

Seventh Judicial Circuit  
St Johns and Putnam County, Florida



Veterans Treatment Court  
Participant Guide





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***"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God."***

## **Introduction**

Do you remember those words? With those words, you made a solemn pledge. You promised to give your life for our country. In return, our country owes you a debt of gratitude which can never truly be repaid. In your time in the military you saw things and did things that most Americans cannot imagine. Whether you served in wartime or peacetime, on the front line, the rear area, or the home front, you chose to serve. You may have been injured physically or mentally. You may have invisible wounds like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or a Traumatic Brain Injury. You may suffer from a mental health disorder, physical disability or substance use disorder. Your family may have suffered along with you. None of those problems define you. You were an American warrior. Now you are an American veteran. You served. You suffered. You sweated, trained, fought, and bled for America.

Now you find yourself back home. Maybe you have been home for years. Maybe you just got home. If you are reading this, you now find yourself in the criminal justice system. How did you get here? Do you want to be here? Chances are that you find you just cannot get anyone to understand what you are going through. Maybe you tried to get help. Maybe you haven't. The simple fact is you are here now. Some of you are sitting in jail reading this. Some of you are on probation already. Some are out on bail. Some of you have been in the system before; for others this is your first time.

This handbook describes an option for you. This option is actually a journey. It's a journey you have to want to take. It's a tough journey. It will not be a cakewalk. If you think this will be easy, then think again. It is a challenge, but a challenge worth

taking. You, an American Veteran, are up to the mission. You can do this if you want to do it. Think of the first week of basic training – you probably kept wondering why you were there? We all did. We have all been down that part of the road with you – and we are here to go down this new road with you. You just have to want to do this with us.

This handbook describes our program. It is a program to help you find your way home. This program exists to take a “justice involved veteran” (that’s you!) and match them with the TREATMENT they need to finish their journey home. That’s why we call it TREATMENT Court. It is all about TREATMENT.

Here’s our promise to you. If you engage in treatment, if you come to court on a regular basis, if you open yourself up to your therapist, your probation officer, your own lawyer, your legal aid lawyer, your mentor, and the Judge, we will put you in touch with what you need. If you have ever been in court before – forget all those memories. Unless you choose to leave, this will not be like any court you have experienced. We will clap for you. We will cheer you on. We will reward you – both positively and negatively for good or bad performance. We will get to know your family. We will share experiences with you. We will surround you with battle buddies, shipmates and wingmen – mentors and also your fellow participants. We will laugh with you and we might cry with you. And when we are done we will all tell you “Welcome Home.”

This guide is for you. We have written it in plain language. There is another manual that tells our team how it is supposed to do its business. You can read that too – there are no secrets. The other manual is written in more technical legal language – legalese. It’s kind of boring but it lays out the nuts and bolts of the program. It is the Program Manual (probably a “-20” manual for you Army types). This guide is the “-10” manual – the operator’s manual - written just for you.

Here’s the only legalese you will get in this manual: Nothing in this manual creates a right or entitlement for any participant. Nothing in this manual supersedes any Florida or Federal statute, case law, regulation or administrative order. Nothing in this manual limits the options of the VTC Judge (that’s the person who is your new C.O.) in the appropriate discretion and administration of justice.

We hope you join us – but if you don't, that's all right. This program is not for everyone. If you choose not to join us, we still honor your service. Thank you for having served this great nation that we all love.

## **The Basics**

At the Appendix to this Guide there is a diagram that shows how you get into the program. Here's the BLUF ("bottom line up front" – you remember acronyms – we use a lot in VTC because most of us are veterans). The law says who can come into VTC. So here are some critical questions and answers:

### **Who is this for?**

Florida law tells us who can be in the program:

- Any person who served in the active military, naval, or air service – regardless of character of discharge.
- Any current servicemember - which means any person serving as a member of the United States Armed Forces on active duty or state active duty and all members of the Florida National Guard and United States Reserve Forces.
- Any current or Former DoD Contractor
- Current or Former Members of an allied military force who suffer from PTSD, TBI (traumatic brain injury), SUD (substance use disorder) or mental health disorder

Chances are, if you have been given this guide to read, you probably are in one of those categories! We will still need to see your DD214 or other appropriate papers to make sure you qualify. So the first step is to help us gather that information. We will keep all of the information confidential.

### **What Crimes qualify?**

Florida Law tells us what level of criminal offense is eligible. This gets a bit more technical particularly because the State Attorney (State prosecutor) gets a lot of discretion in charging a crime. The ASA (Assistant State Attorney) gets to make the initial charging decision. They have to consult with the victim under Florida's Constitution. They will also talk to law enforcement and get their input. No one, including a Judge, can tell the State how to charge a crime

There are some crimes which make you ineligible for VTC. They are all listed in Florida Statute 948.06(8)(c) if you want to look them up. It's pretty much what you



might expect – murder, serious violent crime, sex crimes and treason (that last one is probably pretty important to you as a veteran!). Occasionally the State amends the charge to a lower level one, which allows the veteran to qualify for the program. Talk to your lawyer about this. Remember, the final charging decision is not up to the Judge or your lawyer.

