plan, into an intensive drug, alcohol, and/or mental health treatment program coupled with court intervention as an alternative to incarceration to help you return to a productive and healthy lifestyle.

There are a lot of people supporting you – the Treatment Team, Mentors, as well as other participants in the program. We look forward to working with you as you work towards your successful completion of Veterans' Court and take steps towards a clean, sober, and healthy life.

Many Veterans are known to have a warrior's mentality and often do not address treatment needs for physical and psychological health care. Often those referred to the Veterans' Treatment Court are homeless, helpless, in despair, suffering from alcohol or drug addiction, and others have serious mental illnesses. Your life may have been spiraling out of control.

Without the collaboration of the VA Medical Center, multiple Dauphin County Departments, the Veterans' Treatment Court, Volunteer Veteran Mentors and community health care providers, many Veterans' would continue to have their illnesses untreated and would suffer the consequences of the traditional criminal justice system of jail or prison.

This Collaboration of unique partners affords the opportunity for you to regain stability in your life, to have your families strengthened, to have housing for the homeless, and to have employment for the employable.

Within the 9 county areas supported by the Lebanon VA, there have been more than 330 referrals and more than 60 Veterans participating in a Veterans' Court program. The referrals include Veterans from Vietnam, Persian Gulf, Operation Enduring Freedom /Operation Iraqi Freedom and Grenada.

The goal of the Veterans Justice Outreach is to assist as many Veterans as possible to reduce incarceration, recidivism and contribute to society. It's just another way for Lebanon VA Medical Center and the many supporters of Veterans in the community are working hard to help Veterans rehabilitate and improve their health and well-being.

Assisting the court is a team of 25 volunteer Veteran Mentors. The pool of veteran mentors includes those who have served on several fronts, including Vietnam and Desert Shield, among other conflicts. While in court, a mentor will be assigned to meet with you, discuss any ongoing problems, or issues of interest. You and your mentor will work to bring any issues to the attention of the court that the court can assist in resolving. This relationship promotes and fosters through encouragement a "can do" attitude that you can accomplish your goals in treatment, that you are not alone, and that your mentor is here for you.

The volunteer Veteran Mentors do not waver in their commitment, time, or dedication, despite the fact they are not monetarily compensated for their time or expertise. Faithfully they are present, ready to serve at every Veteran's Treatment Court session - without reservation. We as a program are appreciative and proud of their commitment and eagerness to serve.

WELCOME to the Veterans' Court Program!

1. Program Overview

In this section, you will learn about the rules of the program, factors the team considers when deciding whether to accept a Veteran into this court, length of the program, the different circumstances surround each case that may impact on which "track" a Veteran is placed, and information about the phases of the program.

1.1 Basic Program Rules

- a) **SHOW UP.** Be on time for treatment, groups, other meetings and Veterans' Court sessions.
- b) **BE HONEST.** We can work through almost any problem together if you are truthful with us. Of all the rules, this is often the most difficult. The program staff and the Court expect you to be honest in all areas of your life. DO NOT attempt to falsify records, conceal alcohol or other drug use or tamper with or dilute your urine tests. Eventually, you will get caught.
- c) **Listen, Participate, Ask Questions, & Share Your Experiences.**

It will be necessary to make life adjustments in order to be fully engaged in recovery. This program is about accountability, personal responsibility and healing.

1.2 Referral Sources for Applicants

Referrals to the Veterans' Court program may originate from, but are not limited to, the following sources:

- Police Officers
- Self-referrals
- Magisterial District Judges
- Public/Private Defense Attorneys
- District Attorneys
- Probation Officers
- Judges
- Family members
- Veteran's Administration
- Jail staff

1.3 Applicant Eligibility

Screening for entrance into the program will be available to those defendants who are:

- Detained at the Dauphin County Prison,
- Currently on Pre-Trial supervision,
- Currently on Probation supervision, or/and who are
- Awaiting preliminary hearing before a Magisterial District Justice for an eligible criminal offense.

Informed consent will be obtained for evaluation and consideration by the Court Team and again at the point of acceptance into Veteran's Court.

The Offender shall voluntarily agree to participate in, and be subject to rules, all guidelines of supervision, regulations, and sanctions of the Veterans' Court program.

An individual meeting the following criteria may apply for admission into the Veterans' Court program:

1. Veteran of the United States Armed Forces.
2. Resident of Dauphin County.
3. Charged with or facing revocation of either certain felonies or any misdemeanor offenses.
4. Batters' or Anger Management need.
5. Meets one of the following clinical criteria:
 - a. TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury),
 - b. MST (Military Sexual Trauma),
 - c. Drug/Alcohol Addiction,
 - d. Other Axis I diagnoses that include, but are not limited to:
 - i. PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)
 - ii. Major Depression,
 - iii. Bipolar Disorder,
 - iv. Schizophrenia,
 - v. Schizoaffective Disorder,
 - e. Other Axis II psychological and/or substance abuse problem(s) requiring treatment/support.
6. Veterans with co-occurring disorders (mental health and substance use) will be evaluated for Veteran's Court if they otherwise meet the eligibility criteria, but may be referred to Drug Court and/or Mental Health Court if determined more appropriate, or rejected if those issues/disorders would prohibit satisfactory completion of any veteran's court sentence/program, or/and Probation & Parole rules.

