



Department of
Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

Fact Sheet

February 2016

**Veterans Court Inventory 2014 Update:
Characteristics of and VA Involvement in Veterans Treatment Courts,
Dockets, and Tracks from the Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist
Perspective**

Background

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) Program is a prevention-focused component of VA's Homeless Programs Office (HPO), whose mission is to end homelessness among Veterans. Since the program was founded in 2009, VJO Specialists at every VA medical center have provided outreach and linkage to VA and/or community services for justice-involved Veterans in various settings, including jails and courts. VJO Specialists are essential team members in Veterans Treatment Courts (VTC) and other Veteran-focused courts, as they connect Veteran defendants with needed VA services and provide valuable information on their progress in treatment.

In 2012, Veterans Justice Programs (VJP) began conducting an annual inventory of Veterans Courts from the perspective of VJO Specialists. The 2014 Veterans Court Inventory collected information on court structure, admission criteria, jurisdiction, and mentoring programs, as well as data on Veteran defendant and VA court involvement. A total of 216 VJO Specialists completed and electronically submitted an inventory form for each VTC, Veterans docket or Veterans track they were involved with in 2014.

The Inventory results represent a snapshot of VTCs and other Veteran-focused courts at a particular point in time—in this report, the end of the 2014 calendar year. As courts evolve, the structure or admission criteria may change, thus the data presented here may differ from previous Inventories. Additionally, the information was provided solely by the VJO Specialists who work in these courts as one member of their treatment teams. As such, it reflects their perceptions and interpretations. Another inventory, using identical questions but conducted among these courts' probation officers or prosecutors, for example, may have yielded different results.

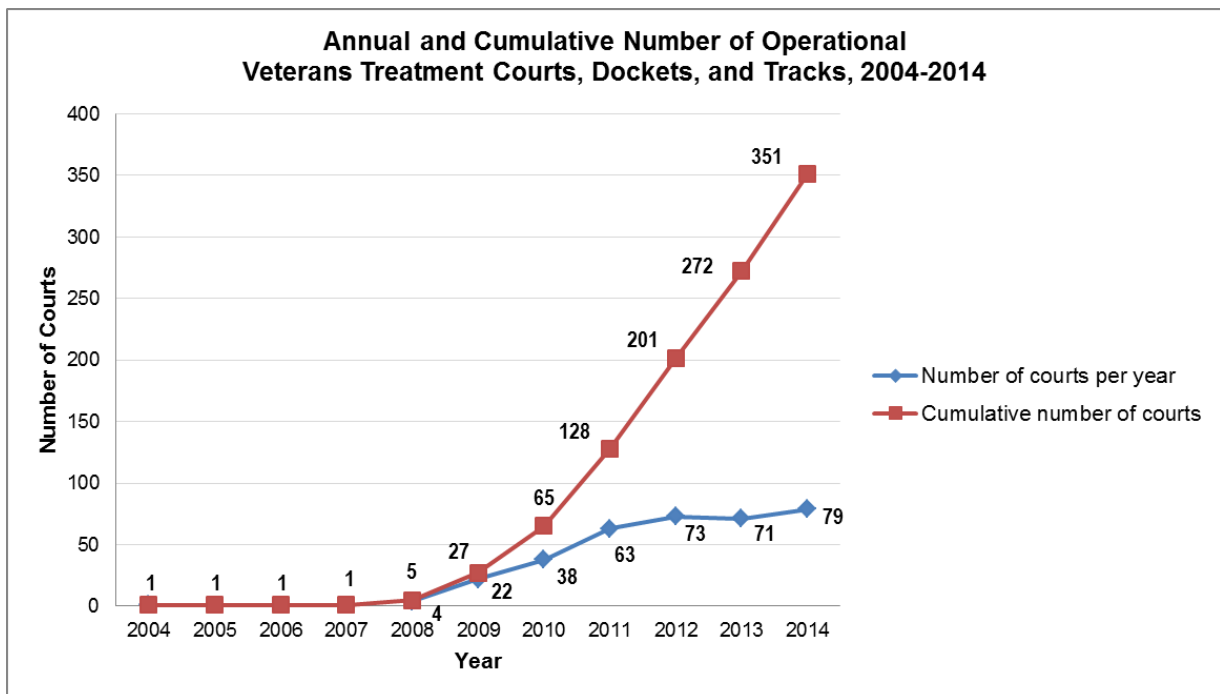
Finally, the Inventory highlights the continued rapid growth in the number of VTCs and other Veteran-focused courts across the United States. In merely two years, from the collection of information for the 2012 Veterans Court Inventory to that of 2014, the number of identified operational VTCs and Veterans dockets or Veterans tracks within drug, mental health, or criminal courts grew dramatically from 168 to 351.

