Veterans Therapeutic Court

7122 West Okanogan Place, Ste. A110
Kennewick, WA 99336
509-735-8476 ext. 3353

Standard Operating Procedure

Updated August 2026

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Table of Contents

Introduction to Veterans Therapeutic Court 4
- Mission Statement 4
- Program Overview 4
- Goals of Veterans Court 5

The VTC Team 6
Eligibility Requirements 7
- Legal Eligibility 7
- Clinical Eligibility 8
- Other Disqualifying Factors 8

Acceptance into Veterans Court 8
Requirements of Participation 9
- Court Information 9
- Court Attendance 9
- Missed Court Appearances 10
- Courtroom Behavior 10
- Dress appropriately 10
- Community Service 11
- Maintain Contact with Your Mentor 11
- Case Management/Supervision 11
- Treatment Protocol 11
- Self-Help Meetings 12
- Drug Testing 12
- Alcohol Monitoring 13
- Prescription Medication Policy 13
- Prohibited Substance Policy 14
- Clean and Sober Housing 16
- Home Visits 16
- Participant Relationships 17
- Travel Policy 17
- Law Enforcement Contact 18

New Offenses & Charges 18
Termination Protocol 18
Re-entry into Therapeutic Courts 19
Incentives, Sanctions, and Service Adjustments 19
Program Phases 20
- Phase 1: Orientation and Stabilization 20
- Phase 2: Action 21
- Phase 3: Prosocial Habitation 22
- Phase 4: Life Skills 22
- Phase 5: Recovery Management 23

Graduation 24
VTC Mentor Program and Monthly Forum 25
Resources 26
Conclusion 27

Introduction to Veterans Therapeutic Court

As Americans, we must keep in mind the enduring debt we owe our country's military veterans and the serious challenges they face. Substance abuse and psychological health problems often go untreated which sometimes lead to criminal or other destructive behaviors. Many of these issues can be connected to the trauma of combat and other trauma-related experiences. Veterans Courts are designed to do just that, by meeting the unique needs of veterans involved in the criminal justice system.

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.

Veterans Court is not a get out of jail free card. The logic behind these programs is to address the underlying issues that cause criminal behavior. Recovery from substance use, mental illness, and psychological health problems is an ongoing commitment that doesn't stop after Veterans Court. This is your opportunity to create a new life for yourself free of involvement with the criminal justice system.

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 transform the lives of justice involved veterans by reframing the traditional legal process through treatment and mentorship.

Program 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. 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.

To enter Veterans Court, you must sign a Stipulated Order of Continuance (SOC) which means that the case is held in a pre-trial status for 24 months while you participate in VTC. If you successfully complete the program, your charge(s) will be dismissed or amended to a lesser charge. Your attorney will discuss this with you in more detail.

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 tell the truth**, you will be able to overcome any challenges and setbacks you encounter to successfully complete and graduate from this program. In many cases, graduation from VTC results in your charge(s) being dismissed!

VTC Requirements:

- Regular court appearances and regular appointments with your VTC Probation Officer
- Compliance with your treatment plan including
    - Mental Health Counseling
    - Medication management
    - Any other treatment recommendations
    - Substance abuse treatment if a history of substance abuse is indicated
- Random drug testing
- Attendance at monthly forums
- Completion of community service hours
- Regular contact with your Veteran Mentor

Goals of Veterans Court

- Eliminate participant contacts with the criminal justice system.
- Reconnect with fellow veterans.
- Build a robust and stable support system to help with continued sobriety and mental wellness beyond Veterans Court.
- Engage Veterans in the life-long process of recovery designed to help them 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.
- Reduce costs associated with criminal case processing, incarceration, and hospitalizations.

We understand the stigma that is associated with addiction and mental illness. We know how difficult it can be to ask for help. We know the barriers and obstacles encountered with the VA. We understand the challenges you face. Veterans Court was designed specifically to address the unique needs of justice involved veterans.

By providing intense supervision, access to veteran specific resources, assistance navigating the VA, connecting you with a support system of veterans, and engaging in a process of recovery, you are more likely to achieve and maintain stability, sobriety, and employment which helps ensure you avoid future involvement in the criminal justice system.

The VTC Team

The Therapeutic Court team oversees the operations of Veterans Therapeutic Court. The team works together to encourage the success of program participants by providing close monitoring and support.

Title	Name	Contact information
Judge	Hon. Dan Kathren	c/o Ryan Washburn
Therapeutic Court Coordinator	Ryan Washburn, MSW	(509) 735-8476 ext. 3417 Ryan.Washburn@co.benton.wa.us
Assistant Coordinator	Jennifer Testerman	(509) 735-8476 ext. 2608 Jennifer.Testerman@co.benton.wa.us
Probation Officer	James Torres, MSW	(509) 735-8476 ext. 3755 James.Torres@co.benton.wa.us
Defense Attorney	Catherine Harkins	(509) 783-5551 Catherine@qtmlegal.com
Deputy Prosecuting Attorney	Annie Chau	(509) 735-3591 Annie.Chau@co.benton.wa.us
Therapeutic Court Clerk	Katie Davies	(509) 735-8476 ext. 3353 Katie.Davies@co.benton.wa.us
Mentor Coordinator	Steve Lehto, USN Columbia Basin Veterans Center	918-520-1317 Steve@columbiabasinvetcenter.org
VA Treatment Liaison	Diane Goodnight, LICSW	509-593-9443 Diane.Goodnight@va.gov
Treatment Representative	Stacy Wells, SUDP Merit Resources	(509) 579-0738 swells@meritresources.org
Law Enforcement Liaison	Lt. Justin Gerry Benton County Sheriff's Office	(509) 735-6555 ext. 3380 Justin.Gerry@co.benton.wa.us

