

All Rise

Justice
for Vets



2024
Veterans
Day

Toolkit

for Treatment Courts



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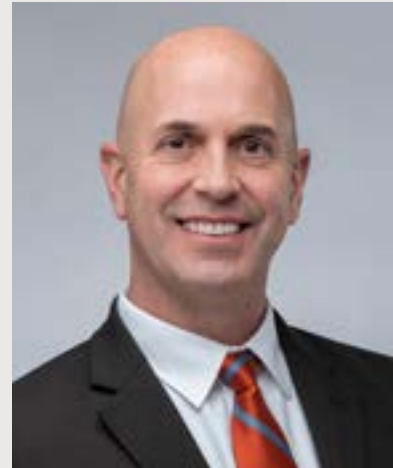
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From the Director



Dear colleagues,

November 11, 2024, is Veterans Day, an occasion for all of us to pay tribute to those services members both alive and deceased. It is an opportunity to honor their purpose-driven commitment to ensuring our nation's security. As a treatment court professional, you engage justice-involved veterans comprising a very small percentage of the overall veteran population. These individuals are all too often forgotten by the general populace.



Affecting change within oneself can be a daunting task. The veteran in your treatment court may have limited insight into their current condition, be reluctant to ask for assistance, or perceive that they don't have any resources available to alter their current circumstances. Regardless of your role on the team, you can help fix that perception by directing them to the supportive assets around them.

Now, more than ever before, there are a plethora of resources available at the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Bureau of Justice Assistance, All Rise, and within local communities that address the responsive needs of these veteran participants in a manner that is culturally empathetic, evidence based, and resource driven. Nothing is more vital on the road to recovery than the empowerment and the hope these individuals experience while in treatment court programs. I believe it is our responsibility—and I would suggest obligation—to do our utmost to ensure that participants are not only informed of these resources but engaged in them.

Similar empowerment must also be experienced at the program level and expressed and demonstrated throughout the jurisdiction. The work you do is critical to the well-being of the participants and the community. It needs to be publicized so that lives can continue to be changed and saved and communities can continue to prosper. This toolkit contains a wealth of assets for planning November activity to convey that messaging.

Lastly, Veterans Day can bring strong, mixed emotions, and for some, it can usher in a challenging holiday season. For these reasons, we have also included resources to help ensure that your participants and staff have the support they need.

Scott Tirocchi, M.A., M.S.

Director, Justice for Vets

Major, U.S. Army (ret.)

Introduction: **Serving Justice-Involved Veterans**



All treatment court types serve veterans.

Adult drug courts, impaired driving treatment courts, mental health courts, tribal healing to wellness courts, and other models have had justice-involved veterans in their programs long before the creation of veterans treatment courts. And while we know that the veterans treatment court model has been revolutionary for veterans who become involved in the justice system due to mental health, substance use, or trauma-related issues, the fact remains that many jurisdictions do not yet have a veterans treatment court and serve local veterans through one of these other court types.

For this reason, all treatment court types can and should do their utmost to ensure that they are using evidence-based best practices for serving this population whenever possible.

Not only is Justice for Vets the leading training and advocacy division for veterans treatment courts, but it also has a wealth of expertise and resources on justice-involved veterans for the programs that serve them at numerous intercept points in the system.

Inside this toolkit, you'll find resources to help you:

- › Better serve the veterans in your program
- › Educate the media
- › Engage your community
- › Ensure that your participants and staff have the support they need to manage the strong emotions that may be activated by Veterans Day and the larger holiday season



A veterans treatment court graduation ceremony in Baltimore, Maryland.

Introduction: Simple Acts of Honor



Simple Acts of Honor

We demonstrate how much we truly value the members of our armed forces through our actions. Here are some simple ways you can honor members of the military in your personal life, community, and our country:

1. Say “thank you” and “happy Veterans Day.”

These are small words and phrases, but they can mean a lot to someone who has served.

2. Take a moment of silence during the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month.

This represents the official signing of the armistice but also demonstrates respect for the service of all veterans of U.S. armed forces.

3. Volunteer with or donate to a local veteran service organization.

There are more than 35,000 veteran service organizations in the U.S. Find a local organization doing great work for veterans and their families in your community and support them with your time and finances. Check out [defense.gov/Resources/Community-Support-of-Troops/](https://www.defense.gov/Resources/Community-Support-of-Troops/) for Department of Defense—approved organizations.