Disqualifying factors may include but are not limited to:

1. The type of discharge from Armed Forces.
2. The sentencing requirements based on the prior record score and seriousness of the offense.
3. Whether the individual is in need of treatment.
4. Charges include a violent felony, a Megan's Law offense, and/or a firearm charge.

1.4 Participant Tracks

There are three (3) potential tracks in the Veterans' Court Programming. A track is selected for you by the Treatment Team based on a variety of factors. The two (2) most important factors considered are your:

- Prior Criminal History, and
- Nature and Severity of the Current Criminal Charges.

Each participant, regardless of program track, is required to complete all recommended treatment, remain drug and alcohol free, attend the Court sessions as directed, refrain from criminal activity, and comply with all conditions of supervision. Participants are expected to participate in and complete numerous pro-social, treatment-oriented activities based on an individualized treatment plan. Typically, these may include but are not limited to:

- Meetings with Veteran Mentors, including the Peer Group Meeting Prior to Court,
- AA/NA Meetings (or approved alternatives),
- Group and individual therapy,
- Medication management/psychiatrist appointments,
- Regular appointments with a Veterans Justice Outreach worker,
- Weekly court appearances,
- Community service,
- Probation appointments, and
- Random drug testing.

As each participant requires a different level of intervention based on need and progress, the participants' specific needs may require the participant to be involved in other related activities.

If you have a Drug or Alcohol related charge, or it is recommended as part of your treatment plan, you shall be required to attend a minimum of four (4) 12-Step meetings per week. You shall also obtain a sponsor in addition to the Veterans' Court Mentor. These must be separate individuals.

1. Diversiónary Track*

- a. Dauphin County's Veterans' Court will accept defendants who would otherwise be ARD eligible into this track. These defendants typically have a limited prior criminal history.
- b. When you complete this program track, you may expunge your criminal record.
- c. If you fail the program (withdraw or are revoked), your case will be returned to the normal court track. The District Attorney is required to approve any other diversion program that may be available to you, such as the regular ARD program.
- d. The minimum length of this program track is 12 months.

2. Incentive Track*

- a. A defendant who is charged with a felony but has a low prior record score and no prior felony convictions will be considered for the Incentive Track.
- b. In this track, the felony will be reduced to a misdemeanor upon successful completion of the program.
- c. A guilty plea to the felony is required; however, your charge will be amended prior to your sentencing.
- d. The minimum length of this program track is 12 months.
- e. An aftercare portion following graduation, consisting of treatment and follow-up supervision, will be completed. This lasts a minimum of 6 months.

*Participants whose cases are either predisposition (Incentive) or ARD (Diversion Track), sentencing will be deferred pending completion of the Veterans Court program. Upon successful completion of the Veterans Court program, including payments of fines, costs, and restitution, the participant's charges may be reduced, dismissed, or the District Attorney's Office will seek to expunge the pertinent charges as previously agreed, subject to Court approval.

3. Standard Track**

- a. A defendant who does not fit into either of the other two (2) track categories will participate in the Standard Track.
- b. In this track, the intensive supervision received by you will be your alternative to incarceration.
- c. The minimum length of this program track is 12 months.
- d. An aftercare portion following graduation, consisting of treatment and follow-up supervision, will be completed. This lasts a minimum of 6 months.

**Participants who are post-sentence/probation violation, successful completion of Veterans Court may result in the reduction or termination of any remaining supervision; however these records cannot be expunged.

1.5 Veterans' Court Phases

Initially, you can expect **weekly** contact with the Veterans' Court Judge, frequent contact from your Probation Officer, Treatment Providers, Veterans' Justice Outreach Specialist, and the Veterans' Court team. The minimum contact you shall expect is the following:

- Phase 1: Participant must report to Veterans' court on a weekly basis.**
- Phase 2: Participant must report to Veterans' court a minimum of two (2) times per month.**
- Phase 3: Participant must report to Veterans' court a minimum of one (1) time per month.**

The program is divided into three (3) phases which vary in length and requirements. When you complete all phases, you will graduate from the program and be released from the intensive level supervision.

Each Veteran must complete each phase of the program to graduate from Veterans' court. Phases 1 & 2 last a minimum of 120 days. The length of Phase 3 / Graduation Phase is a minimum of 120 days. You must have 120 consecutive days clean and sober (clean time in the community) prior to graduating from Veterans' Court. The final length of each phase of the program is dependent on your Treatment Plan and his/her compliance with program requirements.

