

# BENTON COUNTY DISTRICT COURT VETERANS THERAPEUTIC COURT



## PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK



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# INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed to answer your questions, provide information about the program, introduce you to the VTC Team and explain what will be expected of you as a participant in VTC. The program is here to support you while also holding you accountable so that you may overcome the obstacles currently in front of you.

Please read this handbook carefully. It is your responsibility to be familiar with its contents. We encourage you to share this information with your support system. The information in this handbook is subject to change, without prior notice. It is your responsibility to keep yourself informed.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Benton County Veterans Therapeutic Court is to recognize the selfless service of Veterans to our country by addressing their unique needs, emphasizing rehabilitation over incarceration and diverting them from the traditional criminal justice system. Through a collaborative effort with community partners, court-supervised treatment, and judicial accountability, provide Veterans with the tools they need to reintegrate into our community and become integral and productive members of society.

- **Show up**
- **Do the work**
- **Be Honest**

# BENTON COUNTY

## VETERANS THERAPEUTIC COURT OVERVIEW

The Benton County Veterans Therapeutic Court (VTC) is a voluntary program created to provide support to qualifying Veterans that are involved in the criminal justice system. VTC requires regular court appearances, appointments with your VTC Case Manager, compliance with your treatment plan including mental health, substance abuse and medication management, attendance at monthly forums, completion of community service and regular contact with your Veteran Mentor. The program is structured such that you may regain stability in your life while learning life-long skills to ensure you avoid future involvement in the criminal justice system.

VTC depends upon teamwork and **you** are the most important member of the team. As a participant you are expected to seek help from your fellow Veterans and give support and encouragement to each other. You will be given a veteran mentor that will be an additional support for you throughout the program.

As long as you are willing to **show up, do the work, and be honest**, you will be able to overcome any challenges and setbacks you encounter to successfully complete and graduate from this program. In most cases, graduation from VTC results in your charge(s) being dismissed!

VTC consists of two tracks: Stipulated order of continuance (SOC) and probation. The SOC track is a pre-adjudication track which means that the case is held in a “pending” status while you participate in VTC. If you successfully complete the program, your charge is eligible to be dismissed or amended in most cases. The probation track is a post-adjudication track in which you can participate after being convicted and sentenced to probation on a case. The duration of your probation may be reduced by participating on the probation track. Your attorney will discuss this with you in more detail.

The goals of Veterans Therapeutic Court are:

- Reduce participant contacts with the criminal justice system.
- Reduce costs associated with criminal case processing and incarceration.
- Engage participants in an on-going process of recovery designed to help Veterans achieve and maintain stability, sobriety and employment.
- Utilize resources through the VA and other community partners to meet Veterans’ individual needs.
- Through acts of service, provide an opportunity for Veterans to contribute to the community while enhancing leadership skills, self-esteem, and sense of community.

# THE VTC TEAM

Title	Name	Contact information
Judge	Hon. Dan Kathren	c/o Tara Symons
Therapeutic Courts Coordinator	Tara Symons, MBA, MSW	(509) 735-8476 ext. 3353 Tara.Symons@co.benton.wa.us
Assistant to the Coordinator	Denise Kautzky	(509) 735-8476 ext. 3353 Denise.Kautzky@co.benton.wa.us
Case Manager	TBD	
Mentor Coordinator	Tom Mattis	mentorrc@columbiabasinvetcenter.org
Veterans Justice Outreach	Rhonda Strother, LICSW	(509) 386-0991 Rhonda.Strother@va.gov
Defense Attorney	Catherine Harkins	(509) 316-0596 HarkinsLaw@gmail.com
Prosecuting Attorney	Eric Andrews	(509) 735-3591 Eric.Andrews@co.benton.wa.us
Law Enforcement liaison	Lt. Jason Erickson, Benton County Sheriff's Office	(509) 735-6555 ext. 3843 Jason.Erickson@co.benton.wa.us
Treatment liaison	Zach Roddy, Lourdes Counseling Center	Zachary.Roddy@lourdesonline.org

## COURT INFORMATION

Benton County Justice Center  
 District Court  
 7122 W. Okanogan, Bldg A  
 Kennewick, WA 99336  
 Phone: (509) 735-8476, ext. 3353  
 Fax: (509) 222-3758

The VTC program office is located upstairs in the Justice Center. Weekly Court hearings are held Tuesdays in Courtroom 5 beginning at 10:00 A.M.. All participants are expected to arrive and be seated in the Courtroom no later than 9:50 A.M. and remain until excused by the Court.

Website: visit [www.co.benton.wa.us](http://www.co.benton.wa.us) - from the "Government" drop-down menu click "Therapeutic Courts"; then click "Veterans Court" from the menu on the left.

