

COMMISSIONER'S COURT AGENDA ITEM  
Williamson County Veterans Treatment Court (WCVTC)  
And  
Misdemeanor DWI/Drug Court

**Why a Veterans Treatment Court?**

A growing number of veterans suffer from substance use disorders, mental health conditions (such as PTSD), and trauma (such as TBI). These issues can be exacerbated by the loss of structure and camaraderie found in the military, and research continues to link substance use disorders with service-related mental illness. Such conditions increase the likelihood of involvement with the justice system. In fact, **81% of justice-involved veterans** had a substance use disorder prior to incarceration, and **25% were identified as mentally ill**.

Veterans fought for our freedom. We fight for theirs in the Williamson County Veterans Treatment Court and give them the support they have earned. Veterans treatment courts offer a solution.

In the innovative veterans treatment court model, one judge handles the cases of numerous veterans and addresses them during the same court session, restoring some of the structure and camaraderie found in the military but often lost on the home front.

The judge is surrounded by an interdisciplinary team (prosecution, defense, treatment providers, law enforcement, Department of Veterans Affairs representatives, and a team of volunteer veteran mentors) all working toward the same goal: to help each veteran achieve recovery and get their lives back on track. This unique team is more familiar than most court professionals with the Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration, State Department of Veterans Affairs, and veterans service organizations. It allows a collaborative approach and “one-stop shopping” to ensure each veteran receives the personalized, wraparound services he or she has earned and needs to succeed. Treatment courts improve education, employment, housing, financial stability, and promote family reunification.

Not only are treatment courts effective and humane, they **save considerable money for taxpayers**. They produce **benefits of \$6,208 per participant**, returning **up to \$27 for every \$1 invested**.\*

**Do Veterans Treatment Courts work?**

The first major study of these courts, published in the *Community Mental Health Journal*, concluded that veterans participating in veterans treatment courts experience significant improvement with depression, PTSD, and substance use, as well as with critical social issues such as housing, emotional health, relationships and social connection, and overall functioning and well-being.

The same study found that **89.5% of veterans with PTSD who participated in veteran's treatment court remained arrest-free during their time in the program.** It further concluded that mentoring from fellow veterans was particularly effective: veterans who received mentoring experienced better clinical outcomes and felt more socially connected.

### **WCVTC and DWI Court Statistics**

- WCVTC was created in September 2014; first participant accepted in 2015.
- **Number of participants** since inception and currently in program:
  - WCVTC – 239 participants
  - DWI/Drug – 661 participants
- **Number of Participants Currently in Program:**
  - WCVTC – 27 (31 applicants in screening process)
  - DWI/Drug – 17 (7 applicants in screening process)
- **Success Rate of Programs:**
  - WCVTC – 93% successful graduation rate (State average is approximately 89%)
  - DWI/Drug – 85% successful graduation rate
- **Veterans Arrested** - in 2022, there were 681 veteran arrests made in Williamson County

### **WCVTC Success Story**

M.M., a 34-year-old Hispanic female, recently graduated from the WCVTC on October 1, 2020. M.M. had many ups and downs while in the WCVTC, but she never gave up and neither did the treatment staff. She spent 535 days in the program after going to inpatient treatment 3 different times and spending the longest time in the program than any participant we have ever had. She changed the people, places, and things in her life that were negatively affecting her life and focused on addressing the past trauma in her life. She finally received the treatment and the support she needed in the WCVTC.

She currently has a new career in real estate, is in a healthy relationship, and has closed on a new home. The WCVTC was able to assist her in navigating needed resources and treatment, which in turned helped her succeed through the treatment court and in life.

\*[www.nadcp.org/treatment-courts-work/](http://www.nadcp.org/treatment-courts-work/)