



# *Northeast Wisconsin Veterans Treatment Court*

## Participant Handbook

The 8th Wisconsin Judicial District is comprised of the counties of: Brown, Door, Kewaunee, Marinette, Oconto, Outagamie and Waupaca Counties

Established 2011

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# WELCOME

Welcome to the Northeast Wisconsin Veterans Treatment Court Program. This handbook is designed to answer your questions and provide information about our program. As a Participant of the Veterans Court Program, you will be expected to follow the rules and regulations described in the participant contract and this handbook, as well as any directions or instructions given by the Veterans Court Judge or any Veterans Court Team member.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Northeast Wisconsin Veterans Treatment Court (NEWVTC) is to aid our Veterans who have stumbled, and entered the justice system. We will help them get back on their feet by using resources available in our community, while constantly being aware of public safety needs. **'Leave No Veteran Behind.'**

## INTRODUCTION

The Northeast Wisconsin Veterans Treatment Court (NEWVTC) is a court that is specifically designated and staffed to handle cases involving offenders (Participants) with veteran status through an intensive, judicially monitored program of alcohol, drug, mental health treatment, rehabilitation services, and strict community supervision. The NEWVTC concept originated based on principles from other successful treatment court programs.

The NEWVTC is built upon a unique partnership between the criminal justice system, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and local providers which combines treatment and support intervention with the authority and personal involvement of the Veterans Treatment Court Judge. The NEWVTC is dependent upon the creation of a non-adversarial courtroom atmosphere, where a judge and a dedicated team work together toward the common goal of breaking the cycle of drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness and/or criminal behavior. This goal also reflects a dedicated commitment to public safety.

Because of the unique problems and opportunities that present themselves in working with veterans involved in the criminal justice system, treatment and rehabilitation strategies are "reality-based" and recognize that:

- Veterans are most amenable to successful intervention when they are in the crisis of initial arrest and incarceration, so intervention must be immediate and up-front.
- Prevention gaps in communication and ensuring offender accountability area critically important; therefore, NEWVTC supervision will be highly coordinated and comprehensive.
- Community safety is paramount.

## Benefits of the Program

When you have successfully completed and graduated from the Veterans Court Program, you will have obtained the following rewards and benefits:

- You will be clean and sober
- You will have more job or educational opportunities
- You should have a better relationship with family and friends
- You will have a better understanding of yourself
- You will have a positive outlook on life
- You will develop a positive legacy

## The NEWVTC Team

The NEWVTC team consists of individuals from a variety of disciplines that come together to handle cases involving dependent offenders through an intensive judicially-monitored program of drug and alcohol treatment, rehabilitation services, and mental health services. The following is a list of the Northeast Wisconsin Veterans Treatment Court Team members.

- **Circuit Court Judge:** Presides over our non-adversarial court appearances for Veterans Court and makes all decisions regarding your participation in the Program and leads the team in creating a participant focused recovery program.
- **Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator:** Maintains a confidential NEWVTC court file for each participant and attends team meetings and the veterans court sessions.
- **Probation and Parole Agent:** Monitors participants who are under supervision of the Dept. of Corrections, by conducting office, home and job visits.
- **District Attorney Representative:** Participates in team meetings and attends court sessions.
- **Public Defenders Office:** Participates in team meetings and attends court sessions.
- **Law Enforcement Representative:** Represents law enforcement at team meetings and relays information about the benefits of Veterans Court to law enforcement.
- **Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO):** Serves as a liaison between the veteran participant, Veterans Court Program and the VA Medical Center Clinic. Conducts needs assessment and designs the treatment program for each participant. The VJO also attends team meetings and veteran's court sessions.
- **County Veterans Services Officer:** Determines benefit eligibility, attends team meetings and veteran's court sessions.
- **Mentor Coordinator:** Recruits and trains volunteer veteran court Mentors and supervises and monitors mentors for accountability, as well as attending team meetings and veteran's court sessions.
- **Treatment Personnel:** Provides rehabilitative therapy sessions, drug screening, case management and monitoring for participants. Additionally, consistent with legal and ethical limitations, shares information on regarding the progress of participant to all Veterans Court team members.
- **Other appointments by the Judge:** The Veterans Court Judge may designate other Team Members as he/she sees appropriate that will benefit the outcome of court participants i.e. Vets Center, DWFD.

