



**Spokane Municipal  
Veterans Enhanced Treatment (VET) Court**

**Participant Handbook**

**No Veteran Stands Alone.**

Dear Participant,

Welcome to the Spokane Municipal Veterans Enhanced Treatment (VET) Court program. You are about to begin a new chapter in your life which will benefit you, your loved ones, and our community. As you progress through the program, you will be provided an opportunity to learn tools to establish and maintain healthy relationships with friends, loved ones, and your relationship with yourself. The VET Court team is committed to your success and will do all they can to support your positive efforts. However, the final responsibility is yours. You must be motivated to commit to living a life not controlled or constrained by the use of substances including alcohol and marijuana, as well as addressing issues of trauma that may be negatively affecting how you respond to your friends, family, and loved ones. Ultimately, it will be your hard work, accountability, and your willingness to move forward that will determine your success in the program.

This handbook is designed to provide you with information about structure of VET Court, the team, addresses concerns and answers questions. As a participant, you will be expected to follow the instructions given by the Judge and comply with all recommended approaches to addressing why you are now involved in the criminal legal system. This handbook will provide you with a description of what is expected of you as a VET Court participant. Each participant's experience needs and requirements to complete this program are customized, there may be some basic similarities in structure. The conditions and requirements are individualized to meet you where you are currently with a pathway created to lead to a healthier, happier approach to life.

We wish you the best and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

The VET Court Team

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## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the City of Spokane Veteran's Court is to provide an interagency, collaborative, non-adversarial treatment strategy for veterans involved in the criminal legal system while holding them accountable and reintegrating veterans into the community.

## **Goals**

- Increase community/public safety and awareness.
- Reduce participant contacts with the criminal legal system.
- Introduce participants to an ongoing process of recovery designed to help them become stable, employable, and substance free while continuing mental health care through various agencies.
- Increase the ability and likelihood of participant to set their own goals and achieve them.

## **Program Description**

City of Spokane's Veteran's Court is a collaboration of numerous agencies: the Court, the VA, the Public Defender's Office, the Prosecutor's Office, Community Justice Services, Spokane Veteran's Forum, and many other community partners. These agencies, working together, have established a viable option for participants whose needs are better met through therapeutic interventions rather than incarceration. The program encourages positive reintegration with the community.

Court protocol requires all participants to remain for the entire court session. Being a participant in VET Court is not only about you but also your support of other participants by being present and listening.

# Eligibility Criteria and Disqualifiers

## Eligibility Criteria

VET Court is a court program designed to include individuals who have served or are actively serving in the United States Armed Forces who are now criminal legal involved. VET Court is a treatment court but unlike many other treatment courts, eligibility for VET Court exists because the community believes that those who have served our Country and who meet the criteria for participation have earned the privilege of the special consideration inherent in VET Court participation.

When determining whether an individual is eligible, the following indicators should be looked for:

1. Pending criminal case in Spokane Municipal Court.
2. Any veteran with a diagnosis of PTSI (post-traumatic stress injury), TBI (traumatic brain injury), or MST (military sexual trauma) or veterans with substance use, mental health, co-occurring disorders, or pre-indicators for domestic violence.
3. Offender has completed a referral form to Community Justice Services.
4. Offender has undergone screening assessments with Community Justice Services such as a Community Supervision Tool, Kessler Psychological Distress Scale, Michigan Alcohol Screening Tool assessment, Ohio Risk Assessment System, and Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment, if applicable.
5. Offender has observed at least one VET Court session in person.

## The following individuals ARE NOT ELIGIBLE for VET Court:

- Individuals who are currently charged with or who have been previously convicted of a **serious violent offense or sex offense** defined in RCW 9.94A.030.
  - (a)
    - 1) Murder in the first degree
    - 2) Homicide by abuse
    - 3) Murder in the second degree
    - 4) Manslaughter in the first degree
    - 5) Assault in the first degree
    - 6) Kidnapping in the first degree
    - 7) Rape in the first degree
    - 8) Assault of a child in the first degree
    - 9) An attempt, criminal solicitation, or criminal conspiracy to commit one of these felonies;
    - 10) Any sex offense as defined in RCW 9.94A.030(47); or
  - (b) Any federal or out-of-state conviction for an offense that under the laws of this state would be a felony classified as a serious violent offense under (a) of this subsection
  - (c)
- Individuals who are currently charged with or who have been previously convicted of a **serious violent offense or sex offense** defined in RCW 2.30.030 (3)

- (a) Individuals who are currently charged or who have been previously convicted of a serious violent offense or sex offense as defined in RCW [9.94A.030](#)
- (b) Individuals who are currently charged with an offense alleging intentional discharge, threat to discharge, or attempt to discharge a firearm in furtherance of the offense.
- (c) Individuals who are currently charged with or who have been previously convicted of vehicular homicide or an equivalent out-of- state offense; or
- (d) Individuals who are currently charged with or who have been previously convicted of: An offense alleging substantial bodily harm or great bodily harm as defined in RCW [9A.04.110](#), or death of another person.