## **Diversion or Plea Bargain?**

There are two ways you get into the program. Some of you might be offered a “diversion” or “pre-trial intervention.” That’s mostly up to the ASA in your case. Others may get offered a plea bargain. Here’s the difference.

**Diversion or Pre-trial intervention:** We call this a “PTI.” It’s a contract between you and the State. The Judge oversees the deal. The deal is this – do everything in VTC the way we lay it out for you, complete all your treatment and tasks, come to court on time all the time, and graduate. When you graduate the State will stand up and announce a “*nolle prosequi*” (that’s legal Latin - actually they will say something that sounds like “null pross” but it means the same). The Judge will then dismiss the charges. For you that means you never were convicted (that is definitely a good deal). You can even *apply* (no promise here) to have your record “expunged.” (this can be a really good deal—contact civil legal services for representation in doing this).

As you know, there is always a flip side. If you don’t finish your PTI successfully, then you must appear before the Court to be sentenced (not so good a deal). Part of the PTI contract is that you agree that if you fail the PTI program, that you will be pleading no contest and be sentenced by the Judge without the benefit of any plea bargain. That means if you fail out, you can go to prison for up to the maximum sentence allowable on your case. Yes – that’s a bit of a bummer. We call that “negative reinforcement” or “a huge incentive to get the treatment you need anyway!”

Some of you may not be eligible for PTI. You may have had a PTI before, or the State may not want to offer you one of those. Remember the State gets to decide. There are some limited times when you can get diversion or a PTI without the State agreeing – this is unique to Veterans Treatment Court. Talk to your lawyer about it.

**Plea Bargain.** If you get a plea bargain, then you ordinarily will be pleading guilty to the charges. You could plead no contest - but we aren't a huge fan of a "no contest" plea in VTC This program is really designed for those who *admit* that they have messed up and want to change their life to be successful in this program. This program is all about attitude! If you have a felony case its typically going to be a 5-year probation plea. That means you might be doing this for 5 years. Most participants finish in 18-24 months but there is no hard and fast rule – it's at your pace (if you are going too slowly, we might have to use one of those negative incentives).

If you are on a misdemeanor charge it gets a little tricky. Due to the program usually lasting 12 to 18 months, we might have you agree to start the program and defer your formal sentencing until the end of phase II (4-6 months into the program). It will depend on your particular charges. Again, talk to your lawyer.

## **Tell me about the Program!**

This program has five phases. Think of them like phase lines in an operations plan. They help us keep you on track and provide a framework for your individualized treatment.

Here's what the five phases look like:

Each phase has a motto based on the military values. Each phase has a color – Red White and Blue followed by Gold and Black.

Phase 1 (Honor/White): **You demonstrate honor** by showing up and being honest. In this phase, you will be evaluated for treatment. We figure out what treatment you need. You get the chance to become familiar with the program and with individual probation requirements. You will attend all court appointments and treatment appointments **on time**. We are big on being on time – kind of like most drill sergeants – if you are on time you are 5 minutes late.

Phase 2 (Courage/Red): **You demonstrate courage** by complying with program requirements. You gain insight into establishing new and appropriate responses to old bad habits and behaviors. It's time to dig down deep in this phase. We are going to make you do some hard work – on yourself. Again – think of drill sergeants. Only now you are pushing yourself!

Phase 3 (Dedication to Duty/Blue): **You demonstrate an increase in your personal responsibility and accountability.** You are fully engaged with treatment and other program services. You continue to make progress on probation requirements such as community service hours and payments of fines. You work on achieving goals such as employment, education, or a vocation such as volunteering or a hobby. Notice the change here! This is less about us and all about you. In this phase, we want and expect you to take responsibility for your recovery and your future. Think of this like AIT or specialty training to become an NCO or officer.

Phase 4 (Integrity/Gold): **You demonstrate integrity** by adhering to new, positive life patterns and encouraging others to do the same. You work on completing probation requirements. Your treatment transitions from intensive outpatient to aftercare services. You are fully engaged with employment, and/or with volunteering or a vocation. You focus on increasing self-sufficiency within the structured VTC environment. Solid gold is the standard. Here is where you put the shine on your own self-improvement.

Phase 5 (Commitment/Black): **You demonstrate ongoing commitment** by completing treatment and maintaining a healthy, solid, and stable lifestyle. You focus on continued positive change and personal improvement. Your probation requirements are completed. You prepare for graduation.

So did you notice that each of those phases says that **you demonstrate** some attribute? These phases are all about you and your treatment and your progression through the phases. You have to show us you are ready to move on.

