



VETERANS TREATMENT COURT PROGRAM

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Introductory Letter

The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) is pleased to present the third Veterans Treatment Court Program Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2023.

Texas Government Code 124.007 requires that the TVC provides a Veteran Treatment Court Program Report, no later than December 1 of each year, to the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and each member of the Legislature.

The mission of the Texas Veterans Commission is to advocate for all Texas veterans, military families, and survivors and provide excellent services fitting the unique needs of the military population. TVC accomplishes this mission through offering support and collaboration to national, statewide, and local partner. Some of the most impactful partnerships for individuals and families are the Veteran Treatment Courts across Texas.

Each year, thousands of veterans find themselves involved with the justice system in some capacity, due in some part to the lingering effects of military-related trauma. Veteran Treatment Courts recognize this and provide the opportunity for these veterans and their families to receive the community support and mental health treatment crucial to keeping them from becoming more involved in the system, as well as equipping them with the tools to rebuild their lives. County judges, court personnel, community supervision, law enforcement, mental health providers, peer support and other community stakeholders all rally around the veteran—TVC is proud to play an active role in supporting these efforts. While all TVC services (e.g., assistance with benefits, overcoming barriers to employment, navigating educational resources, etc.) are available to veterans participating in Veteran Treatment Courts, our primary impact for justice involved veterans is through our Funds for Veterans Assistance (FVA) and our Veterans Mental Health Department (VMHD).

Through FVA grants, TVC can provide financial assistance to Veteran Treatment Courts as they navigate the substantial resources needed to provide a holistic approach to addressing the multifaceted needs of veterans.

Through our VMHD, we have the Justice Involved Veteran Program which is committed to providing all Veterans Treatment Courts with training and technical assistance in keeping with evidence-based practices and the best practice model. The Justice Involved Veteran Program also stands ready to work with local communities as they map out local needs and pool the resources needed to start new Veteran Treatment Courts. VMHD also supports the Veteran Treatment Courts through the Homeless Veteran Program which aims to find and maintain stable housing for veterans. Additionally, support is provided by VMHD's Military Veteran Peer Network whose TVC-Certified Peer Service Coordinators and trusted volunteers provide needed mentorship and connection to local veteran resources.

Through these efforts, TVC stands alongside our partners committed to helping the Veterans Treatment Courts across Texas as they reduce recidivism and guide justice involved veterans towards a second chance at healthy reintegration into their community.

Thomas P. Palladino
Executive Director,
Texas Veterans Commission

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Veteran Treatment Court Background



Texas Government Code 124.007 requires that the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) provides a report, no later than December 1st of each year, to the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and each member of the Legislature. In accordance with Texas Government Chapter 124.007, the contents of the report must contain Veterans Treatment Court information from the preceding fiscal year, to include (a) the number of veteran defendants who participated in each veteran's treatment court program, (b) the number of veteran defendants that successfully completed each program, (c) the number of veteran defendants that did not successfully complete the program, and (d) the amount of grant funding received by each Veterans Treatment Court.

Texas Government Code 124.001 defines a Veterans Treatment Court program as having the following essential characteristics: (1) The integration of services in the processing of cases in the judicial system; (2) The use of a non-adversarial approach involving prosecutors and defense attorneys to promote public safety and to protect the due process rights of program participants; (3) Early identification and prompt placement of eligible participants in the program; (4) Access to a continuum of alcohol, controlled substance, mental health, and other related treatment and rehabilitative services; (5) Careful monitoring of treatment and services provided to program participants; (6) A coordinated strategy to govern program responses to participants' compliance; (7) Ongoing judicial interaction with program participants; (8) Monitoring and evaluation of program goals and effectiveness; (9) Continuing interdisciplinary education to promote effective program planning, implementation, and operations; (10) Development of partnerships with public agencies and community organizations, including the United States Department of Veterans Affairs; and (11) Inclusion of a participant's family members who agree to be involved in the treatment and services provided to the participant under the program

Texas Government Code 124.002 grants authority to the Commissioners Court of a county to establish a Veteran Treatment Court. Participants are eligible to participate only if the attorney representing the State consents and if the Court in which the criminal case is pending or in which the participant was convicted or placed on deferred adjudication community supervision (as applicable), finds that the participant is a veteran or current member of the United States Armed Forces, including a member of the Reserves, National Guard, or State Guard.