# REFERRAL TO VTC

You must be referred to VTC. Anyone can make a referral to VTC, including the prosecutor, defense attorney, law enforcement, judge, probation, jail staff, or member of the community. A Defendant can even refer themselves. Referral packets can be obtained from the Veterans Therapeutic Court office or on our website. There is also an electronic referral that can be submitted on our website.

Being accepted to VTC requires various steps and communication between all parties to expedite the process. While your referral is being reviewed, you must continue to attend all scheduled court dates on your case. Being referred to VTC does not mean you will be accepted. You will be notified if you are enrolled in VTC.

Path to acceptance:



If you are accepted to VTC you will work with your VTC Case Manager to develop an action plan for your participation in VTC. This action plan will give you direction as you progress through the program. Your action plan may include referrals to VA Services, mental health treatment, chemical dependency treatment, housing assistance programs, DSHS services or other resources, as well as goals you would like to achieve while you are in the program.

# ELIGIBILITY & ACCEPTANCE

To be eligible for Veterans Therapeutic Court you must be:

- 18 years of age or older;
- Legally competent;
- Willing to **voluntarily** participate and commit to the court conditions and treatment plan;
- Charged with a crime in Benton County District Court or Benton County Superior Court, or be on probation in Benton County District Court;
- Affected by Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Military Sexual Trauma (MST), a substance use disorder or other conditions which may have been created or exacerbated as a result of military service;
- Able to explain how your military service is linked to your charge(s);
- Likely to achieve long-term benefits to your quality of life by participating in VTC;
- Able to access necessary treatment services in our local community;
- Insured (privately, Tri-Care, Medicare, Medicaid) or Medicaid-eligible and complete Medicaid application within **three** days of being accepted into MHC;
- Free of active warrants or able to resolve them quickly.

Except under special findings by the court, you are not eligible for participation in VTC if:

- you are currently charged or have been previously convicted of a serious violent offense or sex offense as defined in RCW 9.94A.030;
- you are currently charged with an offense alleging intentional discharge, threat to discharge, or attempt to discharge a firearm in furtherance of the offense;
- you are currently charged with, or have been previously convicted of vehicular homicide or an equivalent out-of-state offense;
- you are currently charged with or 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;
- you have a mental illness or disorder with particularly violent manifestations which creates unreasonable risk to MHC staff or participants.

# PROGRAM PHASES

## Phase 1: Orientation and Stabilization

- **Attend VTC hearings weekly for a minimum of eight weeks.**
- Work with the VTC Program Manager, Case Manager and VJO to obtain/maintain services which may include: housing, healthcare, benefits, mental health care, chemical dependency treatment, employment, education, etc.
- Sign all necessary releases so that the VTC team can verify participation in required treatment and obtain records as needed.
- Comply with getting all necessary evaluations and treatment/counseling services in the community in order to comply with court mandated requirements.
- Meet with the VJO
- Attend Veterans Forums monthly
- Create a schedule and maintain a weekly planner
- Establish regular contact with your Veteran Mentor
- Attend self-help meetings as determined by your treatment plan and Case Manager\*
- Provide a list of all medications to your VTC Case Manager
- Formulate an action plan to accomplish your identified goals while you are in VTC.
- Develop a plan for completing community service and have it approved by your VTC Case Manager.
- Complete Phase 1 writing assignment and review with your Case Manager *prior to* your Phase-up date.

### Phase up criteria:

- **Fulfillment of at least one short-term goal**
- **No positive UAs for 30 consecutive days prior to phase-up**
- **Sanction free for 14 consecutive days prior to phase-up**
- **Employed, enrolled in school, or actively pursuing either**
- **Secure stable, sober housing**

\*If it is verified that you do not have a substance abuse problem, you are not required to attend self-help meetings.

## Phase 2: Action

- **Attend MHC hearings every two weeks for a minimum of four months, unless otherwise determined by the VTC Team.**
- Work with the VTC Program Manager, Case Manager and/or Probation Officer and VJO to obtain/maintain services which may include: housing, healthcare, benefits, mental health care, chemical dependency treatment, employment, education, etc.
- Be actively involved in a job, volunteer work, education, vocational training and/or positive pro-social activities.
- Attend at least three Veterans Forums
- Maintain regular contact with your Veteran Mentor
- Attend self-help meetings as determined by your treatment plan and Case Manager\*
- Develop a support system for personal, mental health and chemical dependency needs.
- Complete 10 hours of community service.
- Complete Phase 2 writing assignment and review with your Case Manager *prior to* your Phase-up date.

### Phase up criteria:

- **Fulfillment of at least one short-term goal**
- **Progress towards long-term goal(s)**
- **No positive UAs for 60 consecutive days prior to phase-up**
- **Sanction free for 30 days prior to phase-up**
- **Demonstrated positive response to treatment**
- **Employed, enrolled in school, or actively pursuing either**
- **Maintain stable, sober housing**

\*If it is verified that you do not have a substance abuse problem, you are not required to attend self-help meetings.