## **Completion/Graduation**

Graduation recognizes participants who are fully compliant. Graduation is a reward for being a courageous, honorable, dedicated, and committed person of integrity. The VTC Team is still here for you. You can visit team members or attend court. You are always welcome!

After graduation you are always welcome to come back and visit. We have graduates who have become mentors! You can help the next generation of participants.

## **What Happens in the Program?**

**Supervision:** You will be supervised by either a probation officer (felony cases) or the program coordinator (misdemeanor cases). Think of supervision like being back in the military. You had to let your squad or section leader know a lot about what you did every day – where you stayed – how you did your job. Well that’s true of court supervision too.

**Home:** You have to live at an approved residence. You get to pick the location, but it has to be approved by your supervisor. You can move to a new home – but only AFTER you get permission. If you need help getting stable housing, we will put you in touch with local housing agencies and with the VA (that’s the US Department of Veterans Affairs). Unlike the military, no one is giving you a white glove inspection. However, we can come to your residence and inspect it to make sure you are living inside the program rules. Your house is subject to search without a warrant.

**Job:** If you can work – you have to get a job. We aren’t naïve. We know it is hard to get a job especially if you have a record. There are some employers in town that have said they would give our participants a shot – we will put you in touch with them when opportunities arise. We send you out – you have to land the job. We have mentors that will help you with your job application. You just have to ask. We work with the State agencies and local groups that assist you in finding jobs. We offer programs to build your resume and prepare for interviews. You are not doing this alone!

**People Places and Things:** Supervision comes with rules. Most of the rules are designed to keep you away from the people, places, and things that will lead you down the wrong path. One of the rules is no drinking and no drugs (you can have all the water you want – just **no alcohol**). When we say no drugs we mean all drugs – as in – you need to tell us what you are taking. If your doctor has you on any medication you need to report it to us. In some VTC programs they have a long list of drugs you cannot take. We don’t have one – our list is your doctor’s list (with a couple of exceptions). The key is that you have to tell us IN ADVANCE what your doctor has prescribed. If you come up positive for opiates and then later bring us a prescription for a medication which has an opiate in it, don’t be surprised if you are sanctioned (that’s NEGATIVE reinforcement).

No alcohol means no alcohol. So you might ask why this applies to you when you don't have a drinking problem. It is part of our program. If you drink alcohol team members cannot always give us an accurate read of what challenges you are facing. Alcohol is a drug – it is a legal drug – but it is a drug. So unless your doctor prescribes it (really pretty doubtful) then you cannot use it while you are in the program. And in case you wondered – we can test for it in urine and by using an electronic device. So we have you covered.

**Treatment:** Going to your prescribed treatment is part of the rules you have to follow. If you aren't going to treatment, then you are wasting your time in “treatment court.” (Makes sense doesn't it – “treatment” court requires treatment!)

The key here is you. No two participants have the same treatment needs. You got here by doing something that is considered a criminal act. We also know that at some time you took the oath at the front of the manual. So something happened between the time that young ideological and inspired young person took that ultimate oath and the event that landed you here in court. The treatment in this program is designed to address that gap. What put you in court? What trauma was there in your life that put you here? What caused you to think the way that you did? What can be done to undo or repair that trauma?

You might have a substance use disorder (we call these SUDS). You might have a mental health challenge. Being ill is not “wrong” – it simply is a fact of life. There are many Americans walking around with mental health disorders who get treatment or take medication and function just fine. If that's what you need, we will put you in touch with it. If you need physical treatment for things like TBI or for other military trauma, we will get you help. The VA is a close partner in your treatment. You earned it – if you are eligible for their care they will either provide it or they will outsource it. Many of our participants get treated by referral to Epic Behavioral Health Services, a local treatment partner. You will have to sign a medical release giving us access to all of your treatment records. Remember this is a treatment court.

**What kind of treatment might I get?** There is no single answer. Many of our veterans participate in a combination of individual and group therapy sessions. Some go to inpatient rehabilitation programs. Some go to the VA Regional Medical center for inpatient. Others go to providers who contract with the Department of

Corrections. Some go to short term inpatient followed by intensive outpatient. Some go only to outpatient. It really depends on the individual. Some are on long term medical therapy while others go to talk therapy. Your treatment is based on your needs.

There is no cookie-cutter solution. If you have a cut on your arm – we don't operate on your leg!! If your buddy has a cut on his or her arm we don't automatically put a Band-Aid on your arm! So if you hear someone else is being treated differently – don't think “hey why are they getting that deal?” Instead you need to accept that they have different needs.

