



Carbon County
Veterans Treatment Court
Policies & Procedures
Manual

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What Is the Carbon County Veterans Treatment Court?

The Carbon County Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) was started in 2017 to address the growing number of veterans who are substance addicted/abusing individuals involved in the criminal justice system. The VTC represents a collaborative effort between the Court of Common Pleas of the 56th Judicial District, the District Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the County Commissioners, the Carbon County Correctional Facility, the County Adult Probation Office, the Carbon-Monroe-Pike Drug and Alcohol Commission, the Carbon-Monroe-Pike Mental Health and Developmental Services, PA Career Link, the County Department of Veterans Affairs, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and other community partners.

Many veterans are known to have a warrior's mentality and often refuse and/or fail to address needs for physical and psychological health care. Sometimes they are homeless, unemployed, helpless and despaired. Some suffer from drug and/or alcohol addictions or suffer from serious mental illnesses.

The VTC, through a coordinated response from all involved, promotes sobriety, recovery and sensitivity with a goal towards giving each participant the opportunity and the best chance of getting back on track as a healthy and productive member of society.

Mission Statement

The mission statement of the VTC is to identify and provide specific intervention for veterans with a Substance Use Disorder and/or a Mental Health Diagnosis in the Carbon County criminal justice system while promoting public safety, reducing recidivism and costs while improving the lives of the veterans, their families, and our community.

The motto of the VTC is

“Bringing Our Veterans Home Again”

Goals

In order to sustain that motto, the following goals and objectives were established:

1. Identify and divert eligible criminal-justice involved veterans with Substance Use Disorder to evidence-based programs.
 - a. Ensure veterans identified as individuals with a Substance Use Disorder in the Carbon County Criminal Justice System are aware of VTC shortly after a preliminary hearing.
 - b. Ensure applicants are assessed clinically and criminally in a timely fashion.
 - c. Ensure applicants who are deemed to be clinically and criminally eligible are admitted into the VTC and receive treatment in a timely fashion.
2. Improve the health and safety of the community.
 - a. Ensure applicants who are deemed to be clinically and criminally eligible are admitted into the VTC and receive treatment in a timely fashion.
 - b. Reduce recidivism of participants that complete VTC.
 - c. Maintain a high graduation rate for participants admitted into VTC.
 - d. Participants are required to “give back” to the community by completing volunteerism hours.
3. Connect Participants to Treatment and Resources
 - a. Ensure eligible participants are engaged in appropriate treatment.
 - b. Establish an appropriate support plan for each participant.
 - c. Arrange working relationships between the participant, the CC Veterans Affairs Director and Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist.
4. Improve the Lives of Participants
 - a. Participants will be informed of adequate and appropriate housing opportunities as needed.
 - b. Participants will become employed, enroll in school or provided vocational training as needed.
 - c. Participants will receive assistance to address and improve familial relationships and reunification.
 - d. Participants will provide periodic updates on themselves post-graduation.

Ten Key Components of the Carbon County Veterans Treatment Court (VTC)

1. VTC integrates alcohol and drug treatment, and mental health services with the criminal justice system case processing

VTC promotes sobriety, recovery and stability through a coordinated response to the participant's dependency on alcohol, drugs and/or management of their mental illness. Realization of these goals requires a team approach. This approach includes the cooperation and collaboration of the traditional partners found in drug treatment courts and mental health treatment courts with the addition of the Veterans Administration Health Care Network, veterans and veterans' family support organizations and veteran volunteer mentors.

2. Using a non-adversarial approach, prosecution and defense counsel promotes public safety while protecting participants' due process rights

To facilitate the veterans' progress in treatment, the prosecutor and defense counsel shed their traditional adversarial courtroom relationship and work together as a team. Once a veteran is accepted into the treatment court program, the team's focus is on the veteran's recovery and law-abiding behavior – not on the merits of the pending case.

3. Eligible veterans are identified early and promptly placed in the VTC program

Early identification of veterans entering the criminal justice system is an integral part of the placement process into the VTC program. An arrest can be a traumatic event in a person's life. It creates an immediate crisis and can compel recognition of inappropriate behavior into the open resulting in denial by the participant of the need for treatment difficult.

4. VTC provides access to a continuum of alcohol, drug, mental health, and other related treatment and rehabilitation services

While primarily concerned with criminal activity, AOD use and mental illness, the VTC team also considers co-occurring problems such as primary medical problems, transmittable diseases, homelessness, basic educational deficits, unemployment and poor job preparation, spouse and family troubles – especially domestic violence – and the ongoing effects of war time trauma.

Veteran peer mentors are essential to the VTC team. Ongoing veteran peer mentors' interaction with the VTC participants is essential. Their active support relationship maintained throughout treatment increases the likelihood that a veteran will remain in treatment and improves the chances of sobriety and law-abiding behavior.

5. Abstinence is monitored by frequent alcohol and drug testing

Frequent court-ordered AOD testing is essential. An accurate testing program is the most objective and efficient way to establish a framework for accountability and to gauge each veteran's progress.

6. A coordinated strategy governs VTC responses to participants' compliance

A veteran's progress through the treatment court experience is measured by his or her compliance with the treatment regimen. VTC rewards cooperation as well as responds to noncompliance. VTC establishes a coordinated strategy including a continuum of graduated responses to continued drug use and other noncompliant behavior.

7. Ongoing judicial interaction with each participant is essential

The judge is the leader of the VTC team. This active supervising relationship maintained throughout treatment increases the likelihood that a participant will remain in treatment and improves the chance for sobriety and law-abiding behavior. Ongoing judicial supervision also communicates to participants that someone in authority cares about them and is closely watching what they do.

8. Monitoring and evaluation measure the achievement of program goals and gauge effectiveness

Management and monitoring systems provide timely and accurate information about program progress. Program monitoring provides oversight and periodic measurements of the program's performance against its stated goals and objectives. Information and conclusions developed from periodic monitoring reports, process evaluation activities and longitudinal evaluation studies may be used to modify the program.

9. Continuing interdisciplinary education promotes effective VTC planning, implementation, and operations

All VTC staff should be involved in education and training. Interdisciplinary education exposes criminal justice officials to substance addiction/abuse treatment issues and treatment staff to criminal justice issues. It also develops a shared understanding of the values, goals, and operating procedures of treatment and the criminal justice system components.

Education and training programs help maintain a high level of professionalism, provide a forum for solidifying relationships among criminal justice and treatment personnel and promote a spirit of commitment and collaboration.

10. Forging partnerships among VTC, public agencies, and community-based organizations generates local support and enhances VTC effectiveness

Because of its unique position in the criminal justice system, VTC is well suited to develop coalitions among private community-based organizations, public criminal justice agencies and AOD and mental health treatment delivery systems. Forming such coalitions expands the continuum of services available to VTC participants and informs the community about VTC concepts. The VTC fosters system wide involvement through its commitment to share responsibility and participation of program partners.

Traditional Court Characteristics versus Veterans Treatment Court Characteristics

TRADITIONAL COURT	VETERANS TREATMENT COURT
The Court Team consists of a judge, prosecutor, defense counsel, etc.	VTC Team is used to achieve goals to support treatment interventions.
Adversarial	Non-Adversarial
Goal is to process the case; apply the law.	Goal is to restore the participant as a productive, non-criminal member of society.
The judge exercises a limited role in the supervision of the defendant.	The Treatment Team will play a central role in monitoring the participant's progress in treatment.
Interventions for substance abuse are at the discretion of the judge.	Formalized and structured treatment interventions are provided for each participant.
Relapse may lead to a maximum sentence.	Incentives are used to reinforce positive adjustment and sanctions are used in response to violations of the VTC program.

Referral Sources

Referrals to VTC may originate from, but are not limited to, the following sources:

- Police Officers
- Self-referrals
- Magisterial District Judges
- Public/Private Defense Attorneys
- District Attorneys
- Probation Officers
- Judges
- Family Members
- Veterans Administration
- Jail Staff
- Veterans' Service Organizations

Any referral should be made on a VTC Referral Form (Attachment 1) and submitted to the Treatment Court Coordinator.