**The following will be staffed by the VET Court team and MAY be disqualifiers for VET Court.:**

- Current Therapeutic Court involvement
- ICE or DOC community custody holds
- Residency outside Spokane County
- Active gang affiliation
- Active Federal Probation
- Pending felonies
- Cases in active warrant status
- Pending cases from other counties

## **Program Phases and Movement**

The VET Court program includes supervised phases. As you meet requirements and show compliance, you will progress through the phases. The first phase is the most challenging. It will involve many contacts with the VET Court team members. As you progress and show success, the subsequent phases become less rigorous and less time consuming.

Your compliance is monitored on a weekly basis and the team will discuss your progress in meeting phase requirements regularly. Once you have demonstrated compliance and completed all requirements, you will move on to the next phase.

The length of program is determined by evaluation and compliance with conditions imposed. Upon meeting all program requirements, you are eligible to graduate and could earn an early termination from probation. The Judge will make the final decision on the length of your program and graduation date.

For example: a participant who is ordered to complete 36 months of supervision in the program who attends 18 consecutive forums and remains in compliance with all requirements of the individualized program could graduate in 18 months.

# Phase Structure

## **Phase 1: Engagement and Assessment**

You must remain in this phase for a minimum of 2 months.

- Attend orientation with Community Justice Counselor.
- Develop case plan and meet with CJC weekly.
- Attend court twice per month.
- As ordered, call the drug and alcohol testing line daily and test when scheduled.
- Additional testing at Community Justice Services discretion.
- Attend Veterans Forum.
- Establish schedule of contact with mentor.
- Meet with Veteran Justice Outreach Coordinator.
- Attend treatment appointments.
- Work towards stable housing, including sober living if ordered.
- Schedule relevant treatment assessment(s).
- **Personal Project:** Indicating why you should be promoted to Phase 2. Include accomplishments to this point, sanctions and behaviors changed to overcome possible repeat behavior. This could be in form of a letter or other appropriate form of expression.

### **In order to complete Phase 1:**

- Minimum of 2 months since entering VET Court.
- Attended orientation with CJC.
- Developed a case plan with CJC.
  - Scheduled relevant treatment assessment(s), as designated by case plan.
- Attended court twice.
- Attended Veterans Forum.
- Established schedule with assigned mentor.
- Met with Veteran Justice Outreach Coordinator.
- Working towards stable housing, including sober living if ordered.
- Presented to the court your personal project to move to Phase 2.

## **Phase 2: Clinical Stabilization (Early Recovery and Education)**

You must remain in this phase for a minimum of 3 months.

- Attend court twice per month.
- Meet with Community Justice Counselor at least once per week.
- As ordered, call the drug and alcohol testing line daily and test when scheduled.
- Adhere to case plan with Community Justice Counselor.
  - Attend Substance Use and/or Mental Health assessment and/or DVIT/Safe at Home assessment, as designated by case plan.
- Maintain stable housing or create a plan for stable housing.
- Attend Veterans Forum monthly.
- Weekly mentor contact.
- Demonstrate changing/eliminating negative people, places, and things.

- **Personal Project:** Indicating why you should be promoted to Phase 3. Include accomplishments to this point, sanctions and behaviors changed to overcome possible repeat behavior. Also include personal short and long-term goals.

### **In Order to Complete Phase 2:**

- Minimum of 3 months in Phase 2.
- Minimum of 14 consecutive days violation free at the end of Phase 2.
- Met with Community Justice Counselor once per week.
- Adhered to case plan with Community Justice Counselor.
  - Attended treatment assessment, if part of case plan.
- Attended VET Court twice per month.
- Attended Veterans Forum monthly.
- Weekly mentor contact.
- Maintained stable housing or created a plan with Community Justice Counselor to address stable and sober housing.
- Demonstrated changing/eliminating negative people, places, and things.
- Presented to the court your personal project to move to Phase 3.

### **Phase 3: Maintenance & Relapse Prevention**

You must remain in this phase for a minimum of 4 months.