## Phase 3: Skill Development

- **Attend VTC hearings every three weeks for a minimum of four months, unless otherwise determined by the VTC Team.**
- Continue to progress in mental health treatment (and chemical dependency treatment, if applicable).
- Be actively involved in a job, volunteer work, education, vocational training and/or positive pro-social activities.
- Attend at least three Veterans Forums
- Maintain regular contact with your Veteran Mentor
- Attend self-help meetings as determined by your treatment plan and Case Manager\*
- Complete all assigned community service hours
- Complete Phase 3 writing assignment and review with your Case Manager *prior to* your Phase-up date.

### Phase up criteria:

- **Fulfillment of at least one long-term goal**
- **No positive UAs for 90 consecutive days prior to phase-up**
- **Sanction free for 45 days prior to phase-up**
- **Demonstrated positive response to treatment**
- **Employed, enrolled in school, or actively pursuing either**
- **Maintaining stable, sober housing**

\*If it is verified that you do not have a substance abuse problem, you are not required to attend self-help meetings.

## Phase 4: Maintenance and Reintegration

- **Attend VTC hearings every four weeks for a minimum of four months, unless otherwise determined by the VTC Team.**
- Attend all appointments with treatment providers and case managers as scheduled.
- Be actively involved in a job, volunteer work, education, vocational and/or positive pro-social activity.
- Have maintained treatment and/or counseling services including medication management.
- Attend two Veterans Forums
- Maintain regular contact with your Veteran Mentor
- Attend self-help meetings as determined by your treatment plan and Case Manager\*
- Write an essay describing what has changed in your life since starting the VTC program, what you plan to do with your life, how you will ensure no further criminal charges and describe coping skills you have learned to implement into your life. You will share this with the VTC Team at your Exit Interview.

### Phase up criteria:

- **Fulfillment of at least one long-term goal**
- **No positive UAs for 60 consecutive days prior to phase-up**
- **Sanction free for 30 days prior to phase-up**
- **Demonstrated positive response to treatment**
- **Employed, enrolled in school, or actively pursuing either**
- **Maintaining stable, sober housing**
- **Attend exit-interview with the VTC team**

\*If it is verified that you do not have a substance abuse problem, you are not required to attend self-help meetings.

# GRADUATION

When you have met all requirements of VTC you will graduate with a sense of pride and accomplishment. You should feel proud knowing that you have completed a rigorous program intended to help you regain stability in your life and the skills you need to avoid future contact with the criminal justice system.

At your graduation, you will be recognized by the VTC team for achieving this impressive milestone. You will be given an opportunity to speak to the other participants about your journey and what you have gained through your participation in VTC. The Judge will sign the appropriate orders during graduation, and if applicable, your case will be dismissed.

You are encouraged to maintain contact with the VTC team after graduation. You are welcome to attend VTC hearings and monthly forums to give and receive support from other participants. **Six months following your graduation, you are able to apply to be a veteran mentor.**



# PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES

The entire time you are participating in VTC you are required to:

- Be honest with the VTC team. This includes immediately reporting any rule violations. Dishonesty or failing to notify your team of rule violations will be more severely sanctioned than honestly admitted violations;
- Commit to 12 months to 24 months of participation (Exact program length depends on your progress. This may be extended if you and the team agree);
- Attend all Court appearances;
- Attend monthly Veterans forums;
- Attend all appointments with your VTC Case Manager and Mentor;
- Remain law abiding;
- Obtain and maintain clean and sober housing;
- Abstain from the use of drugs, non-prescribed medications, alcohol and mood-altering chemicals and comply with the VTC Abstinence Agreement;
- Call the UA line daily and submit to random substance testing as instructed;
- Notify your Case Manager and treatment provider if you feel you are at risk of relapse;
- Maintain treatment with the agency or provider with which you establish;
- Take all medications as prescribed to you;
- Complete at least 20 hours of community service at a preapproved location;
- Comply fully with mental health and chemical dependency treatment recommendations;
- Remain informed and in compliance with all program rules, policies, procedures and requirements;
- Attend counseling regularly, at a minimum of two appointments per calendar month;
- Pursue education and/or employment if able;
- Keep the VTC Program Manager/Case Manager, treatment provider(s), attorney, prosecutor, probation and the court clerk informed of your current address and phone number at all times. VTC Staff must be able to locate a you *at all times*, therefore it is your responsibility to keep MHC staff aware of your whereabouts (overnight travel, etc.);
- Dress appropriately for court and treatment sessions;
- Inform any police officer you have contact with that you are involved in VTC. You must then immediately notify the VTC Program Manager/Case Manager of law enforcement contact;
- Complete and submit a travel request form for any out-of-county travel *prior to* any planned travel.