**Court:** In addition to all other obligations, you can plan on being in court every other week (yes – every other week). If you are doing really well then you might get to come only once a month. But you need to plan on every other week. Some participants come in and tell the Judge that their employer doesn't like it when they miss work for court or treatment. That doesn't carry any water – your first and main job in this program is your treatment. Work is important, but finishing Treatment Court is your primary job. You need to be at every hearing. If you don't show up, then you will get a special invitation called a “capias” which is a fancy name for a warrant. It will direct law enforcement to arrest you and hold you until the next court date. This is an example of what we call a NEGATIVE incentive.

**Court fees:** When you join there will be a document that sets out your court fees. Many of these are mandatory and are based on the criminal allegation that brought you to court. You have to pay these fees off during your time in VTC. There are guidelines that require you to pay a certain amount in order to be promoted to the next phase. From phase II - III you have to have paid 15% of your total. From III-IV you have to have paid 45% of the total. To go from Phase IV-V you have to have paid 75% of the total and to graduate you have to pay them all. The fees vary from case to case so you will have to do some math to get your exact number!

We know that the fees are a burden. So there are some options. You can work off your fees by doing extra community service. For every hour on community service OVER the basic requirement, you get credit for \$10.00 of court costs. We love community service in VTC. Many of our participants find that it is a critical part of their recovery.

**Community Service:** Speaking of community service.....everyone in the program has a basic requirement to do 50 hours of community service while in the program. The same progress guidelines apply – 15% complete to advance from Phase II-III, 45% for Phase III-IV, 75% for IV-V and have them all completed at Graduation. Like we said before – we love community service hours in VTC. But we also offer a chance to “buy out” community service by making a donation to a 501(c)(3) charity. You can buy out up to 25 of your required 50 community service hours by such a donation. One warning – before you make a donation – or before you volunteer, please make sure with your supervisor (DOC or court coordinator) that the place you are donating to or doing community service for is an approved organization. There’s some shady dealers out there who are NOT approved.

## **Incentives**

**Positive Incentives.** We have a schedule of positive incentives. They range from applause in court (When have you ever seen people clap in criminal court? You will see it here) to much more substantial rewards.

If you phase up, you get to leave court early – right after your phase up ceremony. Good Deal.

If you are on First Flight, which is a designation for good progress, for a certain number of weeks, you get to pick from the reward basket. The rewards include things like gift cards (provided by our local veteran’s groups), and, extra community service hour award (credit towards your time owed).

Each phase has a dog tag replica you will be awarded when you phase up. Please wear it all the time as a reminder of your own military service and as a reminder of your participation. Phase I is Silver – for Honor (Purity – White); Phase II is Red for Courage (Valor – Red); Phase III is Blue for Dedication to Duty (True Blue); Phase IV is Gold for Integrity (the Gold standard), and Phase V is Black for Commitment (All in!).

At graduation we will give you a VTC Coin that recognizes your new achievement.

**Negative Incentives:** We don’t like to talk about these, but they are necessary. You may be ordered (please note the word “Order” just like in the military – it’s not voluntary....) to write an essay. You may be ordered to do additional therapy (that’s

not really a punishment – it’s to help you). You might be ordered to do an overnight in jail or a weekend, or a week, or wait in jail until certain therapy is available. You might be ordered to do extra community service hours. In the program manual there is a whole sanction matrix the team will use.

So what gets you a sanction? If you miss court, miss a supervision appointment, miss a urinalysis testing, miss therapy – you are looking at a sanction. If you come up positive for alcohol or an unapproved drug – you are looking at a sanction. If you commit a new law violation – you might get a sanction or you might get a full violation of probation – and you still have to face the consequences of the new law violation as well. If you move without permission, travel outside your county without permission, miss a therapy session without permission (do you note the pattern here about “without permission” - good we thought you might) then you will get a sanction.

Then you might ask – “but my buddy got X sanction when he or she did this but you gave me Z sanction – what gives?” Just like treatment is individual, so are incentives and sanctions. We assure you the team has thoroughly discussed YOUR case, and YOUR actions, and YOUR sanction, before the Judge makes the final decision. Since it is court, you and your lawyer will also have a chance to have input. The final decision is the Judge’s.

**Termination.** We all reach the end of the road at some time. We all hope you reach the end at graduation. There are some folks that won’t get that far. It is a low number, but it happens.

**Termination without violation.** This occurs when you complete your period of probation, but have not finished all the requirements for graduation. You haven’t violated, so you cannot be sanctioned, but you don’t get a coin and a certificate and a graduation ceremony.

**Termination with sanction.** It depends on the violation. You could be terminated from Veterans Treatment Court and ordered to appear back in front of the Judge who originally sent you to us. Or, the VTC Judge can hold a formal VOP hearing, enter an adjudication, and sentence you to prison or other sanction allowed by law. You will get credit for time you may have spent in jail on a sanction, any costs you have paid. You may even be able to credit some community service to



your costs. You will have full due process at the VOP hearing – and the State still has to prove you actually committed a VOP. You will have a lawyer and all rights in that hearing.

