

**DeKalb County  
Veterans'  
Treatment Court  
  
Participant Handbook**

**DeKalb County Circuit Court  
100 S. Main Street  
Auburn, IN 46706  
260-925-2764**

## **Introduction**

The mission of the DeKalb County Veterans' Treatment Court (DCVTC) is to honor the service of our veterans by helping them return to the responsible and productive civilian life that they fought to protect. The DCVTC will manage the veterans' rehabilitation both to assist the veterans and to protect society from recidivism and consequential dangers. This program is a collaboration of the justice system, veteran services entities, drug and alcohol rehab services and mental health providers.

## **Summary**

The DeKalb County Veterans' Treatment Court began serving veterans in DeKalb County in March, 2018 as an alternative to traditional case processing of veteran offenders. The veterans' court targets offenders who meet the eligibility criteria. It is a voluntary program in which eligible offenders participate in an intense, multi-phase treatment program, submit to frequent drug testing and attend self-help meetings while under the supervision of the veterans' court judge. Participants must attend services for a minimum of 18 months and a maximum of 36 months. Successful participants will have their charges dismissed, have their felony reduced to a misdemeanor or they will not have a further sentence imposed.

The DeKalb County Veterans' Treatment Court is a docket within DeKalb Circuit Court. The Honorable Kurt Grimm presides over the Veterans' Court. The administrative office of the DeKalb County Veterans' Treatment Court is located in the DeKalb County Probation Department. Veterans' Court is in session every other Thursday afternoon. Veterans will be scheduled to appear in court as ordered by the court.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the DeKalb County Veterans Treatment Court?**

DeKalb County Veterans' Treatment Court is a sentencing alternative program involving the DeKalb County Circuit Court, DeKalb County Probation Department, DeKalb County Community Corrections Program, DeKalb County Prosecutor, a defense attorney, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, veteran mentors, transitional living facilities, and local treatment providers. The veterans' court allows eligible participants the opportunity to have their charges dismissed, be granted a reduction from a felony to a misdemeanor, or to not have a further sentence imposed by agreeing to complete a substance abuse/mental health treatment program, remain alcohol and drug free, meet with a veteran mentor and complete other program requirements as determined by the DeKalb County Veterans' Treatment Court Team. Participants must complete the Veterans' Court in its entirety.

### **Who is eligible for veterans' court?**

To be considered for drug court participation you meet the eligibility criteria described later in this manual. You must also complete an orientation/assessment with the DeKalb County Veterans' Treatment Court staff. A substance use/mental health assessment with a treatment counselor will be scheduled at a later date. The veterans' court team will determine your eligibility for the veterans' court based on the information gathered and

provided by you during your assessment and other collateral sources. Under IC 33-23-16, a person does not have a right to participate in veterans' court.

**How long do I have to be in veterans' court?**

The veterans' court is 18-36 months in length (with the possibility of extension if necessary) depending on the needs and progress of each participant. The program is divided into five separate phases, known as companies, which will be discussed with you at the time of your orientation/assessment with the veterans' court staff. The veterans' court judge, along with the veterans' court team, determines when you have successfully completed all the requirements.

**How much will it cost?**

All persons enrolled in the DeKalb County Veterans' Treatment Court will be assessed a user fees. The initial fee is \$100.00 and \$30.00 a month beginning the second month of the program until graduation or termination. The user fee is assessed at the time you sign the veterans' court participation agreement. The fee is payable to the DeKalb County Community Corrections Program. You may make partial payments. Drug screen fees for screens taken at the Community Corrections Program are assessed to the participant at the rate of \$20.00 to \$35.00 per screen (with the possibility of additional costs for special screening) and are paid to the Community Corrections Program as well. If you are placed on home detention/electronic monitoring, you will be charged a \$75.00 initial fee, and \$12.00 daily fee.