VTC Team/Job Descriptions

The VTC team is comprised of the Judge, Assistant District Attorney, Attorney Representative of the Public Defender's Office, Adult Probation Officer, Adult Probation Treatment Court Specialist, VJO Specialist, the County Veterans Affairs Director/Mentor Coordinator, Carbon-Monroe-Pike Drug and Alcohol Representative or other authorized D/A Treatment Representative, Carbon-Monroe-Pike Mental Health and Developmental Services Representative or other authorized Mental Health Treatment Representative, CareerLink and Treatment Court Coordinator. All members of the VTC team will sign a Memorandum of Understanding. The VTC team meets prior to each VTC session. At these meetings, the team will review all cases on the docket for the day. The review will include a clinical report as well as a report from the Adult Probation Officer. The meeting also assesses the status of difficult or complex cases in which current treatment and supervision do not appear to be effective. Decisions are typically made by consensus. Each member of the team plays an important role in the advancement of the veterans in VTC.

- **Veterans Treatment Court Judge**

The 56th Judicial District of Common Pleas agrees to provide a Judge who will preside over the VTC. The VTC Judge is responsible for adhering to the Carbon County VTC rules and all revisions to the rules, with special consideration being given to the promulgation of any community-based rules deemed necessary for the success of Carbon County's VTC. As a member of the Carbon County VTC, the assigned Judge will actively participate in staffing of cases, preside over the court proceedings and monitor application of disciplines, sanctions and incentives while maintaining the integrity of the Court.

- **Assistant District Attorney (ADA)**

As a member of the Carbon County VTC Team, the assigned Assistant District Attorney (ADA) will review all potential defendants for criminal eligibility, actively participate in staffing of cases, and interact in a positive manner to address pleas and the application of sanctions and incentives as they apply to the participant. Additionally, prior to a defendant's placement into the program, the ADA will determine which track should be afforded to each defendant charged with new criminal offenses; and depending upon which track is agreed on, what appropriate misdemeanor or felony offense will be

reduced or dismissed/expunged upon the participant's graduation from VTC. The ADA attends all client staffing and judicial reviews.

- **Public Defender (PD)**

As a member of the Carbon County VTC Team, the assigned Public Defender will complete orientation on all defendants accepted into the program and actively participate in staffing of cases to address diversions, pleas or recoveries and application of sanctions and incentives as they apply to the participant. In addition, the PD will attend Court sessions and ensure the participant's legal rights are appropriately protected. The PD attends all client staffing and judicial reviews.

- **Adult Probation Officer (PO)**

As a member of the Carbon County VTC Team, the assigned officer will monitor accountability of social activities and the home environment of all participants, as well as maintain up-to-date records on each participant. In addition, the PO will provide frequent and random drug testing and make recommendations to the Court as to the appropriate sanctions and incentives. The PO shall supervise participants in VTC with the goal of facilitating prosocial behavioral change. The PO will identify and address criminogenic needs through targeted interventions. The PO attends all client staffing and judicial reviews.

- **Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist (VJO)**

The Veterans Administration is making a system-wide effort to ensure access to services for the criminal justice-involved veteran population at risk for homelessness, substance abuse, mental illness and physical health problems. The Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) program was created to provide timely access to VA services for eligible criminal justice-involved veterans to avoid unnecessary criminalization and incarceration of veteran offenders with mental illness. The VJO attends all client staffing and judicial reviews.

- **Director of Veterans Affairs/Mentor Coordinator**

Essential to the coordination, maintenance, and success of the mentoring program is the Mentor Coordinator. Their role is to recruit, organize and schedule trainings, supervise and coordinate Mentors within the Veterans Treatment Court Program. The Mentor Coordinator will also be responsible for individual and group supervision as well as scheduling mentors to be present during the Veterans Treatment Court proceedings. The Mentor Coordinator attends all client staffing and judicial reviews.

- **Treatment Court Coordinator (TCC)**

As a member of the Carbon County VTC Team, the Treatment Court Coordinator will be responsible for coordinating the Court by tracking and screening referrals, compiling statistical data and preparing weekly paperwork for the Court. The Coordinator shall update all materials such as the Policies and Procedures Manual, the Participant Handbook and any other VTC documents that need to be issued. The TCC attends all client staffing and judicial reviews.

- **Mental Health Forensic Case Manager (FCM)**

As part of the VTC Team, the case manager will be responsible for conducting an assessment to determine proper levels of care for Mental Health. The case manager will provide proper support in order for the individual to maximize their quality of life. The case manager will also conduct the initial intake interview in the correctional facility or community setting, appropriate referrals, liability information and completion of progress of notes, consumer contacts as well as ongoing services with coordination and monitoring for the duration of treatment court.

- **Certified Recovery Specialist (CRS)**

As a member of the Carbon County VTC Team, the Certified Recovery Specialist is a self-identified person who has progressed in his/her own recovery and utilizes their own experiences to promote hope and optimism to peers facing substance use dependency struggles. Community based, a CRS is vital in beginning the transformation to a recovery orientated system of care, empowering individuals to recognize potential barriers to their goals and ways to overcome them. A CRS assists in increasing social support systems in families and communities, and links consumers with potential community resources and public assistance programs. The CRS attends all client staffing and judicial reviews.

- **Drug and Alcohol Case Manager**

As a part of the VTC Team, the case manager will be performing comprehensive drug and alcohol assessments to determine the applicant's proper level of care. The case manager will provide necessary support to the participant throughout the levels of care. This includes: visitation of the participant while inpatient (within a considerable distance), coordination of aftercare treatment upon discharging from an inpatient level of care, coordinating recovery support and necessary community support needs.

- **Adult Probation Department – Treatment Court Specialist**

As a member of the Carbon County VTC Team, the assigned Clerk will be responsible for any supporting function of the VTC Team and will attend weekly staffing and Court sessions to take meeting minutes and complete data entry.

All team members, whether original or new, are required to complete at a minimum, the Essential Elements of Adult Veterans Courts online training through the National Drug Court Institute (NDCI). New team members will be provided with a list of recommended training that they should complete within the first six months of joining the team. In addition, they must also complete a minimum of 6 hours of yearly training in at least one of the following disciplines: Treatment Courts, Recovery/Addiction, Illicit/Prescription Drugs, Alcohol, Ethics, Cultural Diversity, Mental Health, Trauma, or Ten Key Components. Training hours will be kept by the Treatment Court Coordinator.

Each team member will be responsible for dissemination of information to their respective agency with regard to confidentiality laws that apply specifically to the VTC participants. Likewise, the sharing of information between team members is a vital part of working as a team. Team members will also be charged with the education of other peer professionals on the program.

In creating this partnership and uniting in a single goal of addressing our community, the team members will pledge to enhance communication between the courts, law enforcement, treatment programs and other community partners and resources. Through this linkage of services, we expect wider participation and greater effectiveness in addressing clients with drug, alcohol and/or mental health issues that are involved in the Criminal Justice System.