If you were on a pretrial intervention, it's a little different. In the pretrial intervention agreement, you entered a plea of no contest to the charges. It is what is called an "open plea" which means there's no limit – other than the legal limit. So if you have a third-degree felony, then you could be sentenced to up to 5 years in the state prison. You will have a full sentencing hearing. The Court will consider any motions you have. The Court will hear witnesses from both the State and you. You will have your lawyer there. Your lawyer can call witnesses and make arguments. The Court will consider the presentence investigation, if one is needed, and will also review your score sheet. The Court will then issue a sentence appropriate to your case. Just like the VOP section above, you will get all the credit for time and effort you put into Veterans Treatment Court as credit against your sentence.

Lets' not focus on the negative – but please do remember – this is Court. What brought you here was a criminal allegation. Please don't ever forget that while this Court is about helping you make the changes you need, you still are responsible for what you have done and how you deal with it.

### **So who's going to be there for me?**

Your Lawyer: You already have a lawyer in your criminal case. If not, the Judge will make sure you get one or are qualified to represent yourself. You really, really, really (did I say really??) should have a lawyer and listen to them. If you are qualified for the public defender (PD), they will represent you. If not, you need to hire a lawyer. We even have a few lawyers who will volunteer to help veterans who don't qualify for the PD, but cannot really afford a private lawyer. Meet with your lawyer. Listen carefully when they explain all of your options. They are on your side.

VA Justice Outreach: This is a person who works for Uncle Sam – specifically for the VA. It's good for you to know that this person is assigned to the health team of the VA (in other words, they don't work for the Benefits or Cemetery teams!). They have access to all of your VA treatment records. This person will be in court and will be a go-between for the Court and the VA. If you need special treatment – they will assist you in getting it. If there's a problem with your prescriptions, they can

inquire inside the system. Think of this person like the guy behind the curtain in “the Wizard of Oz.” They have the secret decoder ring that lets them talk to all kinds of health specialists inside the VA system (Don’t you wish you had an inside contact? Well you do now!). In some cases, they can even help you get to appointments and get treatment. Keep this person on speed dial – they are from the government and they are really there to help!

Treatment Team: This looks different for everyone. Some of you will have doctors. Some will have therapists. Some of you will have civilians who work for companies under contract to the VA. Some of you will use your own doctor, therapist, or counselor, and we will get reports from them. How cool is that? Here’s the deal though – they have to send us reports. You have to sign a “release” that lets them do that. So yes, you do give up some privacy, but our team is committed to keeping your health records private. We really, really, really (again enough with the “really’s”!) listen to these folks. If you need treatment “X,” they tell us. If you need to switch to treatment “47,” they tell us. If they tell us that the Judge’s stupid jokes are not helping your therapy, we will get better jokes for the Judge (pretty easy to find better jokes – most of them are bad). We spend a lot of time outside the courtroom talking about how we can help you. Don’t be embarrassed or shy about it – you need to understand how much the team cares about you and your recovery.

Veteran Mentors: Remember the guy/gal in the same squad as you in Basic who was there with you through the whole ordeal? Or the one who was your roommate in your first barracks or dorm? You called them battle buddy, shipmate, wingman.... Well, we have one for you here. We have an incredible group of volunteers who help us out with you. They are not your lawyer (you have one already). They are not your therapist (you have one already). They are not your supervisor (you have one already). They are there for you. They may remind you of appointments. They will be there when you need to talk to someone. We have a few who are trained to help you set up a budget – but they are NOT a bank or your loan officer. They have a special – but not privileged – relationship with you. So no confessions. Save that for your pastor. You can call them just about any time – put them on speed dial too.

Jail Personnel: Yup – they are on your side too. You may not realize it, but many of you were identified as veterans at your first trip to jail! That started the whole process that has you either in our program or considering it. They are committed to keeping

you safe and secure when you have to be in custody. Some of you might get to participate in a program of recovery that starts in the jail. You will be in a special wing with other inmates who are in treatment. When you finish your time in jail, you'll continue your therapy in the community. If you have to serve a jail sanction it is CRITICAL that we know what meds you are taking – we want to make sure you keep getting your meds while in jail.

Probation Officer: Your new best buddy. Really. Sort of. OK not really– they are more like your toughest coach from school days. The PO is there to supervise your probation. You need to report to them like you used to report to your drill sergeant, or may be later the First Sergeant or Master Chief. You want to go out of the county (called getting a “pass” – sound’s familiar huh?), then you need to ask your PO. You want to move in with a new roommate? Ask your PO for permission. You want to go on vacation to another state? You ask your PO for permission. There’s a pattern here you should be picking up – “Ask your PO for permission.” This is NOT one of those times that you should act first and get permission later. If you do that, see the whole section above labelled “NEGATIVE INCENTIVES.” Your PO will coach you – they will put you in touch with local resources. They run some classes and programs right from their office – take advantage of them. Do well on probation, and they will recommend you for promotion. Do poorly, and they will recommend sanctions (Drop and give me 10! – only it will be more like “I recommend 3 days in the county jail.....”). Keep their number on speed dial right next to VA Justice Outreach and mentor.

