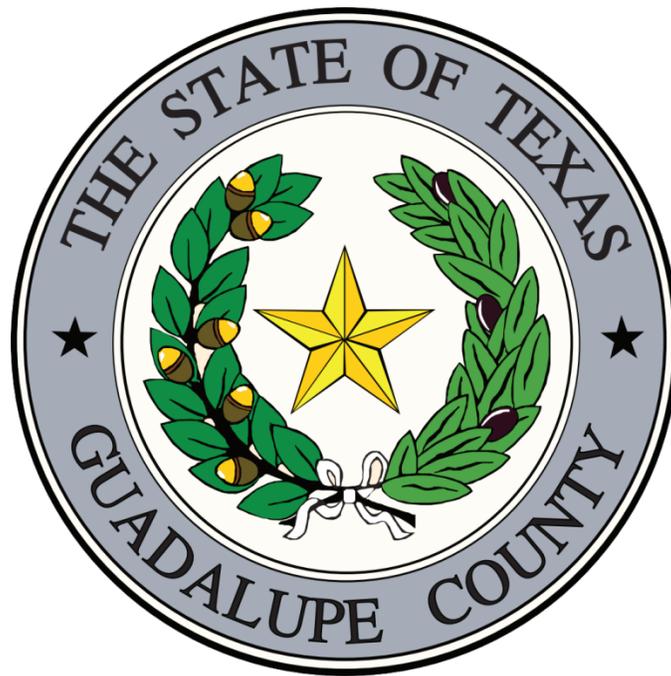


**GUADALUPE COUNTY  
VETERANS TREATMENT COURT  
PARTICIPANT'S HANDBOOK  
UPDATED: MARCH 2020**



**PRESIDING JUDGE:**

**HONORABLE KYLE KUTSCHER  
COUNTY JUDGE**

## **Guadalupe County Veteran's Treatment Court Participant Handbook**

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### **What is the Guadalupe County Veterans Treatment Court?**

The Guadalupe County Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) became the sixth veterans' treatment court in the State of Texas when it opened its doors in January 2011. The VTC represents a fresh and innovative approach to diverting veterans from incarceration into treatment. The court relies on the cooperation and collaboration between the criminal justice system, Veteran's Administration, community agencies and the offenders who meet the eligibility requirements for entrance into the VTC. Participants will receive treatment recommended by the VTC team and supervision by an officer from the Community Supervision and Corrections Department (adult probation).

### **Participant understanding**

As a participant in the VTC, you will be required to follow the instructions and conditions given to you in court by the judge, and you will need to comply with the participant contract developed by the VTC team. You will also be required to remain residing in Guadalupe County, Texas or its contiguous counties during your program commitment. The purpose of the VTC is to help you; 1) to get the treatment you need quickly and without barriers; 2) to help you stay engaged in treatment; and 3) to help you regain control of your life and be a law-abiding citizen so you can enjoy a high quality of life. Also, it is very important that you review all of the information included in your participant contract with your attorney.

### **What are the participant expectations?**

The VTC team will develop and/or adopt treatment recommendations based on an assessment of your needs for treatment, services, resources, housing, case management, VA benefits and services and other needs. To participate in the VTC you will need to complete and agree to sign all necessary releases and forms, comply with treatment recommendations, and comply with all terms and conditions of your pre-trial diversion. While participating in the VTC, the judge and VTC team members will closely monitor your participation and progress in the recommended and agreed upon treatment. You will need to initially complete an orientation meeting with your Vet Coordinator. Then, throughout the VTC program, you will be expected to meet as required with your Community Supervision Officer (CSO) and follow all of the terms and conditions of your contract. You will likewise be expected to meet with your VA Justice Outreach Coordinator (VJO) or other treatment provider as required. You must provide the VTC with a copy of your Individual Treatment Plan provided to you by your treatment provider(s). You must agree to sign and abide by the participant contract which is an agreement between you and the VTC. You will be required to complete 48 hours of Community Service Restitution (CSR) hours at VTC/CSO approved work sites. It is your responsibility to provide verification of all programs required. When available, a VTC mentor will be assigned to help you complete the program successfully.

**How long is the program?**

The VTC is a minimum time commitment of 14 months, not to exceed 24 months. Unsuccessful discharge, termination or involuntary withdrawal from the program could result in your case being returned to the Guadalupe County Attorney's Office for further prosecution. Participants successfully completing the VTC will be given recognition during the VTC program graduation. Additionally, if you successfully complete all of the conditions of the VTC, you may be eligible to have all the charges dismissed and expunged.