It must be understood that the Veterans' Court Program exists to help restore you to a healthier lifestyle with better tools to handle your specific struggles with drugs & alcohol, mental health diagnosis, or other concern. This support and change includes being free of crime.

Graduation: *If you comply with all program and treatment recommendations, you may expect to graduate from the program in 12 months.*

Clients in the Incentive & Standard Tracks of the program will expect to continue with Probation Supervision after the graduation ceremony.

Aftercare treatment aligns with the goals of your Treatment plan. You will receive a follow-up call once a month from the Veterans' Justice Outreach Specialist, for six (6) months following graduation, to support you in your continued treatment process.

The diversity of the phase requirements are guidelines and may need to be adjusted to ensure compliance. Participant cases are reviewed weekly.

1.6 Minimum Phase Requirements

Participants may be required to do more than what is listed below, but this is determined by the Treatment Team and the Veterans' Court Judge.

Each participant is required to complete 150 hours of community service during the Veterans' Court Program, as well as a related community service project. The purpose of this project is to allow you, as a Veteran, to identify an area or cause in the community through which you carry out your willingness to serve. You will be asked to begin thinking about your project when you appear in Veterans' Court to

become a participant. **You will need to bring verification of completion of your community service.**

PHASE 1 REQUIREMENTS:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Treatment (D&A) | <input type="checkbox"/> Education/Vocation (continuing/completed) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling (other) | <input type="checkbox"/> Support Groups (PTSD, Anger etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NA/AA Meetings (12-Step) | <input type="checkbox"/> 90 Consecutive days clean |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain/Maintain employment | <input type="checkbox"/> Peer Group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paying on Fines and Costs | <input type="checkbox"/> Work Release/Electronic Monitoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly Attendance – Vet Court |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mentor contacts (twice a week) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor (if required) |

PHASE 2 REQUIREMENTS:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Treatment (D&A) (continuing/completed) | <input type="checkbox"/> Education/Vocation (continuing/completed) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling (other) (continuing/completed) | <input type="checkbox"/> Support Groups (PTSD, Anger etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NA/AA Meetings (12-Step) | <input type="checkbox"/> 90 Consecutive days clean |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain/Maintain employment | <input type="checkbox"/> Peer Group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paying on Fines and Costs | <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance – Vet Court _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor (if required) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mentor contacts (twice a week) | |

The Veteran must speak with the Treatment Team to be approved to move to Phase 3 of program.

During this meeting, the participant will be asked questions such as:

- What tools have you learned in treatment that you will use in daily life?
- How have you changed since entering the Veterans' Court Program?

The Treatment Team must be in agreement that the individual is ready to move to the final phases of the program before the participant may enter Phase 3.

PHASE 3 REQUIREMENTS/GRADUATION:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Treatment (D&A) (continuing/completed) | <input type="checkbox"/> Education/Vocation (continuing/completed) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling (other) (continuing/completed) | <input type="checkbox"/> Support Groups (PTSD, Anger etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NA/AA Meetings (12-Step) | <input type="checkbox"/> 120 Consecutive days clean |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain/Maintain employment | <input type="checkbox"/> Peer Group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paying on Fines and Costs | <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance – Vet Court _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Service | <input type="checkbox"/> 120 Consecutive Days Post-Treatment, VET |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mentor contacts (twice a week) | <input type="checkbox"/> Court Program Compliance |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor (if required) |

GRADUATION:

___ SPEECH (INCLUDING WHAT YOU DID FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE)

Completion and/or substantial progress in achieving these requirements will be used as a determining factor in your movement to Graduate. Your continued sobriety is EXPECTED throughout the program.

1.7 Veterans' Court Treatment Team Meetings

These meetings are mandatory for the Treatment Team and are closed to Alumni and other Treatment Court participants. Team members will discuss your case during this meeting to make sure that you are making progress in fulfilling the requirements of the Veterans' Court Program. Team meetings are held immediately prior to court, unless otherwise specified.

1.8 Probation Supervision

While a participant in the Veterans' Court, you will be supervised by a Veterans' Court Probation Officer. This Officer will verify your address and conduct home investigations to ensure that you have a stable place of residence.

Each participant is required to sign the Conditions of Supervision and the Veterans' Court Program.

Your Probation Officer will use drug-screening tests for other drug and/or alcohol detection when it is deemed necessary. This testing will occur in addition to the mandatory drug and alcohol monitoring during Phase I. You will be subject to intensive supervision by the Adult Probation Officer.