Fees for treatment services are determined on an individual basis at the time of your assessment and collected by your treatment provider. Your ability to pay may be reassessed at any time during the course of your participation. Every participant is expected to contribute financially to the cost of treatment services and drug testing. Payment of fees is a requirement of veterans' court just as attendance and abstinence from drugs and alcohol is a requirement. Participants will be screened for eligibility for Veteran Benefits and Services through the VA, and referred to the Fort Wayne facility if they qualify. Some private insurance plans and Medicaid programs will assist in the cost of treatment services. If you have health insurance or Medicaid, bring this information with you to your assessment. The veterans' court team also works to obtain grant money to assist with these fees.

**Why should I participate?**

Your participation the DeKalb County Veterans' Treatment Court is voluntary and you may discuss it with your family or attorney before making a decision. The benefits of participation include: becoming and remaining drug and alcohol free, increasing your education, improving your life skills, improving your life, connecting with others in the community who have served, your family's life and access to available community and VA resources. Once you successfully complete the program, your charges may be dismissed, reduced, or you will not be required to serve time in the Indiana Department of Correction. This depends on the original agreement signed at the beginning of the veterans' court program.

**What if I fail to complete the veterans’ court requirements?**

In order to participate in veterans’ court you must sign a plea agreement admitting guilt to your current charges as well as a Veterans’ Court Participation Agreement. If you fail to complete the requirements or violate your veterans’ court participation agreement, the judge may terminate you from veterans’ court and then sentence you on your charges or your probation violation. Your attorney will discuss this with you in further detail. Participants will automatically be considered for termination if they adulterate or tamper with a drug screen, have charges filed during program participation that would make them ineligible under veterans’ court criteria, or other new offenses at the discretion of the Team. Continued non-compliance with program rules may also place a participant in consideration for termination.

**What are my alternatives?**

If you choose not to participate, your case will be prosecuted in the usual manner.

**Eligibility Criteria**

The DeKalb County Veterans’ Treatment Court developed the veterans’ court eligibility criteria in compliance with IC 33-23-16. The veterans’ court eligibility are as follows:

**Eligibility for Veterans’ Court**

1. Any offender who has served in the Armed Forces and received an Honorable or General discharge. Any offender who served in the National Guard or Reserves with service in a foreign war or conflict, and received an Honorable or General discharge.
2. Referrals must meet clinical criteria for Substance Use Disorder, Mental Health Disorders (including but not limited to PTSD, depression, anxiety, bi-polar disorder), and/or traumatic brain injuries.
3. Any felony, misdemeanor, or probation violation will be considered, unless excluded on the list below, if there is a nexus between the offense and the participant’s military service.

**Offenses not Eligible for Veterans’ Court**

1. No Level 1 or 2 felonies, or A felonies.
2. No forcible offenses. A forcible offense is an offense that involves the use or threat of force with a weapon against another human being, or in which there is imminent danger of bodily injury to a human being. No current or past sex offenses.
3. The referred veteran cannot have pending charges in another jurisdiction unless the client can take action to have the pending charges in another county disposed of within a reasonable amount of time of the referral to veterans’ court. Furthermore, the veteran may not have any open warrants.

4. The referred veteran cannot have current probation or parole supervision in another jurisdiction unless the client can take action to have the pending case in another county disposed of within a reasonable amount of time of the referral to veterans' court..

Other factors taken into consideration are:

- Willingness and motivation to comply with court ordered treatment services
- Ability to physically participate in treatment activities (within guidelines of the American Disabilities Act)
- Risk and need level based upon the Indiana Risk Assessment System (IRAS)
- Must meet clinical criteria for substance abuse or dependence
- Willingness to pay restitution within time frame of program

### **Veterans' Court Requirements**

As a participant in the DeKalb County Veterans' Treatment Court you must agree to comply with the following program requirements:

**1. Attend all court sessions.** Veterans' court participants must report to the veterans' judge on a regular basis to discuss their progress in the program. Participants who are in compliance with the veterans' court requirements will receive recognition in court and incentives, including gift certificates, items with military insignia, and more. Participants not in compliance with the veterans' court requirements will receive sanctions. Behaviors that may elicit these sanctions include, but are not limited to drug use, commission of a new offense, failure to attend probation, treatment, or outside service appointments as required, failure to follow court orders, and other violations of a participant's agreement. Sanctions may include community service work, fines, jail stays, or other appropriate activities. Court sessions are held bi-weekly. You are required to attend all court sessions as scheduled. Failure to report to court may result in the court issuing a warrant for your arrest.