4. Patronize businesses that hire and otherwise support military members and veterans.

Go out of your way to support businesses recognizing Veterans Day or offering discounts or free items to those who have served. Check out [military.com/discounts](https://www.military.com/discounts) for a full list.

5. Teach the children in your life about the importance of military service.

Take them to a parade. Bring them with you to visit your local VA or military hospital. Show them they are never too young to help others.

6. Support a military spouse or a family.

Take them a meal or flowers, mow their lawn, or offer to babysit if they have children. Helping in practical ways honors their loved one’s service and sacrifice and makes them feel supported. For even more ways to show appreciation on Veterans Day, visit [military.com](https://www.military.com).

Chapter 1: Event Ideas



Event Ideas to Honor Veterans in November

Here are several event ideas for your treatment court to recognize local veterans and build greater community support for your program. Remember, elected officials can and should be invited to attend these events!

1. Graduation Ceremony

Find creative ways to honor your veteran participants and graduates in November. Look to hold your commencement ceremony in a meaningful venue; invite a color guard; ask a local performer to sing the national anthem; obtain American flags to give to each graduate. There are plenty of ways you can honor your graduates and include your elected officials!

2. Community Cleanup Project

Invite your community to join your court in cleaning up a local park, street, highway, or school. Invite program alumni and their families to participate, and encourage all court staff, law enforcement, treatment providers, community supervision, etc. to join in.

3. Host or Participate In Community Events

Whether it's a 5K walk, run or roll, motorcycle ride, or resource fair, these fun community events can become an annual tradition and can be a great way to raise both awareness and funding for your program. It's also a great way to connect with community partners, other resource providers, and agencies.

4. Donation Drive or Fundraiser

A donation drive for a local food bank or veterans charity can be held throughout the entire month of November leading up to the holiday season. Or, hold a fundraiser specifically for your court program to encourage local businesses and nonprofits to donate funds, gift cards, services, memberships, or time.



New Mexico's Bernalillo County Veterans Treatment Court participates in their local VA 2K Walk and Roll.



Preparing Your Court Team and Veteran Participants

No matter what type of treatment court you work in, we must never forget that “veteran” isn’t a word; it’s a person. Every veteran has a unique military experience and, for some, Veterans Day can be difficult. As treatment court professionals and volunteers, it is critical to recognize this fact and ensure your team is prepared to support your veteran participants in the weeks leading up to and following Veterans Day.

Preparation for Your Court Team

During court staffing meetings prior to the holiday, discuss the following with your team:

Ensure that each team member receives, reads, and understands this toolkit.

Ensure that each team member understands and can articulate the difference between Veterans Day (when we honor all veterans) and Memorial Day (when we honor military members who have passed, both during and after their service).

Discuss what your team will do during the court sessions immediately before or after the holiday for special recognition of military service. Some ideas include:

- › Have the judge read a proclamation about Veterans Day from the bench.
- › Ask veterans in the courtroom to stand and be recognized for their service.
- › Distribute service branch pins to each veteran participant.
- › Fill the incentives/rewards “fishbowl” with compliments and encouragements, and have each veteran participant draw from the bowl.

Preparation for Your Veteran Participants

Be aware of the date closest to Veterans Day when each participant will come before the judge, and address the following:

- › Ask, “What are your plans for Veterans Day and over the holiday weekend?”
- › Ask, “How do you plan to maintain your recovery over the holiday?”
- › Encourage them to understand their triggers and remember some of these (e.g., fireworks) may occur on Veterans Day. Help them have a plan in place to deal with these triggers.
- › Instruct them to schedule and keep appointments with their therapist, counselor, and/or case manager before and after the holiday.
- › Encourage them to choose their activities and company wisely.

Please tell us how your court decides to prepare for, celebrate, and support your veteran participants over Veterans Day! Email your ideas, stories, and photos to communications@allrise.org.



Training and Technical Assistance Resources

Justice for Vets provides a wide variety of free resources to educate public health, public safety, and veterans' service professionals on evidence-based, best, and promising practices for working with justice-involved veterans diagnosed with mental health and substance use disorders. This includes not only veterans treatment courts, but all treatment courts that accept and serve veterans.

Training

Whether in-person or virtual, by jurisdiction or statewide, Justice for Vets provides a full suite of training opportunities to meet your needs! Our new and improved website allows you to search for training by treatment court type, role, or topic.

[Browse Training](#)

Technical Assistance

Justice for Vets provides robust technical assistance (TA) to treatment courts that accept and serve veterans to help these programs develop and implement evidence-based, best, and promising practices for greater effectiveness and increased, long-term participant success.