Benton County District Court
7122 W. Okanogan Place, Ste. A110
Kennewick, WA 99336
Phone: (509) 735-8476, ext. 3353
Fax: (509) 222-3758
www.bentoncountywa.gov (Judicial Services → Veterans Court)

Eligibility Requirements

Veterans Court is a voluntary program. In order to participate, the applicant must:

- ☒ Previously served or currently serving in the US Armed Forces (Active-Duty, Reserves, or National Guard) regardless of discharge.
- ☒ have pending criminal misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor or felony matter(s) in Benton County
- ☒ be 18 years of age or older
- ☒ be legally competent
- ☒ be insured (privately, VA Healthcare, Tri Care, Medicare, Medicaid) or Medicaid-eligible and complete Medicaid application within three days of being accepted into VTC
- ☒ be free of active warrants or able to resolve them quickly
- ☒ agree to comply with treatment and their recommendations (including medications)
- ☒ agree to be compliant with any court orders
- ☒ agree to waive certain legal rights under the advice of an attorney.

Legal Eligibility

RCW 02.30.030 authorizes and establishes the determination of persons not eligible for Therapeutic Courts. ***Applicants are not eligible to participate in Therapeutic Courts if they are currently charged with or have been previously convicted of:***

- ⊗ A serious violent offense as defined in RCW 9.94A.030(46) or sex offense as defined in RCW 9.94A.030(47)
- ⊗ Vehicular homicide or an equivalent out-of-state offense
- ⊗ An offense alleging substantial bodily harm or great bodily harm as defined in RCW 9A.04.110, or death of another person.

The following offenses are also ineligible for Therapeutic Courts:

- ⊗ Offenses alleging intentional discharge, threat to discharge, or attempt to discharge a firearm
- ⊗ Felony DUI (regardless of the prong it was charged under)

A defendant charged with Assault in the Second degree is not automatically ineligible per RCW 2.30.030. The referral will be reviewed for eligibility on a case-by-case basis and may be transferred following special findings. Victim approval is required, firearms may not be involved or used in furtherance of the crime, and the State will take into consideration, including but not limited to, the severity of the harm as well prior history.

Additionally, a defendant who has a prior conviction of Assault in the Second Degree regardless of the prong may be eligible. This will be reviewed for eligibility on a case-by-case basis.

Defendants with active warrants are ineligible for VTC until they can be resolved. If a defendant is referred with an active warrant, the VTC team will send a rejection notification to the defense attorney informing them that their defendant may be referred again once the warrant(s) are resolved.

The Deputy Prosecuting Attorney will screen each case to determine legal eligibility based upon the referred case, criminal history, victim input, and law enforcement input.

Clinical Eligibility

Participants must have a diagnosed mental illness or substance use disorder.

Participants must agree to be in treatment, take any and all prescribed medication in the manner prescribed, and follow all treatment recommendations made by their treatment provider.

Other Disqualifying Factors

Mental illness or disorder with particularly violent manifestations which creates unreasonable risk to VTC staff or participants.

Dementia, delirium, developmental disabilities, or severe brain injuries are the primary diagnosis.

Acceptance into Veterans Court

You must be referred to Veterans Court. Anyone can make a referral to VTC, including a prosecutor, defense attorney, law enforcement, judge, probation, jail staff, or member of the community. Defendants may even refer themselves. Referral packets can be obtained from the Veterans Therapeutic Court office. 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 accepted.

Path to acceptance:

If you are accepted to VTC you will work with your VTC Probation Officer 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.

Compliance with treatment will be closely monitored by the VTC team. You are required to authorize all treatment providers (including doctors and counselors) to disclose information about you to the Therapeutic Court team, including any noncompliance with your treatment plan, such as missed appointments, substance use or failure to take medications as prescribed. The purpose of these disclosures is to provide support for you in your program as well as quickly detect any noncompliance and address the situation promptly and effectively so that negative events are avoided.

Requirements of Participation

First and foremost, Veterans Court is a treatment court, and participants must adhere to their personalized treatment plans, including taking mental health medication if prescribed, attending group and individual counseling, and attending classes.

All VTC participants are supervised by a Probation Officer from the VTC Team. Participants must abide by any and all conditions in their SOC.

After entering a Stipulated Order of Continuance participants must:

1. Immediately report to the Therapeutic Court office to meet with their assigned Probation Officer.
2. Reside in clean and sober housing within Benton or Franklin County which has been approved by VTC. Participants must report any change of address to the Therapeutic Court office within 24 hours.
3. Not socialize with individuals who use drugs and/or alcohol.
4. Not go to dispensaries, head shops, bars, or establishments where the sale of alcohol are the primary enterprise.
5. Attend all court hearings and other appointments as scheduled or required by treatment or probation.
6. Commit no criminal law violations and report any law enforcement contact to the Probation Officer within 48 hours.
7. Take all mental health medications as prescribed. Any changes in prescribed medications (dosage adjustments, additions, or discontinuations) must be reported to VTC within 48 hours.
8. Attend all counseling, therapy, and support groups as ordered.
9. Maintain regular contact with Veteran Mentor.
10. Attend mandatory monthly Veteran Forums.
11. Submit to random drug and alcohol testing as ordered by VTC.
12. Comply with all other assigned treatment program requirements.
13. Sign releases of information for VTC with any treatment provider or hospital that the participant is treated by during their participation in VTC.
14. Show up. Do the work. Always tell the truth.