Assistant State Attorney: I know this will be hard to believe – but the ASA is on your side too – after a fashion. Yes, they are the ones who filed the charges against you, but they are also the ones who allow veterans to enter the program. So, before you go all ballistic, please remember that we are here because of your choices and your actions. The State Attorney’s office was a HUGE part of getting this program started. The ASA represents the people of the State and also assists the victims in the case. They are a critical part of our team – they make recommendations that help keep our community safe and fulfill their constitutional duty to assist the victims. There’s a special rule about them you need to be aware of – they cannot talk to you directly except in court and then only with the Judge’s permission. They have to talk to your lawyer directly – not you. But they know a lot about you – they have access to a nationwide computer network that has your “permanent record.” Yup – it exists

– it’s called the National Crime Information Center (NCIC is the acronym). And it has your whole criminal history – so here’s another critical tip – don’t try to hide your past. Chances are, we’ve already read all about it.

Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator: This person is “dual-hatted.” Remember that military term. It means they have 2 jobs at one time. First, the Coordinator maintains many of the internal records of the Court. They provide all the meeting data used to coordinate your treatment. You probably already met them – it’s likely that’s who gave you this book! They are also responsible in some cases for day-to-day supervision of misdemeanor defendant’s. Everyone will attend an orientation with the Coordinator right after they start in the program.

The Judge: The Judge is the head of the team. Think of the Judge as your new commanding officer – yeah that guy or gal – only wearing a fancy black robe. Just like your old CO, the Judge is responsible for everything that happens or fails to happen in the courtroom. The Judge is still a Judge, however. That means there are rules that you have to follow in dealing with the Judge. You don’t get to talk to the Judge except when you are in court – no private meetings or letters. If the case goes well, the Judge will commend you. If you make a mistake the Judge will be the one who delivers the sanction. If you succeed the Judge will salute you and say “Welcome Home.” If you don’t make it, well...the Judge is still the Judge.

Community Partners: We have assistance from Legal Aid, from the County Veterans Service Office, from the local employment agencies. Sometimes we have people from County Government available. We get visits from elected officials all the time. If you need to talk to one of these folks, just ask! If a debt collector is hounding you – talk to Legal Aid! If you can’t get your veterans benefits – or maybe you never applied – talk to the County Veterans Service Officer. They are absolute the best source of information on getting through the benefits process. If you need a job – we have people that come and present classes from time to time. The most important thing you need to take away from this is that **YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**

## **Completion / Graduation / ETS**

The big day is here! You have completed Veterans Treatment Court. What happens next?

A couple of good things come with graduation. First, in many cases (but not all – so don't go telling us we promised you this) you may be finished with probation. That means no more drug testing, no more visits with your probation officer, no more court dates.

Second – if your case was on diversion it's a really great day – the State Attorney will say those magic words in Court – “Nolle Prosequi” (again it sounds more like “null pross”). Your case will be dismissed – that means it is over – done – gone. No one can bring it back up again. You might even qualify to have your record cleared. That's a separate process however called “expunge and seal” which is completely outside Veterans Treatment Court (civil legal services will represent you in this, so give them a call!).

So what's next? Well – life is next. When you graduate, you will get a certificate, a coin and a chance to speak to the other participants. We will welcome you home! What you do next is up to you. We have some suggestions! Volunteer to be a mentor...spend more time with your family...keep on volunteering where you did your community service hours...participate in a veterans group...attend a group therapy session and share your experiences...run a business...walk on the beach or in the woods...look up at the sky and be amazed that you live in the USA and in the Sunshine State. Most of all understand that we will still be there for you – you just have to pick up the phone and call.

**WELCOME TO VTC!!!**

**For more information about VTC, please contact:**

St. Johns County Veterans Treatment Court  
c/o VTC Coordinator, Cynthia Thompson  
Court Administration, Seventh Judicial Circuit  
Richard O. Watson Judicial Center  
4010 Lewis Speedway, Suite 275  
St. Augustine, FL 32084  
(904)-827-5626