**What is in it for me?***Services:*

The VTC team will assist you in access appropriate treatment, counseling, case management, supportive housing and other services. All services are contingent upon your specific needs and individual treatment recommendations.

*Recognition of Progress:*

As you progress through treatment and your involvement with the program, your achievements will be recognized by the judge and the VTC team to celebrate your accomplishments. Additionally, if you successfully complete all of the conditions of the VTC, you may be eligible to have all the charges dismissed and expunged.

*Opportunities:*

VTC offers you the chance to move forward in your life. Remember, there are many people who make up the VTC Team and they all want to see you succeed. If you take advantage of the assistance offered, you will discover many ways to make a better life for yourself and your family.

**What are the VTC rules?**

To remain in the VTC, you must follow all recommendations made by the VTC team and the rules contained in both your participant contract and handbook as follows:

*Appear in court as scheduled:*

You will be required to appear in front of the judge on a monthly basis and comply with program "phases" as outlined later in this handbook. The judge and the VTC team will discuss your progress regularly and address any problems that may arise. As you make progress in treatment, your required court appearances and treatment appointments may be reduced.

*Follow your treatment plan:*

You are required to complete an initial mental health assessment/substance abuse evaluation by your treatment provider. Your individual treatment plan (ITP) will include some or all of the following components. Understand that your treatment recommendations may change as your treatment needs change.

- Abstinence from illegal drugs and alcohol
- Medication compliance
- Participation in a behavioral health treatment program
- Intensive or supportive case management services
- Supported or structured housing
- Education services
- Employment or vocational rehabilitation
- Regular appointments with a VA Justice Outreach Coordinator
- Regular appointments with a psychiatrist and/or psychologist
- Psycho-social or recreational program(s)

**Specific rules about areas of your treatment plan are outlined below:**

*Substance Abuse Treatment:*

If your treatment plan requires that you participate in a substance abuse treatment program, you must follow all recommendations. While in treatment, your treatment provider will regularly report to the VTC regarding your attendance, level of participation and overall compliance with the program. You must attend all scheduled treatment appointments and follow all rules of your treatment program. You may be required to submit to random drug and/or alcohol tests during the program. You must provide negative results on all drug and alcohol test for a minimum of 30 days for advancement from Phase I to Phase II; 60 additional days from Phase II to Phase III; 90 additional days from Phase III to Phase IV; and 90 additional days from Phase IV to Phase V. You may also be required to install a deep lung breath analysis mechanism for all motor vehicles that you drive with paying all cost incurred.

*Mental Health Treatment:*

All participants are required to complete an initial assessment. If mental health treatment is recommended, you must attend all scheduled appointments and follow all program rules. Your mental health treatment provider will regularly report your status and progress.

*Case Management Services:*

Community based intensive and supportive case managers will help you coordinate treatment services at the VA or from community service providers. If services are provided through the VA you will have a Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator (VJO). Additionally, you will have a Guadalupe County Supervision Officer (CSO) assigned. The VJO will visit with you monthly at first to evaluate your progress and to provide an overview of your treatment compliance to the VTC. You will be required to report as directed to your CSO. Your CSO may visit you at your home, place of business, or treatment program facility. Your CSO will report to the court on progress, concerns and accomplishments. Both your VJO and CSO may assist you in obtaining a variety of appropriate services that may contribute to your successful completion of the program.

#### *Housing:*

For some participants of the VTC it may be recommended that you live in a particular type of housing or in a housing facility while in treatment. If it is recommended that you live in a specified residence, such as a VA Domiciliary or a half-way house, you must reside there and follow all of the rules.

#### *Employment:*

If currently unemployed, you are required to provide written verifiable proof of ten separate contacts per work-week seeking employment. In the alternative, you are required to provide the CSO with proof of disability preventing employment or proof of enrollment in an institution of higher education. If partially disabled or only enrolled in school part-time, special arrangements will need to be discussed.

#### **What else is expected of you?**

- Show up, be completely honest, try hard, and be accountable.
- Treat others with respect; this includes the opinions and feelings of fellow-veteran participants and the VTC team members.
- Verbal or physical threats to anyone will not be tolerated.
- Any inappropriate behavior will be immediately reported to the court and may result in sanctions or even your termination from the VTC.
- Avoid all drugs and alcohol use
- You must not possess, sell, or use illegal drugs or alcohol
- Any relapse involving drugs and/or alcohol must be reported immediately to your CSO and treatment provider.
- Be law abiding- Additional offenses may result in additional charges and your termination from the VTC.