Court Information

The Therapeutic Court office is located on the first floor of the Justice Center. Weekly Court hearings are held every ***Tuesday at 10:00am in Courtroom 5***. All participants are expected to arrive and be seated in the Courtroom no later than 09:50am and remain until excused by the court.

Court Attendance

Attendance at court is mandatory on any date you are given notice to appear. You are expected to be on time and remain until the end of the docket.

Learning from other participants is an important dynamic of Veterans Court. Participants are expected to listen and learn from everyone on the docket.

Participants arriving after the docket has begun are subject to two (2) additional hours community service due by their next court date.

Be prepared to share your successes and setbacks with the Court during your hearing. Remember – HONESTY IS ALWAYS THE BEST PRACTICE and allows the team to celebrate and support you.

Court sessions are not the appropriate time to have lengthy conversations with any of the team members unless you have made arrangements to do so prior to court. You must call or set up an appointment.

Missed Court Appearances

If you miss a court appearance it is your responsibility to contact your Probation Officer and defense attorney. If you have been issued a bench warrant it is your responsibility to turn yourself in or ask for a warrant review hearing.

Courtroom Behavior

Weekly court status hearings are an integral part of VTC. While the "court" aspect of VTC is more relaxed and informal than regular court, it is still a formal court proceeding and a level of decorum is expected. As such, there are rules and protocols that must be followed:

- Cell phones and all other electronic devices must be turned off or they will be confiscated.
- Talking and side conversations are not allowed during court proceedings.
- Eating and drinking is not allowed in the Courtroom.
- No sleeping in the courtroom.

Violent, threatening, or inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated. Inappropriate behavior will result in sanctions and could result in termination from the program. Threats towards other participants, staff, or team members may result in new criminal charges.

Dress appropriately

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 skirts shorter than 3 inches above the knee;
- No clothing that promotes drugs or alcohol;
- Clothing 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.

You are expected to maintain appropriate grooming. **Attention to personal hygiene is important and is required**. If you are attending Court straight from work, make sure that you have a clean change of clothes with you. If you need help with hygiene items, please speak with a member of the team.

Community Service

Community service is a very fulfilling part of VTC. You are expected to have a plan to complete your community service hours before you enter phase 2. Each participant must complete a minimum of 20 hours of community service in each phase (P2-P5) for a total of 80 hours.

Community Service imposed as a sanction due to non-compliance does not count towards regular community service hours.

Community service must be completed at pre-approved locations. All community service must be completed through registered non-profit organizations in good standing with the Secretary of State. If a participant would like to volunteer at a location that is not on the approved list, it must first be approved by the Coordinator. The participant must provide the name of the organization and a point of contact. The Coordinator will verify the location, the work to be completed, and explain the expectations. Community service hours submitted from an unapproved location will not be accepted.

Maintain Contact with Your Mentor

A unique component of VTC is the commitment from local Veterans' programs and organizations to provide a mentor that you will choose. **Your VTC mentor is a Veteran of the Armed Services** who has committed to volunteer a significant amount of time to you and the court. Your mentor will provide you advice, share personal experiences, give guidance, and make recommendations to assist in your journey. Your mentor will attend Court hearings when possible. See page 21 for more information on the Mentor Program.

Case Management/Supervision

Case management is centered around the needs of the participant and follows the strengths-based model which involves assisting participants to examine and identify their own strengths and assets to shape a sustainable recovery plan. It is also the community supervision component to the Therapeutic Court program.

Case management and supervision functions:

(1) help the participant define existing strengths and establish specific goals;
(2) connect participant to treatment and other community-based services to assist in employment, housing, education, social services, etc. while assuring continuity as the participant progresses through treatment and program completion;
(3) monitor and report participant progress in treatment;
(4) support the participant by identifying problems, and advocating for the participant with legal, treatment, social service, and medical and mental health systems;
(5) monitor urinalysis, breath analysis or other chemical testing;
(6) monitor phase progress.

Treatment Protocol

All Veterans Court participants are required to participate and engage in mental health counseling and substance use disorder treatment if a history of substance use exists. Participants will receive treatment from licensed providers approved by the court that adhere to the best practice standards of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals.

Participants with a substance use disorder will be referred to Merit Resource Services, the VA, or Lourdes Counseling for treatment.

All participants are required to complete either Strength at Home, Moral Reconation Therapy (MRT) or Seeking Safety in addition to any other treatment recommendations.

Treatment providers will facilitate scheduling of inpatient treatment as required for Therapeutic Court participants and engage in care coordination with other service providers such as Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) or Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) as necessary. Some participants may be required to complete more than one inpatient treatment program if deemed clinically appropriate by the treatment provider.

Participants must sign a release of information allowing the exchange of information between the provider and the court regarding the participant's progress.

Self-Help Meetings

Participants with a substance use disorder are required to attend and participate in self-help meetings and obtain a sponsor. Participants must also bring proof of sober support meeting attendance to case management meetings and to the SUD treatment provider upon request. Failure to provide verification of meeting attendance may result in a response from the court. Online meetings will not count toward your weekly meeting requirements, but participants are not prohibited from attending.