# PROGRAM RULES

## **Dress appropriately for Court and treatment sessions**

When coming to court, you must dress accordingly. It is also expected that proper hygiene will be maintained. The following are a few guidelines to determine if something is appropriate to wear to court. If you have questions, or need help with clothing, please speak with a member of the VTC team.

- No shorts;
- No torn jeans;
- No tank-tops;
- No nose, brow or tongue rings;
- No skirts shorter than 5 inches above the knee;
- No clothing that promotes drugs or alcohol;
- Dresses should fit appropriately. This mean that the chest, back and stomach area should not be exposed;
- Pants should not ride so low that undergarments or lack of undergarments is visible;
- No gang related and/or violence promoting clothing.

## **Courtroom attendance/behavior**

Attendance at court is mandatory on any date you are given a notice to appear. You are expected to be on time and remain until you are excused. You are expected to maintain appropriate behavior at all times in the courtroom and courthouse. When in court, you should remain seated and quiet unless given other instructions. **All cell phones and/or electronic devices must be turned off in the courtroom and at case management sessions/appointments.** If found to be in use, these devices may be removed from your possession, turned in to the judge and will only be returned by the judge. Should these guidelines be violated you will be subject to sanction.

## **Violent or inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated.**

Do not make any threats towards other participants, staff or team members. This may result in sanctions, and could result in termination from VTC.

## **Abstinence from drugs & alcohol must be maintained during participation in VTC.**

VTC is an abstinence based court that prohibits the use of alcohol, marijuana (including “medical marijuana”), non-prescribed drugs or synthetic drugs such as Spice. You will be randomly tested for the presence of drugs and/or alcohol throughout your participation in VTC. Stability and sobriety are the primary focus of this program. Maintaining a drug/alcohol free lifestyle is very important to your recovery process.

**You are prohibited from using or possessing any legal and/or illegal drugs and/or alcohol (in any form), including “alternative/replacement” and “designer” drugs.** If you have a valid prescription for a medication, that must be presented to your VTC Case Manager as soon as you receive the prescription. This will ensure that the VTC is aware of what medications you are currently taking that could affect a drug test result. You must review Appendix A for a list of allowed substances when determining what over-the-counter (OTC) medications to take/not take, as some of those can also affect drug test results. **Also, random pill counts will be performed on your prescribed medication.**

**Special note about marijuana:** Benton County VTC recognizes the need for a straightforward policy on prohibiting the use of medical marijuana, with or without a prescription or authorization. VTC realizes that a policy allowing for medical marijuana produces a detrimental effect on the persons being served in VTC and creates a perception that the use of marijuana may be permitted. VTC serves a group of vulnerable individuals with mental health challenges, drug addiction, or co-occurring disorders where a focus on abstinence is a key component to an individual’s recovery and treatment. If you choose to use medical marijuana you are not eligible for participation in VTC.

The Court and your treatment provider may not have the same urinalysis (UA) or other drug/alcohol testing requirements. You must comply with the drug/alcohol testing requirements as ordered by the Court **and** those required by your treatment provider.

**Important note: Missed tests, diluted tests or inability to provide a sample will be considered positive tests.**

Positive test results will be taken very seriously and will result in a sanction or termination from VTC. **Dishonesty or failing to notify your team that you have violated the abstinence policy will be more severely sanctioned than honestly admitted violations.** This policy’s purpose is to encourage you to take responsibility for your progress in VTC by emphasizing the importance of honesty and communication-skills that will continue helping you after your graduation from VTC.

### **Attend and participate in all treatment sessions.**

Ongoing and active participation in mental health and/or chemical dependency treatment is a requirement for all VTC participants for the duration of their participation in the court program.

The VTC team expects participants to follow and adhere to treatment recommendations made by their provider. If, at any time, you have questions or concerns about the recommended plan of treatment, these should be brought to the attention of both your treatment provider and the VTC team.

Treatment recommendations and plans change and evolve in accordance with an individual’s needs. If you enter VTC with co-occurring issues (i.e. chemical dependency, mental health, homelessness), it is the VTC team’s expectation that all of these issues will be specifically and adequately addressed in treatment.