At the publication of this report, there were 31 verified Veterans Treatment Courts (VTC) covering 38 Texas counties in operation (See **Figure 1.1**). The data contained in this report is presented as received by the submitting Veterans Treatment Courts from the preceding State fiscal year. There are no standardized statewide reporting requirements for Veterans Treatment Courts, and each Court has the autonomy to track data at their discretion.



Figure 1.1 The above map shows counties in the State of Texas that have active Veteran Treatment Court Program coverage to support the Veterans population in Texas.

Introduction from Veterans Mental Health Department



The **Texas Veterans Commission's Veterans Mental Health Department (VMHD)** provides support to all Veterans Treatment Courts as part of its role in ensuring access to competent mental health services for service members, veterans, and their families. In addition to directly connecting veterans and families to local mental health and supportive services, VMHD works with partners at the national, state, and local levels to address veteran-specific issues including suicide prevention, veteran homelessness, military cultural competency, peer support services, military-related trauma, women and rural veterans, and justice involvement. Across all VMHD programming, services including training and technical assistance are offered freely to all who are in need.

VMHD accomplishes these tasks by providing training, certification, and technical assistance across its six programs:

1. Justice Involved Veteran (JIV) Program;
2. Homeless Veteran Program;
3. Military Veteran Peer Network;
4. Community & Faith-Based Program;
5. Veteran Provider Program;
6. Veteran Suicide Prevention Program.

“VMHD looks forward to continuing to serve Veterans across the State of Texas. If you are in need of assistance, know a veteran who could benefit or have any questions about the services VMHD provides, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.”

Our contact information is found at the end of this report.

Blake Harris, PhD
Director, Veterans Mental Health Department
Texas Veterans Commission

Justice Involved Veteran Program Overview



In collaboration with the other VMHD programs, the Justice Involved Veteran (JIV) Program works to improve veteran services across the entire criminal justice continuum at each intercept of the Veterans Sequential Intercept Model (See **Figure 2.1**).

A crucial function of the JIV Program is to serve as a resource to all the Veterans Treatment Courts across Texas. In Fiscal Year 2023, **the JIV Program provided Veterans Treatment Courts with 107 instances of technical assistance** aimed at bolstering best practice standards. The JIV Program also provides support to the TVC-Certified Peer Service Coordinators of the Military Veteran Peer Network who participate in the Veterans Treatment Courts as local support resources and court mentors. VMHD's JIV Program Managers are also committed to working with counties and local stakeholders who are interested in starting Veterans Treatment Courts in their areas in accordance with local needs, available resources, and best practices proven to be effective. The JIV Program also collaborates with the **local jails, sheriff departments, law enforcement and statewide stakeholders including the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Texas Commission on Jail Standards, Texas Commission on Law Enforcement, Texas Health and Human Services, the Statewide Behavioral Health Coordinating Council, and others**. The JIV Program also works closely with national partners including the Department of Veterans Affairs, Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration, and the National Institute of Correction as an active member of the nationwide Justice Involved Veterans Network.

The Texas Veterans Commission also supports VTCs through the **Fund for Veterans' Assistance (FVA)** reimbursement grants intended to support the rehabilitation of justice involved veterans to best prepare them for reintegration with their communities. FVA grant funding can be applied to reimburse: substance use detection; probation officers; bailiffs; program/court coordinators; licensed mental health providers and/or counselors applying evidence-based practices; life skills and community reintegration training programs; financial assistance to participating veterans for mortgage, rent, and utilities; transportation assistance; substance use treatment; anger management/batterer intervention/domestic violence programs; and other expenses that provide or support veteran services. As of the publication of this report, FVA is supporting **18 Veteran Treatment Courts with a total of \$3,480,456 aimed at serving approximately 1,061 justice involved veterans**.