**2. Attend all group sessions with treatment provider.** Attendance at treatment sessions is a requirement in order to successfully complete the drug court. If you miss a group session due to illness or a death in the family you must provide the court with appropriate documentation. Work, lack of transportation, or lack of childcare is not an acceptable reason for missing group. All of your groups are scheduled in advance in order that you will be able to make arrangements with your employer and arrange for childcare.

If during your period of program participation you are found to have used alcohol and/or drugs, violated a "no contact order", show indication of a mental health issue, or other therapeutic concerns, a therapeutic adjustment will be made to your treatment plan. Therapeutic adjustments may be discussed in staffing with team input, or may be discussed between the treatment provider and the supervising probation officer.

**3. Attend self-help meetings.** Support group meetings may include meeting with a veteran mentor or 12-step/recovery meetings. Self-help meetings include Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous, Methamphetamine Anonymous, and other secular alternatives for those with substance abuse issues. You must show documentation

of meeting attendance to your case manager and to the court. You may also attend other self-help meetings with approval from your veterans' court case manager. You may attend these meetings in the evenings, weekends, or whatever time works best with your schedule. You may obtain information from your case manager or treatment counselor regarding meeting times and location.

All participants will be required to meet with a veteran mentor. The Veteran Mentor acts as a coach, a guide, a role model, an advocate, and a support for the veteran participant. They will attend court hearings, lead mentoring sessions, act as a resource for participants, and act as a role model and friend.

**4. Submit to drug testing.** Veterans' court participants must submit to drug testing as ordered by the court. Drug testing may occur on regularly scheduled days or you may have to report for drug testing randomly. Positive drug screen results will result in sanctions from the court. **Failure to report for drug testing or drug screens that show evidence of tampering or dilution will be treated as a positive screen.** It is a criminal offense in the State of Indiana to tamper with, alter or carry in urine to a drug screen while on probation supervision. If you are found to have tampered with your drug screen, new charges could be filed against you and you could be terminated from the veterans' court program. The drug screening fees are to be paid at DeKalb County Community Corrections. **Participants are responsible for what is put in their body.**

**5. Report to case manager as instructed.** Your veterans' court case manager may provide you with information on group meetings, self-help meetings, employment opportunities, education programs, and other community resources. You must keep your case manager informed of any changes in your address of employment. The contact information you provide to your case manager will be used to contact you in the event of changes in the court or group schedule. You should contact your case manager whenever you have questions about the drug court requirements. You should contact your attorney regarding legal matters related to your participation in drug court or if you have a question about your case. **The veterans' court case manager's office is located within the DeKalb County Community Corrections Program. Office hours are Monday, Thursday, and Friday 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM; Tuesday from 8:00 AM – 2:4 PM; and Wednesday from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM. The community corrections office is closed weekends and holidays.**

**6. Pay all fees associated with treatment services.** Veterans' court participants are expected to pay the costs associated with all treatment services. Payment is made directly to the treatment provider. If you have concerns about your ability to pay for services, please discuss this with your case manager and the treatment provider.

**7. Work full-time, attend school full-time, or perform community service.** Anyone who participates in the veterans' court program must work full-time, attend school full time, or perform community service. The participant can do a combination of the above, the total number of hours required will be determined by the veterans' court team.