- Attend court twice per month. If you are in full compliance, you may request to be waived from one court appearance per month.
- Meet with Community Justice Counselor a minimum of twice per month.
- As ordered, call the drug and alcohol testing line daily and test when scheduled.
- Adhere to case plan with Community Justice Counselor.
  - Engaged in treatment, unless successfully completed required program.
- Attended VET Court twice per month.
- Attended Veterans Forum monthly.
- Maintain stable housing.
- Demonstrate changing/eliminating negative people, places, and things.
- Establish at least one pro-social activity.
- **Personal Project:** Indicating why you should be promoted to Phase 4. Include accomplishments to this point, sanctions and behaviors changed to overcome possible repeat behavior. Review and reflect on your short- and long-term goals from you Phase 3 personal project.

### **In Order to Complete Phase 3:**

- Minimum of 4 months in Phase 3.
- Minimum of 45 consecutive days violation free at the end of Phase 3.
- Met with Community Justice Counselor twice per month.
- Adhered to case plan with Community Justice Counselor.
  - Engaged in treatment, if part of case plan.
- Attended VET Court twice per month unless one session was waived.

- Attended Veterans Forum monthly.
- Weekly mentor contact.
- Maintained stable housing or created a plan with Community Justice Counselor, including sober living if ordered.
- Demonstrated changing/eliminating negative people, places, and things.
- Established at least one prosocial activity.
- Present to the court your project and application to move to Phase 4.

#### **Phase 4: Adaptive Habilitation**

You must remain in this phase for a minimum of 4 months.

- Attend court twice per month. If you are in full compliance, you may request to be waived from one court appearance per month.
- Meet with Community Justice Counselor a minimum of once per month.
- As ordered, call the drug and alcohol testing line daily and test when scheduled.
- Adhere to case plan with Community Justice Counselor.
  - Engaged in treatment, unless previously successfully completed required program.
- Attended Veterans Forum monthly.
- Weekly mentor contact.
- Maintain stable housing, including sober living if ordered.
- Demonstrate changing/eliminating negative people, places, and things, if pertinent.
- Engaged in at least one pro-social activity.
- **Personal Project:** Indicating why you should be promoted to Phase 5. Include accomplishments to this point, sanctions and behaviors changed to overcome possible repeat behavior. Include goals for after VET Court is completed and identify your support system.
  - If eligible to graduate, indicate why you should graduate. Include accomplishments, sanctions, and behaviors changed while in the program and what is your advice for participants starting this journey?

#### **In Order to Complete Phase 4:**

- Minimum of 4 months in Phase 4.
- Minimum of 90 consecutive days sober and violation free at the end of Phase 4.
- Met with Community Justice Counselor once per month.
- Adhered to case plan with Community Justice Counselor.
  - Engaged in treatment, if part of case plan.
- Attended VET Court twice per month unless waived.
- Attended Veterans Forum monthly.
- Weekly mentor contact.
- Maintained stable housing or created a plan with Community Justice Counselor, including sober living if ordered.
- Demonstrated changing/eliminating negative people, places, and things, if pertinent.
- Engaged in at least one prosocial activity.

- Present to the court your personal project to move to Phase or if eligible, present your graduation project.

### **Phase 5: Aftercare and Graduation**

You must remain in this phase until individualized program requirements are completed.

- Attend court twice per month. If you are in full compliance, you may request to be waived from one court appearance per month.
- Meet with Community Justice Counselor a minimum of once per month.
- As ordered, call the drug and alcohol testing line daily and test when scheduled
- Adhere to case plan with Community Justice Counselor.
  - Engaged in treatment, if part of case plan.
- Attended Veterans Forum monthly.
- Weekly mentor contact.
- Maintain stable and sober housing, if pertinent.
- Demonstrate changing/eliminating negative people, places, and things, if pertinent.
- Engaged in pro-social activity.
- **Personal Project:** Indicating why you should graduate. Include accomplishments, sanctions, and behaviors changed while in the program and what is your advice for participants starting this journey?

### **In Order to Graduate:**

- Completed individualized program requirements.
- Minimum of 120 consecutive days violation free at the end of Phase 5, including sobriety, if pertinent.
- Met with Community Justice Counselor once per month.
- Adhered to case plan with Community Justice Counselor.
  - Completed treatment, if part of case plan.
- Attended VET Court twice per month unless waived.
- Attended Veterans Forum monthly.
- Weekly mentor contact.
- Maintained stable housing.
- Demonstrated changing/eliminating negative people, places, and things.
- Engaged in prosocial activity.
- Present to the court your personal project and application to graduate.