Point of Contact: Bessie Flatley, Ph.D., Program Analyst, Veterans Justice Programs, Elizabeth.Flatley2@va.gov, (215) 823-5800 extension 7084; or Sean Clark, J.D., National Coordinator, Veterans Justice Outreach, Sean.Clark2@va.gov, (859) 233-4511 extension 3188.

Veterans Court Inventory 2014 Results Summary

A. Court Census

- Total number of operational courts: 351
- New courts in 2014: 79
- Courts closed in 2014: 6



B. Court Structure

Court Type (N = 351)	
Separately Designated Veterans Treatment Court	74.4%
Docket of a drug treatment court	12.3%
Docket of a mental health court	4.6%
Docket of a drug treatment/mental health court	4.8%
Docket of a criminal court	4.0%

Veteran/Military Admission Criteria (N = 349)	
Accept only Veterans determined to have substance use and/or mental health problem	59.9%
Accept only Veterans with military-related mental health condition ¹	20.6%
Accept only combat Veterans	12.3%
Accept only OEF/OIF Veterans	7.2%
Emphasize OEF/OIF Veterans (N = 325)	16.6%
Accept active duty	71.6%
Accept Reserve/Guard ²	67.3%
Accept other ³	4.9%
Accept only Veterans eligible for VA health care	38.7%
If accept ineligible Veterans (N = 211), estimated ineligible percent (\pm standard deviation)	15.7% (\pm 17.9)

¹This is not restricted to "service-connected" for psychiatric only

²Without active duty service

³Other types of defendants include family members, non-Veteran VA employees, and non-US military

Plea and Offense Admission Criteria (N = 349)	
Accept pre-plea Veteran defendants only	19.8%
Accept post-plea Veteran defendants only	30.9%
Accept both pre- and post-plea Veteran defendants	49.3%
Accept felony only	18.1%
Accept misdemeanor only	20.3%
Accept both felony and misdemeanor	61.6%
Accept domestic violence charges, but no other violent offenses	21.8%
Accept violent offenses excluding domestic violence	5.2%
Accept both domestic violence and other violent offenses	59.9%

Court Jurisdiction (N = 349)	
County	54.2%
City	8.3%
Mixed city/county	23.2%
Regional	8.6%
Statewide	4.3%
Federal	1.4%

C. VA Involvement in Court

VJO Specialist Participation in Court (N = 349)	
Participates in court sessions	96.3%
Always participates in court sessions in-person	76.8%
Almost always participates in court sessions in-person	11.5%
Sometimes participates in court sessions in-person	5.2%
Participates in court sessions via telephone	2.9%
Average hours monthly (\pm standard deviation) VJO interacts with court team by any means during court sessions and staffings	17.5 (\pm 18.8)

VBA Representative Participation in Court (N = 349)	
Participates in court sessions	18.9%
Always participates in court sessions in-person	8.6%
Almost always participates in court sessions in-person	4.9%
Sometimes participates in court sessions in-person	4.9%
Participates in court sessions via telephone	0.6%

Vet Center Representative Participation in Court (N = 349)	
Participates in court sessions	17.8%
Always participates in court sessions in-person	7.7%
Almost always participates in court sessions in-person	4.9%
Sometimes participates in court sessions in-person	5.2%

D. Court Mentor Program

Mentor Program (N = 348)	
Mentor component is operational	61.8%
Total number of mentors in all courts (N = 212)	1,944
Average number (\pm standard deviation) of mentors per court (N = 212)	9 (\pm 10.3)
Mentor component is under development	15.2%

Coordinator of Mentor Component (N = 215)	
Volunteer mentor coordinator	62.3%
Treatment court coordinator	13.0%
Paid mentor coordinator	11.2%
VJO Specialist	1.4%
Other ¹	12.1%

¹Other coordinators include community agencies, probation/parole, public defender's or prosecutor's office, and VBA or Vet Center representatives.