

Case Study: Tulsa, OK

Collaborative Veterans Treatment Court Tackles Nonviolent Offenses With Treatment, Resources

Veterans
DUI/DWI
Jail Alternative
Pre Sentencing

Tulsa, OK – The Tulsa Veterans Treatment Court works with military veterans charged with non-violent felonies who struggle with drug/alcohol addictions and/or mental health problems.

The court originated in 2008 when county officials realized a significant number of individuals entering the criminal justice system were veterans. In October 2008 alone, 158 veterans were arrested in Tulsa County.

Many of the offenses were the result of substance abuse and mental health issues related to combat.

The Tulsa Veterans Treatment Court was the first in Oklahoma and the third in the United States. The court deals with felony and misdemeanor cases that are pre-sentencing and post-plea. The program, which is voluntary for veterans charged with non-violent crimes and in need of substance abuse or mental health treatment, is a five-phase process that takes a minimum of two years to complete.

The Court connects program participants to resources to help them address the issues that led to their offenses and to successfully adjust to civilian life. Resources include the Veterans Benefit Administration, the Veterans Health Administration, the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs, the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission, and other community organizations.

The court is a collaborative effort among the 14th Judicial District Tulsa County Drug/DUI Court, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the Tulsa County District Attorney's Office, the Tulsa County Public Defender's Office, and many other community partners.

How is SCRAM CAM Being Used?

The Tulsa Veterans Court uses SCRAM Continuous Alcohol Monitoring (CAM) as a monitoring device as well as a sanctioning tool. SCRAM CAM enables the Veterans Treatment Court team to see which participants are drinking, how much they are

Highlights of Success

- The program has a more than 90% completion rate
- The Tulsa Veterans Treatment Court has been named a Mentor Court by Justice for Vets, in collaboration with the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

SOBER DAYS: 99.3%

drinking, and when they are drinking. It also gives participants a 24/7 reminder not to drink.

Courts in Tulsa work with Dallas-based Recovery Healthcare (RHC) for their SCRAM CAM monitoring. RHC is a treatment-based organization that is the largest provider of SCRAM CAM in the country.

The VA assessment process evaluates each participant's income to determine sliding scale eligibility for monitoring rates. The majority of court participants can afford the daily monitoring fee and are on a self-pay model. For those participants that are indigent the judge can waive the monitoring fees.

Outcomes

The program has a more than 90% retention completion rate. On any given day, 99.3% of the program's participants are completely sober while on SCRAM CAM.

District Judge Rebecca Brett Nightingale has seen the difference the program makes during her time with the court. "Often, the addiction issues arise from things that happened to the veteran while they were in their service. By helping them with their addiction issues, it often resolves any criminal behaviors that they have," she says.