Drug Testing

Veterans Court participants are required to be drug and alcohol free. Drug and alcohol testing is a key component to the Veterans Court program. All participants are required to submit to regular, random drug and alcohol testing regardless of substance use history. This includes, but is not limited to urine, breath, saliva, and sweat patch.

Testing is completed on a random basis and every collected sample is fully observed. If the results from the rapid test are positive for one or more substances, it is considered presumptive positive and sent to a certified laboratory for confirmation testing. Sanctions will not be imposed until the court receives either confirmation from the lab that the sample was positive for substance(s) or the participant admits to using substances. Dishonesty will result in more severe consequences.

Test results are used to determine whether the participant is complying with program requirements and will not, under any circumstances, be used as evidence of a new crime. However, **test results may be provided to other probation or parole officers if the participant is under community supervision with another jurisdiction.**

All drug testing for Therapeutic Courts is facilitated through Merit Resource Services at their Pasco office located at 1906 North 20th Ave. Each participant will be assigned a unique identification number. It is the participant's responsibility to check the drug test notification system seven days a week, including holidays and weekends, unless instructed otherwise by the Coordinator, Probation Officer, or Judge, to determine if they are required to provide a drug test that day. The Drug Test Notification System is updated each morning at 5:00am.

Merit's Weekday drug testing hours are 8:00am to 6:00pm. Females cannot test between 11:30-12:30 and males cannot test between 2:00-3:00 for lunch breaks. Weekend and holiday drug testing hours are 8:00am to 1:00pm (does not close for lunch). Drug Test Notification System phone number is (509)402-4595 and the website is https://meritresources.reliatrax.net/pub/testingtimes.

Participants may also be required to submit to a portable breath test, saliva test, and/or urine analysis testing upon request of any Therapeutic Court Staff at their discretion. Participants are required to submit to drug testing by their treatment provider at any time at their discretion as well.

Participants who refuse to provide a drug test sample, miss a drug test, tamper, alter or dilute a drug test are reported to the VTC team. Refused, missed, altered, and dilute drug tests are considered a positive test, and a violation of the SOC. Violations will be addressed by the Veterans Court team. Positive, missed, refused, dilute, or tampered drug tests will also result in the loss of a participants court clean time.

Participants who provide a presumptive positive drug test, refuse a drug test, or miss a drug test are required to appear on the next VTC docket to address potential issues regardless of what phase they are in.

Alcohol Monitoring

Participants with DUI or Physical Control charges will be placed on portable or continuous alcohol monitoring upon entering their SOC. This will be in addition to regular drug testing and statutorily required alcohol monitoring such as an ignition interlock device. Any participant may be placed on alcohol monitoring if additional accountability is deemed necessary.

Therapeutic Courts will cover the cost of court ordered alcohol monitoring as long as funding allows.

Prescription Medication Policy

1. Mood Altering Medications

   As a general rule, participants in Benton County Therapeutic Courts are expected to be drug and alcohol free, including the use of mood-altering prescription medications.

   Therapeutic Court participants with chronic pain or other conditions requiring ongoing use of prescription opioid, amphetamine, or benzodiazepine medications may not be able to participate in the Therapeutic Court program. In order to participate in Therapeutic Courts, participants may need to speak to their prescriber regarding alternatives to current medications. This will be discussed with your Probation Officer.

   If participants opt into Therapeutic Courts and then experience an episode of acute pain or other condition requiring a prescription medication, the prescriber must complete a Prescription Medication form and fax it directly to the Therapeutic Court office. The medical provider will be asked to indicate on the form that they are aware that participant is in Benton County Therapeutic Courts and that participants are expected to remain drug-free except in extreme instances.

   The use of any and all cannabis, THC, or CBD related substances is **strictly prohibited** while participating in Benton County Therapeutic Courts even with a medical prescription or authorization.

2. Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD)

   Benton County Therapeutic Courts supports Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) in the form of Methadone, Buprenorphine or Naltrexone prescribed by a doctor and used as prescribed as a part of a participant's SUD treatment plan.

3. Non-Mental Health Prescription Medication

Participants may take non-mental health medication while participating in Therapeutic Courts. However, there may be some medications that are not appropriate for the program. Participants may be asked to discuss other treatment options with their physician or may be prohibited from continued participation in the program.

Non-mental health prescription medication must be taken as prescribed (dose and period of time).

Participants must inform the Therapeutic Court Team of any non-mental health medications or prescriptions received.

Participants will request non-narcotic medications when medically appropriate.

All new medications and prescriptions may be subject to review by the Therapeutic Court Team. Participants must inform their Probation Officer of any new prescriptions within 24 hours.

Depending upon each individual participant's treatment plan, the medications or prescriptions may not be approved for continued use. If the participant insists on taking non-approved medications, the participant may be subject to sanctions or removal from the Therapeutic Court Program.

4. Release of Information

   Participants are required to sign a Release on Information for all medical, dental, and mental health care providers.

Prohibited Substance Policy

All Therapeutic Court Participants are required to remain drug and alcohol free and are not allowed to use any form of mood-altering chemicals.