**If you miss a treatment group/appointment related to mental health and/or chemical dependency, notify your Case Manager immediately (no later than the next business day).**

**Missed group/appointments will be sanctioned. However, if you immediately notify your Case Manager of the issue and make attempts to either make-up or reschedule the missed group/appointment before your next VTC hearing, the sanction may be waived.**

Attendance at and participation in all treatment sessions is mandatory. This includes individual/group counseling session, mental health assessments/sessions, medical appointments, educational sessions, Veteran mentor appointments/activities, sobriety support meetings, and self-help meetings. If you are unable to attend a scheduled session/appointment, you must contact the individual that your appointment is with **prior to** the session, to request an excusal. Being late for treatment sessions/appointments can be looked at as being non-compliant. **Failure to attend or missing scheduled appointments may result in sanctions and could ultimately result in termination from VTC.**

### **Community Service**

Community service hours are part of VTC. You are expected to have a plan to complete your Community Service hours before you enter phase II. Each participant will complete a minimum of 20 community service hours.

### **Maintain contact with your Mentor.**

A unique component of VTC is the commitment from local Veterans' programs and organizations to provide a mentor assigned specifically to you. **Your assigned VTC mentor is a Veteran of the Armed Services** willing to volunteer a significant amount of time to you and the VTC. Your mentor will maintain contact and provide you advice, share personal experiences, give guidance and make recommendations to you to assist you in your journey to recovery. Your mentor may also attend Court hearings when possible.

### **Medication Compliance**

You are required to bring all of your prescription medications to every court appearance and every Case Management appointment. Your Case Manager will do pill counts to make sure you are taking your medications as prescribed. If your Physician puts you on any mind-altering/sedating medications, it must be reviewed by the VTC team. The VTC team may consult with your providers about medications. This is to ensure that substances are not being sought for their unintended purpose. A clear, alert mind is best for achieving your goals.

# DRUG & ALCOHOL TESTING

You are required to call the UA line daily - 1-800-494-1250. You will input your assigned code and the line will tell you if you need to provide a UA sample for that day. You must call the UA line between the hours of 0600-2045. You must provide the UA sample on the same day the sample is requested, prior to 11:00pm. To provide a UA sample, you must go to the Benton County Jail lobby. If the lobby is closed, press the button on the speaker at the jail release door (to the east of the lobby entrance). Inform corrections staff that you are there to do a VTC UA. You will be asked to sign the VTC UA log, and you will be supervised while you provide the urine sample.

You may be required to submit to a portable breath test, saliva test, and/or UA testing upon request. If you are in treatment, the agency can require you to submit to UA testing at any time. Your VTC Case Manager or VTC Staff can also require you to submit to UA testing at their discretion. Any refusal or missed test will be considered a violation and will be addressed by the VTC team.

While participating in Veterans Treatment Court, you may not consume any alcohol or non-prescribed drugs at any time for any reason. It is your responsibility to ensure you do not ingest any substance containing alcohol, THC, or any other non-prescribed substance that may cause a positive UA. See appendix A – Prohibited Substances Abstinence Contract, and Appendix B – List of Prohibited & Allowed Substances.

## **Failing, missing, or tampering with a drug test or breath test:**

- If you miss a urine or breath test, that information is reported to the judge as a positive sample. At times, people avoid testing when they know that they have used alcohol or other drugs thinking that they will avoid the consequences of using substances. In VTC, there is no advantage to that idea...if you miss your test, the judge will treat it the same as if you took the test and it showed that you are using alcohol and/or drugs.
- Tampering with, or trying to dilute, your urine sample or trying to avoid being closely observed will also count as a positive sample.
- If your sample is positive for alcohol and/or drugs, the treatment team may revise your treatment plan and/or require increased treatment attendance. In addition, the VTC team will recommend some type of corrective action for you to the Court. This is imposed to help you get back into compliance and on track with your program.
- Please be clear on this matter. ***There is absolutely no advantage for you to miss, tamper, alter, dilute, or provide an unobserved urine or breath test. It will be counted as a POSITIVE for the use of drugs and/or alcohol.*** There will be a consequence.

## **PROHIBITED SUBSTANCE LIST**

We consider every positive drug test a violation. You are required to avoid the use of foods or products that may produce a positive test for drugs or ethyl alcohol. Some examples:

Poppy seeds	Allergy or Cold Medications
Diet Pills	Cough Syrup and other liquid medications
Non-Alcoholic Beer and Wine	Food and other Ingestible Products
Mouthwash and Breath Strips	Hand sanitizers
Hygiene Products containing alcohol	Solvents and Lacquers

## **APPROVED SUBSTANCE LIST**

### PAIN

Acetaminophen 500 mg, 1-2 tablets  
Every 4-6 hours  
Ibuprofen 200-800 mg, every 4-6  
as needed  
Aspirin  
Excedrin Migraine

### ANTACIDS

Zantac  
Pepcid  
Prilosec  
Tums/Rolaid

### COUGH/COLD

Delsym (non-alcoholic/pediatric)  
Mucinex

### ALLERGIES

Claritin  
Allegra  
Benadryl

### STOMACH

Mylanta  
Milk of Magnesia  
Pepto Bismol

### FLU SYMPTOMS

Theraflu  
Alka-Seltzer

### JOINT PAIN

Tylenol Arthritis  
Ben Gay muscle rub & thermal patches  
Icy Hot muscle rub & thermal patches

