

OSCEOLA COUNTY VTC IS A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT OF THE FOLLOWING:

Ninth Judicial Circuit Court Administration
Jeffrey Ashton State Attorney for Osceola
Bob Wesley Public Defender for Osceola
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Osceola County Veterans Service Office
Judicial Correction Services
Osceola County Bar Association Members
LASO—Osceola Veteran Mentors
Local Treatment Providers

VETERANS TREATMENT COURT GOALS

Reduce criminal recidivism
Facilitate participant sobriety
Reduce costs of criminal cases
Increase compliance with treatment and other court ordered conditions
Improve access to VA benefits and services
Improve family relationships and social support connections
Improve life stability

VETERANS TREATMENT COURT SERVICES

One-on-one judicial supervision
Individual case management
Meet with County Veteran Service Officer
Intensive probation supervision
Access to substance abuse, mental health, family, and other counseling services.
Random drug and alcohol testing

History of Osceola County VTC

In late 2013 Chief Judge Belvin Perry directed Judge Mark Blechman to create and start a Veterans Treatment Court in Osceola. Working with Assistant State Attorney Robert Holborn and Michelle Jones of the Osceola County Drug Court, the structure for the VTC was formed using the proven methodology of Drug Court and the recommendations of Justice for Vets. Osceola County VTC held its first session on February 28, 2014 with three Veterans.

VOLUNTEER AS A VETERAN MENTOR

The peer mentor component of VTC is an integral part of what makes the program work. If you served in the U.S. Armed Forces and are interested in becoming a volunteer mentor and want to support veterans through their journey through the justice system, please contact us by sending an email to:

OsceolaVeteranMentors@gmail.com

C O N T A C T I N F O R M A T I O N

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**NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
COURT OF FLORIDA**

**OSCEOLA COUNTY
VETERANS TREATMENT COURT**



The Mission of the Osceola Veterans Treatment Court is to coordinate the judiciary, the criminal justice entities, veteran services, treatment providers and the community under one program that will reduce criminal behavior of the veteran and restore them to a more productive life.



WHAT IS VETERANS TREATMENT COURT?

The Osceola County Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) is a collaborative problem solving court designed to give veterans treatment intervention rather than incarceration. VTC is a voluntary 12-24 month program designed for defendants who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces who are experiencing treatable behavioral, psychological, or substance abuse health problems. The program involves ongoing judicial supervision and intensive probation supervision with input from a multi-disciplinary team of professionals led by the judge. A peer mentor is assigned to all defendants offering support as their "battle buddy" as they go through the VTC program. VTC will also help veterans in securing housing, employment linkages, job training, education, transportation, disability compensation claims, discharge status and other linkages available at the local, state and federal level.



Both misdemeanor and felony cases will be considered for admission to VTC. There are two different tracks, Track I Diversion results in the charges being dismissed. Track II Post Plea results in a reduced sentence.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

- Service in the U.S. Armed Forces
- Eligible for veteran service benefits
- Have a demonstrated treatment need
- The crime charged is appropriate for VTC
- Show a nexus between the crime charged and the diagnosis of the veteran
- Reside in the Central Florida area

WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

If you want to be considered for the Osceola County Veterans Treatment Court, ask your attorney, the prosecutor or the judge to have your case placed on the next VTC hearing date. The VTC Veteran Justice Outreach liaison will then contact you to see if you qualify for any veteran benefits.

Admission to VTC is not automatic and the prosecutor must agree that you and your criminal case qualify. Veterans seeking entry to VTC will undergo a treatment and mental health assessment to determine if VTC is appropriate. If VTC is appropriate then the prosecutor after input from the victim will determine which track is appropriate.

VTC runs on a 5 week cycle, and during that cycle you will attend a court session, meet with your case manager and veteran mentor, attend treatment, perform community service, be subject to random drug testing, and anything else the Court requires to be completed.

Participants who are placed on probation are required to pay a supervision fee and the cost of drug testing. In addition, participants may be required to pay a fine and/or restitution.

Upon successful completion of the Osceola County VTC, participants are given a certificate of completion. Track I Diversion veterans will have their charges dismissed. Track II Post Plea veterans will be sentenced by the VTC Judge taking into account the veterans performance in the program.

THE TEN KEY COMPONENTS OF VTC

- 1: Veterans Treatment Court integrate alcohol, drug treatment, and mental health services with justice system case processing.
- 2: Using a nonadversarial approach, prosecution and defense counsel promote public safety while protecting participants' due process rights.
- 3: Eligible participants are identified early and promptly placed in the Veterans Treatment Court program.
- 4: Veterans Treatment Court provide access to a continuum of alcohol, drug, mental health and other related treatment and rehabilitation services.
- 5: Abstinence is monitored by frequent alcohol and other drug testing.
- 6: A coordinated strategy governs Veterans Treatment Court responses to participants' compliance.
- 7: Ongoing judicial interaction with each Veteran is essential.
- 8: Monitoring and evaluation measure the achievement of program goals and gauge effectiveness.
- 9: Continuing interdisciplinary education promotes effective Veterans Treatment Court planning, implementation, and operations.
- 10: Forging partnerships among Veterans Treatment Court, Veterans Administration, public agencies, and community-based organizations generates local support and enhances Veteran Treatment Court effectiveness.