Note: *These policies and procedures may be amended at any time, but will be reviewed annually by the VTC Team. The team membership can be expanded at the discretion of the court.*

Procedures for Entry into VTC – New Charges

1. A referral source identifies a criminal defendant as an individual with a Substance Use Disorder.
2. The defendant shall complete a VTC application (Attachment 2).
3. Adult Probation shall provide the defendant with the VTC Participant Handbook for review.
4. Once the defendant completes the VTC application, it is submitted to the Treatment Court Coordinator, who in turn, will provide it to the District Attorney's Office for a criminal eligibility review and to the VJO Specialist for benefit eligibility determination and clinical assessment. The District Attorney's Office will render a criminal eligibility determination within seventy-two (72) hours of receipt of the application and notify the Treatment Court Coordinator and the VJO Specialist. If determined to be criminally ineligible, the application will be denied and there is no recourse for reconsideration.
5. If eligibility is established by the VJO Specialist, notice shall be provided to the Treatment Court Coordinator, who shall arrange for the defendant's application and related documents and reports to be forwarded to the VTC Team for review and consideration.
6. Appropriate assessments will be performed by the Probation Officer, Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol to determine the appropriate level of care, and the risks, if any and other needs of the defendant.
7. Once the VTC Team receives the defendant's request, it shall then consider approving placement in the VTC and make appropriate recommendations for the defendant's treatment plan.
8. Defendants are strongly encouraged and may be required to attend one Treatment Court session prior to being admitted into the program.
9. If approved for placement in the VTC, the defendant, counsel, if any and the Commonwealth will be notified accordingly, and a date will be scheduled for placement in VTC.
10. If the plan is not approved by the VTC Team, written notice will be provided to the defendant, counsel, if any and to the Commonwealth citing the reasons for rejection.
11. If eligibility is not established by the District Attorney's Office or the VJO Specialist or the VTC, the defendant can request reconsideration pursuant to the reconsideration policy of this manual.

Procedures for Entry into VTC – Supervision Violation

1. A referral source identifies a criminal defendant as a veteran who is a substance addict and/or abuser.
2. The defendant shall complete a VTC application (Attachment 2).
3. Adult Probation shall provide the defendant with the VTC Participant Handbook for review.
4. Once the defendant completes the VTC application, it is submitted to the Treatment Court Coordinator, who in turn shall provide it to the VJO Specialist for benefit eligibility determination and clinical assessment.
5. After eligibility determination, the Treatment Court Coordinator and Adult Probation Officer will determine VTC eligibility with regard to the type of charges and maximum custody/supervision time remaining.
6. If eligibility is established by the VJO Specialist, notice shall be provided to the Treatment Court Coordinator, who shall arrange for the defendant's application and related documents and reports to be forwarded to the VTC Team for review and consideration.
7. Appropriate assessments will be performed by the Probation Officer, Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol to determine the appropriate level of care and the risks, if any and other needs of the defendant.
8. Once the VTC Team receives the defendant's request and all assessments are completed, it shall then consider approving placement in the VTC and make appropriate recommendations for the defendant's treatment plan.
9. If approved for placement in the VTC, the defendant, counsel, if any and the Commonwealth will be notified accordingly and a date will be scheduled for placement in VTC.
10. If the defendant is not approved by the VTC Team, written notice will be provided to the defendant, counsel, if any and to the Commonwealth citing the reasons for rejection.
11. If eligibility is not established by the Probation Officer or the VTC, the defendant can request reconsideration pursuant to the reconsideration policy of this manual.

Reconsideration Policy

Reconsideration requests must be made within thirty (30) days of initial rejection unless the basis for such requests relates to V.A. benefit eligibility.

*Reconsiderations are **NOT available** for criminal ineligibility determinations.*

If a relevant party to the defendant's case (Defendant, Attorney, Judge, Probation Officer, etc.) feels that someone failed to consider a particularly important factor, he/she may complete a request for the case to be reconsidered for VTC. Only one such request may be made per case.

A Reconsideration Request Form (Attachment 3) must be completed and submitted to the Treatment Court Coordinator along with any supporting documentation and reasoning to justify reconsideration. This may include, but not be limited to, mitigating circumstances related to the crime(s) charged and psychiatric/psychological reports that may not have been available for the initial consideration.

Once the request for reconsideration is submitted, the Treatment Court Coordinator will forward the request to the Veterans Treatment Court team for reconsideration.

Eligibility Criteria

Screening for entrance into VTC is available to those defendants who are detained at the CCCF, awaiting disposition of eligible criminal offenses, currently on pre-trial supervision or currently on probation/parole supervision. The following criteria has been established to identify defendants who may qualify for admission to VTC:

- 18 years of age or older.
- A resident of Carbon County (or residing in another county without a VTC within a reasonable distance to Jim Thorpe, as determined by the VTC Team) or alternatively a resident of another county in Pennsylvania with a VTC willing to accept an eligible defendant.
- Be charged with any combination of misdemeanors and/or felonies not otherwise listed in the disqualifying criteria.
- Defendant voluntarily agrees to participate in, and be subject to, rules, regulations and sanctions of VTC.
- A validated Risk/Needs Assessment will be used to aid in determining the eligibility for VTC participation.
- Diagnosis of substance use disorder.
- Either a member in good standing of any branch of the military, including the National Guard or Reserves, or is a former member of the above who has been honorably discharged, or if not honorably discharged, is still eligible for V.A. benefits.

- Must meet one of the following clinical criteria: PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury), MST (Military Sexual Trauma), Drug/Alcohol addiction, and other Axis 1 diagnoses that includes but is not limited to: Major Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Schizoaffective Disorder, or a psychological and/or substance abuse problem(s) requiring treatment/support.

Disqualifying Criteria

Not every defendant is eligible for inclusion in VTC. The following criteria disqualifies defendants from inclusion:

- Dishonorable discharge.
- Other than Honorable discharge due to bad conduct.
- Where the offenses involve: murder, voluntary manslaughter, arson, Megan’s Law offenses, crimes against children, kidnapping, aggravated assault (on police officers/Probation Officers), escape, robbery, assault by prisoner, and violent drug offenders¹ or drug offenders who sold drugs for profit. (DA reserves the right to use discretion when in regards to these offenses)
- Where the defendant is required to register as a requirement of Megan’s Law (Adam Walsh Act).
- Failure to meet residency requirements.
- Defendant is not in need of treatment or is unwilling to comply with the treatment recommendations.
- Unresolved out-of-county or out-of-state criminal charges.
- Defendant has a medical condition or mental health diagnosis that does not allow for functional participation in VTC.
- Failure to provide an adequate transportation plan.

The District Attorney’s Office, Probation Officer, VTC and VTC Judge all reserve the right to exercise discretion in considering other disqualifying criteria including, but not limited to: sentencing requirements based upon the prior record score and seriousness of the offense, previous participation in a specialized treatment court, defendant’s unwillingness/inability to

¹ a “violent offender” means a person who – (1) is charged with or convicted of an offense that is punishable by a term of imprisonment exceeding 1 year, during the course of which offense or conduct – (a) the person carried, possessed, or used a firearm or dangerous weapon; (b) there occurred the death of or serious bodily injury to any person; or (c) there occurred the use of force against the person of another, without regard to whether any of the circumstances described in subparagraph (a) or (b) is an element of the offense or conduct of which or for which the person is charged or convicted; or (2) has one or more prior convictions for a felony crime of violence involving the use or attempted use of force against a person with the intent to cause death or serious bodily harm.

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terminate use of lawfully prescribed controlled substances (except MAT substances) or over-the-counter medications that affect the integrity and accuracy of drug screening and program participation and victim's opposition, if any, to entry into VTC.

Competency

If a defendant is referred to Carbon County VTC and there is a suspicion, at any time, that the defendant may not be competent to participate, as required by VTC, a referral will be made to the defendant's counsel to request a motion to have this issue evaluated prior to any further action in the VTC screening/assessment process.

VTC Program Entry Hearing

Once a defendant is approved for entry into the VTC Program by the VTC team, a hearing will be scheduled and held before the court. Prior to entry into the appropriate track, the participant must execute the following documents:

1. Stipulation for Entry into VTC (Attachment 4);
2. Release of Information Forms to allow the VTC team to track and monitor a participant's progress (Attachment 5);
3. A Participant Contract (Attachment 6);
4. A Verification of Content Understanding Form (Attachment 7);
5. Acknowledgement & Waiver of Due Process Rights (Attachment 8); and
6. Colloquies and Waivers as further outlined below.

Upon execution of the documents referenced above and after conducting the hearing, the VTC Judge will place the participant into the appropriate track and the VTC Judge will sign the appropriate order (Attachment 9).

