



RIVERSIDE COUNTY VETERANS COURT Information Sheet

The Riverside County Superior Court's Veterans Court is designed to supervise felony and misdemeanor veterans through a comprehensive judicially monitored program of treatment and rehabilitation services. This court is authorized under Penal Code section 1170.9 which requires a nexus between the issues that have caused the veteran to intersect with the criminal justice system and their military service.

The mission of the Riverside County Veterans Court is to provide an inter-agency, collaborative, treatment strategy for Veterans in the criminal justice system, who suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), psychological issues, sexual trauma, mental health or substance abuse problems as a result of having served in the armed forces.

Start Date: The Veterans Court will commence operation on January 5, 2012

Location: Hall of Justice Courthouse, Department 31, 4100 Main Street, Riverside, California 92501
Honorable Mark Johnson Presiding

Days/Times: Veterans Court will be held weekly on Fridays. Countywide referrals should be set for a **Veterans Court Eligibility Hearing at 8:30 am in Dept. RVC** (Dept. 31). Please note referral process.

Program Capacity: Initial program capacity will be 35 participants

Participating Agencies: Superior Court, District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, Department of Probation, VA Healthcare Systems and Department of Mental Health

Treatment Team: VA Justice Outreach Specialist, Department of Mental Health Specialist, Probation Officer

Staff Liaisons: Deputy District Attorney, Deputy Public Defender, Deputy Probation Officer, and representatives from the Veteran's Administration and Department of Mental Health

Eligibility Requirements: United States Military service veterans who: (i) have a criminal case and (ii) qualify for admission under CA Penal Code Section 1170.9.

PC 1170.9(a) - In the case of any person convicted of a criminal offense who would otherwise be sentenced to county jail or state prison and who alleges that he or she committed the offense as a result of sexual trauma, traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, or mental health problems stemming from service in the United States military, the court shall, prior to sentencing, make a determination as to whether the defendant was, or currently is, a member of the United States military and whether the defendant may be suffering from sexual trauma, traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, or mental health problems as a result of that service.

PC 1170.9 Nexus: The Veterans Court Judge will make the final determination that a participant committed the offense(s) at issue as a result of sexual trauma, traumatic brain injury (TBI), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, or mental health problems stemming from service in the United States military.

Referral Process: Defense counsel must initially consult with the Veterans Court District Attorney liaison (951-955-5400) for a preliminary PC 1170.9 nexus assessment, prior to requesting a judicial officer set a case to the Veterans Court for program consideration.

Admissions Process: Admission will be determined by the Veterans Court Judge based on eligibility and suitability recommendations from the treatment team and staff liaisons. Primary factors to be considered are the likelihood of success and public safety.

Plea Requirements: Participants must plead guilty or must agree to reinstatement of probation. Participants must also be placed on formal probation. Regular court appearance as determined by the Veterans Court Judge will be required.

Treatment Requirements: Participants must agree to a minimum 18-month intensive treatment program (or 12 months for individuals convicted of specified misdemeanors).

Treatment Components: Weekly individual and group counseling, drug and alcohol testing, mental health treatment, and regular attendance at support/self-help meetings. Ongoing aftercare services will be available to all participants who graduate.