

## **MIAMI-DADE** **VETERANS TREATMENT COURT**

### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The Miami-Dade Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) is a problem-solving court designed to offer treatment in lieu of incarceration for veterans whose substance use disorders and/or mental illness appear to have contributed significantly to their arrest. VTC is a pre- and post-adjudicatory, pre-trial, voluntary program lasting 14 to 18 months. VTC seeks to provide a means to divert eligible veteran participants from the traditional criminal justice system and offer them support and rehabilitation through comprehensive substance abuse and/or mental health treatment, education, vocational programs, and community resource referrals for housing and transportation, all while being judicially monitored. VTC is made up of an extensive collaboration of dedicated partners, including criminal justice, federal veterans' agencies, and local community veterans' organizations. The program provides a means to successfully habilitate veterans by diverting them from the traditional criminal justice system and providing them with the tools needed to lead a productive, law-abiding life.

### **Benefits of the VTC Program**



#### **Dismissal or reduction of a Veteran's charges**

In most cases, successful completion of the VTC program results in having the original charge(s) dismissed or reduced. In other cases, depending upon a number of factors affecting a Veteran's entry into the program, a no-jail or no-probation sentence will be imposed. Defense attorney will be able to discuss the particulars of the case.



#### **A second chance**

The VTC program offers veterans the chance to move forward in their lives with the new skills and tools they have learned as result of treatment and supervision.



#### **A healthy lifestyle**

The VTC program will help veterans take control of their lives in many ways. In addition to learning coping skills for how not to abuse drugs and alcohol and committing crimes, veterans will learn how to maintain a healthy diet, reduce stress, become gainfully employed, rebuild family relationships, and become a productive member of the community.

### **VTC Provides Veterans with:**

- ✓ Inpatient/outpatient treatment
- ✓ Mental health counseling
- ✓ Substance abuse counseling
- ✓ Dual diagnosis treatment
- ✓ Psychiatric appointments
- ✓ Trauma counseling (VA)
- ✓ Case Management
- ✓ Regular and random drug and alcohol testing
- ✓ SCRAM/GPS monitoring
- ✓ Emergency housing and/or transitional housing placement
- ✓ Application for VA Benefits
- ✓ Daily check-in system (call-in)
- ✓ Mentorship with fellow veterans
- ✓ Participation in 12-step self-help groups (AA/NA), Refuge Recovery, Smart Recovery
- ✓ Educational/vocational/employment programs
- ✓ School or other vocational services
- ✓ Job placement services
- ✓ Couples and family counseling referrals
- ✓ Recreational activities
- ✓ Public assistance/Medicaid

## **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

### **Minimum Eligibility Criteria**

An individual must:

- Be 18 years or older
- Have served in the United States Military
- Reside in either Miami-Dade or Broward County
- Agree to fully engage and participate in court and treatment requirements
- Suffer from military service-related mental illness, traumatic brain injury, and/or moderate or severe substance use disorder
- Be clinically eligible: Screened as either High Risk and High Need or Low Risk and High Need per the Risk and Needs Triage (RANT) assessment
- Be legally eligible

Qualifying offenses include third degree felonies (F3), with victim approval if applicable. Second degree felonies (F2) that are non-violent will be staffed for appropriateness by the VTC team.

### **Exclusion Criteria**

- Screened as either Low Risk and Low Need or High Risk and Low Need per the Risk and Needs Triage (RANT)
- Have prior violent felony convictions
- Have a history of sex crimes and/or crimes against children

Disqualifying offenses include first degree felonies (F1), life felonies, and cases where there is no victim approval.

## **Referral Process**

1. The VTC referral packet, which includes the following documents: referral form, basic program information, eligibility criteria, various releases of information (ROIs), and a DD214 request form (military verification) must be completed in its entirety.
2. Defense attorney provides completed VTC referral packet to VTC Intake Specialist (in-person or via email). The VTC referral packet can also be emailed by the defense attorney to the email listed at the bottom of the referral packet (VTC Intake Specialist and VTC Coordinator will receive it).
3. Intake Specialist forwards to the State for legal eligibility.
4. Intake Specialist meets with the defendant to conduct the RANT to determine clinical eligibility. A request for military verification (DD214) is also submitted to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC).
5. If the defendant's military status is confirmed, and they are deemed clinically and legally eligible, the case will be placed on the VTC (Div 57) calendar. The Judge and State will make the final decision to bring the case into Veterans Treatment Court.