Depending on your charges and recommendations for treatment, you will be required to attend 90, 12-Step meetings in 90 days after which you will be asked attend a minimum of four (4) meetings per week. **Participants are required to attend a minimum of 4 12-Step meetings per week.** You must sign and submit a record of your attendance at these meetings to your Probation Officer. **You will also be required to obtain a "sponsor" as defined by the 12-Step tradition, if called for as part of your treatment plan.** Additionally, in all cases, your Probation Officer may perform field and/or phone curfew checks and will enforce sanctions during your supervision when necessary and dependent upon your supervision guidelines.

You will submit to urine tests. If you have a charge related to drugs or/and alcohol or/and your treatment plan warrants it, you will be required to complete a drug test at least two (2) times per week. and continue contact at the Adult Probation Office. The Veterans' Court Probation Officer, working together with the Treatment Team and Veterans' Administration, will refer participants to educational and vocational programs. Urine screening tests will continue during Phases II and III.

To avoid jeopardizing treatment, if you have a violation that involves new criminal charges, you must immediately notify a Veterans' Court Probation Officer who will in turn report to the Treatment Team as soon as possible.

1.9 Incentives

You can expect to receive **incentives** for positive progress in the Veterans' Court program. Incentives may be given for program completion benchmarks, such as but not limited to:

- Completion of treatment,
- Phasing-Up in the Program,
- Maintaining sobriety, and
- Completion of the community service project.

Incentives will be determined by the Veteran's Court Team and specific rewards will depend on available resources.

1.10 Sanctions

You can expect to receive a **sanction** if you violate the Veterans Court Program rules or fail to achieve certain Phase requirements. Typical violations that may be sanctioned include:

- Missed appointments,
- Failed or tampered drug tests,
- New arrests/charges,
- Lack of participation in treatment.

Sanctions will be imposed relative to the violation, and progressive in nature. Types of sanctions include but are not limited to:

- Essays,
- Loss of incentives,
- Demotion in phase,
- Curfew restrictions,
- Incarceration,
- Electronic Monitoring or/and the use of other Alcohol Monitoring Device,
- Termination from the Veteran's Court Program,
- Fines.

The Veterans Court Team reserves the right to impose these and/or other incentives or/and sanctions as appropriate to each particular participant and circumstance of violation.

2. How Veterans' Court Works

The Veterans' Treatment Court is handled on a specialized criminal court docket involving Veterans charged with criminal offense(s), by diverting eligible Veteran-defendants with substance dependency and/or mental illness. The court substitutes a treatment problem solving model for traditional court processing. Veterans are identified through specialized screening and assessments, and voluntarily participate in a judicially supervised treatment plan that a team of court staff, veteran health care professionals, veteran peer mentors, AOD health care professionals and mental health professionals develop. At regular status hearings treatment plans and other conditions are periodically reviewed for appropriateness, incentives are offered to reward adherence to court conditions, and sanctions for non-adherence are handed down. Completion of program is defined according to specific criteria. Upon admission to Veterans Treatment Court, the court staff and mentors assist the veteran with an array of stabilization and other services, such as emergency financial assistance, mental health/trauma counseling, employment and skills training assistance, temporary housing, advocacy, and other referral services.

2.1 The Veterans' Court Mentoring Program

The Dauphin County Veterans' Court Program is specifically designed for veterans involved in the Criminal Justice System. The intention is to place these individuals into an intensive drug, alcohol, and/or mental health treatment program coupled with court intervention as an alternative to incarceration to help them return to a productive lifestyle.

The key component of any successful Veterans Court is a Veterans' Mentor Program. In this program, a trained Veteran Mentor is paired with a veteran participant to provide support as he/she navigates through the court and treatment. Ideally, Mentors/Participants will be paired by service whenever possible.

The Mentor is present as an ally and friend to assist the veteran through this difficult time. Our belief is that the shared experiences of another veteran will be critical in assisting the participant in regaining control of his/her life and successfully connecting to – and maintaining – treatment, which will lead to successful completion of the Veterans' Court program.

The Mentor is a resource to you, and not a counselor.

The Mentoring Program offers support and encouragement for veterans in the court system by spending one-on-one time with the veteran participant on a regular basis to provide an opportunity to discuss concerns and receive feedback and support from another veteran. The Mentor will have a resource book at his/her disposal to refer veterans to a wide range of available services both within the veteran system and in the community at large. These include, but are not limited to: benefits, housing, spiritual needs, social/recreational needs, employment.

Mentor Coordinator Role:

Essential to the coordination, maintenance and success of the mentoring program is the Mentor Coordinator. His role is to recruit, organize and schedule trainings, supervise, and coordinate Mentors within the Veterans Court Program.

His contact information is the following:

	Veterans' Court Mentor Coordinator
	Mr. Charles (Chuck) Leach
Cell:	(717) 579-9651
E-Mail:	leach3613@comcast.net

The positions of Mentor and Mentor Coordinator are both strictly volunteer and are unpaid. Expenses related to the Veterans Court may be paid as authorized by the President Judge.