# **Roles of VET Court Team**

## **VET Court Judge**

The Judge, or her designee, will preside over all VET Court hearings and participate as an active member of the multidisciplinary team. The Judge will assist in motivating and monitoring the participants in their success in VET Court. They will ensure a cooperative atmosphere for attorneys, community justice counselors, law enforcement, mentors, and treatment providers. The Judge will be responsible for all final decisions regarding incentives, therapeutic interventions, sanctions, phase ups and graduations. The Judge will set the tone of each court session by either an open-ended therapeutic style prompt or question.

## **Community Justice Counselor (Probation)**

The Community Justice Counselor (CJC) will participate as an active member of the VET Court multidisciplinary team. CJC will process referrals and conduct screening assessments and share results with the team. The CJC will provide coordinated and comprehensive supervision and case management to all participants in the program. CJC is responsible for team communication on behalf of participants for requests of the court, travel passes, and other communication. The CJs maintain regular communication with participants, providers, and the court.

## **Prosecutor**

A Prosecutor is assigned to VET Court and participates as a member of the multidisciplinary team. The prosecutor operates in a non-adversarial manner during court to promote a sense of a unified team presence while addressing participant's accountability and needs, utilizing a therapeutic approach. To this end, the prosecutor should make efforts to ensure that participants recognize that a therapeutic court works best when it is an open venue for participants to seek to improve and address as many problems as can be addressed. Recommendations for incentives and sanctions should be based upon evidence-based practices when possible and appropriate and should be aimed at improving outcomes rather than punishment. The prosecutor participates in court promoting activities and is the liaison with law enforcement.

## **Public Defender**

A Public Defender is assigned to VET Court and participates as a member of the multidisciplinary team. The Public Defender will advise the defendant at all hearings. They will also advise the participant as to the nature and purpose of VET Court, the rules governing participation, the consequences of abiding or failing to abide by the rules, and how participating or not participating in VET Court will affect his/her interests. The Public Defender will also participate as a team member, operating in a non-adversarial manner during court, to promote a sense of a unified team presence and will engage in court promoting activities.

## **Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator**

A Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator (VJO) is assigned to VET Court and participates as a member of the multidisciplinary team. The VJO connects veterans to VA services at the earliest point possible. The VJO has built and maintained partnerships between the VA and VET Court.

## **Treatment Providers**

Attend VET Court staffing and hearings while maintaining a professional relationship as a member of the multidisciplinary team. Treatment will advocate for clients in a therapeutic manner as they provide access to a

continuum of treatment and other related services and monitor treatment compliance. Treatment will conduct all assessments and treatment sessions.

## **Incentives/Interventions/Sanctions**

### **What are incentives?**

Incentives are given to recognize participants who have achieved measurable accomplishments and goals. At the court's discretion, any of the following incentives may be granted:

- Verbal praise and encouragement
- Applause
- Written praise
- Phase advancement
- Travel approvals
- Bus passes
- Candy or other treats
- Decreased court appearances
- Decreased UA testing
- Reduction of supervision
- Graduation ceremony

\*\*\*This list is not exhaustive, and additional incentives may be added at any time.

### **What is a therapeutic intervention?**

Therapeutic interventions are tools the team utilizes to assist a participant in overcoming program noncompliance. Failure to progress in the program, attend treatment sessions, or meet program requirements may result in a therapeutic intervention, as ordered by the court.

- Verbal admonishment
- Apology letter to judge, team, and fellow participants
- Essay/Presentation or other writing assignment
- Increased or imposed curfew times
- Additional check-ins with Community Justice Services
- Change in type of treatment required based upon clinical re-assessment
- Community Service hours
- Increased drug and alcohol testing
- GPS/EHM/Alcohol monitoring bracelet
- Extended time in phase/Delayed graduation

\*\*\*This list is not exhaustive and additional therapeutic interventions may be added, as appropriate, at any time.

### **What are sanctions and what type of sanctions will the court impose?**

Failure to comply with the VET Court program requirements may lead to court intervention or sanction. Continued failure to progress in the program after therapeutic court interventions, or any other failed behavior may result in sanctions, as ordered by the court. Sanctions are imposed to improve therapeutic outcomes. VET Court seeks to employ evidence-based practices and harm reduction theory whenever possible and appropriate, however every decision made is individualized to the veteran participating and the issues presented at the time of the intervention.