Program Tracks

The VTC consists of four (4) separate and distinct tracks for eligible defendants. With the exception of the Recovery Track, the three other tracks are utilized at the discretion of the District Attorney's Office and vary in terms of the ultimate disposition of the charges of each participant.

1. Diversionary Track

All participants entering VTC through a Diversionary Track will execute a Rule 600 Waiver form (Attachment 10) and Written Colloquy – Diversionary Track (Attachment

11). For participants completing the Diversionary Track, charges will not be dismissed until the participant has graduated and paid any and all applicable fines, costs, and fees. It is the responsibility of the participant to furnish proof of final payment to their VTC Probation Officer. Once verified, the Office of the District Attorney will prepare the appropriate document for obtaining dismissal of the charges. Further, upon successful completion, the participant who entered into the program as diversionary may petition the Court to have their criminal case(s) expunged. The participant must pay the appropriate fee to the Clerk of Courts Office prior to the filing of the petition for expungement. The Office of the District Attorney will prepare the necessary paperwork for the participant's expungement. Failure to successfully complete aftercare may result in the District Attorney denying the expungement request. Any participant who enters into the Diversionary Track but fails the program and is removed from VTC will have his/her case returned to normal criminal tracking at the pre-trial conference stage.

2. Incentive Track

The goal of the Incentive Track is to give the participant a chance to work toward a better resolution of the charges if he/she adheres to all conditions set forth by the Court and successfully completes the VTC Incentive Track. This track is designed for the participant to enter a guilty plea approved by the D.A. and then defer sentencing with signed Rule 704 Waiver (Attachment 12) and Written Plea Colloquy – Incentive/Standard Track (Attachment 13) in order for the participant to complete the VTC Incentive Track program. Upon successful completion, the participant may be afforded the opportunity to withdraw his/her guilty plea and enter a plea to lesser charges. The VTC Incentive Track is designed to meet the needs of eligible veterans who have prior criminal records or more serious charges that are better suited for the Incentive Track program rather than the Diversionary Track program.

3. Standard Track

A participant in VTC who enters through a Standard Track is one who does not fit into either a Diversionary Track or Incentive Track as determined by the District Attorney's Office. Normally, this requires a participant to enter a guilty plea to an appropriate offense approved by the D.A. and to have sentencing deferred with signed Rule 704 Waiver (Attachment 12) and Written Plea Colloquy – Incentive/Standard Track (Attachment 13) in order for the participant to complete the VTC Standard Track. The VTC Standard Track is designed to meet the needs of those eligible veterans, who because of the charges or their record, are not suitable for either the Diversionary Track

or Incentive Track and are otherwise facing incarceration. Participation in the Standard Track is an alternative to incarceration.

4. Recovery Track

A participant in VTC who enters through the Recovery Track is admitted as a result of a violation of supervision from a previous sentence imposed by the Court. It is designed to meet the needs of eligible veterans who have been unsuccessful with probation/parole supervision and are in need of more intense and extensive treatment in lieu of incarceration. In this track, a participant acknowledges a violation of his/her probation or parole and agrees to have his/her Gagnon II Sentencing deferred with signed Probation/Parole Violation Colloquy in order for the participant to complete the VTC Recovery Track.

Program Phases

The VTC is comprised of five (5) separate and distinct phases totaling a minimum of eighteen (18) months of supervision, treatment and monitoring. All phases have been designed to provide a reasonable and clinically effective assemblage of activities and to afford periodic positive reinforcement of the participant by transition.

Each participant's involvement will be monitored by his/her probation officer. As each participant completes various aspects and requirements of each phase, the probation officer will note such in the participant's file and complete with the participant an appropriate Supervision Plan Form (Attachments 15A-F).

PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	PHASE 4	PHASE 5
Duration: 60 Days	Duration: 120 Days	Duration: 120 Days	Duration: 120 Days	Duration: 120 Days
Court: Status Hearing 1 time a week	Court: Status Hearing every other week	Court: Status Hearing every other week	Court: Status Hearing once a month	Court: Status Hearing once a month
Probation: minimum of 2 contacts per week	Probation: minimum of 2 contacts per week	Probation: minimum of 2 contacts per week	Probation: minimum of 1 contact per week	Probation: minimum of 1 contact per week
Drug Testing minimum of 2 times a week	Drug Testing minimum of 2 times a week	Drug Testing minimum of 2 times a week	Drug Testing minimum of 2 times a week	Drug Testing minimum of 1 time a week
Sobriety: 15 continuous days in the	Sobriety: 30 continuous days in the	Sobriety: 90 continuous days in the	Sobriety: 90 continuous days in the	Sobriety: 120 continuous days in the community

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community	community	community	community	
Volunteerism: 15 hours	Volunteerism: 30 hours	Volunteerism: 30 hours	Volunteerism: 30 hours	Volunteerism: 30 hours
Meet with VJO for treatment planning	Engage in treatment plan created in conjunction with VJO	Continue with treatment plan created in conjunction with VJO	Continue with treatment plan created in conjunction with VJO	Continue with treatment plan created in conjunction with VJO and conclude, if appropriate
Meet with Mentor: 3 contacts per week	Maintain contact with Mentor: 2 contacts per week	Maintain contact with Mentor: 2 contacts per week	Maintain contact with Mentor: 1 contact per week	Maintain contact with Mentor: 1 contact per week
Curfew: 9 PM	Curfew: 9 PM	Curfew: 10 PM	Curfew: 11 PM	Curfew: None
Daily Journal	Daily Journal	Daily Journal	Daily Journal	Daily Journal
Create/update Supervision Plan with Probation Officer and actively participate and comply with plan				
Attend and participate in treatment as directed				
Participate in SMART Recovery or other approved community-based support groups				
Attend and participate in classes, appointments, or functions as required (employment, housing, finances, driver's license, wellness, etc.)				
Establish payment plan	Compliance with payment plan (minimum \$50 a month)	Compliance with payment plan (minimum \$50 a month)	Compliance with payment plan (minimum \$50 a month)	Finalize payment plan for fines/costs/restitution
Complete application for the next phase II	Seek employment, education, & training	Maintain employment, continuous educational process or vocational training	Maintain employment, continuous educational process or vocational training	Maintain employment, continuous educational process or vocational training
Smartlink (Cell phone based check-ins and tracking)	Establish financial budget	Live within financial budget	Live within financial budget	Live within financial budget
Memorize General Orders of Carbon County VTC	Smartlink for 30 days (Cell phone based check-ins and tracking)	Maintain stable housing	Maintain stable housing	Maintain stable housing
	Obtain stable housing	Complete an application for Advancement to Phase IV	Complete an application for Advancement to Phase V	Complete application for graduation

	Complete an application for Advancement to Phase III.			
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Treatment Protocol

All eligible participants will receive drug, alcohol and mental health services through Veterans Administration Wilkes-Barre, Carbon-Monroe-Pike Drug and Alcohol Commission, Carbon-Monroe-Pike Mental Health and Developmental Services or any other provider at the discretion of the Court, where required. The participant must comply with the recommendations of the treatment. If a participant must cancel an appointment, they must notify both the Provider and their assigned Adult Probation Officer of the cancellation and the reason why the appointment must be cancelled.

A VJO will be assigned to the VTC. Each participant will be referred to the VJO for the initial assessment. Once assessed, the participant will be placed in the appropriate level of care. The VTC team will receive regular updates from the VJO on the participants' progress in treatment. The VTC Team will make a collaborative effort to provide services (inpatient, intensive outpatient, outpatient, etc.) that are needed for the participant to obtain their treatment goals.

Probation Supervision Requirements

Each participant will be supervised by a member of the Carbon County Adult Probation Office while involved in VTC. It is expected that each participant will comply fully with all mandates and requirements of that supervision (Attachment 22).

