



Multi-County Veterans Court



Serving the Counties of:

**Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Jackson,
Martin, Nicollet & Watonwan**

*The Mission of the Fifth Judicial District
Veteran's Court is to promote public safety
and assist and support veterans and their
families through a coordinated effort among
the veteran services delivery system,
community-based services, and the court –
thereby leaving no veteran behind.*

Veterans Court Goals

- Reduce contacts with the criminal justice system
- Increase compliance with treatment and other court ordered conditions
- Improve access to VA benefits and services
- Improve family relationships and social support connections
- Introduce participants to an ongoing process of recovery to achieve and maintain life stability

Veterans Court Services

- One-on-one judicial supervision
- Ready access to County Veterans Service Office and qualifying VA services
- Intensive probation supervision
- Substance abuse, mental health, family and other counseling
- Random drug and alcohol testing
- Medication monitoring and social services
- Employment and housing assistance
- Volunteer Peer Mentoring

Volunteer Peer Mentors

The role of the Volunteer Peer Mentor is to act as a coach, guide, role model, advocate and a supportive person as the participant progresses through the veteran's court process. Experience in other courts has shown that veterans are likely to respond more favorably toward another veteran rather than someone who did not have similar experiences. By partnering each participant with a mentor of similar military background, it is anticipated that this active supportive relationship will increase the likelihood that the veteran will remain in treatment and improve his or her chances for sobriety and law abiding behavior.

Volunteer Peer Mentors Needed

If you are interested in becoming a peer mentor and assist the veteran's court participants, please contact the Fifth Judicial District Veteran's Court Coordinator for more information.

Basic eligibility requirements and commitment is:

- ✓ Must be a veteran of one of the branches of the U.S. military
- ✓ Complete the screening process
- ✓ Completed initial mentor training
- ✓ Agree to adhere to the 5th Judicial District Veteran's Court policies and procedures
- ✓ 6 month minimum commitment to mentor
- ✓ Attend court sessions

A Partnership of:

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Service Officers
Fifth Judicial District Court
County Attorney's Offices
County, State Probation/Corrections
Human Services Departments
5th Judicial Public Defender's Office
County Sherriff's Departments
City Law Enforcement
MAC-V Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans

For More Information, please contact:

Kevin Mettler
Veterans Court Coordinator
Fifth Judicial District Veterans Court
401 Carver Road, PO Box 3543
Mankato MN 56002
Phone (507) 469-5518
Fax (507) 304-4710
Kevin.mettler@courts.state.mn.us

Or visit us on the web at:

<http://www.mncourts.gov/district/5/>

WHAT IS A VETERANS COURT?

A Veterans Court is a problem solving court designed for U.S. military veterans charged with misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor or felony offenses and struggling with addiction, serious mental illness and/or co-occurring disorders. The Court promotes sobriety, recovery and stability through a coordinated response that involves cooperation and collaboration with the traditional partners found in problem solving courts, with the addition of the U.S. department of Veterans Affairs Health Care networks, the Veterans Benefits Administration, volunteer veteran mentors and veterans and veterans' family support organizations.

The 5TH Judicial District Veterans Court is a voluntary 12-18 month program. Following the 10-Key Components of Veterans Courts, the District Court Judge leads the multi-disciplinary team of professionals who meet on a regular basis to collaboratively assist the veteran with an array of services such as emergency financial assistance, chemical dependency and mental health/trauma counseling, employment and skills training assistance, temporary housing, advocacy and other referral services and services of the veterans involved in the program.

At regular judicial status hearings treatment plans and other conditions are reviewed, incentives are offered to reward adherence to court conditions and sanctions for non-compliance are handed down.

Defendants who voluntarily agree to participate and meet the eligibility requirements, may enter the Veteran's Court pre-adjudication (acceptance after charging, but prior to a plea or finding of guilt) or post sentence (after plea or finding)

Who is Eligible?

- ✓ Must have served in the U.S. Military
- ✓ Non-disciplinary discharge from the military.
- ✓ Adult – 18 years of age or over
- ✓ Resident of one of the participating counties (team may waive residency requirement)
- ✓ Charged with a misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor or felony level offense (non-presumptive commit)
- ✓ Experiencing a treatable behavioral, mental health, or substance abuse problem substantially related to the offense.
- ✓ Consent of the prosecuting attorney for referral to the Veterans Court
- ✓ Defendant is willing to participate

Final determination for admission will be made by the Veterans Court Judge based on recommendations from the prosecuting attorney and other veteran's court team members.

Referral & Entry Process

1. A referral form with signed release information is sent to the Veterans Court Coordinator.
2. The Veterans court team meets to decide if the candidate meets qualifications. If so, the candidate will be notified by a member of the team to set up an appointment to discuss the program, and fill out paperwork. At this time they will receive a court handbook, and other materials needed to enter the veteran's court.
3. The candidate attends the next Veterans Court hearing and is formally accepted into the program. (An accepted defendant will remain on probation in their country of origin)
4. The participant will meet with the 5th Judicial District Veterans Court Case manager on a regular basis between court sessions to develop, and maintain plans to ensure steady and measured progression to graduation.

Graduation

Upon completion of the Veterans Court program, participants are given a certificate of completion. Depending on the sentencing option used by the court, some cases are either dismissed or reduced. Probationers are placed on administrative probation and subject to minimal requirements.

Court Hearings

This Veterans Court is a multi-county, single location model, which means there is only one pre-court staffing team and court is held in a single location – Blue Earth County.

The Veterans Court staffing team meets at 11:00am on the second and fourth Friday of every month and court is held at 12:00 noon in Courtroom B, Blue Earth County Justice Center.

Technology is an important tool used by this court. Interactive Television (ITV) allows the team and judge to meet with others at another site via an audio/video connection. It provides quick and efficient access to participants, service providers and county staff at other locations without the need to travel. Staff at your location will coordinate the actual connection between the ITV sites. A schedule of the times, and sites will be made available on the district web site.

This project is supported by a 2013 grant awarded from the MN Department of Human Services-Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division

This project does not prohibit participation on the basis of race, national origin, color, creed, religion, sex, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or associational preference.