- GPS/EHM/Alcohol monitoring bracelet
- DOC work crew
- Immediate jail sanction (booked into jail from court)
- Termination from VET Court with possible imposition of jail sentence.

\*\*\*This list is not exhaustive, and additional sanctions may be added at any time.

### **How are alleged violations handled?**

VET Court violation hearings will be conducted in a different manner than traditional Probation Violation hearings. Alleged violations will be discussed prior to Court, in staffing, by all VET Court Team Members. The nature of the alleged violation will be discussed, including possible defenses, and recommendations will be made to the Judge. No decision will be rendered during this meeting. Before the court hearing begins, your attorney will discuss the alleged violation with you and determine whether to address the violations that day or whether to set a contested hearing at a future date. If the alleged violation is addressed that day in Court, you will be allowed the opportunity to address the Court on the matter and the Court will then render its decision. The Court's decision will be the final judgment on the violation. A violation could also be handled by a roundtable discussion involving the participant and the team members.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### How much time will the entry process take?

Each referral will be assessed whether the Veteran meets the criteria to participate in VET Court. This involves a series of meetings with attorneys, community justice services and completing assessments. Veterans will initially meet with their attorney to determine whether they meet specific criteria. Next, each potential participant may undergo the Community Supervision Tool, Kessler Psychological Distress Scale, Michigan Alcohol Screening Tool, Ohio Risk Assessment System, and Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment (if applicable). Upon completion of screening tools, and if deemed eligible, potential participants will be required to observe one VET Court hearing.

### What is the Veterans Forum?

The Spokane Veterans Forum (SVF), <https://spokaneveteransforum.org/>, is an independent non-profit program specifically created to support participants in VET Court. The Forum provides mentors, educational, therapeutic and life enhancing services as well as a meal to military veterans referred from any Veterans Court. The referred veteran is matched with a mentor, also a veteran with the same prior branch, who provides them support as they participate in the community program. Participants are required to be in contact with their mentors on a weekly basis at a minimum and to attend the SVF meetings held monthly where they will share a meal together, experience fellowship and camaraderie, and attend classes on therapeutic topics and life skills. SVF also provides services through partnerships with veteran's groups, federal, state and local governments, local businesses and non-profits in the Inland Northwest. Attendance at the Forum is mandatory for 6 consecutive sessions. If a participant attends 12 forums, if on 24 months of probation or 18 forums, if on 36 months of probation and is otherwise in full compliance it is anticipated they will earn early graduation.

### Is there etiquette for the Veterans Forum?

Your attendance at the forum should be treated the same as court with the exception for eating and drinking which is allowed at the forum. Remember all forum staff and mentors are there voluntarily and in support of your success. Treat staff, mentors, and the facilities with respect or you will be asked to leave. **If asked to leave the forum, you must have the judge's approval before you are allowed to return. You will not receive credit for attendance at the forum if you are asked to leave. Refer to page 17 for additional information.**

### What if I have a recurrence of use?

VET Court may prohibit the use of substance (including THC) and alcohol unless prescribed by a physician. The court also understands that recurrence, commonly known as relapse is part of the recovery process. Traditional court systems have placed an emphasis on using incarceration as an immediate sanction for relapse. VET Court uses incarceration as a last resort unless you are dishonest or do not self-report a recurrence. Self-reporting a recurrence does not mean that you admit to using when questioned, self-reporting is contacting your Community Justice Counselor before they get the information from another source. **The severity of a sanction for recurrence**

**all depends on your honesty to the court. If you lie or hide use and are caught, harsher sanctions may be imposed.**

### **How does drug and alcohol testing work?**

As a participant in VET Court, you may be subject to random drug and alcohol testing. This is conducted at a contracted facility. While participating in VET Court, if ordered as a condition of sentence, you may not consume alcohol, marijuana, or other illegal substance at any time for any reason. You must also use prescribed medication only as prescribed you must reveal to your CJC if you are prescribed medication. If you believe you have a legitimate exception, this must be discussed and staffed by the VET Court team prior to entry into VET Court. Be careful not to ingest any substance containing alcohol or illegal substances or non-prescribed medications that may show positive results if tested. If you are unsure if a product will cause you to test positive for substances, it is your responsibility to contact your Community Justice Counselor for permission. A Washington State medical cannabis authorization card does not authorize use in VET Court. Refer to the Testing Contract and Medication Compliance policy on pages 18-20 for additional information.