### VITAMINS

Multivitamins  
Prenatal vitamins

# VTC MENTOR PROGRAM AND MONTHLY FORUM

As a participant in VTC you will be paired with a fellow veteran who will be your mentor. Your mentor is not an officer of the court. He or she is a volunteer from the Columbia Basin Veterans Center and is your advocate, friend and partner throughout your participation in VTC. You will be asked several questions about your background and military experience to help the mentor coordinator match you with a Mentor with whom you will feel comfortable working with. You must understand that your participation in the Veterans Court Mentor Program requires you – not your mentor - to take responsibility for your success.

Weekly contact with your mentor by meeting face-to-face, phone or video-chat, and attending the monthly Veterans Forum dinner and presentations with your fellow VTC participants and other mentors will significantly improve your overall experience in VTC. The presentations are designed to educate and inform you about topics and resources that are relevant to you as a Veteran. You may be surprised to find members of the VTC team there as well, showing their support for you and your efforts.

Your mentor may also appear with you at your required Court hearings and will report on your progress. Your mentor will not disclose things you have shared in confidence unless there is a concern about your safety. If you are failing to meet any of the requirements of VTC, your mentor will strongly encourage you to immediately meet with your VTC Case Manager. It is your responsibility to initiate the dialogue, not your mentor's. When you step up, you will find your mentor in your corner, advocating for you.

If you encounter challenges with your mentor, please let him or her know and try to work it out. If it is clear the two of you won't be able to work well together, we will find another mentor for you to work with. The decision to reassign a mentor is solely at the discretion of the VTC team. Remember that your mentor is dedicated to making sure that "no veteran is left behind." That you are not left behind!



# SANCTIONS & INCENTIVES

## Sanctions

In the event of a violation, the VTC will consider the specific circumstances and most effective way to handle it. VTC uses a sanction matrix which represents the increasing expectations that the team has for you as you progress through the program phases. This means that you will receive more severe sanctions for rule violations in the latter phases of the program because you have had time to become accustomed to the rules and should be living your life in a way that is structured and stable.

Potential sanctions:

- Reflective essays
- Increased frequency in UA testing
- SCRAM (alcohol intake monitoring anklet) and/or GPS device
- Community Service hours
- Daily reporting to VTC office
- Work Crew
- Jail
- Termination from VTC

## Incentives

The VTC Team may award incentives for complying with program rules, progress towards your goals and special accomplishments. Incentives may include, but are not limited to:

- Recognition by the judge
- Early excusal from court (Rocket Docket)
- Phase advancement
- Reduced frequency of court appearances
- Certificates of achievement
- Food items
- Movie tickets
- Gift certificates
- Reduced sentence/probation
- Skip-a-court-date pass
- Other token gift items

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## What happens when I “phase up”?

When you have met all requirements of a particular phase, you will be given an essay writing prompt to complete. You will complete your writing assignment and review it with your Case Manager *prior to* your phase-up date. The final decision regarding phasing up is made by the VTC team. On the day of your phase up, you will read your essay in court. You will receive a certificate to recognize your successful completion of each phase.

## What if I have contact with Law Enforcement?

**You must report all police contact to your Case Manager within 4 hours of contact.** Police contact includes any situation in which police officers have asked you for your name. It includes new arrests and citations. It also includes situations in which you have been involved including being a witness to an accident or a crime. If you learn that you have a warrant for your arrest or are the subject of an investigation, you must report such instances to your Case Manager immediately and take immediate action to resolve the issue. If you have police contact after business hours or on a weekend, you must leave a voicemail for your Case Manager within four hours of the contact. The VTC team has access to police records and will become aware of your contact. You will be sanctioned for not being forthcoming.

## Am I allowed to travel?

If you need to travel outside of Benton and Franklin Counties, you must first submit a travel request. You are expected to be in attendance at court, case management and treatment regularly. Therefore, every effort should be made to plan out of town travel around your commitments. You may obtain a travel request form from your Case Manager, or you may complete the electronic form on our website. You must submit the request with enough time in advance for it to be reviewed and approved. Travel outside of Benton and Franklin Counties **is not authorized** unless you have been notified of an approved travel request.

## What is “Rocket Docket”?

When you are on Rocket Docket, you are excused from Court immediately after your case is called. The VTC team may decide to place you on Rocket Docket to recognize your compliance or some other accomplishment.

## Where can I dispose of unneeded prescription medications?

Below is a list of local medication disposal sites. It is important that you do not “stockpile” medications. We recommend that you dispose of old, unneeded medications. This makes it easier to manage current medications.