Employment/Volunteerism

Participants are required to obtain/maintain stable employment no later than the end of Phase III of the VTC Program, unless excused by the VTC Team (because of vocational training or involved in an educational process) or determined disabled by the Social Security Administration or Department of Veterans Affairs. Those who do not maintain employment for

a two (2) week period will be required to complete an additional five (5) hours of volunteerism work each week not employed.

Additionally, each participant is required to complete all volunteerism hours mandated by phase requirements. In addition, volunteerism hours may be imposed as sanctions for violating VTC rules. Participants must have volunteerism sites pre-approved by their Adult Probation Officer. Volunteerism hours will be verified.

In all situations, participants who are disabled as determined by the Social Security Administration or Department of Veterans Affairs will only be required to complete volunteerism hours as determined by the VTC Team.

Drug Testing

Drug testing is an important component of the Carbon County VTC program. Drug testing methods within the program include urinalysis, breathalyzers or any other means deemed appropriate by the Court. Drug testing within the program will be random and frequent. The frequency, type of test, and the substances that will be tested for will be at the discretion of the Probation Officer or the VTC Team. Testing may occur during non-traditional hours and requests for a sample may occur without notice to the participant. Participants reporting to Court or the probation office should be prepared to submit a urine sample. Participants will be tested a minimum of two (2) times a week during Phases I-V. The vast majority of the drug test will be administered and observed by the Probation Officer, but tests may be administered by others (e.g. treatment programs, sober houses, other agencies, etc.) at the discretion of the Probation Officer. Participants are strongly encouraged to report lapses to their Probation Officer **PRIOR** to submitting their sample. All test results will be reported to the VTC Team.

Incentives for consistent drug free samples may be provided. Sanctions may be imposed for positive drug screens. The type of sanction will be based on the sanction policy. Any refusal, alteration or failure to provide a drug test at the time requested, shall be viewed by VTC as a positive test result and the appropriate sanction will be imposed. If a participant fails to provide a sample, fails to report for testing, provides an adulterated sample or attempts to utilize a device that provides false urine, sanctions will be imposed. Any attempt to alter/tamper with a specimen will be considered a violation. If at any time throughout the collection process it appears that the participant is attempting to conceal any device used to alter/tamper or provide an invalid specimen, the Probation Department reserves the right to conduct a search of the participant. Confirmatory tests may be ordered upon request by the

VTC Team. If a participant requests a confirmatory test which subsequently is confirmed positive, the participant shall be sanctioned to pay the cost of the confirmation.

Progress Hearings

During each phase of VTC, all participants are required to attend progress hearings in accordance with their phase requirements. A participant will be required to report at the next progress hearing following any violations which may result in a sanction. In addition, the Court may sanction a participant to increased attendance to progress hearings. The Judge will inquire of each participant's progress, providing incentives or sanctions if appropriate at that time. The Judge may also change conditions of participation, if warranted. Unless excused, participants are required to remain in the Courtroom until all progress hearings have been completed. The participant will be given notice of their next required progress hearing appearance by VTC each time they appear.

Upon successful completion of each phase, the participant will be presented with a certificate and an offer to proceed to the next phase. Participants may leave early after they have received their certificate for phasing up. Upon completion of all five (5) phases, the participant will be eligible to graduate from the program.

Court sessions for progress hearings are held each Wednesday in Courtroom #2. Participants are required to appear as noticed and to show up on time, show respect to the Court, the VTC Team and other participants. It is sincerely discouraged to have children attend progress hearings. Participants are required to stay in the Courtroom for the duration of the hearings, unless excused by the VTC team.

Incentives

The purpose of providing incentives is to reward participants for positive lifestyle changes and for meeting program milestones/requirements. The following has been developed as a guide to assist the VTC Team in providing incentives to VTC participants in a consistent and fair manner. The VTC Team is not limited to the incentives listed on the guide and may consider other factors and incentives at their discretion.

Milestones

1. Acceptance into the VTC Program
 - a. Participants shall receive a VTC Wristband, Pocket Calendar and Journal.
2. Advancement in Phases (II through V)

- a. Participants shall receive a certificate, Gift card (\$20) and a congratulations from the Judge.
- b. Participants advancing to Phase IV will also receive a VTC t-shirt.
- c. Participants advancing to Phase V will also receive the VTC Challenge Coin.

3. Graduation

- a. Participants shall receive a framed certificate, Gift Card (\$20), a VTC Coffee Mug and congratulations from the Judge.

Sobriety

1. Participants shall receive a round of applause in Court whenever they indicate the number of days sober (minimum of thirty (30) days).
2. Participants will receive a VTC token at 90-day intervals of sobriety (i.e. 90 days, 180 days, etc.). Participants will be allowed to leave early after receiving their token.

100% Club (Flagbox)

Every first Wednesday of each month, those participants that have made all Court sessions, probation contacts, treatment appointments, and have complied with all other requirements of the VTC Program for the preceding month, will have their names placed in a box for a random drawing. The Court will read the names of those participants who have earned “100%”. At least one winner shall receive a \$20 gift card. Additional incentives may be awarded if available.

Participants who complete any of the following will have their names added to the box for an increased opportunity to win:

1. Fines, costs and restitution paid in full.
2. Volunteerism completed for Phase.
3. Completion of a level of care treatment.
4. Completion of a specific class.
5. Obtaining a driver’s license.
6. Obtaining and maintaining full-time employment (60 days).
7. Obtaining and maintaining stable housing (60 days).

Other Miscellaneous Achievements or Milestones

The VTC Team and the Court may provide additional incentives when appropriate, and at their discretion, for various other achievements and milestones. Examples include, but are not

limited to, verbal praise from the Court, a round of applause in Court, permission to attend outings, allowance for a day/overnight trip or similar incentives.

Incentives are built into the Phase structure of the VTC Program. In addition to the recognition of phase advancement, as participants proceed through the phases, they will have reductions on program requirements, later curfews and the ability to leave Court earlier.

Sanctions

Participants who fail to comply with program requirements (honesty, supervision, treatment, urinalysis, etc.) will be held accountable through the imposition of sanctions. The VTC team will review the following questions to assist the team and the Court in determining the appropriate sanction for the non-compliant participant:

1. **WHO** are they in terms of risks and needs?
2. **WHERE** are they in the program?
 - a. What is their current phase?
 - b. Previous sanctions?
3. **WHICH** behaviors are we responding to?
 - a. Are they proximal or distal goals?
4. **WHAT** is the response choice and magnitude?
5. **HOW** do we deliver and explain the response?

Participant Input: The VTC Team recognizes that the participant is an integral part of the team. In determining the appropriate sanction, the team should ask the participant:

- What sanctions would be beneficial to you?
- What is something that has helped you to address this type of behavior in the past?

Sanctioning & Termination Criteria: The VTC Team recognizes that many offenders placed in the program have serious alcohol and/or other drug use/abuse/dependency or addictions and presents a serious risk to the community and themselves. VTC will make every effort to properly assess participants and to engage them in the appropriate treatment. Time will be taken during the sanctioning and termination review process to ensure that the participant's presenting treatment need was addressed and that responses were used based on the behaviors the participant could achieve as a result of his/her presenting diagnoses, commitment to treatment, and time in the program.

Increasing levels of sanctions will be used if and/or when violations of VTC program rules occur. Disciplinary actions taken by the VTC Team does not alter the status of a participant in the program unless consensus is reached by the Team which indicate further steps are necessary to manage inappropriate participant conduct.

Sanctions demonstrate that there are immediate consequences to inappropriate behavior. When possible, the sanction should be imposed at a Progress Hearing immediately following the infraction. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal admonishment from the Judge • Written warning • Letter of apology • Worksheets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Missed appointments ○ Honesty ○ Program compliance ○ Readiness to change ○ Values check ○ Action check ○ Thinking check ○ Decisional balance exercise • Essays <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Triggers ○ My support system ○ Defining my addiction ○ Negative self-talk ○ Why do I want to change? ○ Definition of recovery ○ Drug refusal skills ○ Lying & dishonesty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fee for contested confirmed UT • Reflection hour • Increased supervision • Increased drug testing • Increased Court appearances • Additional hours of volunteerism • Assessment of costs related to behavior • Curfew • Increased community restrictions • Tour of morgue or similar location • Round table • Delay advancement to the next phase • Restarting phase • Smartlink (Cell phone based check-ins and tracking) • House arrest/electronic
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The impact of my use on others • Journaling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> monitoring • Jail (sparingly) • Termination
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Depending upon the severity and timing of the VTC violation, the participant may be promptly detained with a hearing held as soon as Court becomes available.

