

# Veterans Treatment Court

Honorable Judge Charles Feeney

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## Veterans Treatment Court

▶ VTC

MISSION STATEMENT

- ▶ The mission of the 11th Judicial Circuit Veterans Treatment Court is to identify veterans within the criminal justice system and honor their sacrifice and service by providing a collaborative, judicially supervised, mentor oriented, treatment regime with the goal of enhancing public safety, maintaining legal accountability, and reintegrating stable and dependence-free veterans back into our community by utilizing all available and appropriate resources.
- ▶ First veterans court was in Buffalo, NY
- ▶ Goal: To reduce, deter and ultimately eliminate future criminal offenses committed by Veterans in the Eleventh Judicial Circuit (Ford, Livingston, Logan, McLean, and Woodford Counties) by utilizing the Veterans Administration Services, which help promote and restore Veterans to a civilian lifestyle.

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## Veterans Treatment Court

▶ VTC (cont.)

- ▶ U.S. military veterans suffering from a diagnosable and treatable behavioral health issue and charged with misdemeanor or felony offenses.
- ▶ Participants eligibility requirements
  1. Resident in one of the five counties of the 11th Judicial Circuit (Ford, Livingston, Logan, McLean, or Woodford)
  2. Eighteen (18) years of age or over
  3. Charged with a probation eligible, non-violent offense
  4. Must have served, or currently serving, in the U.S. Armed Forces
  5. Eligibility for VA Healthcare benefits from the Veterans Administration OR with letter stating they would qualify with exception of income determination.
  6. A treatable behavioral health issue substantially related to the offense.
  7. Eligible candidates must be willing to comply with the probation terms and conditions of Veterans Court, and voluntarily consent to participate in the Veterans Treatment Court.

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### Veterans Treatment Court

- ▶ Non Adversarial, Veteran talks directly to Judge about sobriety and treatment.
- ▶ Meet Tuesday's at 2:00 pm for staffing, then 3:00 pm for court with Honorable Judge Charles Feeney in Courtroom 4D.
- ▶ Once the charges are accepted from both parties, State's Attorney and Public Defender/Private Attorney, the client will plea guilty into VTC.
- ▶ Program takes between 12, 18 or 24 months depending on the Adult Risk Assessment (ARA) and the VA Assessment to complete.
- ▶ Three tracks High, Medium, and Low risk that are then broken down to five phases.
- ▶ Once the veteran has completed the 5 phases of the program they will graduate and will have their case dismissed and the opportunity to have case expunged.
- ▶ Current 11<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit VTC graduation rate is 86%. Current recidivism is 2%.

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### Roles in the Court

- Veterans Treatment Court Judge
- State's Attorney
- Public Defender
- Probation Officer
- Veterans Court Circuit Coordinator
- Veteran Mentor Coordinator
- Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist
- Law Enforcement
  - Sheriff Dept
  - Bloomington PD
  - Normal PD
- Jail Services
- Veteran Mentors

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Veteran Justice Outreach  
**Ginger Garner**  
 Dept. of Veterans Affairs  
 Veterans Health Administration

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## Role of the VJO

- Perform outreach to Justice Involved Veterans in jails and prisons
- Enroll eligible Veterans into VA Healthcare
- Complete clinical evaluations
- Assist Veterans with access to treatment
- Make treatment recommendations and monitor treatment for court participation
- Partner with local court partners to prioritize treatment needs of Veterans and avoid the criminalization of mental health and addiction needs
- To provide linkage to VA and community resources to Veterans that are Justice Involved
- Assist Veterans with information of VA benefits and service connection application process
- Address them in addressing behavioral health needs as well as medical, housing, financial and education services.

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## Locations

- VA Illiana Healthcare System, with the main hospital campus at Danville, IL.
- 1 of 2 VJOs based out of VA Illiana, which covers most of Central Illinois.
- Licensed clinical social workers and are able to diagnose and provide treatment.
- Together we cover about 30 counties.
- We cover all the jails and prisons located within those 30 counties.

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## Services

- VJOs complete clinical assessments in order to make treatment recommendations
- Refer to treatment and then monitor progress in treatment for both criminal dockets and Veterans Treatment Court programs.
- The Dept of Veterans Affairs specializes in treating individuals with substance use disorders, PTSD, mental health conditions and trauma related conditions, utilizing evidence based treatments that lead the nation in effective symptom management.
- Offer domestic violence treatment that is evidence based, as well as offer anger mgt services for court Veterans.
- As a VJO they are able to make referrals to utilize a vast array of treatment programs to local VA facilities or ones throughout the VA healthcare network.

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