- Participants will not possess, use, distribute, sell, or have under their control any illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia.
- Participants will not possess and/or consume alcohol or marijuana in any form. This includes non-alcoholic beer, wine, or spirits, and any ingestible or topical products containing THC or CBD.
- Participants will not possess and/or consume any substance intended to replace an otherwise illegal/prohibited substance. All synthetic/designer drugs marketed and sold under false pretenses as "supplements" or with the warning "not for human consumption" are strictly prohibited.
- Participants will not use or possess canned air such as, but not limited to, air duster, carbon dioxide (CO_2) canisters, nitrous oxide, or any other canister that could be used for inhalant or huffing purposes.
- Participants will not possess and/or consume any products intended to substitute or alter the results of a urine drug test such as creatine, nitrites (Klear, Whizzies), UrinAid, Urine Luck, Certo, Sure Jell, diuretics, etc.

Consuming and/or possessing any substance referenced above or in the list below is a violation of the terms and agreement and is grounds for an immediate notice of termination being filed and may result in termination from the program.

PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES

Alcohol (Ethanol)	• Beer, wine, or spirits • Non-alcoholic beer, wine, or spirits • Foods containing alcohol • Mouthwash • Kombucha	• Solvents • Cough syrup or liquid medications containing alcohol such as Nyquil, Robitussin DM, TheraFlu-D, etc.
Amphetamines, Stimulants & Pseudoephedrine	• Methamphetamine • Adderall • Vyvanse • Ritalin • Concerta • Quillivant • Methylphenidate • Dexedrine • Dextroamphetamine • Modafinil	• MDMA (Ecstasy/Molly) • Phentermine (Adipex, Lomaira) • Allergy and cold medications containing **pseudoephedrine** such as Alka-Seltzer Cold, Claritin-D, Mucinex-D, Allegra-D, Advil Cold and Sinus, Sudafed, Tylenol Cold, Tylenol Severe Cold & Flu, TheraFlu-D, Robitussin Cold Cough & Flu.
Benzodiazepines	• Alprazolam (Xanax) • Clonazepam (Klonopin) • Chlordiazepoxide (Librium)	• Diazepam (Valium) • Lorazepam (Ativan)
THC, CBD, & Synthetic Cannabinoids	• Any product containing THC or CBD (edible, drink, flower, dab wax, vapes, topical) • Delta-8 • Delta-9	• Delta-10 • Spice/K2 • THC-A • THC-O • THC-P
Opioids, Opioid Derivatives, Synthetic Opioids	• Codeine • Fentanyl • Heroin • Hydrocodone (Lortab, Loracet, Norco,Vicodin) • Hydromorphone (Dilaudid) • Morphine (Arymo ER, MorphaBond ER, Duramorph, MS Contin, Infumorph P/F, and Astramorph-PF)	• Medetomidine (Dex) • Nitazenes • Oxycodone (Oxycontin, Percodan, Percocet) • Poppy Seeds and/or foods or drinks containing poppy seeds • Tramadol • Xylazine (Tranq)
Miscellaneous Substances	• All Appetite Suppressants • All Inhalants • All Synthetic substances • Anything labeled “Not for Human Consumption” • Bath Salts • Caffeine Pills • Creatine	• Mitragynine Pseudoindoxyl • Krokodil • Mephedrone • Mescaline • Phenibut (Anvifen, Bifren, Noofen, PhGaba, β-phenyl-GABA) • Poppy Seeds (food or drinks containing poppy seeds)

	• Flakka • Kava • Ketamine • Khat • Kratom • 7-hydroxymitragyne (7-OH, 7-Hydroxy)	• Spice/KS • Steroids • Tianeptine (Tia, Tianna, Zaza) • Xyrem (GHB) • Xylazine (Tranq)
Hallucinogens	• Dimethyltryptamine (DMT) • Ecstasy "Molly" • Ketamine • LSD • Methoxetamine	• MDPV (Monkey Dust) • Mushrooms (Psilocybin) • PCP • Tryptamine • Inhalants

APPROVED SUBSTANCES

PAIN
Acetaminophen
Ibuprofen
Aspirin
Aleve

ANTACIDS
Zantac
Pepcid
Prilosec
Tums/Rolaids

JOINT PAIN
Tylenol Arthritis
Ben Gay
Icy Hot

STOMACH
Mylanta
Pepto Bismol
Milk of Magnesia

ALLERGIES
Claritin (Not Claritin-D)
Allegra (Not Allegra-D)
Benadryl

VITAMINS
Multivitamins
Prenatal Vitamins

COLD/COUGH
Delsym (non-alcoholic)
Mucinex

Clean and Sober Housing

All Therapeutic Court participants are required to reside in drug and alcohol-free housing. This means that no alcohol, illegal drugs or substances, or mind-altering substances are allowed in the residence or by any person residing there. Therapeutic Court staff will make unannounced visits to the residence for the purpose of ensuring compliance with this policy. If a participant does not have access to drug and alcohol-free housing, they will be required to secure placement in recovery housing such as Oxford House or Seasons Housing. Any other transitional housing must be preapproved by the Coordinator before the participant is allowed to live there.

Home Visits

Therapeutic Court participants are required to submit themselves, their vehicle, or place of residence to search and seizure of narcotics, drugs or other contraband at any time without a search warrant, without prior notice and without probable cause by Therapeutic Court Probation Officers.

Probation Officers are authorized to visit participants in the home, at work, and in the community. Although home visits are preferred, if a visit to a place of employment is necessary, court representatives will do their best to be discreet and courteous.