The Team will decide on the particular incentive or sanction that is used. It is understood that while incentives are clearly positive motivators, the sanction chosen should also serve to increase the participant’s likelihood of success in the program. For example, while increased attendance of reporting is listed as a sanction, this can be seen as a way of increasing the support the participant needs to allow them to succeed.

The amount of time spent incarcerated for a sanction shall not count towards credit for time served, if applicant fails to successfully complete VTC.

Graduation

Participants who have successfully completed all five (5) phases of VTC and have completed the *Application for Program Graduation* and the *Graduation Survey* are eligible for graduation. The Court may also require restitution be paid in full prior to graduation. Graduation ceremonies take place approximately two (2) times per year depending upon the number of participants who are eligible to graduate. Ceremonies will take place outside the normal Court session and all participants are required to attend. Friends and family are invited to attend and join in congratulating the participant on a “job well done”.

Termination from VTC

Participation in VTC is voluntary. As such, participants may terminate their involvement at any time, however, should they choose to do so, they may be subject to different and sometimes harsher sentences and conditions resulting there from, including incarceration.

A) Voluntary Termination

The following must occur in order to terminate from the program:

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1. The termination request must be made in writing (Attachment 17) and contain a clear and concise explanation as to the participant's reasons for opting-out of the program.
2. The written request must be submitted to the VTC Judge for consideration. Once received, the request is considered by the VTC Team and a final determination is made by the VTC Judge.
3. A verbal and written acceptance of the participant's request will be given to the participant during a scheduled hearing.
4. After the hearing, should the Court grant the request, an appropriate Order and Notice to Appear will be issued (Attachment 18).

B) Involuntary Termination

The Treatment Team will evaluate the totality of all factors prior to making a recommendation on involuntary termination. In the team's discretion, a termination recommendation can be based on one factor or multiple factors. Factors include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Behavior(s) which has resulted in a citation, summons, arrest and/or conviction;
2. A pattern of missed, diluted or positive drug tests;
3. Repeated or continued failures to comply with or engage in treatment or recommendations;
4. Repeated or continued failures to comply with supervision or other conditions of the Court;
5. Absconding from an approved residence;
6. Violence or threats of violence against anyone;
7. Multiple jail sanctions.

It is the responsibility of the VTC Team to determine whether a participant should be recommended for termination from VTC. The ultimate decision belongs to the Veterans Treatment Court Judge. Written notice of a recommendation to terminate will be given to the participant and counsel, if any, and a proper termination hearing will be held (Attachment 19). If the Judge terminates a participant from the VTC Program, the appropriate Order will be issued and the participant will either be scheduled for pre-trial conference with the District Attorney's Office (Diversionary Track), scheduled for sentencing (Standard or Incentive Track) or scheduled for a Gagnon Proceeding (Recovery Track) (Attachment 20).

Prescriptions and Over the Counter Medications

Due to the high potential for certain medications to interfere with treatment and recovery efforts, VTC prohibits the use of all addictive medications. This includes the use of

narcotic pain medications (Vicodin, Percocet, OxyContin, etc.), muscle relaxers (Flexeril, etc.), sleep aids (Somas, Ambien, etc.), caffeine pills, and the use of benzodiazepine medications (Xanax, Klonopin, Valium, etc.). Consuming diet pills is also strictly prohibited. Participants are not to consume any food item containing poppy seeds.

Participants seeking entry into the VTC Program are expected to consult their physician and/or psychiatrist to seek non-addictive medications with no abuse potential to treat conditions such as chronic pain and anxiety. Participants using such medications are subject to sanctions. Exceptions to this policy will be made only in extremely rare instances where there is a documented medically necessary or emergency treatment by a primary care physician. Participants who habitually seek exception to this policy are subject to increased sanctions and/or termination.

Participants of VTC may not take any dietary supplements or vitamins, as they may contain substances that would alter the normal color of urine or cause a positive drug test for illegal substances.

The consumption of salvia, morning glory seeds, K2/Spice, or any other such mood altering, synthetic/designed or hallucinogenic substance is strictly prohibited. All cough medications must be pre-approved by the Probation Officer. Ingredients such as alcohol, codeine, and dextromethorphan (DXM) are also prohibited. For a list of the medications not permitted in VTC, see Attachment 23.

Any medications prescribed by a doctor must be approved by the Probation Officer prior to use. The only exception is an emergency situation. All medications must be kept in the original container. Any non-approved medication can be confiscated by the Probation Officer. To ensure your doctor's awareness and cooperation, as well as your compliance with the VTC Policy, the participant should have the physician sign the medical form (Attachment 24). The participant must also sign a medical release form (Attachment 5) for each encounter where they seek medical or other treatment. The use of over-the-counter medications may also result in a positive test result. Participants are encouraged to contact the Probation Officer regarding the medications before commencing use.

Medication-Assisted Treatment

Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) is an evidence-based substance abuse treatment protocol. VTC supports the availability for individuals to have access to appropriate MAT under the care and prescription of a physician. VTC recognizes that not all participants may have access to MAT due to a lack of physicians who are able to prescribe and oversee patients using anti-alcohol and anti-opioid medications. This will not preclude individuals from applying to

VTC and where and when available, VTC supports the participant's right to access MAT. This right extends to participation in VTC and VTC encourages the involvement in MAT-related treatment by any participant with an opioid addiction, to the extent MAT is clinically indicated.

VTC will not deny any eligible participant access to VTC because of their use of FDA-approved medications for the treatment of substance abuse (e.g., methadone, buprenorphine products, including buprenorphine/naloxone combination formulations and buprenorphine mono-product formulations, naltrexone products including extended-release and oral formulations, disulfiram, and acamprosate calcium). Further, methadone treatment rendered in accordance with current federal and state methadone dispensing regulations from an opioid treatment program and ordered by a physician, who has evaluated the participant and determined that methadone is an appropriate MAT for the individual's opioid abuse, will be permitted. Similarly, FDA-approved medications available by prescription must be permitted unless the Judge determines the following conditions have not been met:

- The participant is receiving those medications as part of treatment for diagnosed substance abuse.
- A licensed clinician, acting within their scope of practice, has examined the participant and determined that the medication is an appropriate treatment for their substance abuse.
- The medication was appropriately authorized through prescription by a licensed prescriber.

In all cases, MAT will be permitted to be continued for as long as the prescriber determines that the FDA-approved medication is clinically beneficial. VTC assures that participants will not be compelled to no longer use MAT as part of the conditions of the VTC, if such a mandate is inconsistent with a licensed prescriber's recommendation or valid prescription for FDA-approved medication.

Under no circumstances will the VTC Judge, other Judicial Official, Correctional Supervision Officer, or any other staff connected to VTC deny the use of such FDA-approved medications when made available to the participant under the care of a properly authorized physician and pursuant to regulations within an opioid treatment program or through a valid prescription and under the conditions described above. The VTC judge, however, retains judicial discretion to mitigate/reduce the risk of abuse, misuse, or diversion of these medications.

VTC files shall be kept in secured locations and in compliance with the Adult Probation/Parole Department's Policy and Procedures.

Ethics and Confidentiality Statement

VTC proceedings shall be kept confidential. The VTC Team agrees that a positive drug test or open court admission of drug possession or use will not result in the filing of additional drug charges based on that admission. As with meetings, participants are strongly encouraged to neither break anonymity nor disclose any information obtained during VTC proceedings.