Kennewick Police Department – 211 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Kennewick.

May dispose of pills and patches, they do not accept liquids/needles/creams.

Richland Police Department – 871 George Washington Way, Richland.

They do not accept any liquids.

West Richland Police Department - 3805 W. Van Giesen Street, West Richland.

West Richland residents only; Prescription medication only; May dispose of pills and patches, they do not accept liquids/needles/creams.

Pasco PD – 525 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Pasco.

May dispose of pills and patches, they do not accept liquids/needles

Prosser Memorial Emergency Department - 723 Memorial Street, Prosser.

May dispose of pills and patches, they do not accept liquids/needles

## What happens if I am terminated from VTC?

The judge may *terminate* you from the program for non-compliance, new criminal charges, bench warrants, drug testing violations, or other issues which affect your ability to be successful in the program. There are several grounds for possible termination:

- New criminal charges or conviction(s)
- Failure to comply with the Court program and requirements
- Not participating in the program
- Participating in inappropriate behavior or conduct
- Demonstrating a lack of progress
- Altering a drug test
- Violence or threats of violence directed at VTC staff, treatment staff, other participants in the program, or other clients of the treatment providers.
- Active warrants

A single relapse may not necessarily be grounds for termination, however, a continual inability to meet your treatment goals will result in termination.

If you withdraw or are terminated from VTC while on a SOC for a misdemeanor or gross misdemeanor, you will appear before the Court for a revocation hearing. The hearing will be based solely on the police reports that you stipulated to when you entered VTC. You will not have the opportunity to testify or call witnesses. If you withdraw or are terminated from VTC while on a SOC for a felony, your case may be transferred back to Superior Court where it will then be adjudicated.

## May I bring my child(ren), spouse, friend, etc. to court and case management with me?

The courtroom is open to the public. You are welcome and encouraged to bring a support person with you. Case management appointments are for the participant only. Children, friends, spouse, etc. are not allowed to attend case management appointments. They are welcome to wait in the hallway as long as they are not disruptive. Children are allowed in the courtroom unless they become a distraction to others or disruptive to the court process. Children may not be left alone in the hallway while you attend court or case management.

# RESOURCES

Obtain a Community Resource Guide in the VTC office for even more local resources.

## Crisis Services

- **National Suicide Prevention Hotline**  
1-800-273-8255, option 1
- **Military OneSource (MOS)**  
1-800-342-9647
- [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net)
- **Lourdes Health Crisis Services**  
500 N. Morain, Kennewick, Suite 1250  
(509) 783-0500
- **National Text line**  
Text: CONNECT to 741741

## Employment Assistance

- **Work Source Columbia Basin**  
815 N Kellogg St, Suite D, Kennewick  
(509) 734-5949  
**Hours:** M-F | 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
[www.go2worksource.com](http://www.go2worksource.com)

## Financial Assistance

- **Veterans Relief Fund**  
**Department of Human Services (DHS)**  
7102 W. Okanogan Pl., Ste. 201, Kennewick  
(509) 783-5284  
**NOTE:** Bring a copy of your DD-214 to your 1st visit if you are able.
- **VFW Richland**  
**1369 George Washington Way, Richland**  
(509) 946-9411  
**Hours:** 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month 1700-1900  
**NOTE:** Bring a copy of your DD-214 to your 1st visit if you are able.
- **American Legion**  
See VTC office for the post directory

- **Veteran's Opportunity Center**  
1600 N. 20<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite A, Pasco  
**Hours:** Tuesdays & Thursdays 1000-1600

## **Housing Assistance**

- **Housing Relief Fund**  
**Department of Human Services (DHS)**  
7102 W. Okanogan Pl., Ste. 201, Kennewick  
(509) 783-5284  
**Hours:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 0800-1130 & 1300-1630  
**NOTE:** Bring a copy of your DD-214 to your 1st visit if you are able.
- **Blue Mountain Action Council**  
720 W Court Street Downstairs. Pasco  
(509) 412-5204 or (509) 440-3229  
**Website:** [www.bmacww.org](http://www.bmacww.org)
- **HUD-VASH Program**  
825 Jadwin Avenue, Ste 250, Richland  
509-946-1020 ext. 6379  
[www.va.gov/homeless/hud-vash](http://www.va.gov/homeless/hud-vash)

## **Medical Services**

- **Richland (WA) Community Based Outpatient Clinic**  
825 Jadwin Ave., Ste. 250, Federal Bldg., 2nd Floor, Richland  
(509) 946-1020  
Fax: 509-946-0827
- **Walla Walla VA Clinic**  
77 Wainwright Dr., Walla Walla  
(509) 525-5200  
[www.va.gov/health.vamc](http://www.va.gov/health.vamc)