## COURT PROCEEDINGS

As a Veteran's Court Program participant, you are required to appear before the Veterans Court Judge for hearings on a regular basis. The number of appearances depends on the phase that you are in. Failure to appear could result in a warrant being issued for your arrest and detention in jail until you can appear before the Veterans Court Judge. During each Veterans Court hearing the Veterans Court Judge may discuss their case with each participant. Sanctions will be imposed for violations and incentives are used to recognize success. All Veterans Court participants must be in the courtroom at the required time, unless otherwise excused by the Veterans Court Judge. Participants should dress in a manner that reflects their respect for the Court, the other participants and themselves.

## PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

### **Program Rules**

Veterans Court participants are required to abide by the rules outlined in the participant contract, including but not limited to the following:

1. Totally abstain from the use of illegal drugs and alcohol, and avoid misuse of prescriptions or over-the-counter medications.
2. May not enter establishments where alcohol is primarily sold, unless granted specific permission by the Judge (e.g. taverns, bars, liquor stores and events with beer stands/tents etc.) Participants are required to have an approved safety plan before entering any residences or business where alcohol is present. A single approved plan may apply to all the residences and businesses whose primary purpose does not include the sale of alcohol.
3. Must inform treating physicians that he/she is in a veterans court program and may not take narcotic or addictive medications or drugs without the prior approval from the court.
4. Must attend and be on time for all court supervision, and treatment sessions as well as mentor meetings as scheduled.
5. Must submit to random alcohol and drug testing if required by the court.
6. May not violate federal or state criminal laws or local ordinances.
7. May not associate with people who use or possess drugs or abuse alcohol.
8. May not possess any firearms, unless granted specific permission by the Judge.
9. Must keep the Veteran's Court Team and probation and parole agent informed of his/her current address and phone number at all times.

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10. Must inform the Veteran's Court Team and their probation and parole agent if they become aware of another Veterans Court participant violating rules of the program or supervision.
11. May not consume poppy seeds, mouthwash or any hygiene item containing alcohol, or non-alcohol beer and/or wine.
12. Must abide by their individualized management plan.\*
13. Must abide by all other rules and regulations imposed by the Veterans Court Team and his/her probation and parole agent.

*\*NEWVTC participants are required to document that they have followed their assigned time management plan each week, including a combination of the following activities: support groups meeting attendance, substance abuse treatment, drug screens, employment, job searches, school, community service work, Veterans Court appointments or Veterans Court attendance.*

## **SANCTIONS AND VIOLATIONS**

Any violations of the rules of the Veterans Court Program may result in the immediate imposition of sanctions as determined by the Veterans Court Judge. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Jail
- Curfew/check in time
- Electronic monitoring
- Increased supervision
- Day reporting
- Increased drug testing
- Increased court appearances
- Increased support group attendance
- Warnings
- Team intervention/round table
- Community service work
- Verbal and/or written apologies to Judge and group
- Forfeited clean time
- Increased time in phase/return to a lower phase

## **ACIEVEMENTS & INCENTIVES**

The Veterans Court Judge and the Veterans Court Team will acknowledge and reinforce compliance by Veterans Court participants by providing a variety of motivational incentives. Incentives can include, but are not limited to the following: recognition, modification to phase requirements, gift cards, praise from the bench, medallion or coin, or gas card. (This list is not all inclusive)

## **SUPERVISION & TESTING**

A critical component of successful NEWVTC participation involves intensive supervision to determine compliance with the rules of the NEWVTC program. Supervision is provided by various members of the Veterans Court Team. The minimum schedule of supervision is outlined in each phase of the program.

