



The National Clearinghouse for Veterans Treatment Courts at the  
National Association of Drug Court Professionals

## **Justice Department Funds More Than \$1 Million to Veterans Treatment Courts**

“Today, we are filled with gratitude for the service and sacrifice of our veterans and their families. To all of our veterans: thank you for safeguarding our freedom and for strengthening this nation at home and abroad. On this day we are also grateful for those who dedicate themselves to ensuring veterans who struggle with the invisible wounds of war receive the benefits and services they have earned. When we treat our veterans with honor, we give honor to their service. The National Association of Drug Court Professionals is proud to share the following Department of Justice announcement regarding funding for Veterans Treatment Courts and offer congratulations to all awardees.”

– West Huddleston, CEO of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals



*Washington, DC [November 11, 2011]* – The Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) today announced that it will support four Drug Courts designed to meet veterans' needs in Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 under the Adult Discretionary Drug Court Program. Veterans Treatment Courts help veterans within the criminal justice system manage their substance abusing habits so that they can safely return to their communities. A total of over one million dollars is being provided to: the Judicial Council of California; Hennepin County, Minn.; the 13th Judicial District Court in Yellowstone County, Mont.; and Spokane County, Wash.

"Eighty-one percent of all justice-involved veterans have a substance abuse problem prior to incarceration, and twenty-five percent of these veterans have a mental illness," said Assistant Attorney General Laurie O. Robinson. "It is our hope that these veteran drug courts can provide the services and treatment that these soldiers need in order to help them rejoin our communities safely as the heroes we know them to be."

Veterans Treatment Courts integrate substance abuse treatment, mandatory drug testing, sanctions and incentives, and transitional services in a supervised court setting. In addition, with programmatic support from the Department of Veterans Affairs, participants are connected with Veterans Justice Outreach specialists for help with obtaining veterans' benefits and services to address their treatment and other recovery support needs.

"By identifying justice-involved veterans early and connecting them with mental health and substance abuse services at home, Veterans Treatment Courts can stabilize veterans and ensure that they are able to return to honor and live productive lives," said BJA Director Denise E. O'Donnell. "At BJA, we are proud to support these Drug Court and Mental Health Court programs that serve the men and women who fought so bravely to protect our nation."

Research shows that many returning soldiers are diagnosed with cases of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury, which can lead veterans to abuse illegal substances and alcohol. According to the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, in studies performed by the RAND Corporation and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, one in five veterans exhibited symptoms of a mental disorder or cognitive impairment, while one in six veterans from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom suffered from substance abuse. Untreated cases of PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury in veterans have been linked directly to homelessness and involvement in the criminal justice system.

**For more information on Veterans Treatment Courts, visit [www.JusticeForVets.org](http://www.JusticeForVets.org).**

