



# Dispatch from the Front Lines

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

September 2012

## Veterans Treatment Courts and the U.S. Department of Labor

### *Putting Veterans Back to Work*

By Matt Stiner, M.P.A.

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The emergence of Veterans Treatment Courts, with the collaboration of the U.S. Department of Labor, has proven to be a vital tool to assist in the fight against veteran unemployment.

As Veterans Treatment Courts expand across the nation, unemployed veterans will continue to enter the court system. Justice For Vets provides the following Dispatch for Veterans Treatment Courts to utilize as a guide to working with the U.S. Department of Labor's Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists.

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Veterans of the United States Armed Forces may be eligible for a broad range of programs and

services provided by the U.S. Department of Labor. These programs and services are legislated in Title 38 of the United States Code. DVOP Specialists and LVERs provide services to all veterans that Title 38 indicates are eligible. With the help of DVOP Specialists and LVERs, veterans receive assistance and guidance with job placement and/or employment training to enter the workforce.

DVOP Specialists and LVERs are located in state employment offices (also called One-Stop Career Centers or Employment Offices) in communities across the nation. One-Stop Career Centers provide veterans in Veterans Treatment Courts with free access to computers, internet, phones, copiers, and fax machines, as well as information regarding local employment and job training opportunities. These facilities also host a variety of job fairs, GED classes, budgeting seminars and resume development.

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## Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists

DVOP Specialists place an emphasis on assisting veterans with service-connected disabilities. DVOP Specialists provide services, such as training, licensing and certification, one-on-one employment counseling, and support services. Additionally, DVOP Specialists provide necessary follow up services to both the veteran and the employer to ensure job retention.

DVOP Specialists actively work with employers, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Centers, Veterans Service Organizations, Native American Tribes and community based organizations to link veterans with appropriate employment and training opportunities.<sup>1</sup>

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DVOP Specialists may also serve as case managers for federally funded job training programs, such as the VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E). VR&E's mission is to help veterans with service-connected disabilities with a rating of at least 10 percent, or a memorandum rating of 20 percent or more to prepare for, find, and keep suitable jobs. Apprenticeships, college, vocational, technical or business schools, and on-the-job training or coaching are paid for by this program. During this time, the veteran receives supportive rehabilitation services, such as case management and counseling.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [VETS Fact Sheet 1, Employment Services for Veterans](http://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/fact/Employment_Services_fs01.htm#DVOP) U.S. Department of Labor. 2011. Veterans' Employment and Training Services. 13 Feb. 2012 <[http://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/fact/Employment\\_Services\\_fs01.htm#DVOP](http://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/fact/Employment_Services_fs01.htm#DVOP)>

<sup>2</sup> [Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service](http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/index.htm) U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. 2011. Veterans Benefit Administration. 6 Feb. 2012 <<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/index.htm>>

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## Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs)

LVERs assist veterans with resume writing, job searches, personal employment plans and help with job lead identification and training opportunities. LVERs are able to inform veterans of employment opportunities and ensure eligible veterans receive priority in the hiring process by monitoring job listings from federal agencies.

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Additionally, LVERs help veterans seek employment by working with community leaders, local employers, unions, training programs and Veterans Service Organizations to ensure veterans are hired.<sup>3</sup>

## DVOP Specialists and LVERs Participating in Veterans Treatment Court

Veterans Treatment Courts may use the following as a guide to working with DVOP Specialists and LVERs.

### *Role of DVOP Specialists and LVERs in Veterans Treatment Courts*

1. Assess Participants entering the Veterans Treatment Court who face barriers to employment and need additional training resources.
2. Inform Participants of local, state and federal training and employment opportunities and resources at each Veterans Treatment Court session.

3. Provide information to the Veterans Treatment Court concerning the local, state, and federal employment and training opportunities that are available.
4. Serve as a liaison between the Participants, the Veterans Treatment Court, community employers, VA, Veterans Service Organizations, higher education and local career and technical schools.

### ***DVOP Specialists and LVERs Duties and Responsibilities***

1. Adhere to all of the Veterans Treatment Court program's policies and procedures.
2. Complete the initial training as specified by the court prior to participation in the Veterans Treatment Court.
3. Attend Veterans Treatment Court sessions when scheduled and assist Participants as needed.
4. Be supportive and helpful to Participants in the Veterans Treatment Court.
5. Attend an initial orientation regarding Veterans Treatment Court and courtroom protocol.
6. Inform the Veterans Treatment Court of the progress of Participants obtaining employment and/or job training.
7. Schedule to meet with Participants if necessary at the local One-Stop Career Center to assess skills and any potential barriers to employment.

### **Veterans Treatment Courts and the U.S. Department of Labor**

#### ***Collaborating to Fight Veteran Unemployment***

DVOP Specialists and LVERs are excellent additions to the Veterans Treatment Court. By collaborating, Veterans Treatment Courts and the U.S. Department of Labor are putting veterans into the workforce who would otherwise be incarcerated. To locate the nearest DVOP Specialist or LVER visit [www.dol.gov/vets/](http://www.dol.gov/vets/).

To learn more about the training and employment services and resources provided by the U.S. Department of Labor visit [www.JusticeForVets.org](http://www.JusticeForVets.org).

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### **About Justice For Vets**

In 2009, the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) launched Justice For Vets: The National Clearinghouse for Veterans Treatment Courts. Justice For Vets is exclusively committed to ensuring that veterans involved in the criminal justice system have access to Veterans Treatment Courts and the benefits, services and treatment they have earned. Since Justice For Vets was launched, the number of operational Veterans Treatment Courts has grown to over 90. Justice For Vets activities include advocating for federal Veterans Treatment Court funding, assisting with state legislation, training and technical assistance, public awareness, and building coalitions within the criminal justice, business, and Veterans Service Organization communities. Visit Justice For Vets online at [www.JusticeForVets.org](http://www.JusticeForVets.org).

### **About National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP)**

Since 1994, NADCP, a non-profit organization 501(c)(3) representing over 27,000 multi-disciplinary justice professionals and community leaders, has worked tirelessly at the national, state and local level to create and enhance Drug Courts. NADCP is recognized as the experts in the field of addiction and its intersection with the criminal justice system. In 1998, NADCP launched the National Drug Court Institute (NDCI). To date, NDCI has directly trained 65,440 Drug Court professionals from all fifty states and U.S. territories as well as sixteen other countries. Because of the breadth, quality and impact of NADCP, the Drug Court field has grown from fourteen programs in 1994 to 2,800 Drug Courts currently in operation. Visit NADCP online at [www.AllRise.org](http://www.AllRise.org).

## About Matt Stiner

Matt Stiner is the Director of Justice For Vets at NADCP. After receiving the Combat Action Ribbon for service in Iraq as a Marine, Stiner used VA Education benefits and the Harry S. Truman Scholarship to obtain a Masters in Public Administration from the University of Oklahoma. Stiner began his career in public service in the Tulsa Mayor's Office and then worked in the Tulsa Veterans Treatment Court.

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