Each participant is subject to random testing for the purpose of detecting unauthorized use of alcohol or controlled substances. Every participant is subject to testing at any time. Upon request, the Veterans Court participant shall immediately deliver the requested sample. If a sample is not produced, is not of sufficient quantity, or is adulterated in any way, it will be treated as a positive sample for the presence of unauthorized drugs or alcohol.

## **PROGRAM PHASES**

Phases are the steps identified by the Northeast Wisconsin Veterans Treatment Court Team through which participants must progress in order to complete the program. The expected length of the program is approximately 14-15 months. An application must be made to the Court and be approved by the NEWVTC team for phase advancements.

The NEWVTC program shall consist of five phases with the final phase being a Continuing Care Phase. The NEWVTC team shall determine when promotion to a higher phase is appropriate. When the participant is accepted into the NEWVTC program, he/she will complete a comprehensive AODA or mental health assessment. After the assessment is completed, the NEWVTC team will determine the level and location of each participant's treatment.

### **Phase I Acute Stabilization - Minimum Duration 60 days**

- Attend court weekly
- Comply with treatment
- Comply with supervision
- **Develop case plan**
- Weekly office visits
- Monthly home visits
- Address housing
- Obtain medical assessment
- Random drug testing (minimum 2 tests per week)
- Change people, places and things
- Curfew 9:00pm
- Intro to VJO and Mentor

Brown County Veteran's Treatment Court Phase Structure

	Phase 1 Acute Stabilization 60 days	Phase 2 Clinical Stabilization 90 days	Phase 3 Prosocial Habilitation 90 days	Phase 4 Adaptive Habilitation 90 days	Phase 5 Continuing Care 90 days
Minimum Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend court weekly</li> <li>Comply with treatment</li> <li>Comply with supervision</li> <li><b>Develop case plan</b></li> <li>Weekly office visits</li> <li>Monthly home visits</li> <li>Address housing</li> <li>Obtain medical assessment</li> <li>Random drug testing (minimum of 2 tests per week)</li> <li>Change people, places and things</li> <li>Curfew 9:00 pm</li> <li>Intro to VJO and Mentor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend court bi-weekly</li> <li>Continue changing people, places, and things</li> <li>Review case plan</li> <li>Bi-weekly office visits</li> <li>Monthly home visits</li> <li>Random drug testing (minimum of 2 per week)</li> <li>Maintain housing</li> <li><b>Address financial (budget assessment)</b></li> <li>Curfew 10:00 pm</li> <li>Continued engagement with VJO and Mentor</li> <li>Begin to focus on recovery support groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend court every 3 weeks</li> <li>Demonstrate changing people, places, and things</li> <li>Review case plan</li> <li>Office visits every 3 weeks</li> <li>Monthly home visits</li> <li>Random drug testing (minimum of 2 per week)</li> <li><b>Begin Criminal Thinking program</b></li> <li>Curfew 11:00 pm</li> <li>Continue engagement with VJO and Mentor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend court monthly</li> <li>Continue changing people, places, and things</li> <li>Review case plan</li> <li>Monthly office visits</li> <li>Monthly home visits</li> <li>Maintain housing</li> <li>Random drug testing (minimum of 2 per week)</li> <li>Continued engagement with VJO and Mentor</li> <li>Curfew 12:00 am</li> <li><b>As needed based upon assessment:</b></li> <li>-Job Training</li> <li>-Parenting/family support</li> <li>-Vocational Training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend court monthly</li> <li>Continue changing people, places, and things</li> <li>Review case plan</li> <li>Monthly office visits</li> <li>Monthly home visits</li> <li>Maintain housing</li> <li>Random drug testing (minimum of 2 per week)</li> <li><b>Development of Continuing Care Plan</b></li> <li>As needed based upon assessment, continue:</li> <li>-Job Training</li> <li>-Parenting/family support</li> <li>-Vocational Training</li> </ul>
Requirements to Advance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular attendance at treatment</li> <li>Regular attendance at all office visits</li> <li>Honesty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with treatment</li> <li>Compliance with supervision</li> <li>Address medical needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged with treatment</li> <li>Compliance with supervision</li> <li>Establish prosocial activities</li> <li>Begin recovery network</li> <li>Address medical needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged with treatment</li> <li>Compliance with supervision</li> <li>Maintain prosocial activity</li> <li>Engage recovery network</li> <li>Continue addressing medical needs</li> <li>Began employment, vocational training, or school</li> <li>Begin to address ancillary services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged with treatment</li> <li>Compliance with supervision</li> <li>Maintain prosocial activities</li> <li>Maintain recovery network</li> <li>Maintain other employment, vocational training, or school</li> <li>Address ancillary services</li> <li>Address medical</li> </ul>
Minimum Consecutive Clean Days	15 days	30 days	45 days	60 days	90 days