Treatment providers are bound by ethical and confidentiality standards set by HIPAA, and state and federal confidentiality rules (42 CFR, part 2; 71 P.S. Section 1690.108; and 42 U.S.C. Section 290dd-2) and any other regulations that may apply. Participants sign informed consent forms permitting disclosure of treatment information concerning attendance and general participation in treatment, and relapse information. Specific matters discussed during treatment sessions shall not be disclosed.

Data Collection

VTC realizes the need to measure the program's performance outcome by utilizing the Problem-Solving Adult and Juvenile Court Information System (PAJCIS) to measure and to monitor the success and failure of program initiatives and objectives, and to give insight to any necessary program modifications and implementations. Currently, the program measures: ethnicity, gender, marital status, employment, education, community service, terminations, successful offenders, violations (new arrest and technical) and withdrawals, admissions, urinalysis, officer contacts and field work, risk and needs evaluations, incarceration days saved, and offenders in program phases.

Veterans' Mentoring Program

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Veterans' Mentoring Program is to enable veterans to help veterans complete the Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) by providing support, assistance and guidance.

Overview of the Program

The key component of any successful Veterans Treatment Court is a Veterans' Mentoring Program. In this program, a trained Veteran Mentor is paired with a veteran participant to provide support as he/she navigates through the Court and treatment. Ideally, Mentors/participants will be paired by service whenever possible. The Mentor is present as an ally and friend, to assist the veteran through this difficult time. Our belief is that the shared experiences of another veteran will be critical in assisting the participant in regaining control of his/her life and successfully connecting to and maintaining treatment and other resources, which will lead to a successful completion of the VTC Program.

The Mentoring Program offers support and encouragement for veterans in the Court system by spending one-on-one time with the veteran participant on a regular basis to provide an opportunity to discuss concerns and receive feedback and support from another veteran. The Mentor will have a resource guide at his/her disposal to refer veterans to a wide range of available services within the federal, state and local veteran system and in the community at large. These include, but are not limited to: monetary and healthcare benefits, housing, spiritual needs, social/recreational needs and employment. The Mentor is a resource to the veteran, not a counselor. The Mentor Coordinator and other members of the VTC Team are also available if needed. The mentor will be provided with key contact information.

Role of Mentor

The role of a mentor is to act as a coach, guide, role model, and an advocate for the individuals he/she is working with. A mentor is intended to encourage, guide, and support the participant as he/she progresses through the Court process. This will include listening to the concerns of the individual, making general suggestions, assisting the participant to determine what their needs are supporting the participant at a time when they feel alone in a way only another veteran can understand.

Mentors are not intended to assume the role of a parent, professional counselor, social worker, or doctor. Although a mentor will be expected to use some of the skills used by these positions (listening, supporting, and advising) the level of involvement will be significantly less as the mentors are not trained professionals. It will be the responsibility of the mentor and the

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coordinator to ensure this boundary through individual and group training and supervision when necessary.

Concerns around suicide or other self-harm, homicide or harm to others, non-compliance with medication, physical or mental health concerns that have not been shared with a health professional or anything that the mentor is uncomfortable discussing, should be seen as outside of the mentoring role.

When concerns are brought up that fall into any of these categories, the mentor should encourage the veteran to share the information with an appropriate health care professional. The mentor can suggest that if the health care professional is present, the mentor will accompany the veteran and support him/her during the conversation. If the health care professional is not present, the information should be shared with the Case Manager through the Court or with another member of the Court staff, either by the veteran or by the mentor, prior to the veteran leaving Court.

The volunteer must be mindful of the separation of church and state.

Mentor Application and Screening

An individual who is interested in becoming a mentor should complete the application and schedule an interview with the Mentor Coordinator. All prospective mentors should also attend a minimum of one session of VTC. Prospective mentors must:

- Be a veteran of one of the branches of the United States Military, i.e., Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard (to include the Reserves or National Guard, only if the applicant was ordered to active duty for a period that exceeded 180 days). The volunteer must have an Honorable Discharge and provide DD 214 as confirmation.
- Go through the Mentoring vetting process (background check)
- Adhere to all of the Carbon County VTC Veterans' Mentoring Program policies and procedures
- Commit to program participation for a minimum of six months
- Participate in the initial training necessary to become a Veteran Mentor which includes the Volunteer Veteran Mentor online training program (www.pacourts.us/T/AOPc/VolVetMentTrgPrg) and any additional training required during the program commitment
- Be able to dedicate 2 hours per month to one Veterans Treatment Court session, and at least one hour per week to the participants of Veterans Treatment Court, along with additional time spent talking to and being with the veteran participant outside of Court
- Be a willing listener
- Be encouraging and supportive

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- Be tolerant and respectful of individual differences

The positions of Mentor and Mentor Coordinator are both strictly volunteer and are unpaid. Expenses related to the VTC may be paid as authorized by the Judge. Free parking is provided to mentors for scheduled VTC status hearings.

All mentors will sign acknowledgement that they have received and reviewed a copy of VTC Mentor Policy/Procedures Manual and understand that their compliance with the manual is required to continue as a mentor in VTC.

Supervision and Training

The Mentor Coordinator is responsible for the recruitment, training and supervision of all mentors of VTC. The Coordinator is also available to help guide and assist the mentor as needed. The Coordinator is an active member of the VTC Team and participates in case conferences and court sessions. The Coordinator is the primary communication channel between the mentors and the VTC Team.

The Coordinator will schedule ongoing in-person and online training to help develop the skills and knowledge of mentors. In-person sessions will serve as an opportunity for all of the mentors to come together to discuss their concerns, their successes, and their ideas. Topics to be addressed include questions about what to do for program participants, how to address a particular question or situation with a participant, etc. The group meeting will allow all of the mentors to benefit from the discussion as well as increasing the number of ideas and strategies provided around a specific concern or question. The group setting will also allow mentors to praise and support each other.

Mentor Duties

Mentor Introduction:

Ideally, the mentor will facilitate an introduction between the mentor and the participant prior to the veteran being admitted into the Court. This usually occurs immediately before the admission hearing. In addition, the Mentor will be introduced to the members of the VTC Team. Once the Veteran has been admitted into the Court, the Judge will ask the mentor to join the participant at the podium.

It is recommended that the mentor dedicate time immediately following Court to better acquaint themselves with the participant.

Mentoring Sessions:

Mentoring sessions consist of one-on-one meetings between a mentor and the participant. Mentoring sessions are typically short, less than 30 minutes, but could be extended depending on the needs of the participant. Sessions are ideally face-to-face but can also occur via phone, text, and other means. Sessions often occur before or after Court. Mentoring sessions usually consist of questions related to the well-being of the participant, any needs identified by the participant or the Court and any work that is being done by the participant, the mentor or the Court to satisfy the identified need of the veteran.

Mentoring sessions should begin with introductions, if necessary, and then move into questions about how the veteran is progressing, how things are with the family members that are involved, and about the concerns that were brought up in previous sessions. The majority of the mentoring sessions should consist of the mentor supporting the positive changes that the participant has made and empathizing with the difficulties that the participant is experiencing. Sessions should close with asking if the participant needs anything or if the mentor or the Court can do anything to be helpful to the individual.

The minimum number of required contacts is driven by the participant's current phase. The mentor and participant are encouraged to develop a regular routine for reporting.

- Phase One: Three contacts per week
- Phases Two & Three: Two contacts per week
- Phases Four & Five: One contact per week

Court Sessions:

Mentors are encouraged to attend a minimum of one status hearing per month. The mentor is encouraged to stand at the podium with the participant when the participant is called. Mentors are advised that respectable attire is required in the Court room.

Interaction with the VTC Team:

The Mentor is encouraged to discuss his or her concerns with team members. They may also communicate to the team through the Coordinator. If the mentor has concerns about how a situation was handled by the Court or if they have any other concerns, a meeting can be scheduled with the assigned Adult Probation Officer and/or Coordinator.