### **What if I have a serious medical condition?**

In general, if you have a serious medical condition, you will not be excluded from VET Court. You must be willing to fully disclose your condition and medical care to the treatment providers and VET Court team. If you are taking medication for your condition, you must continue to do so according to your primary care physicians' directions. Although we can be flexible and work around your condition, you must be able to engage in and comply with the conditions associated with your case. You must provide a copy of all prescriptions to your Community Justice Counselor and the court assigned drug and alcohol testing facility. You must advise both agencies of any changes in your medication.

### **Can I use prescription medication?**

As a general rule, VET Court participants are expected to be substance free. If your doctor prescribes mind-altering medication, it must be disclosed to your Community Justice Counselor and may be monitored for misuse. You will sign a release of information between the prescribing doctor and Community Justice Services in order to verify your prescription. Refer to the Medication Compliance Policy on page 20 for additional information.

### **How is my level of care determined?**

All treatment is based upon a full, complete clinical evaluation conducted by the VA or an outside treatment center. Evaluations establish the type and duration of treatment. Your treatment provider may make ongoing treatment recommendations during your time in VET Court that may increase or decrease your treatment requirements.

### **What if I want to travel outside Spokane County?**

If you need to travel outside Spokane County (or across the state border), you must first contact your CJC to request permission to leave. If you are requesting a day trip, it is usually approved,

if there is advanced notice, and you are in compliance. An overnight or out-of-state trip (including travel across state border) will require a travel request form to be submitted at minimum, 7-days before planned travel. The travel request form must contain your relapse prevention plan. The VET Court team will review and grant permission or deny your request. You may be required to be on alcohol monitoring or GPS while on approved travel and you may be required to do a urinalysis test **prior** to leaving and **immediately** upon return. In the event an emergency trip outside of the County is needed, it must be reported (via email, voicemail, or phone call) to your CJC prior to leaving and you will be subject to **immediate** testing upon return. If absence is for an extended period of time, testing may be required during that absence. Your CJC will attempt to assist in finding locations for testing.

### **What if I have contact with Law Enforcement?**

**You must report all police contact to your CJC within 24 hours of contact. (Messages left for CJC will be considered contact)** Law Enforcement contact includes any sort of interaction with law enforcement personnel, including outside Probation/Parole agencies. Contact could include but is not limited to: Being asked for ID by law enforcement, being a passenger in a vehicle that is contacted by law enforcement, being involved in a crime event or collision where law enforcement responds or being questioned by law enforcement personnel as a suspect, victim and/or witness to a criminal act.

If you learn that you have a warrant or are the subject of an investigation, or if you are sought as a witness, you must report that to your CJC.

If you receive a subpoena or a restraining order, or are a party to a lawsuit, you must report that to your CJC.

### **When can I complete the program?**

You will be eligible for graduation once you have completed all phases as outlined above and have been in VET Court for a minimum of 12-18 months, depending on your sentence. The time frame varies according to your performance, engagement with the Veterans Forum, and will be determined by the VET Court Team. Your family, friends, employers, counselors, and sponsor are welcome to come to court and share in this joyous and life-affirming occasion. There will be a graduation ceremony in which you will receive a certificate and coin demonstrating your completion of VET Court and accomplishment. You may also be eligible for a Quilt of Valor.

## **Rules and Responsibilities**

### **Confidentiality**

You are required to sign a Release of Information which allows the Community Justice Services Department to give information to the VET Court team. The team consists of the Judge,

prosecuting attorney, public defender, court coordinator, community justice counselor, law enforcement, treatment provider, and drug/alcohol testing provider. Please note, at times, other parties with the respected offices identified above may cover your case and have access to your information. Your privacy is respected, and the team will make every effort to protect your identity.

Confidentiality is essential to maintain the integrity of group therapy sessions. Nothing that is discussed within the confines of those meetings will leave those meetings. No information pertaining to another client should be discussed outside of the group. This confidentiality applies to things said in the courtroom as well.

Participants will be required to sign the VET Court Release of Information & Waiver of Rights and Publicity Consent Form.

### **Financial Obligations**

All court payments are to be established and paid through PAR Acceptance Corp. Information regarding your payments may be obtained from the court clerk.

If your charge involved a property crime, you may be required to pay the restitution that is owed to the victim(s) of the crime. The amount of restitution, if any, was determined at your sentencing. You must make regular payments on your restitution in accordance with the court order.

There is not a fee to participate in VET Court. If ordered to submit to drug and alcohol testing, the cost will be paid by the court. If you miss a test, you may be responsible for the missed test fee.

