

Veterans Court Team

The VC team works with Veterans to help them achieve their goals.

The team members include:

- The Veteran
- Peer Support
- Judge
- District Attorney
- Public Defender
- Probation
- Veterans Justice Outreach- VJO
- Collaborative Courts Program
- Community or VA treatment Providers

How does someone become a part of Veterans Court?

To join Veterans Court, the Veteran should complete the Collaborative Courts Referral Packet with the help of their attorney. Once all forms are filled out and signed, please submit the completed packet to the Collaborative Courts at collaborativecourt@santacruzcourt.org. A Collaborative Court representative will reach out to discuss the next steps in the eligibility screening process for Veterans.



Time/Location:

Veterans Court takes place the 3rd Thursday of every month at 10:30 a.m. in Department 7. The presiding Judge is Honorable Leila Sayar.



Santa Cruz Superior Court Collaborative Courts

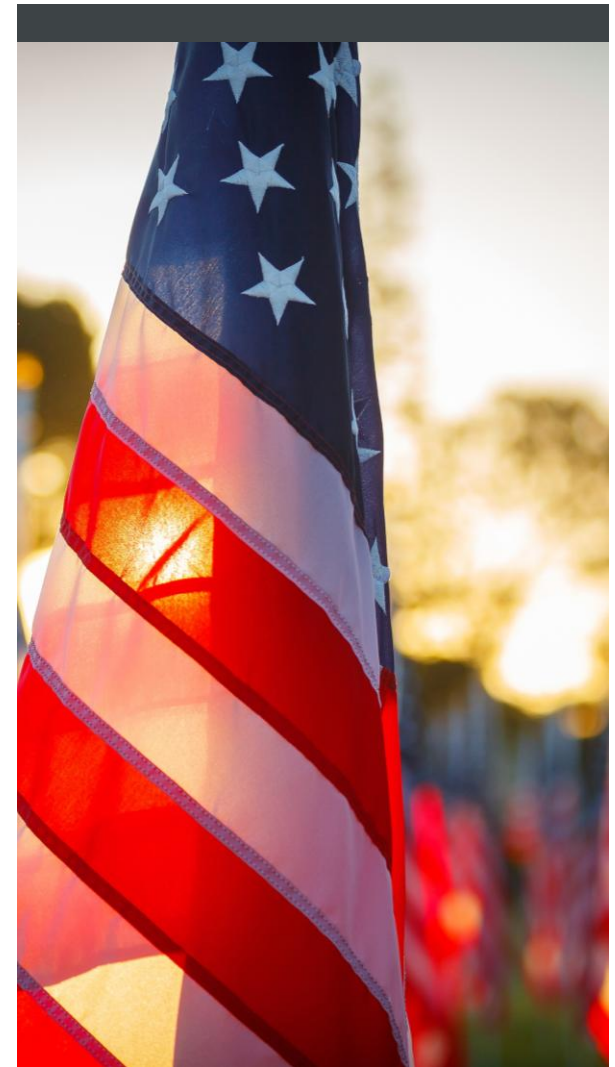
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Veterans Court
Superior Court of California,
County of Santa Cruz

What is Veteran's Court?

Veterans Court (VC) is a peer-support based court program which provides alternatives to sentencing for veterans with service-related mental health issues. The mission of Veterans Court is to connect justice involved veterans and their families with opportunities to improve their quality of life and access treatment to address health concerns through a collaborative effort among justice system partners, community-based organizations, and local and national veteran's services.

Who Would Benefit From VC?

Veterans Court (VC) can best support a person who has a desire to engage in treatment and utilize services but have been unsuccessful in doing so on their own. A potential participant may be dealing with a substance use disorder, a mental health disorder, or other health related issue related to their military service that has contributed to their instability. This is a voluntary program. The potential participant must express a willingness or a desire to make a change and participate in the program.

How Long is the Program?

The duration of participation in VC depends on the participant's ongoing needs, as well as their ability to make progress on their treatment plan. Each participant's goals are identified in their treatment plan and revisited regularly. A participant's progress will be monitored by a process that helps participants identify actions needed to achieve their personal goals.

Who is Eligible?

Willing participants must:

- Served in the U.S. Military, regardless of length of service, combat experience or characterization of discharge
- Struggles with a diagnosis of PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Military Sexual Trauma (MST), substance use or other mental health symptoms directly related to military service
- Amenable to participate in VC and voluntarily agree to all conditions including treatment for their qualifying conditions

Treatment Plan

Upon acceptance into the program, Veterans will collaborate with the Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO) Representative or Collaborative Courts Representative to develop a personalized treatment plan. Each participant will be assigned Peer Support to help guide them toward their goals. Regular court sessions will review the Veteran's progress, with the judge offering encouragement and the team providing ongoing support.

The treatment plan will support Veterans in:

- Setting individual goals for personal growth and recovery
 - Accessing substance abuse and/or mental health treatment
 - Connecting to VA services and community-based resources
 - Receiving job training and assistance in finding and securing employment
 - Obtaining medical care
 - Identifying resources to rebuild relationships with family and the community
- This comprehensive plan helps Veterans achieve stability, improve well-being, and successfully reintegrate into the community.

Rewards/Sanctions

The goal of the VC team is to provide support and celebrate participants accomplishments. This is accomplished through rewards and sanctions.

Rewards are given when participants are "doing well." Doing well means following a case plan, following the conditions of their supervision, remaining sober, looking for employment, engaging in pro-social activities in the community and remaining violation and arrest free.

Benefits:

- Bus passes
- Funding for programs
- Less frequent court appearances
- Less restrictive treatment recommendations
- Support for individualized pro-social activities/employment
- Converting fines/fees to service hours

Sanctions are used when participants are getting off track. If participants are not following their case plan, not fulfilling recommendations of their case manager and/or parole agent, incurring violations, and generally failing to meet the expectations of the court, participants may be sanctioned in a number of different ways.

Sanctions:

- More restrictive treatment recommendations
- Increased frequency of court appearance
- Increased frequency of drug testing
- Termination from VC and return to regular Home Court