



VETERANS JUSTICE PROGRAMS

WHY ARE THEY NEEDED?

VETERANS ARE 9.3% OF
THE INCARCERATED
POPULATION IN THE U.S.

70% OF OFFENSES WERE
FOR NON-VIOLENT CRIMES

CLOSE TO 60% OF INMATES
HAVE MENTAL HEALTH
PROBLEMS

82% OF INCARCERATED
PERSONS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VA
SERVICES ON RELEASE

WHAT ARE THE JUSTICE PROGRAMS?

These are programs within the Department of Veterans Affairs that make sure that justice-involved Veterans get individualized care. They link persons to community services to help homelessness, behavioral health issues and recidivism.

THERE ARE TWO MAIN PROGRAMS

VETERANS JUSTICE OUTREACH (VJO):

FOR THOSE ENTERING THE LOCAL JAIL OR COURT SYSTEM

- VJO Specialists work out of Veteran Health Administration (VHA) Medical Centers

- They ensure justice-involved Veterans have access to mental and substance abuse treatment and other medical services to avoid criminalization of mental illness

- VJO Specialists collaborate with local partners to help identify Veterans in need. They also provide case management and liaison services on the Veteran's behalf

HEALTH CARE FOR RE-ENTRY VETERANS (HCRV):

FOR THOSE COMING OUT OF THE PRISON SYSTEM

- HCRV Specialists work out of Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISN)

- They address the needs of incarcerated Veterans for re-entry into the community to be proactive in countering homelessness, recidivism and the impact of physical and mental health and substance abuse issues

- Specialists do pre-release outreach and assessments and make referrals and linkages to services upon release

WHEN DO VETERANS ACCESS THESE SERVICES?

SERVICES ARE OFFERED TO VETERANS AT SEVERAL POINTS IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM:

- Point of law enforcement or emergency services
- Initial detention or court hearings
- Courts and jails
- Before release from prison or jail

HOW DO THESE SERVICES WORK?

ELIGIBILITY

- Veterans are generally eligible if they have an Honorable or General Discharge from service and if those who enrolled after September 1980 have 24 months of consecutive service. National Guard Reservists may qualify if they were called to active duty. In some cases, Veterans with less than honorable discharges can receive services for things like traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress if they can attribute their struggles to their time in service.

- Eligibility is only limited by involvement with the criminal justice system during incarceration. At this time, VHA is only able to make assessments and referrals for services to begin following release.

- Monetary benefits will be reduced or suspended after a person has been sentenced; the amount to which this occurs depends on several factors.

VETERANS TREATMENT COURTS

- Veterans Treatment Court is a specialized court structure to address underlying issues contributing to criminal behavior. The courts address not only the criminal behavior, but the factors that cause them. VJO Specialists work within these courts.

- Mental health issues such as PTSD, traumatic brain injury and adjustment disorder are often associated with particular crimes. A Veteran is assessed for these issues upon entry into court. VJOs try to link a veteran with services and programs that may help them enter diversion or avoid incarceration where possible and appropriate

FOR A LIST OF OHIO VETERANS TREATMENT COURTS AND OTHER INFORMATION:

Go to www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/specDockets/ or www.justiceforvets.org/.

FOR A LIST OF CURRENT NEWS, GRANTS, TRAINING, INFORMATION AND OTHER RESOURCES ON VETERANS AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE:

Go to Retired Justice Stratton's blog at www.estrattonconsulting.wordpress.com.

TO JOIN THE OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL TASK FORCE SUBCOMMITTEE ON VETERANS CARE AND MILITARY AFFAIRS:

Contact Carolyn Bevins at 614-466-3552 or carolyn.bevins@ohioattorneygeneral.gov.

WHERE ARE THESE SERVICES?

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS (VA):
WWW.VA.GOV/HOMELESS/VJO.ASP
1-800-827-1000

VETERANS HEALTH
ADMINISTRATION (VHA):
WWW.VA.GOV/HEALTH
1-877-222-VETS (8387)

HEALTH CARE FOR
RE-ENTRY VETERANS:
WWW.VA.GOV/HOMELESS/REENTRY.ASP