### **Court Appearances**

All scheduled court appearances are MANDATORY. As you advance to higher phases of the program, court appearances may be decreased. You must arrive at court at least ten minutes before the docket begins and remain in the courtroom until after the docket is complete.

If you are not present in court on the required days, a bench warrant may be issued. It is then your responsibility to contact your attorney to get the warrant quashed or turn yourself in. ***If this does not happen, you may be arrested and remain in jail until your next court date.***

Absences may be excused if a documented reasonable excuse for the absence is provided. You will need to contact your CJC.

### **Courtroom Behavior**

You are expected to always maintain appropriate behavior in the courtroom and courthouse. This includes:

- Do not bring your children to court. There is a free drop-in children's waiting room program available to residents of Spokane County attending business at the Courthouse campus. <https://www.spokanecounty.gov/3087/Childrens-Waiting-Room>

- No talking while court is in session
- Be respectful of others
- No food or beverage in the courtroom unless provided during the session.
- No smoking or vaping
- No chewing gum or tobacco
- The Judge should always be addressed as “Judge” or “Your Honor”
- Be on time and do not leave during the hearing except to use the restroom
- No cell phone use during court
- **Dress appropriately.** Clothing bearing alcohol or drug related themes or promoting, or advertising alcohol or drug use or containing obscene or political language is considered inappropriate.

Do not wear hats, sunglasses, short shorts, or tank tops. Clothing that is disturbing and distracting in court is inappropriate and disruptive to the judicial process and may result in a therapeutic adjustment or sanction.

## Testing Contract

- I understand I will be drug and alcohol tested frequently and on a random basis throughout the VET Court program. It is my responsibility to call the testing line daily and provide a sample if directed to.
- I understand my testing frequency can be increased at any time while in the VET Court program.
- I understand drug and alcohol testing will be performed on weekdays, weekends and Holidays. It is my responsibility to call the testing line daily.
- I understand drug and alcohol testing will be performed by a laboratory or program approved by the VET Court program.
- I understand that I must arrive at the testing facility as soon as possible after being notified that a test has been scheduled. I will be sanctioned for a missed test.
- I understand a staff person will directly observe the collection of test specimens. The staff person will be the same gender as me unless I, my defense attorney, or my counselor request otherwise.
- I understand failure to provide a test specimen or providing an insufficient volume of fluid for analysis is a violation of the rules of the program and will be sanctioned accordingly.
- I understand I may not drink any fluid excessively before testing.
- I understand that I must avoid environmental contaminants such as alcohol-based hand sanitizer, perfumes, colognes, bug sprays or other chemicals such as paint lacquers, solvents, and gasoline.
- I understand I may be subjected to immediate testing if the VET Court program has reason to suspect use.
- I understand I have the right to challenge the results of a screening test by confirming the results through a laboratory-based test and may be charged the cost of the confirmation test.
- I understand I will be sanctioned for providing diluted, adulterated, or substituted test specimens. Urine specimens below 90 degrees F, above 100 degrees F, or that have a creatinine level below 20 ng/dL will be presumed to be diluted or fraudulent.
- I understand if I'm unable to provide a urine specimen, miss a random test, or provide a dilute sample, the court will consider the test a positive.

- I understand I will be sanctioned for using synthetic substances such as K2 or Spice that are designed to avoid detection by standard drug tests.
- I understand poppy seeds and flavoring extracts (for example: vanilla and almond extract) can result in a positive test.
- I understand using passive inhalation or secondhand exposure will not be allowed as an excuse for a positive test.
- I understand it is my responsibility to read product labels and to avoid exposure to products and substances that contain ethyl alcohol.
- I understand I will not be able to take nutritional supplements and herbal dietary supplements without contacting my Community Justice Counselor for permission because they could negatively affect my urine test results.
- I understand that I am not allowed to use marijuana or any of its biproducts including but not limited to edibles, lotions, and oils.
- I understand that non-alcoholic beer and wine contain enough alcohol to result in a positive test and that I am prohibited from consuming these products.
- I understand that I will only take prescribed medication that is prescribed to me. I will provide my Community Justice Counselor documentation of all prescriptions.
- I understand I am responsible for all testing and confirmation costs. Currently, the VET Court program covers the cost of testing. You may be responsible for confirmation test costs.
- I understand I am responsible for all items I consume and come into contact with.
- I have read and understand my responsibilities detailed above.