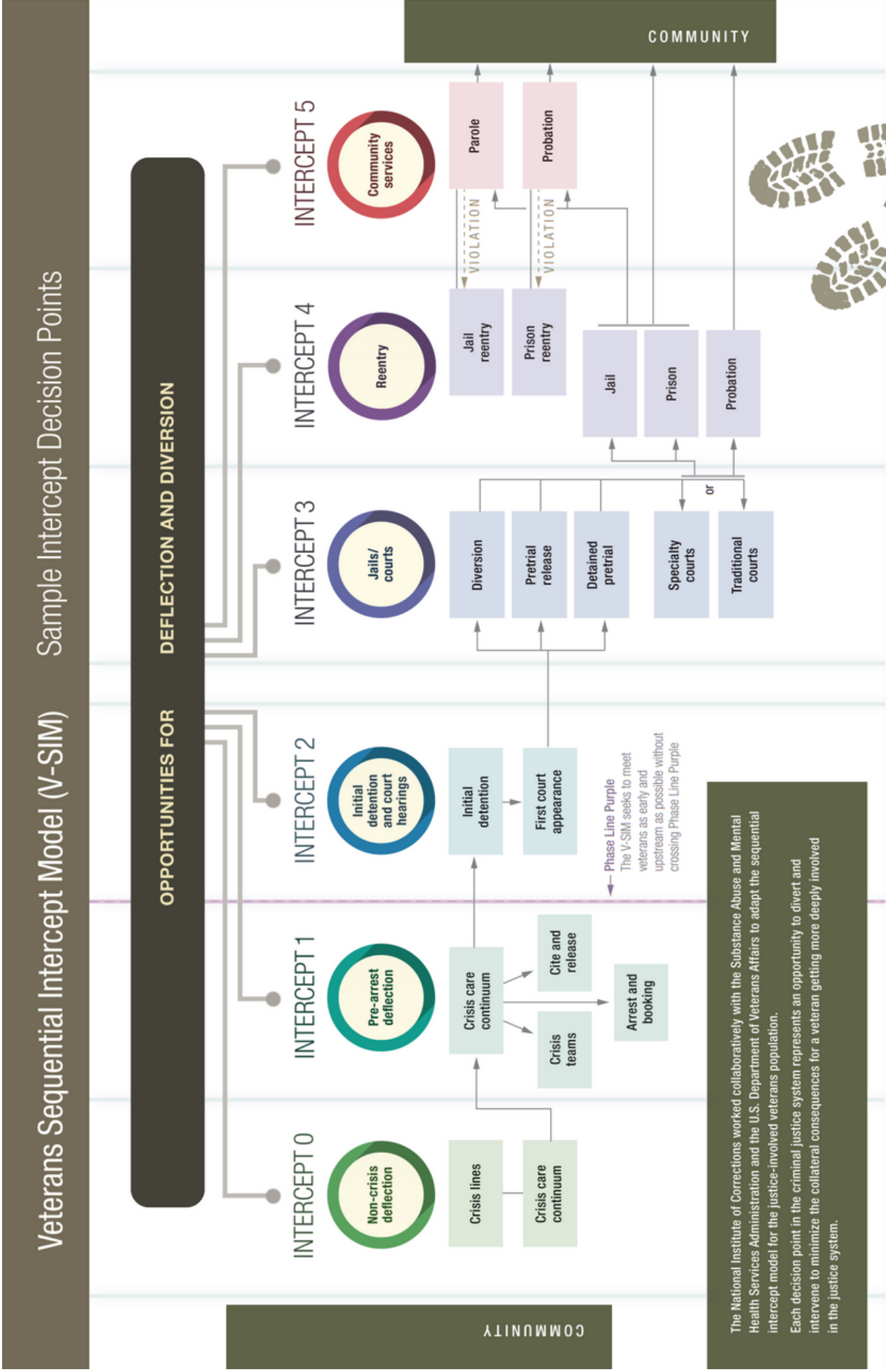


Figure 2.1 The figure features the components of the 5 Intercepts composing the Veterans Sequential Intercept Model (V-SIM).

The Texas Veterans Commission acknowledges and commends the continued dedication and excellent work of the Veterans Treatment Courts as they make a meaningful and lasting impact on the lives of Texas veterans and their families. We also wish to commend state leaders for their continued support of Texas veterans and the stakeholders who collaborate at the community levels to improve veteran lives, fulfill the promises made to those who served, and reduce recidivism across Texas while promoting mental health wellness. While there are excellent services being provided that keep Texas at the forefront of veteran services, there is still much work ahead for those who aim to address the mental health and supportive needs for the growing number of veterans who make their home in the Lone Star State.