## Appendix A – Phase Overview

### General Overview of Phases and Time Considerations – Misdemeanor

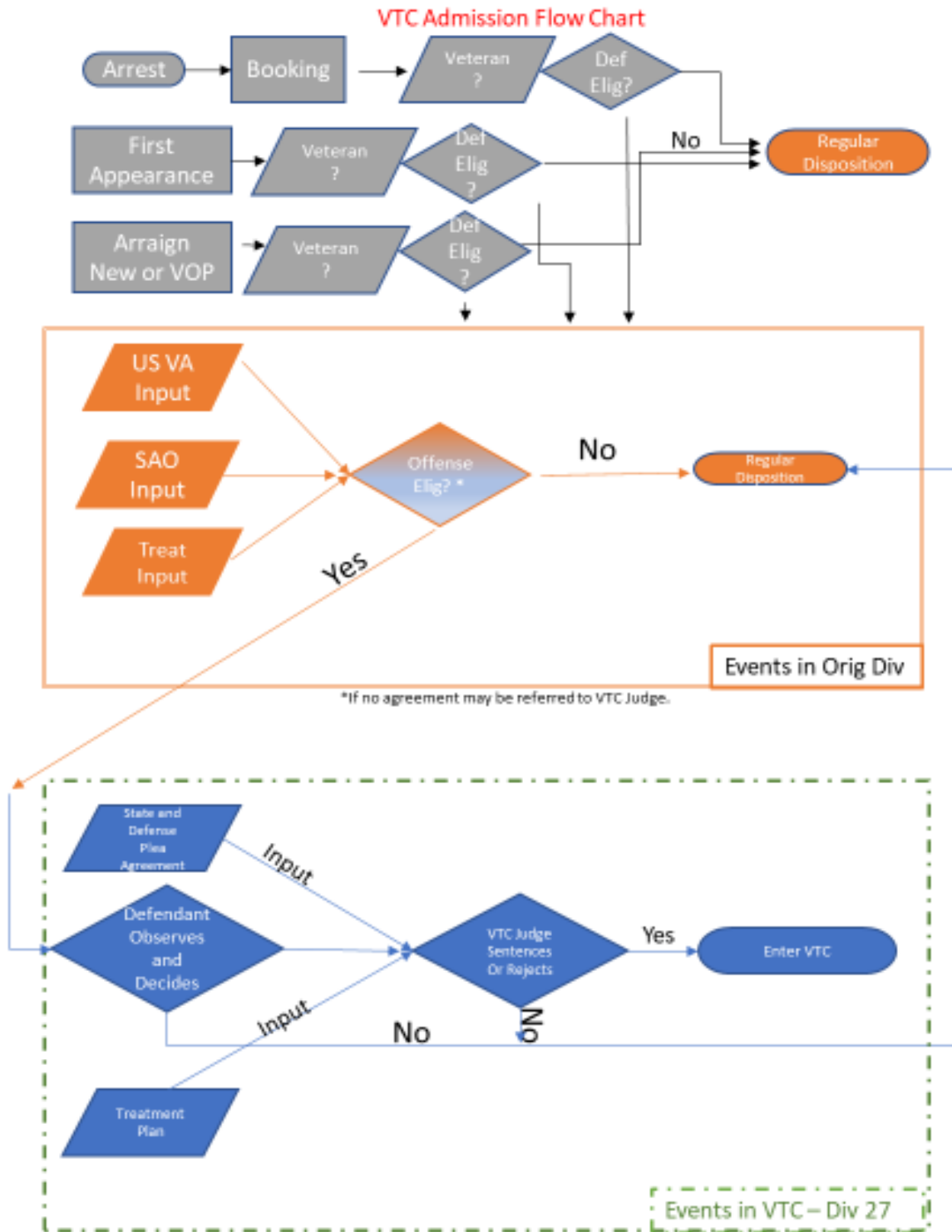
	<u><i>Phase I</i></u>  <i>Orientation/ Assessment Acute Stabilization</i>	<u><i>Phase II</i></u>  <i>Clinical Stabilization Ongoing Treatment</i>	<u><i>Phase III</i></u>  <i>Transition/ Graduation Prosocial Habilitation</i>	<u><i>Phase IV</i></u>  <i>Adaptive Habilitation Relapse Prevention/ Treatment Completion</i>	<u><i>Phase V</i></u>  <i>Continuing Care Program Completion Graduation Planning</i>
<b>Characteristics</b>	Full mental health & substance abuse assessment. Set individual program goals and treatment plan with VTC team.	Demonstration of active participation and compliance in the treatment program. Greater degree of oversight by program management and health professionals.	Full immersion in treatment and participation in supervision, with regular review of treatment plan and goals.	Move toward program completion, by starting a “master plan” to describe post-graduation goals and objectives, and to serve as the basis for a request to graduate.	Embrace return to community with clean, sober, productive lifestyle. Complete community service and court related financial obligations.
<b>Contact with: Judge/ Judicial Docket</b>	Bi-weekly	Bi-weekly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly
<b>VTC Coordinator</b>	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Bi-weekly	Bi-weekly
<b>VJO/VA/VA Contract</b>	As Directed	As Directed	As Directed	As Directed	As Directed
<b>Mentor</b>	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly
<b>Substance testing: Alcohol/drugs</b>	2-3 times weekly	2-3 times weekly	2-3 times weekly	Bi-weekly/random	Bi-weekly/random
<b>Fees / Community Service Hours</b>		Complete 15% of total	Complete 45% of total	Complete 75% of total	All Completed and paid
<b>Months:</b>	<i>1-2</i>  <i>*14-days clean &amp; sober</i>	<i>2-4</i>  <i>*30-days clean &amp; sober</i>	<i>1-3</i>  <i>*90-days clean &amp; sober</i>	<i>1-2</i>  <i>*90-days clean &amp; sober</i>	<i>1</i>  <i>*90-days clean &amp; sober</i>