[Browse TA](#)



A veterans treatment court training in Fairfax, Virginia.

Chapter 2: Preparation and Resources



Publications

Access hundreds of free publications at your fingertips. From the 10 Key Components of Veterans Treatment Courts, to toolkits on acquired brain injury and Motivational Interviewing, to the All Rise magazine, these publications cover a wide range of need-to-know topics like target population, incentives and sanctions, drug testing, risk and need assessment, and more.

[Browse Publications](#)

Webinars on Demand

You can view recorded webinars on critical topics anytime that's convenient for you, and we add new webinars as they occur! Check out our current offerings, addressing areas such as intimate partner violence, trauma, identifying justice-involved veterans, suicide awareness and prevention, chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), acquired brain injury, PTSD, and more!

[Browse Webinars](#)



Podcasts

Standards of Justice

Through compelling firsthand accounts and thoughtful conversation, Standards of Justice explores how treatment courts are transforming the justice system's approach to people impacted by substance use and mental health disorders by prioritizing recovery, health, and community. Hosted by All Rise Director of Communications Chris Deutsch, we present a vision of justice grounded in an understanding of what works, what doesn't, and an abiding belief in people's capacity to change. Subscribe wherever you get your podcasts!

When Thank You Is Not Enough

We say, "Thank you for your service." We say we are "a grateful nation." But what should we do when "thank you" isn't enough? Hosted by Major General (ret.) Clyde "Butch" Tate, each episode of this podcast takes you on a journey with veterans, subject matter experts, and people doing heroic work on behalf of those who have served. Subscribe wherever you get your podcasts!

[Learn More + Start Listening](#)

Chapter 2: Preparation and Resources



Other Resources

The Veteran Crisis Line

The Veteran Crisis Line is available around-the-clock by dialing 988 and pressing 1. Crisis support can also be accessed via text at 838255 or online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net). If you are court staff and need assistance with a veteran who you believe may be in or near crisis, the crisis line can walk you through appropriate steps to take.

The Department of Veterans Affairs

For help understanding what veterans may be experiencing and strategies for providing support, check out this community provider toolkit.

[Click here](#) for a comprehensive list of VA and community-based resources.

Veterans can talk to someone in community-based VA Vet Centers, where over 70% of staff are veterans themselves. Call 1-800-WAR-VETS or [click here](#) to find one near you.

American Legion Buddy Check Program

The [American Legion Buddy Check Program](#) is a way to reconnect veterans who may need help but aren't sure where to turn, encouraging veterans to check in with their fellow veterans and families to improve mental health, increase access to resources, and strengthen peer-to-peer connections

American Red Cross Military Veteran Caregiver Network

[Click here](#) for peer support and mentoring, or call the Hero Care Network at 1-877-272-7337.



A veterans treatment court graduation in Great Falls, Montana.



Get Media to Your Graduation/Event

November is a great time to engage media and promote the success of your program. There's no better way to do this than with a graduation or special event. Here's how to get media to cover your program. Note: Even if your event is virtual, media can still be included.

Designate a media coordinator and spokesperson for your court:

- › The media coordinator is responsible for identifying and contacting media for your court.
- › The media spokesperson is the individual providing quotes and interviews to the media. The spokesperson must be knowledgeable about your court and able to speak from a position of authority. This is often the judge but could be another key member of the team.

- › Determine if any program graduates or participants are willing to speak with the media. Write a short paragraph outlining their story for use in media advisory.

Note: Personal stories are critical. Ask successful graduates or participants nearing program completion if you can share their story. Include a short paragraph on each in your advisory. All Rise's publication [Sharing Your Treatment Court Story](#) is a great resource for helping participants and alumni. If you choose to feature a success story from your court, remember that **new participants are in a vulnerable stage and should not be profiled by the media.**



If you're holding a commencement ceremony, a keynote speaker to address the graduates in person or virtually is always recommended!



Follow These Easy Steps to Get Media to Your Event

1. Write your media advisory.

A media advisory is crucial to ensuring coverage of your event. It lets media know what the event is, where it is, and why it is important for them to come cover it. You can find a sample media advisory [on our website](#).

2. Identify media outlets to contact.

Don't limit your list to local media; state and regional media may also be interested. If you've worked with reporters in the past, or know of reporters covering criminal justice or veteran-related issues, reach out to them directly. Otherwise, contact the outlet and ask for the assignment desk.