Court Statistics Reported by Texas Counties in 2023



* *Number of Veterans Served* includes those actively involved in VTC at time of reporting (see page 23 for details)

County of Court	Name of Court	*Number of veterans served	Number of veterans successfully completed	Number of veterans unsuccessfully completed
Bell	Bell County Veterans Treatment Court	49	19	3
Bexar	Felony Veterans Treatment Court	67	7	1
Bexar	Misdemeanor Veterans Treatment Court	179	118	3
Brazoria	Brazoria County Veterans Treatment Court	23	7	2
Cameron	Cameron County Veterans Treatment Court	19	3	1
Comal	Eugene E. Hooper Veterans Treatment Court	26	25	1

* *Number of Veterans Served* includes those actively involved in VTC at time of reporting (see page 23 for details)

County of Court	Name of Court	*Number of veterans served	Number of veterans successfully completed	Number of veterans unsuccessfully completed
Dallas	Dallas County Veterans Treatment Court	95	36	5
Denton	Criminal Court #3	110	20	2
El Paso	346th El Paso Veterans Treatment Court	59	12	6
Fort Bend	County Court #2	14	5	0
Galveston	Galveston County Veterans Treatment Court	35	18	1
Guadalupe	Guadalupe County Veterans Treatment Court	19	9	1
Harris	Felony Veterans Treatment Court	75	21	1
Harris	Misdemeanor Veterans Treatment Court	42	11	1

* *Number of Veterans Served* includes those actively involved in VTC at time of reporting (see page 23 for details)

County of Court	Name of Court	*Number of veterans served	Number of veterans successfully completed	Number of veterans unsuccessfully completed
Hays	Hays County Veterans Treatment Court	47	19	3
Hidalgo	Hidalgo County Veterans Treatment Court	26	8	2
Jefferson	Jefferson County Veterans Treatment Court	14	6	2
Liberty	Liberty County Veterans Treatment Court	7	1	1
McLennan	McLennan Veterans Treatment Court	35	9	2
Midland	Midland County Veterans Treatment Court	19	7	0
Montgomery	359th Veterans Treatment Court	54	23	0
Collin, Fannin, Grayson, Kaufman, Rockwall	North Texas Regional Veterans Court	162	29	4

* Number of Veterans Served includes those actively involved in VTC at time of reporting (see page 23 for details)

County of Court	Name of Court	*Number of veterans served	Number of veterans successfully completed	Number of veterans unsuccessfully completed
Nueces	Nueces County Veterans Treatment Court	32	9	3
Potter, Randall	Panhandle Regional Veterans Treatment Court	31	11	2
Smith	Felony Veterans Treatment Court	6	6	0
Smith	Misdemeanor Veterans Treatment Court	32	31	1
Tarrant (2 courts)	Veterans Treatment Court Felony & Misdemeanor	77	65	7
Travis	Veterans Treatment Court	53	28	1
Duvall, Jim Hogg, Jim Wells, Maverick, Starr, Val Verde, Webb, Zapata	406th Veterans Treatment Court	32	15	2
Williamson	Williamson County CC #2	66	30	5
Totals		1466	576	59

Court Grant Funding Sources Reported by Counties in 2023



County of Court	Name of Court	U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)	Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division (CJD)	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)	TVC-Fund for Veterans Assistance (TVC-FVA)	State Criminal Justice Fund 421 (SF (421) Fund)	Bureau of Justice Assistance	Total Grant Funding by Counties
Bell	Bell County Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$44,405	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$44,405
Bexar	Felony Veterans Treatment Court	\$169,236	\$0	\$0	\$75,000	\$0	\$0	\$244,236
Bexar	Misdemeanor or Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$300,000	\$0	\$0	\$300,000
Brazoria	Brazoria County Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$126,302	\$0	\$75,000	\$0	\$0	\$201,302
Cameron	Cameron County Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$96,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$96,000
Comal	Eugene E. Hooper Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$150,000	\$0	\$0	\$150,000

County of Court	Name of Court	U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)	Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division (CJD)	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)	TVC-Fund for Veterans Assistance (TVC-FVA)	State Criminal Justice Fund 421 (SF (421) Fund)	Bureau of Justice Assistance	Total Grant Funding by Counties
Dallas	Dallas County Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$300,000	\$0	\$0	\$300,000
Denton	Criminal Court #3	\$0	\$120,016	\$312,061	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$432,077
El Paso	346th El Paso Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$300,000	\$0	\$0	\$300,000
Fort Bend	County Court #2	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Galveston	Galveston County Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$250,000	\$0	\$0	\$250,000
Guadalupe	Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$100,000