Random monitoring of participants through the use of home visits is an integral component to the Therapeutic Court program and its ability to evaluate the participants' living environment, ensure program compliance beyond the courtroom, and maintain contact, develop rapport, and gather relevant information from family members, significant others, housemates, or other involved parties. It is also an opportunity to catch participants doing something good that can be recognized and rewarded in court.

It is the responsibility of the Probation Officer to facilitate, coordinate, and document that home visits are performed and reported to the team. Participant home visits will be unannounced and never conducted alone. All home visits will be conducted with another staff member or law enforcement.

Participant home visits may include the following:

- An examination of the participant's living area (i.e., apartment, house or efficiency room) for any contraband. Examinations may include all areas in the participant's living space. This means if the participant lives in an apartment with roommates, all common areas are examined and not just the participant's individual room;
- A full interaction with the participant and any other persons present at the residence/living space. This is done to ensure that there are no prohibited persons present;
- A monitored alcohol or other drug test if there is suspected drug or alcohol use; and
- A full documentation of the home visit to include a listing of any contraband or interaction valuable to the court.
- If contraband is discovered in the residence, Probation Officers will document and remove the contraband from the residence and dispose of it accordingly.

The frequency of home visits is determined by a participant's phase and any other considerations deemed sufficient by the court.

Participant Relationships

While a participant in Veterans Court, business relationships, dating relationships, sexual relationships and financial relationships with other Therapeutic Court participants is strictly prohibited. These relationships pose a high risk of diverting focus from individual sobriety, may foster co-dependency, and often lead to additional stress and emotional pain. The court may also require pre-existing relationships with other participants prior to entering the program be terminated or suspended while both parties are participating. Platonic, supportive relationships are highly encouraged!

Travel Policy

Any travel outside of Benton or Franklin Counties must be approved by the Veterans Court team. Travel request forms are available in the office. An electronic form is also available on the Veterans Court website. Travel requests must be submitted at least 72 hours in advance for it to be reviewed. Travel outside of Benton and Franklin Counties is not authorized until the participant has been notified by their Probation Officer that the travel request has been approved.

The 72-hour requirement may be waived on a case-by-case basis if the requested travel is emergent in nature, or extenuating circumstances exist.

Standard approved travel procedure is that a participant must do a drug test on the day of departure and the day of return. If the approved travel is longer than three days, the participant will be provided with either oral fluid devices and alcohol breath strips to be coordinated by the Probation Officer and conducted over zoom or have a sweat patch put in place prior to travel.

The Veterans Court Team may make exceptions to the travel policy when a participant's verified place of employment is in a neighboring county or if their employment regularly takes them out of the county for the workday.

Law Enforcement Contact

Upon any contact with a law enforcement officer, participants are required to promptly advise them that they are a participant in Veterans Court. Participants must also report any police contact to their Probation Officer within 4 hours of contact. Law enforcement contact includes any situation in which a law enforcement officer asks a participant for their name including, new arrests, citations, or being a witness to an accident or a crime. If contact with law enforcement occurs after hours or on a weekend, the participant is still expected to leave a voicemail with their Probation Officer within four hours. Failure to report law enforcement contact may result in sanctions for not being forthcoming.

If a participant learns they have a warrant for their arrest or are the subject of an investigation, they must immediately report it to their Probation Officer and take action to resolve the issue.

New Offenses & Charges

If a participant commits a new offense while in VTC, continued participation in the program will be reassessed. The team may decide to allow the participant to continue in VTC after considering the new case and assessing the appropriateness of continued VTC participation.

If the team determines that the participant is no longer appropriate for VTC based upon new charges, the participant may be subject to termination in VTC.

If a current participant's new case is accepted into VTC, the participant may be subject to sanctions, new probationary conditions, and an increased term of probation in VTC.

Termination Protocol

Termination from Veterans Court is typically a last resort. A participant may be terminated from VTC as a consequence of serious violations of VTC policies, if they cannot be managed safely in the community, or if they repeatedly fail to comply with treatment or supervision requirements.

Termination may occur as a result of new criminal charges. If the alleged offense(s) would otherwise be eligible for VTC participation, the VTC team may consider the circumstances on a case-by-case basis and determine if continued participation is appropriate. The VTC team may also consider on a case-by-case basis accepting a referral on a new charge. A referral on a new offense must go through the formal referral process.

Serious violations that may result in termination include, but are not limited to:

- Violence or threats of violence directed at court staff, treatment staff, other participants in the program, or other clients of the treatment providers
- Absconding from VTC
- New criminal charges or convictions

- Tampering with or adulterating a drug test
- Persistent failure to comply with the requirements of the court program or demonstrating a consistent lack of progress

If it is determined that a participant is being considered for termination from VTC, the participant will be provided a notice of termination in court which advises the participant and their attorney of the allegation(s) that is the basis for termination being considered. At the next VTC proceeding, the participant will be given the opportunity to admit or deny the allegation(s). If requested by the participant, the consideration of termination will be scheduled for a revocation hearing where the prosecution and defense will present evidence in support of and against termination.

After the evidentiary hearing on termination, the court will determine if the State has proved by a preponderance of the evidence that the participant has violated the VTC participation agreement and termination is warranted. If the participant is terminated from the program, the judge will review the police reports at a stipulated bench trial, enter findings of guilt if proven, and then move to sentencing. If a participant is terminated from VTC on charges that originated in Superior Court, the District Court case will be dismissed, and the State will recommence prosecution in Superior Court.