2.2 The Veterans' Court Team

The Dauphin County Veterans' Court Team consists of members of several different disciplines that collectively meet weekly to review participant progress and program concern. These disciplines include:

- Pre-Trial Services
- Veterans' Court Judge
- Assistant District Attorney
- Defense Counsel
- Coordinator of Drug Court and Veterans' Court
- Mental Health/D&A Clinician(s)
- Probation Officers
- Veteran's Justice Outreach (VJO) Worker, VA Medical Center
- Mentor Coordinator for Veterans' Court

Each member is responsible to provide the necessary knowledge and guidance to the Veterans Court Team to adequately promote participant progress and sound program policy.

2.3 Veterans' Justice Outreach Specialist (VJO)

The VJO assigned to the Court uses a standard laptop which is encrypted and connected to the VA network. The VJO assists the Veterans' Court program in many ways, but primarily does the following:

- Obtains and checks on VA Releases of Information (ROI) between court and VA Hospital,

- Facilitates VA linkages for services,
- Verifies and makes appointments for SATS and Mental Health Clinics,
- Checks on VA toxicology testing results,
- Coordinates VA Treatment Status Report provision to Court,
- Provides the Judge with accurate VA treatment status updates,
- Checks on and assists with VA eligibility for services,
- Treatment Case Management, Crisis Management and support for the Veteran at the Court visit.

2.4 Veterans' Court - TEN KEY COMPONENTS

Dauphin County's Veterans Court has adopted the Ten Key Components designed and utilized by Buffalo New York's Veteran's Treatment Court. Buffalo implemented the first Veteran's Court and is a model by which most, if not all, others, are designed. Buffalo used "slight modifications [of] the essential tenements of the ten key components as described in the U.S. Department of Justice Publication entitled *"Defining Drug Courts: The Key Components"*, (Jan.1997)" in order to develop what is listed below.

Key Component #1: Veterans' Treatment Court integrates alcohol, drug treatment, and mental health services with justice system case processing.

Veterans Court promotes sobriety, recovery and stability through a coordinated response to veteran's dependency on alcohol, drugs, and/or management of any mental health issues. Realization of these goals requires a team approach. This approach includes the cooperation and collaboration of the traditional partners found in drug treatment courts and mental health treatment courts with the addition of the Veteran Justice Organization/Veteran's Administration, veterans and veterans family support organizations, and veteran volunteer mentors.

Key Component #2: Using a non-adversarial approach, prosecution and defense counsel promote public safety while protecting participants' due process rights.

To facilitate the veterans' progress in treatment, the prosecutor and defense counsel shed their traditional adversarial courtroom relationship and work together as a team. Once a veteran is accepted into the treatment court program, the team's focus is on the veteran's recovery and law-abiding behavior—not on the merits of the underlying case.

Key component #3: Eligible participants are identified early and promptly placed in the Veterans' Court program.

Early identification of veterans entering the criminal justice system is an integral part of the process of placement in the Veterans Court program. Arrest can be a traumatic event in a person's life. It creates an immediate crisis and can compel recognition of inappropriate behavior into the open, making denial by the veteran of the need for treatment difficult.

Key Component #4: Veterans' Court provides access to a continuum of alcohol, drug, mental health and other related treatment and rehabilitation services.

While primarily concerned with criminal activity, alcohol and drug use, and mental illness, the Veterans Court team also consider co-occurring problems such as primary medical problems, transmittable diseases, homelessness, basic educational deficits, unemployment and poor job preparation, spouse and family troubles—especially domestic violence—and the ongoing effects of war time trauma.

Veteran peer mentors are essential to the Veterans' Treatment Court team. Ongoing veteran peer mentors interaction with the Veterans' Treatment Court participants is essential. Their active, supportive relationship, maintained throughout treatment, increases the likelihood that a veteran will remain in treatment and improves the chances for sobriety and law-abiding behavior.

Key Component #5: Abstinence is monitored by frequent alcohol and other drug testing.

Frequent court-ordered drug testing is essential. An accurate testing program is the most objective and efficient way to establish a framework for accountability and to gauge each participant's progress.

Key Component #6: A coordinated strategy governs Veterans Court responses to participants' compliance.

A veteran's progress through the treatment court experience is measured by his or her compliance with the treatment regimen. Veterans' Court rewards cooperation and sanctions noncompliance. Veterans' Court establishes a coordinated strategy, including a continuum of graduated responses, to continuing drug use and other noncompliant behavior.

Key Component #7: Ongoing judicial interaction with each Veteran is essential.

The judge is the leader of the Veterans' Court team. This active, supervising relationship, maintained throughout treatment, increases the likelihood that a veteran will remain in treatment and improves the chances for sobriety and law-abiding behavior. Ongoing judicial supervision also communicates to veterans that someone in authority cares about them and is closely watching what they do.