County of Court	Name of Court	U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)	Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division (CJD)	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)	TVC-Fund for Veterans Assistance (TVC-FVA)	State Criminal Justice Fund 421 (SF (421) Fund)	Bureau of Justice Assistance	Total Grant Funding by Counties
Harris	Felony Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$125,185	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$125,185
Harris	Misdemeanor Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$62,186	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$62,186
Hays	Hays County Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$300,000	\$0	\$0	\$300,000
Hidalgo	Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$86,064	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$86,064
Jefferson	Jefferson County Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Liberty	Liberty County Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

County of Court	Name of Court	U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)	Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division (CJD)	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)	TVC-Fund for Veterans Assistance (TVC-FVA)	State Criminal Justice Fund 421 (SF (421) Fund)	Bureau of Justice Assistance	Total Grant Funding by Counties
McLennan	Veterans Treatment Court	\$187,500	\$0	\$0	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$287,500
Midland	Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Montgomery	Montgomery County Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$200,000	\$0	\$0	\$200,000
Collin, Fannin, Grayson, Kaufman, Rockwall	North Texas Regional Veterans Court	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$400,000	\$0	\$0	\$400,000
Neuces	Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$200,000	\$0	\$0	\$200,000
Potter	Panhandle Regional Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

County of Court	Name of Court	U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)	Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division (CJD)	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)	TVC-Fund for Veterans Assistance (TVC-FVA)	State Criminal Justice Fund 421 (SF (421) Fund)	Bureau of Justice Assistance	Total Grant Funding by Counties
Smith	Felony Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Smith	Misdemeanor or Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Tarrant (2 courts)	Veterans Treatment Court Felony & Misdemeanor	\$0	\$115,408	\$0	\$170,456	\$0	\$0	\$285,864
Travis	Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$50,000
Duvall, Jim Hogg, Jim Wells, Maverick, Starr, Val Verde, Webb, Zapata	406th Veterans Treatment Court	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$300,000	\$0	\$0	\$300,000
Williamson	Williamson County CC #2	\$80,457	\$88,920	\$0	\$210,000	\$0	\$0	\$379,377

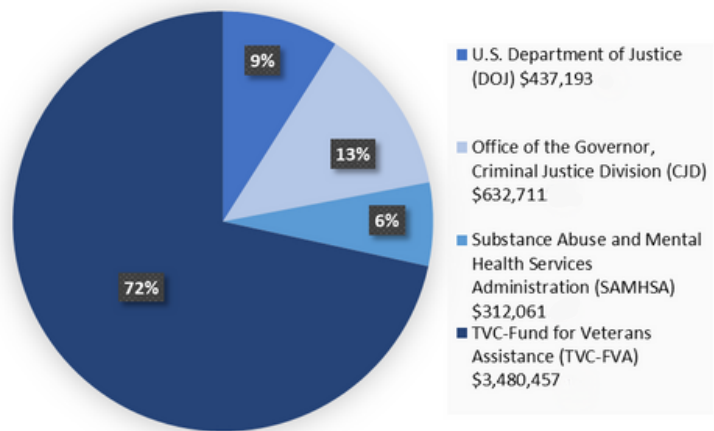
Statistical Data Summary



Based on the Data collected for Fiscal Year 2023, from the Total Grant funding for the Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) Program (\$4,862,422), 72% of the Total Funding came from TVC-Fund for Veterans Assistance; 13% of the funding came from the Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Department; 9% of the funding came from the U.S. Department of Justice; and 6% of the funding came from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. It should be noted that the State Criminal Justice Fund 421 and Bureau of Justice Assistance did not provide funding this Fiscal Year.