## Medication Compliance Policy

- I understand I cannot take the following without specified approval as listed below:
- Opiates (Vicodin, Percocet, etc.)
  - Benzodiazepines (Xanax, Valium, etc.)
  - Muscle Relaxants (Flexeril, Soma, Robaxin, etc.)
  - Synthetic pain pills (Tramadol, Ultram, etc.)
  - Stimulant amphetamines (Adderall, Ritalin, etc.)
  - Barbiturates
  - Anything with Pseudoephedrine (Sudafed, Claritin-D, etc)
  - Anything with Alcohol (Nyquil, Zzzquil, Kombucha, etc.)
  - Any product containing THC
  - PM medications (Lunesta, Ambien, etc.)
  - Ranitidine (Zantac)
  - CBD (in any form)
  - Kratom (synthetic or herbal supplements should be cleared by your assigned CJC)
  - Any food or drink that contains poppy seeds
  - Any mind-altering or addictive substance not otherwise listed
- I understand I may not use any Scheduled I-IV drugs without the permission of the VET Court team. Should my doctor prescribe medication, I will sign a Release of Information between the prescribing doctor and my Community Justice Counselor to verify my prescription.
- I understand I must notify my doctor of participation in the VET Court program before being prescribed any medication.
- I understand failure to disclose all medical and prescription information may be considered a violation and subject to sanction.
- I understand telling the court that a hospital gave you something without your knowledge is not an acceptable excuse. I am responsible for my healthcare and knowing what is prescribed.
- There are occasionally exceptions with regards to opiates, such as having surgery. I understand I must present a plan to my CJC that will be reviewed by the VET Court team in advance. Approved plans will be carefully monitored and may include daily pill counts and proper disposal protocol. Generally, these plans will not exceed three days in duration.
- If I am unsure about a medication or supplement, I will talk with my CJC, pharmacist or doctor. I am responsible for doing this before I take any medications or supplements. I will take this list with me when I see my doctor or purchase over the counter medications.
- I understand the above to be a condition of VET Court. If I fail to comply, I will be sanctioned.

## VET Court Release of Information and Waiver of Rights

As a VET Court participant, I agree and authorize the following:

- I agree and authorize the VET Court team to discuss my case and treatment outside the courtroom and outside my presence. I further understand that my case may be accessed by members of each respective agency while in VET Court.
- I agree and acknowledge as part of the VET Court program I will not disclose to any other person, business, or organization any treatment information I hear regarding another VET Court participant during a VET Court session.
- I authorize my treatment providers to exchange my treatment information with the Court and CJC. I further allow the Court and CJC to disclose that treatment information to VET Court team members and other medical, mental health and treatment providers.
- I authorize the CJC and Court to discuss my treatment progress and records during VET Court sessions. I authorize the CJC and treatment provider to disclose to the VET Court Judge the results of any urinalysis and to have those results discussed in court.
- I understand my judgement and sentence is a public record.
- I understand that this consent will remain in effect and cannot be revoked by me until there has been a formal and effective termination or revocation of my release by me in writing. I agree I cannot participate in VET Court unless all releases remain in effect. I further acknowledge that this release will expire upon my successful completion of probation and the VET Court program.

## Publicity Consent Form

You may be at a Veterans Court event, including the Forum where photos or videos may be taken. **It will be your responsibility to advise that you be excluded, otherwise the following provides your consent.**

I hereby consent to and authorize the use, publication, and reproduction of all media by VET Court or anyone it authorizes, for all photographs/video taken of me, with or without names, for any editorial, promotional, advertising, educational or other purpose.

I understand that any photographs or videos may be used in any publication for promotion of VET Court. I realize that this coverage may place my picture, with or without further explanation, alone or accompanied by other pictures, in a story, on a website, or on a cover of any or all publicity materials for VET Court. I hereby release the VET Court, its staff, and employees, or anyone it authorizes, from all claims relating to or arising from the uses consented above.

I am over eighteen years of age, have read this consent and release, or have had it read and explained to me, fully understand its contents, and enter into it voluntarily and without coercion.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Acknowledgment and Agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have read/have been read the VET Court handbook and agree to the terms stated in the handbook and by the Spokane Municipal Veterans Enhancement Treatment Court program. I understand that if I do not follow the court's rules, I can be terminated from VET Court with imposition of my suspended sentence. I have received a copy of this agreement and agree to its terms and conditions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Defense Counsel

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Prosecuting Attorney

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# **VET Court Program Contact Information**

## **Spokane Municipal Community Justice Services Department**

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## **City of Spokane Public Defender's Office**

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## **Office of the City Prosecuting Attorney**

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## **Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator**

Doug Fender  
Cell/Office: 509-850-7153

## **Mentor Coordinator**

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