

# ***Multnomah County Veterans Outreach Project and Probation Violation Docket Memorandum of Understanding***

The parties to this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) endorse the mission, goals and objectives of the Multnomah County Veterans in the Criminal Justice System Outreach Project to:

- To create a coordinated approach within the local criminal justice system for identifying military veterans, recognizing and assessing their unique needs, and systematically referring them to specialized services currently available in the community.
- To reduce future criminal behavior by better addressing the criminal risk factors and sources of instability for military veterans involved in the criminal justice system.
- To provide better access to care for military veterans living in our community.

## **Eligibility**

Veterans on felony probation for other than Measure 11 (ORS 137.700, et al) and Domestic Violence offenses are eligible for inclusion in this project.

## **The Multnomah County Sheriff's Office will:**

- Identify veterans at the time of booking.
- Work collaboratively with the Veterans Justice Outreach staff, and when possible, arrange with the Veterans Justice Outreach staff to assess needs and eligibility for services.

## **The District Attorneys Office will:**

- Identify cases in which the defendants are veterans when known to the District Attorney's Office, and so advise defense counsel.
- Consider the services available to Veterans when engaging in plea discussions/negotiations and in making sentence recommendations.

- Consider the information provided through the Veterans Administration and Outreach Services when determining what recommendation to make to the court if the defendant is found in willful violation of probation by the Court, including a recommendation, where appropriate, that the defendant participate in a treatment/specialty court.

**The Defense Attorney will:**

- Identify Veterans at the time of assuming representation.
- Discuss with the client if s/he wishes to access services available to veterans through the Veterans Administration.
- Facilitate the release of information forms so the defense attorney may access prior treatment records.
- Engage the Veterans Justice Outreach Staff to consult with the client and counsel re: available services and programs for which the client is eligible in the community through the Veterans' Administration.
- Assemble the information as part of a mitigation package which will encompass the services and resources available through the Veterans Administration to facilitate resolution of pending criminal charges, or alleged probation violations, in negotiations with the District Attorney's office, and to present to the court.

**The Veterans' Justice Outreach staff will:**

- Assist in eligibility determinations for Veteran Healthcare Administration services and help facilitate enrollment of eligible Veterans in such services.
- Assist with scheduling of treatment appointments for eligible Veterans and facilitate referrals for eligible VA services.

- Provide support to the defendant to facilitate engagement in VA services, and follow through with treatment and other services available through the Veterans' Administration.
- Be available as a resource to coordinate VA information, records, and assessment materials needed by the defense attorney, District Attorney's Office (upon consent of the defense) and the Court throughout the pendency of individual Veterans' cases, pursuant to a court Order or a Veteran signed release.
- Attend the probation violation hearings on the Veterans' Court docket.

**The Multnomah County Department of Community Justice will:**

- Provide specialized probation/parole officers in each field office and in each specialty caseload who are knowledgeable about working with veterans and about the community resources for veterans for those placed on probation.

**The Multnomah County Circuit Court will:**

- Designate a circuit court judge who is knowledgeable about Veterans' specific needs and services to establish a rapport with the defendant by presiding over the entry of a plea that results in the defendant being placed on probation, and preside over subsequent probation violation hearings.
- Consider the information provided through the Veterans Justice Outreach Staff in determining the appropriate disposition if the defendant is found in willful violation of probation.
- The Veterans Probation Hearing Docket will convene on a regularly designated date and time.

The Veterans Project has been developed through a collaborative effort of the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice, the Multnomah County Circuit

Court, the Veterans Administration, the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office, Multnomah County District Attorney's Office, the Criminal Defense bar (through the involvement of the Executive Director of the Metropolitan Public Defender), and the Multnomah County Trial Court Administrator. Each of these entities intends to remain actively engaged in planning and designing these enhanced services. The Veterans Project has the support of the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners and the Local Public Safety Coordination Council.

This MOU is a non-binding collaborative effort to use the treatment modalities of the VA and the resources of the local judicial system to reduce recidivism and substance abuse, promote mental health and achieve long term benefits for individual Veterans and society at large.