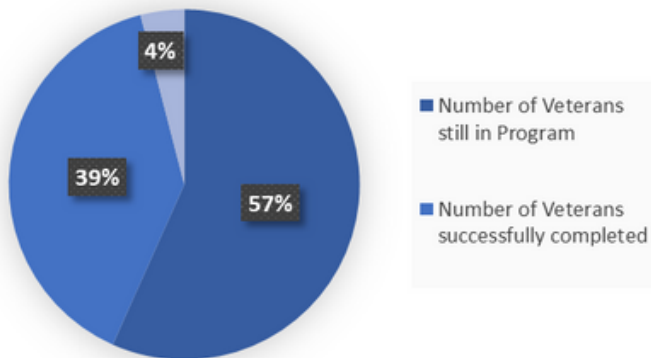
Breakdown of Total Grant Funding by Sources in 2023

Grant Funding Sources for FY 2023	
U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) \$437,193.00	\$437,193
Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division (CJD)	\$632,711
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) \$312,061.00	\$312,061
TVC-Fund for Veterans Assistance (TVC-FVA) \$3,480,457.03	\$3,480,457
Total Grant Funding by Counties	\$4,862,422



Additionally, it is important to note that the chart below accounts for the Number of Veterans still in the VTC Program (831 veterans) from the Total Number of Veterans served (1466 veterans) as recorded in the Court Statistics reported by Texas Counties Section (Refer to **Page 15**).

Breakdown of Veteran Treatment Court Program Enrollment in 2023



Veteran Treatment Court Program Enrollment	
Number of Veterans still in Program	831
Number of Veterans successfully completed	576
Number of Veterans unsuccessfully completed	59
Total Number of Veterans served	1466

Program Achievements



2023 El Paso Veterans Treatment Court Success Story:

Submitted by Yvonne Whitaker, Veterans Program Director at 346th District Court

The following success story truly conveys all the aspects of how the Veterans Treatment Court Program functions and what type of an impact it can have in a veteran's life.

“Back in 2021, I met Mr. Llamas in jail. The Veteran Justice Outreach Specialist (VJO) from the VA, and I, visited a couple of veterans in jail that day. We met with Mr. Llamas, and he was extremely saddened by the circumstances of why he was in jail. He was about to lose his freedom as the state had filed a probation violation and Mr. Llamas probation was about to be revoked. Mr. Llamas continued to drink and violate the terms and conditions of his probation.

When I spoke with Mr. Llamas, he was estranged from his wife and children. He had no job, and no place to stay. He continued to drink excessively when he managed to bond out of jail. He told me “I know my wife is done with me. I continue to break all my promises I have made to her”. The VJO explained the services from the VA as he was not service connected. I explained the services from the Veterans Treatment Court Program. The veteran indicated that he was interested in participating in the Veterans Court. Mr. Llamas filled out the application and the medical release form at that time. I advised him to contact me as soon as he was released from jail.

The veteran did just that. He came to our offices as soon as he was released. Once in our office, we immediately started to look for a safe place where he could stay while he completed the stabilization period. I asked Mr. Llamas if he had family in El Paso other than his wife and he said no. He was so sad and was in the brink of crying when he said, “I have no one”.

I told Mr. Llamas that we could help him, but he had to help himself first. I told him that he had to start making different choices and would need to accept the fact that he needed help. He agreed. He said he had nothing to lose at this point because he had already lost everything that he loved.

We were able to place him at a shelter. We also communicated with the VJO, and they were able to enroll him in a 90-day inpatient treatment to address the alcohol addiction, in combination of addressing his mental issues. After a week, the veteran left for his inpatient treatment.

After 90 days of inpatient treatment, Mr. Llamas came back with a different attitude and a new outlook in life. He was able to enroll in the VA for health and financial benefits.

During the 18-month program, Mr. Llamas continued to receive therapy and counseling. He found employment, and he was able to find a permanent place to stay. He was also able to speak with his wife and was able to reconnect with her and his children.

Mr. Llamas completed the program without a hiccup. He had decided to turn his life around because he understood that there was only darkness at the end of the road that he had been taking. Mr. Llamas resiliency and thirst for change allowed him to make the right choices and was able to completely change his life around.

Mr. Llamas was the recipient of the Patriot Strong Award. This award is given to those participants that complete the program without any sanctions.

After he graduated the program successfully, he decided to give back to the program and became a mentor to a veteran/participant who is now enrolled in the Veterans Court. We are extremely proud of Mr. Llamas for his courage to break the cycle, and for his determination to change his life around so he could be a positive role model for his children.”

-Yvonne Whitaker, Veterans Program Director at 346th District Court

Program Graduation from Fort Bend County:



Contact Information



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