## **GRADUATION**

Upon successful completion of all five phases and with the recommendation of the NEWVTC team, the Veterans Court Judge shall declare the Veterans Court participant a graduate of the Veterans Court Program. A graduation ceremony will be held in celebration of the participant's success in completing all of the established guidelines of the NEWVTC program.

## **MENTORING**

Northeast Wisconsin Veterans Treatment Court participants in the continuing care phase will be given an opportunity to assist Phase I participants in their adjustment to the NEWVTC program. Upon recommendation of the NEWVTC team, the participant can be assigned to assist a Veteran Mentor to work with the new Phase I participant. They will then be given the opportunity to assist the Phase I participant with transportation and or any other areas of the ongoing rehabilitation as needed. Six months after a Participant's graduation date from NEWVTC they can apply to become a regular Mentor.

## **ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

Upon completion of the Northeast Wisconsin Veterans Court Program, all participants will become members of the Northeast Wisconsin Veteran Court Alumni Association.

## **SUSPENSION**

A Northeast Wisconsin Veterans Treatment Court participant may be suspended from the NEWVTC program due to continued relapses or the emergence of new legal charges. If the treatment team recommends a participant be suspended for new legal charges, the NEWVTC participant may still attend the NEWVTC until their legal charges are resolved. If the NEWVTC participant is referred to an institutional treatment facility by the NEWVTC team, their progress or lack of progress will be monitored by their probation agent liaison. Their return to the NEWVTC program will be based upon their discharge status from the institutional treatment center.

## **TERMINATION/EXPULSION STATUS**

A participant in the Northeast Wisconsin Veterans Treatment Court can be terminated from the program for any of the following reasons:

1. Commission of a new crime.
2. Persistent failure to comply with the NEWVTC rules.
3. Clear evidence present that a participant is dealing drugs or driving while under the influence of an intoxicant.
4. Clear evidence present that a participant has been involved in any threatening, abusive, or violent verbal/physical behavior towards anyone.
5. Any other grounds that the NEWVTC Judge finds sufficient for termination.
6. Revocation of probation/parole extended supervision.

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Any member of the Northeast Wisconsin Veterans Treatment Court team may make a motion for expulsion. The motion for expulsion will be discussed at the team meeting, upon a majority vote a recommendation for expulsion will be made to the NEWVTC Judge. The NEWVTC Judge may hold a hearing, at the Judge's discretion. If the NEWVTC Judge agrees that there is a basis to grant a Motion for Expulsion, the NEWVTC Judge will make the initial determination that the participant's participation is terminated, findings and conclusions will be made on the record, and the NEWVTC participant will be removed from the program and returned to the original sentencing Judge (or a substitute Judge if the originally assigned Judge is the NEWVTC Judge) for imposition of sentence. If a participant has absconded for a total of four weeks, they are automatically terminated from the program and there is no process for appeal.

The participant may request a contested hearing following the termination, after which the NEWVTC Judge will make a final determination. If no request for a hearing is made, the initial decision will become the NEWVTC Judge's final determination. Although entry into the Northeast Wisconsin Veterans Treatment Court is entirely voluntary, successful completion of the program or expulsion from the NEWVTC, are the only two ways to leave the Northeast Wisconsin Veterans Treatment Court Program. While a participant may request to be terminated, the consequences or penalties are the same as a participant terminated for cause.

***'Where we stumble is where our Treasures Lie.'***

***Joseph Campbell***