#### **Policy pertaining to the VTC participant's use of prescribed addictive substances:**

Participants in the VTC will remain abstinent from all non-prescribed mood-altering substances while enrolled in the program. It is understood that there may be circumstances in which a participant may need to take addictive substances for medical or psychiatric reasons.

The court requires that **prior to filling the prescription** and/or taking the medication, the participants do the following:

- Inform their treatment provider
- Inform the VJO (if applicable) and the Guadalupe County's CSO
- Participants with a substance abuse diagnosis must obtain medical verification from their prescribing physician(s) verifying their knowledge of the participant's active abuse or dependence diagnosis and your enrollment in an abstinence-based chemical dependency treatment program as well as the participant's enrollment in the VTC.
- Participants must sign a consent form which authorizes the release of patient identifying information between their VJO (if applicable) and their CSO, treatment provider(s), physician, physician assistant or nurse practitioner who prescribes the drug or substance to the participant/patient.

Should information be received from the physician who supports the participant's continued use of a control substance, the case manager will consult with the prescribing professional. If there is insufficient information to support continued use, the participant must safely cease use of that substance(s) and seek alternative treatment options.

You are responsible for any medication consumed without a doctor's prescription. There are some over the counter medications that might alter urine results due to ingredients.

The following medications cause a cross-reaction with drug testing and alternatives should be prescribed:

1. Effexor
2. Lamictal
3. Protonix
4. Sustiva
5. Zantac
6. Zoloft
7. Clarithromycin

\*NOTE—a positive urine test which is sent to the laboratory for further testing may result in additional charges. If you are sanctioned to be tested via hair sample or sweat patch, you may also incur additional charges.

You are responsible for reading all labels or consulting with your pharmacist or doctor before taking any medication. Use of the products detailed below in violation of this contract will not be allowed as an excuse for a positive test result. When in doubt, don't use, consume, or apply.

- \*Cough syrups and other liquid medications
- \*Non-Alcoholic Beer and Wine
- \*Food and other ingestible products that contain ethyl alcohol
- \*Mouthwash and Breath Strips
- \*Hand sanitizers
- \*Hygiene Products that contain ethyl alcohol
- \*Solvents and Lacquers

Any medication – regardless whether it comes from a doctor or bought Over-the-counter – must be cleared with your Probation Officer in advance.

### **What is meant by infractions and sanctions?**

While in the VTC, if you fail to comply with your treatment recommendations, contract, or commit a criminal offense, you will be sanctioned to include possible termination from the program. Program infractions and sanctions include but are not limited to:

#### *Infractions:*

- Missed treatment appointment(s)
- Missed appointment(s) VJO or CSO
- Missed court appearance(s)
- Abuse of drugs and/or alcohol
- Refusal to submit to drug/alcohol tests/screens
- Positive drug/alcohol screens
- Failure or refusal to take prescribed medications
- Violation of rule(s) of the treatment program
- Violation of rule(s) of housing provider, including curfew
- Threatening behavior, including verbal threat of violence
- Other non-compliance with treatment recommendations
- Violation(s) of probation terms and conditions (to include but not limited to financial obligations, commission of another criminal offense, or other non-compliance with participant contract agreement terms.)

#### *Sanctions:*

- Assign you to write an essay
- Verbal warning
- Increase frequency of drug/alcohol tests/screens
- Increase frequency of CSO reporting
- Mandatory/Increase 12-step or support group(s) meetings
- Serving time in the Guadalupe County jail

- Impose new curfew requirements
- Additional community service requirements
- Restarting your current program phase
- Journaling
- Mandatory group attendance (anger management, depression, etc.)
- Possible termination from program

### **What is meant by Rewards?**

The VTC team will respond to all infractions as appropriate. The team wants you to succeed. However, you must be motivated in your own treatment or recovery and also want yourself to succeed. Sometimes the team will require you to increase your treatment-related activities or will direct you to accept a change in your level of care after consulting with your treatment provider.

What is meant by rewards?

While in the VTC, if you comply with your treatment recommendations and the terms of the contract, you may be acknowledged and rewarded in a number of different ways.