Key Component #8: Monitoring and evaluation measure the achievement of program goals and gauge effectiveness.

Management and monitoring systems provide timely and accurate information about program progress. Program monitoring provides oversight and periodic measurements of the program's performance against its stated goals and objectives. Information and conclusions developed from periodic monitoring reports, process evaluation activities, and longitudinal evaluation studies may be used to modify program.

Key Component #9: Continuing interdisciplinary education promotes effective Veteran's Court planning, implementation, and operations.

All Veterans' Court staff should be involved in education and training. Interdisciplinary education exposes criminal justice officials to veteran treatment issues, and Veteran Administration, veteran volunteer mentors, and treatment staff to criminal justice issues. It also develops shared understandings of the values, goals, and operating procedures of both the veteran administration, treatment and the justice system components.

Education and training programs help maintain a high level of professionalism, provide a forum for solidifying relationships among criminal justice, Veteran Administration, veteran volunteer mentors, and treatment personnel, and promote a spirit of commitment and collaboration.

Key Component #10: Forging partnerships among Veteran's Court, Veteran's Administration, public agencies, and community-based organizations generates local support and enhances Veteran's Court effectiveness.

Because of its unique position in the criminal justice system, Veterans Court is well suited to develop coalitions among private community-based organizations, public criminal justice agencies, the Veteran Administration/Veteran's Justice Outreach, veterans and veterans' families support organizations, and drug & alcohol and mental health treatment delivery systems. Forming such coalitions expands the continuum of services available to Veterans Court participants and informs the community about Veterans Court concepts. The Veterans Court fosters system wide involvement through its commitment to share responsibility and participation of program partners.

Other General Information on Veterans' Courts:

<http://www.nadcp.org/JusticeForVets>

2.5 Traditional Court Characteristics versus Veterans' Court Characteristics

VETERANS' COURT	TRADITIONAL COURT
VET Court Team is used to achieve goals to support treatment interventions.	The Court Team consists of a judge, prosecutor, defense counsel, etc.
Non-Adversarial	Adversarial
Goal is to restore the participant as a productive, non-criminal member of society.	Goal is to process the case; apply the law.
The Treatment Team will play a central role in monitoring the participant's progress in treatment.	Judge exercises limited role in supervision of the defendant.
Formalized and structured treatment interventions for each participant.	Interventions for substance abuse at the discretion of the judge.
Incentives used to reinforce positive adjustment and Sanctions used in response to violations of the Veterans Court program.	Relapse may lead to a maximum sentence.

2.6 Confidentiality

Your identity and privacy will be protected consistent with Federal Regulations and State laws (i.e., 42CFR, Part 2, HIPAA). In response to these regulations, policies and procedures have been developed which guard your confidentiality. You will be asked to sign a waiver authorizing the transfer of information among all participating agencies.

You will also be asked to sign a release of information waiver authorizing that information about your case may be gathered for research purposes for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Veterans' Court. A random identification number will be assigned to you by the Veterans' Court Coordinator. This number will be used in all research and evaluation activities to safeguard your identity.

No information disclosed during treatment court proceedings shall be the basis for prosecution of new crimes and you shall not be required to testify to any information discussed or disclosed during Veterans' Court sessions.

2.7 Policy on Narcotic Medications

Applicants seeking entry into the Dauphin County Veterans' Court program are expected to consult with their treating physician or/and psychiatrist to seek non-addictive medications whenever feasible for treatment of conditions such as pain or/and anxiety. It is recognized that some Veterans will have

chronic pain or/and anxiety that does not respond to non-addictive medications, therefore making it necessary for the Veteran to continue taking narcotics. In such cases, the Veteran will be required to alert the prescribing physician about any substance use or/and abuse history. It is also required that if there are concerns about abusing medications the Veteran will seek a Pain Clinic referral through the VA to explore other options besides narcotic medications. Veterans who are prescribed narcotic medications are prohibited from obtaining prescriptions for these medications from providers outside of the VA.

Some other expectations of the program include:

- The consumption of alcoholic beverages, the use of illegal drugs, or any other mood-altering substances IS NOT TOLERATED.
- The Veterans' Court operates on an abstinence basis. Any prescription medication taken must be authorized by a medical doctor and reviewed with the Treatment Provider and your Probation Officer.
- Active involvement in treatment and striving to make personal progress while you are in the Veterans' Court program.
- It is expected that you will make treatment of primary importance. Missing treatment, or any court-related activity without permission, will be considered a sanctionable act.
- You will be expected to submit to alcohol and/or other drug screening tests on a regular basis. Missing these screenings will be considered sanctionable act. Failure to give a urine sample is also a sanctionable act.
- Your basic progress in treatment is communicated to members of the Treatment Team after the appropriate releases of information/confidentiality forms are signed.