3. Send your media advisory.

Email your advisory to each media outlet one week prior to the event. Include the advisory in the body of the email, not as an attachment. The news cycle is constantly evolving, so it doesn't hurt to send it again one or two days before the event.

4. Follow up.

Media are unlikely to cover the event unless follow-up calls are made. Often, media won't make decisions about coverage until the last minute.

5. Send positive media stories about your treatment court to your members of Congress and other elected officials.

Include both your representatives and senators. You can look up contact information for your elected officials, including mayor, governor, and members of Congress, [here](#).

For assistance with media outreach and interviews, contact communications@allrise.org.





Print Media: Op-ed

Veterans Day typically receives significant media attention. One way to make sure treatment courts take advantage of this attention locally and regionally is to submit an opinion editorial (op-ed) to your local newspaper or news site.

With widespread interest in justice reform in the U.S., news outlets are usually interested in the subject of treatment courts, especially veterans treatment courts (the proximity to Veterans Day makes it even more newsworthy). An op-ed is a great way to remind your legislators that veterans treatment courts save lives.

We've provided a sample op-ed for you to adapt and use as appropriate [on our website](#). Here are some general tips to help ensure that any op-ed you write gets published:

- › **Find a news hook.** Your court's graduation ceremony or other event is newsworthy! Give it an extra hook by relating it to the broader discussion of veterans' issues, justice reform, and finding proven solutions for your community. If your court is in jeopardy of losing funding, say so!
- › **Know the word limit.** In general, 700-800 words is sufficient for an op-ed, but check your newspaper's op-ed page to find out their preferred length.
- › **Humanize your piece.** Anecdotes and personal stories help illustrate and bring clarity to complicated issues. Think about personal experiences in your court and use them as examples in the op-ed (but only use names with permission).
- › **Stick to a single point.** Make a single, strong point clearly and persuasively. Your first paragraph should draw the reader in, but if you choose to open with an anecdote, make sure you get to the point quickly.
- › **Make a specific recommendation.** This is an opinion piece, so state an opinion on what is needed to ensure your court can continue to operate effectively.
- › **End with a bang.** Your final paragraph is as important as your opening paragraph. Be sure to summarize your argument in one strong, final paragraph, and include a poignant quote from a key stakeholder or participant, if you have one.
- › **Follow up.** Most op-ed editors will respond to you or publish the piece within 1-2 weeks. If you haven't had a response in that timeframe, or if your piece is particularly time-sensitive, make a follow-up phone call to be sure it was received and ask about its status.



Social Media Overview

Justice for Vets encourages treatment court programs to use social media to their advantage but also with care. Social media can help engage and educate your participants, graduates, and community, and it's one of the most effective ways to get the attention of elected officials.

Nearly all elected officials have official social media accounts and will often take notice of and like or share positive content. Remember that anything you post on social media (words, photos, videos, etc.) is considered public content.

As with any public content, it is critical that a system be in place to ensure that content posted or shared on behalf of your court program is 1) appropriate, 2) factual, and 3) in accordance with the principles and responsibilities of your court and the U.S. judicial system.

Be sure to like and follow All Rise on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) and share the inspiring stories, podcast clips, infographics, and news we post. [On our website](#), we've provided sample posts you can use during the month of November. Content that includes photos, images, and/or videos is much more successful, so we encourage you to include them whenever possible.

If you would like to see your court highlighted, send your stories, photos, links to any news media, and contact information to communications@allrise.org.



Thank You



Justice for Vets would like to express our profound gratitude to you, the individuals doing some of the most difficult, important, but rewarding of healing veterans involved in the justice system. Without your belief in the effectiveness of treatment courts and your unwavering dedication to ensuring that your court provides real solutions to veterans in real need in your communities, there would not be more than 15,000 veterans currently working toward lives of long-term health and stability today. And the impact of your efforts doesn't stop there: it reaches every veteran

participant's family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors. Because of you, millions of lives have seen a level of restoration that would not have been possible otherwise.

Treatment courts are justice reform in action. You're transforming the U.S. justice system for the better every day. You're taking a bold stance by declaring that we can do better for the veterans who have sacrificed so much to safeguard our individual and national freedom, safety, and security. We could not be more proud to stand with you.



**Treatment
Court Institute**
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**Impaired
Driving Solutions**
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**Justice
for Vets**
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Advancing Justice**
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Founded As



This project was supported by Grant No. 2019-VC-BX-K003 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of views or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

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