Re-entry into Therapeutic Courts

The fundamental mission of Therapeutic Courts is to eliminate participant contact with law enforcement and the justice system by engaging them in a process of sustained recovery and connecting them with the appropriate resources in order to maintain a clean and sober life free of crime. Because of that, re-entry into therapeutic courts is very limited.

Graduates of a therapeutic court who incur new charges after graduation will not be considered for re-entry unless the court team agrees that there are exceptional circumstances that warrant consideration.

Participants who have been previously terminated from a therapeutic court program for serious violations, repeated non-compliance or the filing of new, ineligible charges, will not be considered eligible for re-entry unless the court team agrees unanimously that there are exceptional circumstances that warrant consideration.

Incentives, Sanctions, and Service Adjustments

Participants are carefully monitored for compliance with program expectations and rules and may receive incentives for accomplishments, sanctions for violations, and therapeutic adjustments to address continued or resumed substance use. Responses to participants' behavior are predictable, fair, consistent, and administered following evidence-based principles of effective behavior modification.

Incentives

Participants receive incentives for engaging in beneficial activities that take the place of harmful behaviors and contribute to long-term recovery and adaptive functioning, such as participating in treatment, recovery support activities, healthy recreation, or employment. Incentives may include:

- Recognition by the judge
- Phase advancement
- Gift Cards
- Movie tickets
- Waived court fees
- Skip-a-court-date pass

- Certificates of achievement
- Candy/Snacks
- Other token gift items

Sanctions

Sanctions are not meant to be a punishment; they are meant to correct a behavior. In the event of a violation, the Veterans Court team will consider the specific circumstances and most effective way to handle it. The Therapeutic Court programs use a matrix which represents the increasing expectations of participants as they progress through the program phases. Participants will receive more severe sanctions for violations in the latter phases of the program because they have had time to become accustomed to the requirements and sufficient time has lapsed where they should be living and behaving in a way that is structured and stable. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to:

- Jail
- Community Service
- Work Crew
- Notice of Revocation

Treatment Adjustments

Participants' progress in treatment and their recovery is closely monitored by the Veterans Court Team. If a participant is not making progress in their mental health or substance use disorder treatment or the participant is continuing to or has resumed use, a treatment adjustment will likely be made. Treatment adjustments are predicated on recommendations from treatment professionals and may include:

- Increased or decreased frequency, intensity, or modality of treatment, including inpatient treatment.
- Initiating medication for addiction treatment (MAT).
- Delivering specialized services such as co-occurring treatment, trauma services, bilingual services, or culturally proficient treatment.
- Incorporating or adjusting medications.

Supervision Responses

Supervision responses are carried out based on recommendations from Probation Officers predicated on the participants response to services. Supervision is increased or decreased when necessary to provide needed support, ensure that participants remain safe, monitor obstacles in their recovery, and help them develop effective coping skills. Supervision responses may include but are not limited to:

- Increased/decreased case management
- Increased/decreased court hearings
- Daily check-ins to Therapeutic Court office
- Increased/decreased drug testing
- Workbooks
- Reflective Essays
- SCRAM, Portable Alcohol Monitoring Device, GPS device

Program Phases

Phase 1: Orientation and Stabilization

- **Attend weekly VTC hearings and case management appointments.**
- Develop a Treatment Plan
- Sign all necessary releases so that the VTC team can verify participation in required treatment and obtain records as needed.

- Comply with Treatment Plan as determined by Mental Health/Substance Use Disorder treatment providers and VTC program.
- Comply with getting all necessary evaluations and treatment/counseling services in the community in order to comply with court mandated requirements.
- Attend Veterans Forum monthly.
- Create a schedule and maintain a weekly planner.
- Establish regular weekly contact with your Veteran Mentor.
- Attend self-help meetings as determined by your treatment plan and Probation Officer.
- Provide a list of all medications to your VTC Probation Officer.
- Formulate an action plan to accomplish your identified goals while you are in VTC.
- Complete Phase 1 writing assignment and review with your Probation Officer *prior to* your Phase-up date.

Phase up criteria:

- **No missed UAs for 14 consecutive days**
- **No sanctions for 14 consecutive days**
- **Plan for completing community service**
- **Living in supportive sober housing**

Phase 2: Action

- **Attend VTC hearings and case management appointments every two weeks.**
- Be actively involved in a job, volunteer work, education, vocational training and/or positive pro-social activities.
- Attend all Veterans Forums.
- Maintain regular weekly contact with your Veteran Mentor.
- Attend self-help meetings as determined by your treatment plan and Probation Officer.
- Begin to develop a support system for personal, mental health and chemical dependency needs.
- Complete Phase 2 writing assignment and review with your Probation Officer *prior to* your phase-up date.