The Mentoring Program will not be effective if participants do not feel that they can trust their mentor or that what they discuss will remain confidential. The Mentor should generally not be

discussing sessions with VTC Team members unless there is an imminent danger to the participant or others. The mentor should always strongly encourage the participant to be honest with the team. Mentors can speak with the Coordinator if they have questions on what should be discussed with the team.

Mentors must sign a confidentiality waiver form prior to working with a participant Information obtained by a Mentor as a result of interacting with the participant during individual meetings or as a result of their participation in the VTC shall remain confidential. Any violation of the confidentiality policy will result in immediate removal from the Veterans' Mentoring Program.

Maintaining Records:

All mentors will be provided with a Journal. In the Journal the mentor should record all sessions that occur between the mentor and the participant.

Unacceptable Behavior Policy

Behaviors that do not match with the mission, vision, goals or values of the VTC will be considered unacceptable and are prohibited during Court proceedings and mentoring sessions.

These behaviors include:

- Unwelcomed physical contact including inappropriate touching, patting, pinching, punching or physical assault
- Unwelcomed physical, verbal, visual behaviors that degrade, show hostility or aversion toward an individual
- Any actions or behaviors that would be considered beyond the role of the mentor
- Being under the influence of alcohol or any illicit substance while attending Court proceedings and/or mentoring sessions

Any unacceptable behavior, as specified but not limited to the above stated behaviors, will result in the possibility of suspension or termination from the program.

It is the policy of the VTC that evaluations is an important aspect of determining the effectiveness of the mentoring program and for making continuous improvements. Evaluations will be completed routinely by both participants and mentors concerning the effectiveness of the services provided to them. The Coordinator will use information gleaned from the evaluations to make changes to the program and to identify training needs.

If you have questions about the Veterans Treatment Court Mentoring Program, please contact Christine LeClair, Veterans Mentor Coordinator, at 570-325-3986 or via email at cleclair@carboncounty.net

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Contact 911 or the assigned Probation Officer if the program participant is in immediate danger to others or him/herself. If you have a concern about the health and safety of the participant, please contact 570-325-4226 or 570-325-9111. The Veterans Crisis Line can also be contacted 1-800-273-8255.

DRUG & ALCOHOL RESOURCES

C-M-P Drug & Alcohol Services	610-377-5177
PA Treatment & Healing	610-377-8870
Celebrate Recovery	610-714-9200
NAR-ANON-For families of people with addiction	
	1-855-NAR-ANON
AL-ANON	1-800-344-2666
Alcoholics Anonymous	1-877-934-2522
Cocaine Anonymous	1-866-777-0983
Directory for Sub. Abuse	1-877-807-9275
Narcotics Anonymous	570-421-6618
Penn AIDS Testing Info	717-783-4677

FOOD ASSISTANCE

WIC (Women, Infant, Children)	1-866-942-8463
Beaver Meadows Food Pantry	570-455-6835
Ebenezer Evangelical Church	570-325-2855
St. Joseph/Divine Mercy	570-325-3731
Lansford Pantry	570-645-3416
Trinity Lutheran Church	610-377-4303
Zion Feed A Neighbor	610-377-1191
Ben Salem UCC Food Pantry	570-386-3870
Nesquehoning Pantry	570-669-9212
Palmerton Christian Action	610-826-1190
Sacred Heart St. Vincent De Paul	610-826-9756
Summit Hill Pantry	570-645-3604
Tresckow Food Pantry	570-454-8209
Weatherly Pantry	570-427-4113
St. Vincent de Paul	570-645-2664

HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Action Committee	610-377-6400
Carbon County Housing Authority	610-377-9375
Peaceful Knights	610-393-2536
Rescue Mission (Allentown)	610-740-5500
Safe Harbor	610-258-5540
Salvation Army (Allentown)	610-432-0128
Victim Resource Center	610-379-0151
Family Promise	610-379-4757
Hope for Veterans	1-855-483-8466
Housing Resources	211

AGING/DISABLED ASSISTANCE

Area Agency on Aging:	
Carbon County	610-824-7830
DPW Pharmaceutical Program	1-800-662-6080
Long-Term Care Helpline	1-866-286-3636
Eldercare Locator	1-800-677-1116
PA Senior Law Helpline	1-877-727-7529
PACE (Prescription Assistance)	1-800-225-7223
Alzheimer's Chapters Helpline	1-800-272-3900
APPRISE (Health Insurance Counseling & Assistance)	1-800-783-7067

VICTIMS SERVICES

Victim Resource Center	610-379-0151
Domestic Violence Service Center	
	1-800-424-5600 OR 610-379-0261

ID/DRIVERS LICENSE

Photo License Center	570-386-4394
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CLOTHING/FURNITURE

Salvation Army	570-668-0410
Mother Pauline's Thrift Shop	570-732-4313
Trinity Lutheran Church	610-377-4303
St. Vincent de Paul	570-645-2664

EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT

Career Link	570-325-9960
CCTI-GED Class	570-325-3682
LCCC-Carbon	570-669-7010

Go online to www.pa211east.org for an Online Resource Guide

Other online services:

MakeTheConnection.net – website for shared experiences and support for Veterans

www.myhealth.va.gov – Online access to health information

www.ebenefits.va.gov – Online Benefits Resource

CARBON COUNTY OFFICES

Adult Probation	570-325-4226
Juvenile Probation	570-325-2417
Children and Youth Services	570-325-3644
Domestic Relations	570-325-2681
Bureau of Collections	570-325-3500
Public Defenders Office	570-325-2343
Veterans Affairs	570-325-3986
Prothonotary Office	570-325-2481
Elections/Voter Registration	570-325-4801
District Attorney	570-325-2718
Senatorial Office	570-325-3274
	OR 570-740-2434

MENTAL HEALTH/COUNSELING SERVICES

C-M-P Mental Health and Developmental Services 610-377-0773
Crisis 1-800-849-1868 or 570-992-0879
ReDCo Group 610-377-8525
-Spanish speaking staff available
Northeast Counseling 610-377-9146
St. Luke’s Partial Program 610-852-4061
POWER/LEAP 610-377-3940
Behavioral Health Associates 610-379-0067
PA Treatment & Healing 610-377-8870
NAMI (National Alliance for Mental Illness) 1-800-950-NAMI
Co-op Drop-In Center 610-377-5799
CMP Mental Health Warm Line 1-866-654-8114
-for mental health support 6pm-10pm daily
Care Net 610-379-0411
Suicide Prevention Helpline 1-800-273-TALK

TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE

Carbon County Transit	610-776-7433
Easton Coach	1-800-990-4287
Lanta Van	610-432-3200

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Social Security Administration 1-800-772-1213
County Assistance Office:
-Carbon County 610-577-9020
LIHEAP (Energy Assistance):

Revision date 8/18/2021

-Carbon County 610-577-9073

VETERAN’S SERVICES

Veterans Crisis Line	1-800-273-8255 option #1
Justice Outreach	570-472-5046
Valor	570-645-2212
Veteran’s Affairs	570-325-3986

MEDICAL CARE

St. Luke’s Gnaden Huetten Campus	610-377-1300
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Karen Baer, LCSW	570-472-5046
Veteran’s Justice Outreach	
1111 East End Boulevard	
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711	

Scranton Vet Center	570-344-2676
1002 Pittston Avenue	
Scranton, PA 18508	

Women Veteran’s Coordinator	570-824-3521 ext. 27517
1111 East End Boulevard	
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711	

Suicide Prevention	570-830-7033
1111 East End Boulevard	
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711	

Military Sexual Trauma Coordinator	570-824-3521 ext. 27693
1111 East End Boulevard	
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711	

Caregiver Support Coordinators	570-824-3521 ext. 27693
1111 East End Boulevard	
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711	

Post 9/11 Transition & Care Mgmt. Coordinator	570-824-3521 ext. 27693
1111 East End Boulevard	
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711	