Rewards may include but are not limited to:

- Fewer court appearances related to phase advancement
- Certificate of Accomplishment
- Phase promotion
- Encouragement, praise and support
- Immediate release from VTC court appearances
- Graduation

### **Your Program Phase Progression:**

Note: Your Individual Treatment Plan ITP may include all or some, based on your particular diagnosis and needs; as follows:

#### **Phase I – Stabilization (Minimum of 3 Months)**

##### **VA and/or Other Treatment Modalities as Required:**

- Substance Dependence Treatment Program (SDTP)
- Bio Psychosocial Assessment
- Emotional Behavioral
- Health Screen
- Random drug and/or alcohol testing
- Must have a minimum of 30 consecutive violation free days before advancing to Phase II will be considered
- Random home visit
- CSO visits (Monthly)

- Residential Treatment
- Hospitalization
- Addiction Education and Support Groups (Alcoholics Anonymous)
- Medication(s) as needed
- Enrollment in specialized treatment
- Psychosis and Mood Disorders/Group/Individual Sessions as directed:
- (Anger Management; Diagnosis-Specific support education groups; Cognitive Processing Therapy groups; Psychosocial Rehabilitation; Family Therapy; Prolonged Exposure therapy; Psychodrama; OEF/OIF coping Skills; Combat Nightmare Group; Dual diagnosis Groups; Women’s Group; and referrals to Veterans Center programming.)
- Seeking Safety
- Court Appearances (Monthly)
- Payment of \$273 as well as \$50 Drug testing fee
- Completion of Phase Change Petition and approval by VTC Team

### **Phase II – Treatment (Minimum of 4 months)**

#### **VA and/or Other Treatment Modalities as Required:**

- SDTP Continued
- Relapse Prevention and Aftercare education and support groups (Alcoholics Anonymous)
- Random drug and/or alcohol testing, including hair follicle test
- Must have a minimum of 60 consecutive violation free days before advancing to Phase III will be considered
- Random home visit
- CSO visits (Monthly)
- Medication maintenance with MD as needed
- Vocational program
- Continued specialized treatment
- Court appearances (Monthly)
- Seeking Safety
- Continue Psychosis and Mood Disorders/Group/Individual Sessions
- Payment of \$364 during phase II
- Completion of Phase Change Petition and approval by VTC Team

### **Phase III – Transitional (Minimum of 3 months)**

#### **VA and/or Other Treatment Modalities as Required:**

- SDTP
- Graduation from SDTP

- Relapse Prevention and Aftercare education and support groups (Alcoholics Anonymous)
- Random drug and/or alcohol testing
- Must have a minimum of 90 consecutive violation free days before advancing to Phase IV will be considered
- Random home visit
- CSO visits (Monthly)
- Medication maintenance with MD as needed
- Vocational program
- Complete all CSR before advancing to Phase IV
- Court appearances (Monthly)
- Completion of Seeking Safety
- Continue Psychosis and Mood Disorders/Group/Individual Sessions
- Payment of \$273 during phase III
- Completion of Phase Change Petition and approval by VTC Team

#### **Phase IV – Maintenance (Minimum of 3 months)**

- **VA and/or Other Treatment Modalities as Required:**
- Treatment completion – monitoring phase for VA and/or other treatment provider
- Relapse Prevention and Aftercare education and support groups (Alcoholics Anonymous)
- Continued medication monitoring as needed
- Random drug and/or alcohol testing
- Must have a minimum of 120 consecutive violation free days before advancing to Phase V will be considered
- Court appearances (Bi-Monthly), or as directed
- CSO Visits (Bi-Monthly), or as directed
- Random Home Visit
- Pay the remaining balance of \$140 (total cost of program is \$1050)
- Completion of Graduation Petition and approval by VTC Team

#### **Phase V – Graduation**

- **VA and/or Other Treatment Modalities as Required:**
- Graduation from Program
- Continued treatment referral, support and encouragement as needed

**Note: Your individual Phase Progression may differ from the above with respect to length of time within each phase and specific treatment requirements based on your individual treatment plan approved by the court. Violations of the program terms can extend the length of time in each phase.**

# IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

VTC Attorneys: Elizabeth Jandt / Sheila Old

Attorney's phone number(s): (830) 379-5485 / (830) 303-6900

Court Supervision Officer: Dallas Borota (830) 303-9719

VA Justice Outreach Coordinator: Stacey Adams (210) 243-1752

Guadalupe Co VTC Coordinator: Doreen Luehlfing (830) 303-8867

VA/Other Treatment Provider: Teddy Buerger Center (TBC)

Treatment provider's phone number(s): (830) 401-1367

AA/NA Sponsor/Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor/mentor's phone number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

VA Housing Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Housing provider's phone number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Guadalupe County Veterans Affairs:

**Seguin: 830-303-8870      Schertz: 210-945-9708 x 3**

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number(s): \_\_\_\_\_