

ORANGE COUNTY VC IS A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Ninth Judicial Circuit Court
- State Attorney's Office
- Public Defender's Office
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- Orange County Veterans Services Office
- Orange County Correction Services
- Orange County Bar Association Members
- State Probation
- Central Florida Safety Council

VETERANS COURT GOALS

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

VETERANS 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 Orange County VC

In August of 2013, Veterans Court in Orange County was established. Orange County Judge Jerry Brewer, working with State Attorney Jeff Ashton, laid the foundation for VC. Orange County VC held its initial session on October 30, 2013 with seven veterans, following which it graduated its first veteran on June 25, 2014.

VOLUNTEER AS A VETERAN MENTOR

The peer mentor component of VC 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: veteranscourt@ocrjcc.org

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**

**ORANGE COUNTY
VETERANS COURT**



The Mission of the Orange County Veterans 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 its participants and restore them to a more productive life.



WWW.NINTHCIRCUIT.ORG

WHAT IS VETERANS COURT?

The Orange County Veterans Court (VC) is a collaborative, problem-solving court designed to offer treatment intervention rather than incarceration. VC is a voluntary 6 to 18 month program designed for defendants who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces and are experiencing treatable behavioral, psychological or substance abuse problems. The program involves ongoing judicial supervision and intensive probation supervision with input from a multi-disciplinary team of professionals led by a judge. VC also assists participants in securing housing, employment opportunities, job training, education, transportation, disability compensation claims, discharge status and other benefits available at the local, state and federal level.



Defendants with misdemeanor or felony cases are considered for admission to VC. There are three different tracks: Track I Diversion results in the charges being dismissed, Track II Post Plea results in a reduced sentence and Track III VOP is for probation cases. Veterans who are placed on probation and then assigned to VC as a condition of probation participate in the program during the duration of their probation.

Additional information and Veterans Court forms are available at:
www.ninthcircuit.org

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Anyone who meets all of the following:

- Has served in the U.S. Armed Forces
- Has a demonstrated treatment need
- Has been charged with a crime that is appropriate for VC
- Is charged with a crime that can be linked to their diagnosis
- Resides in the Central Florida area

WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

If you want to be considered for the Orange County Veterans Court, your attorney should complete the referral form and submit it to the VC case manager who will verify VA benefits. Once benefits have been verified, the Assistant State Attorney and Judge assigned to the case must agree to refer the case to VC. Once the referral is done, the case will be scheduled on the VC docket for an initial status hearing.

Admission to VC is not automatic. Veterans seeking entry into VC will undergo treatment and mental health assessment to determine if VC is appropriate. While in VC, participants will attend court, meet with their case manager and veteran mentor, undergo treatment, perform community service, be subject to random drug testing and fulfill any other requirements the Court deems needs to be completed.

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

Upon successful completion of VC, participants are given a certificate of completion. Track I veterans will have their charges dismissed. Track II veterans will be sentenced by the Judge who referred the case, after taking into account the veteran's performance in the program. Track III veterans will have successfully completed their probation.

THE TEN KEY COMPONENTS OF VC

1. Veterans Court integrates alcohol, drug treatment and mental health services with judicial case processing.
2. Using a non-adversarial approach, prosecution and defense counsel promote public safety while protecting the participant's due process rights.
3. Eligible participants are quickly identified and promptly placed in the Veterans Court program.
4. Veterans Court provides access to a variety of services, including alcohol, drug, mental health and other related treatment and rehabilitation services.
5. Abstinence is monitored by frequent alcohol and drug testing.
6. Veterans Court utilizes a coordinated strategy to encourage the participant's compliance.
7. Ongoing judicial interaction with each veteran is essential.
8. Close monitoring and evaluation measures how well program goals are achieved.
9. Continuing interdisciplinary education promotes efficient Veterans Court planning, implementation and operation.
10. Forging partnerships among Veterans Court, the Veterans Administration, public agencies, and community-based organizations generates local support and enhances Veteran Court's effectiveness.