Phase up criteria:

- **No positive UAs for 45 consecutive days prior to phase-up**
- **Sanction free for 30 days prior to phase-up**
- **Accomplished personal goals outlined for Phase Two**
- **Completed 20 hours community service**
- **Begin developing a support system**
- **Obtain sponsor**
- **Employed, enrolled in school, or actively pursuing either unless disabled**
- **Living in supportive sober housing**

Phase 3: Prosocial Habitation

- **Attend VTC hearings and case management appointments every three weeks.**
- Continue to progress in mental health counseling and chemical dependency treatment.
- Develop a plan that includes a daily routine and skills to identify and overcome challenges in your daily life. Demonstrate problem solving and budgeting skills.
- Be actively involved in a job, volunteer work, education, vocational training and positive pro-social activities.
- Build and strengthen support system.
- Attend all Veterans Forums.
- Maintain regular weekly contact with your Veteran Mentor.
- Attend self-help meetings as determined by your treatment plan and Probation Officer.
- Complete Phase 3 writing assignment and review with your Probation Officer *prior to* your phase-up date.

Phase up criteria:

- **No positive UAs for 60 consecutive days prior to phase-up**
- **Sanction free for 45 days prior to phase-up**
- **Completed 20 hours community service**
- **Accomplished personal goals outlined for Phase Three**
- **Continued development of support system**
- **Engaged in prosocial activities**
- **Verified sponsor**
- **Living in supportive sober housing**
- **Employed, enrolled in school, or actively pursuing either**
- **Compliant with supervision**
- **Making payments towards restitution (if applicable)**

Phase 4: Life Skills

- **Attend VTC hearings and case management appointments every four weeks.**
- Attend all appointments with treatment providers and Probation Officers as scheduled.
- Actively involved in a job, volunteer work, education, vocational and/or positive pro-social activity.
- Robust support system and sponsor.
- Maintained treatment and counseling services including medication management.
- Attend all Veterans Forums.
- Maintain regular weekly contact with your Veteran Mentor.
- Attend self-help meetings as determined by your treatment plan and Probation Officer.

Phase up criteria:

- **No positive UAs for 90 consecutive days**

- **No sanctions for 60 consecutive days**
- **Completed 20 hours community service**
- **Accomplished personal goals outlined for Phase Four**
- **Has a defined support system**
- **Engaging in prosocial activities**
- **Living in supportive sober housing**
- **Employed, enrolled in school, or actively pursuing either**
- **Compliant with supervision**
- **Making payments towards restitution (if applicable)**

Phase 5: Recovery Management

- **Attend VTC hearings and case management appointments every four weeks.**
- Attend all appointments with treatment providers and Probation Officers as scheduled.
- Actively involved in a job, volunteer work, education, vocational and/or positive pro-social activity.
- Robust support system and sponsor.
- Maintained treatment and counseling services including medication management.
- Attend all Veterans Forums.
- Maintain regular weekly contact with your Veteran Mentor.
- Attend self-help meetings as determined by your treatment plan and Probation Officer.

Graduation criteria:

- **No positive UAs for 120 consecutive days**
- **No sanctions for 90 consecutive days**
- **All 80 hours of community service is completed.**
- **Accomplished personal goals outlined for Phase Five**
- **Has a well-established support system to help maintain sobriety and mental wellness**
- **Engaging in prosocial activities**
- **Living in supportive sober housing**
- **Employed, enrolled in school, or actively pursuing either**
- **Compliant with supervision**
- **Restitution is paid** (if applicable)

Graduation

When you have satisfied all the requirements of VTC you will graduate with a sense of pride and accomplishment. You will feel proud knowing that you have completed a rigorous program intended to help you regain stability in your life and obtain 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 your charge(s) will be dismissed or amended.

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. <u>Six months following your graduation, you are able to apply to be a veteran mentor.</u>

VTC Mentor Program and Monthly Forum

As a participant in VTC you will select 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 VTC 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 with your fellow VTC participants and other mentors will significantly improve your overall experience in VTC. Forums are designed to educate and inform you about topics and resources that are relevant to you as a Veteran. You will find members of the VTC team there as well, showing their support for you and your efforts.

Your mentor may 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 Probation Officer. 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 and the Mentor Coordinator. Remember that your mentor is dedicated to making sure that "no veteran is left behind." That you are not left behind!

Resources

Crisis Services

National Suicide Prevention Hotline
1-800-273-8255, option 1
Veterans Crisis Line
Dial 988 then Press 1

Benton Franklin Crisis Response
(509) 792-1747
National Text line
Text: CONNECT to 741741

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.

Columbia Basin Veterans Center
1020 S 7th Ave, Pasco
(509) 545-6558
Hours: M-F | 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM
https://columbiabasinvetcenter.org/

Medical Services

VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic
Jadwin Ave., Ste. 250, Federal Bldg., 2nd floor
(509) 946-1020
Fax: 509-946-0827

Walla Walla VA Clinic
77 Wainwright Dr., Walla Walla
(509) 525-5200
www.va.gov/health.vamc

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

Columbia Basin Veterans Center
1020 S 7th Ave, Pasco
(509) 545-6558
Hours: M-F | 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM
https://columbiabasinvetcenter.org/

General Veterans Services

Columbia Basin Veterans Center
1020 S 7th Ave, Pasco
(509) 545-6558
Hours: M-F | 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM
https://columbiabasinvetcenter.org/

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

Housing Assistance

Columbia Basin Veterans Center
1020 S 7th Ave, Pasco
(509) 545-6558
Hours: M-F | 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM
https://columbiabasinvetcenter.org/

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

HUD-VASH Program
825 Jadwin Avenue, Ste 250, Richland
509-946-1020 ext. 6379
www.va.gov/homeless/hud-vash

Conclusion

Benton County Veterans 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 is 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 expectations 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.

Thank you for your service!