**8. Sign the drug court participation agreement.** The participation agreement is a legal document that you must sign in order to enter drug court. Your signature indicates that

you understand and agree to all of the terms of drug court participation. You must review this document with your private attorney or the public defender assigned to veterans' court. If you agree to participate in veterans' court, you and your attorney will submit the participation agreement to the court for the prosecutor's and the judge's signature. If you are terminated from or withdraw from veterans' court, you will be sentenced by the drug court judge. If you have questions about this process, contact your attorney.

The DeKalb County Veterans' Treatment Court does not infringe on the right of participants to seek medical care, nor does it attempt to override the training or qualifications of medical professionals. However, for those with addiction issues the use/misuse of medications is a real concern for recovery. The program requires participants to inform their case manager within 24 hours of receiving a prescription for medications. Additionally, participants must agree to receive permission from community corrections before consuming certain over-the-counter medications, which are indicated as having a possibility of abuse. Participants will receive a list of these over-the-counter medications. Additionally, participants will be asked to sign a release of information that complies with confidentiality requirements in 42 CFR Part 2 if the Judge or Team believe communication between the Court and medical practitioners is necessary. Participants may also be limited to one medical professional in each specialization. The DeKalb County Veterans' Treatment Court allows medically assisted treatments, including the use of antagonist, agonist, and partial agonist medications, with signature of releases of information for the prescribing professionals.

**9. Participants will NOT be allowed access or possession of firearms or weapons while participating in the program.**

**Phases of Veterans' Court**

The following is a description of each phase of drug court. Advancement from phase to phase is determined by the judge and is based upon recommendations from the drug court team. Participants must complete all required phases in order to be considered for graduation.

**Phase I - Assessment and Stabilization**

- Orientation with court staff
- Assessment with the treatment provider
- Detoxification/residential treatment (if necessary)
- Outpatient sessions
- Self-help meetings – as determined
- Drug testing - frequent and random
- Court sessions - as determined
- Frequent case management appointments

**Phase II - Therapy Focused**

- Mental health services as recommended by the treatment provider
- Address criminogenic needs – as determined
- Maintain approved housing
- Self-help meetings – as determined

Drug testing – as determined  
Court sessions – as determined  
Case management sessions – as determined  
Develop Budget

**Phase III – Continued Therapy Focused**

Mental health services as recommended by the treatment provider  
Address criminogenic needs – as determined  
Maintain approved housing  
Self-help meetings – as determined  
Drug testing – as determined  
Court sessions – as determined  
Case management sessions – as determined  
Review Case Plan – as determined

**Phase IV – Maintenance**

Mental health services as recommended by the treatment provider  
Address criminogenic needs – as determined  
Self-help meetings – as determined  
Drug testing – as determined  
Court sessions – as determined  
Case management sessions – as determined  
Review Case Plan – as determined  
Complete Continuing Care Plan

**Phase V – Aftercare – Prepare for Graduation**

Reside in environment where plan to reside following veterans’ court  
Self-help meetings – determined by the participant  
Drug testing – as determined  
Court sessions – as determined  
Complete case plan  
Graduation

Throughout Phase 5, prior to graduation, the veteran is required to complete a “graduation packet” and make a presentation to a panel of professionals from the veterans’ court team. At this presentation, questions will be asked of the veteran regarding what was personally gained from veterans’ court and how the new lifestyle will be maintained.

Persons who complete all drug court requirements will graduate and have their charges dismissed, reduced, or they will not have any further sentence imposed

Treatment services are currently provided by:

**The Department of Veterans’ Affairs**

2121 Lake Avenue  
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46805  
260-426-5431

**Vet Center**

Worthman Office Mall, Suite 265  
5800 Fairfield Avenue  
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46807  
260-460-1456

**The Bowen Center**

923 Cardinal Court  
Auburn, Indiana 46706  
260-925-8035

**The Northeastern Center**

1800 Wesley Road  
Auburn, Indiana 46706  
260-925-2453