3. Frequently Asked Questions

What is going to be specifically required of me in terms of hours of community service requirements, probation fees, etc.?

You will be required to complete 150 hours of community service in this program. These hours must be completed prior to graduating from the program.

You will also be required to pay a one-time \$350 Veterans' Court fee.

You will be required to pay for Probation Supervision fees, but at a reduced rate of \$25 per month.

With the exception of restitution owed victims' in your case (if applicable), ALL OTHER costs, fines, and fees are waived when you enter this program. Sometime, this difference in cost between a regular-track court case and a Veterans' Court Participant case can range in the thousands of dollars.

What opportunity do I have to drop out of the Program, and what happens to me if I were to do so?

Veterans' Court is voluntary to enter, but not voluntary to leave. The goal of the program is to provide you with the tools you need, based on your treatment plan, to support long-term change in your lifestyles. This may not be an easy road to take; we expect, however, for it to be a life changing process.

Your fellow Veterans' are here to support you as you journey on this path!

Depending on the circumstances surrounding the reason for your withdrawal from Veterans' Court, several things may happen. For example, if you are revoked from the program for a serious violation (a new charge), you may face serious penalties associated with the original case that brought you into the program.

If you are considering withdrawing from the program for any reason, be advised that the deals offered to you in the past may not be available if the case is placed in the regular court track.

What is to total length of time I'll be in the Program; how long should I expect to be in each of the three Phases before I graduate to the next?

Phases 1 & 2 last a minimum of 120 days each; Phase 3 & Graduation combined can last a minimum of 120 days. The treatment team ultimately decides when a participant is ready to move from one phase to another. This decision is not simply based on "time" in the program; it is also made based on how many elements of your treatment plan you are completing, progress in community service, and the like. For example, if you are eligible to phase up, but have not begun a required treatment program (e.g. anger management, PTSD counseling), you will not be eligible to phase-up until you have begun to comply with these program requirements.

What, if any, ability do I have to question determinations of the Treatment Team in terms of Program requirements, sanctions, delay in progressing to subsequent Program Phases, and the like?

Participants are welcome, at any time, to ask to speak with the Treatment Team about questions they have regarding the program, its requirements, Phase-Ups, or to better understand the sanctioning process.

After I've completed the Program in the Diversion, Incentive, or Standard Track, what happens to my criminal charges and my record?

Typically, diversion track cases will have the associated criminal records expunged. Incentive track cases enter some kind of plea deal prior to court – this is worked out between the attorneys – and when the program is completed the deal goes into effect. For Standard track cases, which are typically more serious, not much can be done about the charges and your criminal record. However, this program should assist with keeping you out of correctional institutions.

Our sincere hope is that by using the tools you learned in Veterans' Court, you will not come back to us as a defendant in the future!

If my charges are not drug or alcohol related, will I still be obliged to participate in NA or AA meetings?

This is dependent on your treatment needs as recommended to us by professionals in the treatment field. Most participants in the program attend 4 12-Step meetings per week. We expect this support is needed in a treatment court.

Once I graduate from the Program, what on-going probation or other supervision will I be subject to, and for how long?

This is dependent on your track type and charges. At minimum, for incentive and standard track participants, you can expect six (6) months of continued supervision after you officially graduate from the program.

How often must I attend the Veterans' Court sessions?

When you begin the Veterans' Court Program, you will be required to attend Veterans' Court sessions every Friday, beginning at 11:00 a.m. Your Probation Officer will provide you with a schedule of the Veterans' Court sessions.

The location of the specific courtroom may change, but Veterans' Court will usually be held in the Dauphin County Courthouse, Courtroom Six (6), fifth (5th) floor (the Veterans' Court Judge's Courtroom). If the location or time of the session changes, you will be notified immediately.

Please contact your Probation Officer if you still have questions regarding when and where to appear for Veterans' Court sessions.

During these sessions, the Veterans' Court Judge reviews participants' cases in the presence of the Treatment Team and other participants in the Veterans' Court. It is during these sessions that incentives and sanctions will be given to participants based on positive progress of actions or the negative consequences of them. These court appearances provide a mechanism for continued interaction between you and the Veterans' Court Judge as your case continues through the criminal justice system.

Anyone outside of the Treatment Team, Judge, and other Veterans' Court Participants wishing to attend a court session may do so.

Is there an Administrative Fee for the Vet Court program?

Yes. Currently, the administrative fee for the Dauphin County Vet Court program is \$350.00 and monthly supervision fees must also be paid.

If I cannot get treatment through the VA Medical Center, do not have insurance, or my insurance will not cover treatment for drug and/or alcohol addiction, what can I do?

As a last resort, if you are a Dauphin County resident, have no insurance, cannot pay for treatment, or are a low-income individual, you **may** qualify for funding for treatment through the Dauphin County Drug and Alcohol. Please call this agency at (717) 635-2254 for further information.