General Overview of Phases and Time Considerations - Felony

	<b><i>Phase I</i></b> <b><i>Orientation/ Assessment Acute Stabilization</i></b>	<b><i>Phase II</i></b> <b><i>Clinical Stabilization Ongoing Treatment</i></b>	<b><i>Phase III</i></b> <b><i>Transition/ Graduation Prosocial Habilitation</i></b>	<b><i>Phase IV</i></b> <b><i>Adaptive Habilitation Relapse Prevention/ Treatment Completion</i></b>	<b><i>Phase V</i></b> <b><i>Continuing Care Program Completion Graduation Planning</i></b>
<b>Characteristics</b>	Full mental health & substance abuse assessment. Set individual program goals and treatment plan with VTC team.	Demonstration of active participation and compliance in the treatment program. Greater degree of oversight by program management and health professionals.	Full immersion in treatment and participation in supervision, with regular review of treatment plan and goals.	Move toward program completion, by starting a “master plan” to describe post-graduation goals and objectives, and to serve as the basis for a request to	Embrace return to community with clean, sober, productive lifestyle. Complete community service and court related financial obligations.
<b>Contact with: Judge/Judicial Docket</b>	Bi-weekly	Bi-weekly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly
<b>Probation</b>	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Bi-weekly	Monthly
<b>VJO/VA/VA</b>	As Directed	As Directed	As Directed	As Directed	As Directed
<b>Mentor</b>	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly
<b>Substance testing: Alcohol/drugs</b>	2-3 times weekly	2-3 times weekly	2-3 times weekly	Bi-weekly/random	Bi-weekly/random
<b>Fees / Community Service Hours</b>		Complete 15% of total	Complete 45% of total	Complete 75% of total	All Completed and paid
<b>Months:</b>	<b>2</b> <b><i>*14-days clean &amp; sober</i></b>	<b>4-5</b> <b><i>*30-days clean &amp; sober</i></b>	<b>5-6</b> <b><i>*60-days clean &amp; sober</i></b>	<b>2-3</b> <b><i>*90-days clean &amp; sober</i></b>	<b>2-3</b> <b><i>*90-days clean &amp; sober</i></b>



# Appendix B – Admission Flowchart



## Appendix C – Data Sheet

### Veterans Treatment Court Participant Profile

Case Number: 1776 CF 0704

#### Personal Information

Name: George Washington

Veteran of US Army

Primary Offense: Destruction of Government Property (Cherry Tree)(for team to fill out)

Period of Probation: \_\_\_\_\_(for team to fill out)

Offense History: \_\_\_\_\_(for team to fill out)

#### Military History:

Date of Entry: June 14, 1775

Basic Training: Virginia Militia

Advanced Training: Bunker Hill, Boston, MA

Military Specialty: Infantry

Combat Service: 1775 - 1783

Combat Injury: TBI

Date of Separation: December 23, 1783

Rank at Separation: General of the Armies (later upgrade applied)

Characterization of Service: Honorable

#### VA SERVICES

Eligibility for VA Health Services:  Yes  No

Enrolled in VA Health Services:  Yes  No

VA Disability Rating/Compensation:  Yes  No Rating: Have not applied – I have been otherwise occupied doing some writing and running a small but growing nation.

## Social Profile

Married: Martha – married in 1759

Children: adopted 2

Home situation (Include known relationships/conflicts/challenges): Owns Mt. Vernon Farm

Employment: Owns Mt Vernon Farm

## Proposed Treatment Plan:

Primary Diagnosis: \_\_\_\_\_ (for team to fill out)

Secondary Diagnosis: \_\_\_\_\_ (for team to fill out)

Modality: \_\_\_\_\_ (for team to fill out)

Primary Provider \_\_\_\_\_ (for team to fill out)

Secondary Provider \_\_\_\_\_ (for team to fill out)

Funding: Primary: \_\_\_\_\_ (for team to fill out)

Funding Secondary Provider \_\_\_\_\_ (for team to fill out)

Funding Issues: \_\_\_\_\_ (for team to fill out)

List treatment goals/milestones: \_\_\_\_\_ (for team to fill out)

Participate in AA/NA?       Yes  No

Frequency of Drug/Alcohol Testing: \_\_\_\_\_ (for team to fill out)