## **Support Groups**

- **Combat Veterans and Partners**  
(509) 783-9168

## **General Veterans Services**

- **Blue Mountain Action Council**  
720 W Court Street Downstairs. Pasco  
(509) 412-5204 or (509) 440-3229  
**Website:** [www.bmacww.org](http://www.bmacww.org)

# CONCLUSION

The Benton County District Court Veteran Therapeutic Court was developed to help you achieve stability in your life. The program is designed to promote self-sufficiency and to return you to the community as a productive and responsible citizen. The VTC team are present to guide and assist you, but the final responsibility is yours. Please take time to review this handbook from time to time, as it will help you understand the expectation as you move through the program.

We hope this handbook has been helpful and answered your questions. Please remember that there will be program changes and you are responsible for following all rules and requirements as they evolve. If you have additional questions or concerns about the VTC program, please contact the Therapeutic Courts office at (509) 735-8476 ext. 3353.





## Appendix A

### Community Service Opportunities:

1. Adopt Shelter Animal Pets (ASAP) – (509) 416-6637  
Located at Petco: 2927 Queensgate Drive, Richland or 4012 W. 27<sup>th</sup> Ave., Kennewick
2. Benton City Food Bank - (509) 588-5454 - 712 10<sup>th</sup> Ave., Benton City
3. Columbia Basin Veterans Center – (509) 545-6558 - 1620 N. 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Pasco
4. Dayspring Ministries – (509) 582-1011 - 2625 W. Bruneau Pl., Kennewick
5. Fields of Grace - (509) 528-4067 - 1153 Gage Blvd., Richland
6. Kennewick Food Bank - (509) 586-0688 - 424 W. Deschutes Ave. Kennewick
7. Pet Over Population Prevention - (509) 943-4722 - 524B Railroad St., Richland
8. Prevent Homeless Pets – (509) 497-1133 - 812 Della Ave., Benton City
9. Retired Senior Volunteer Program – (509) 946-4645 - 2139 Van Giesen Street, Richland
10. Richland Food Bank - (509) 943-2795 - 321 Wellsian Way, Richland
11. Salvation Army:  
Richland: 1219 Thayer Dr. Richland WA, 509-943-7977  
Pasco: #1 303 W. Clark St. Pasco WA, 509-547-3602  
Pasco: #2 310 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. Pasco WA, 509-547-2138
12. Tri-City Union Gospel Mission - (509) 547-2112 - 112 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Pasco
13. United Way of Benton & Franklin Counties – (509) 783-4102 - 401 N. Young Street, Kennewick
14. Other 501(c)3 location with prior approval of the Therapeutic Courts Coordinator.  
You may call 211 to learn about other opportunities.

Appendix B

**COMMUNITY SERVICE TIMESHEET**

PARTICIPANT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

WORKSITE: \_\_\_\_\_

(NAME)

(ADDRESS)

(TELEPHONE)

Date	Hours	Supervisor (print)	Supervisor signature

WORK DUTIES PERFORMED:

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FEEDBACK/COMMENTS:

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PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### Prohibited Substance/Abstinence Contract

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to abstain from (not use) any form of mood-altering chemical, including alcohol (ethanol), while I am a participant in a Therapeutic Court Program.

I understand that use of prohibited substances is not allowed. I understand that most drug use is illegal and not allowed. I understand that prescribed drugs should only be taken as prescribed to me by a health care professional. I understand that I am subject to drug testing to verify compliance with this contract.

I AGREE:

1. To not ingest any substances off the Prohibited Substance List (attached) or any other substance that contains alcohol (ethanol) or illegal drugs.
2. To not ingest any street drugs or synthetic drugs (E.G. Spice, K2).
3. To not exhibit drug seeking behavior (E.G. recurrent prescription losses, aggressive complaining about the need for higher doses.)
4. To not alter the route of ingestion (E.G. injecting, biting, or crushing oral formulations.)
5. To be honest with the Therapeutic court team at all times. I will tell the truth at all times, and understand that omission (leaving something out) is a form of lying.
6. To communicate with my Case Manager or other program staff if I feel at risk of relapse.

**It is YOUR responsibility to avoid exposure to products and substances that contain alcohol (ethanol). It is YOUR responsibility to know what is contained in the products you use, consume, or are exposed to BEFORE you use or expose yourself to them. Many household and industrial products contain alcohol (ethanol), even though the label does not say so.**

**REMEMBER, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT GOES INTO OR ON YOUR BODY. WHEN IN DOUBT, DON'T USE, CONSUME OR APPLY.**

**I have read and understand that any positive drug or alcohol test will be considered a violation. Failure to adhere to this contract will result in sanctions or termination from the program.**

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Participant

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Date