Do I still need to attend treatment if I find employment?

Yes. Treatment is the first priority throughout the program.

What should I do if I relapse?

Inform your counselor, Probation Officer, or a representative from the VA Medical Center or Dauphin County Drug and Alcohol as soon as possible if you feel that you are struggling with your sobriety in order to prevent a relapse. However, if a relapse does occur, contact one of the individuals **immediately** and be accountable for your actions. You must always remember that the Treatment Team exists to help and assist with your recovery. It is ultimately the Judge's decision regarding any imposition of sanctions; however, treatment options are always considered in lieu of incarceration when you are honest and take responsibility for your actions.

The worst action you can take is to ignore the requirements of the Veterans' Court. Severe penalties will be imposed if this occurs.

Who will track the 90/90, 4 12-Step Meetings per week, or other 12-Step meeting requirements?

Each Veteran's Court participant is responsible to know when he/she began his/her 90/90 and when you will be finished. However, the Veterans' Court Probation Officer will verify that you are completing your meetings. Each participant will be supplied with an attendance sheet to document his/her meetings. These sheets must be turned-in to the Probation Officer on a weekly basis.

Who tracks the Phases?

The Veterans' Court Team will ultimately determine when you have completed a Phase of the Veterans' Court program.

Must I live in Dauphin County to be a participant in the VET Court Program?

No, but residency in Dauphin County is a consideration and residents will be given priority in program admission. Your status as a veteran, your charges, and your diagnosis matter more as the criteria for admission into the program than anything else.

Once you enter the Veterans' Court Program, if you reside in Dauphin County when you begin the program, you **MUST** live in Dauphin County until you complete all program requirements.

What, in general, may I do while I am on Electronic Monitoring?

While you are on Electronic Monitoring, you may do the minimum of: working, job searching, attending drug & alcohol counseling, going to 12-Step meetings, and to doctor's appointments.

When do I start the 12-Step meetings?

You **MUST** start attending 12-Step meetings on the day that you are sentenced to the Veterans' Court Program. All participants who have a charge related to drugs or/and alcohol, or who are recommended via treatment plan, **MUST** attend a minimum of 4, 12-Step meetings per week.

How do I prove that I went to a 12-Step meeting?

You are required to fill-out a 12-Step meeting attendance sheet for each meeting you attend. **Again, you MUST fill out this sheet every day or for every meeting you attend and show it to your Probation Officer on at least a weekly basis.**

4. Program-Related Contact Information

LEBANON VA MEDICAL CENTER CONTACT INFORMATION

****IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING AN EMERGENCY, PLEASE DIAL 911****

Administrative hours of operation for the Lebanon VA Medical Center are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Emergencies are seen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

General Contact Information

Lebanon VA Medical Center
 1700 South Lincoln Avenue
 Lebanon, PA 17042
 (717) 272-6621 or toll free at 1-800-409-8771

To Make, Change or Schedule an Appointment

To make, change or cancel an appointment, please call the Lebanon VA Medical Center Appointment Line at (717) 272-6621 extension 5105 or toll-free at 1-800-409-8771, extension 5105 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:15 p.m.

Medical or Prescription Advice

Please contact our telephone care line if you need medical advice or have a question about your medication. Call Telephone Liaison Care (TLC) at these telephone numbers: 717-228-6041 or toll-free at 1-800-409-8771, extension 6041 and speak to a VA nurse, anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Compensation and Pension

To speak with someone in compensation and pension, call the Medical Center at (717) 272-6621, extension 5913.

Release of Information

If you need to get information from your medical records, please call the Release of Information office at (717) 272-6621 x6075 or 1-800-409-8771 x6075. Release of Information hours are 7:30 am to 4:15 pm.

To Refill a Prescription

To refill a prescription via the automated medication line, please call (717) 272-6621 x5991 or 1-800-409-8771 x5991. This telephone line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

DAUPHIN COUNTY DEPARTMENTAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Department	Phone Number	Ask to Speak with the...
Dauphin County Adult Probation Department	(717) 780-6927	Veterans' Court Adult Probation Officer
Dauphin County Commission Drug & Alcohol	(717) 635-2254	Veterans' Court Local D&A Case Manager
Office of the District Attorney, Dauphin County	(717) 780-6767	Veterans' Court Coordinator
Office of the Public Defender, Dauphin County	(717) 780-6370	Veterans' Court Treatment Team Public Defender
Dauphin County Crisis Intervention Hotline	(717) 232-7511	Crisis Worker

CONCLUSION

We hope this manual has been helpful and has answered many questions about the program. Any additional questions or concerns about the VET Court program may be directed to the VET Court Coordinator, Mentor, and/or other members of the VET Court Treatment Team.

Best Wishes, and thank you for your service to our country.