



**Superior Court of California  
County of Orange  
*News Release***

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**The Orange County (California) Veterans Treatment Court  
Receives National Recognition as Mentor Court**

The Orange County Superior Court Veterans Treatment Court has been named one of just five (5) national mentor courts by Justice For Vets—a division of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP)—and the U.S. Department of Justice. The program will receive an award marking the distinction on Tuesday, April 12, 2022, at 9:30 a.m., at the Collaborative Courts Building, currently located at 909 North Main Street in Santa Ana.

National mentor courts are exemplary veterans treatment courts selected to serve a three-year term as model programs to assist new or growing courts. These top-tier programs follow evidence-based best practices and play a significant role in national training, technical assistance, and research efforts.

As part of the mentor court network for 2022-2024, the Orange County Superior Court Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) will help develop, identify, and test national best practices and provide technical assistance to jurisdictions interested implementing a veterans treatment court, including hosting site visits by team members from other jurisdictions around the country. (All site visits will be conducted virtually in 2022.)

“It is a great honor to recognize this court as one of only five mentor courts in the country,” said NADCP Chief of Training and Research Carolyn Hardin. “This program is a shining example of serving those who have served us and ensuring our military veterans and service members receive the treatment and benefits they have earned. As a mentor court, this program is helping to transform our justice system and leading veterans who might otherwise be incarcerated into lives of hope and healing.”

There are now nearly 4,000 treatment courts nationwide, including more than 475 veterans treatment courts. These five (5) programs are considered the cornerstone of justice reform.

Orange County Superior Court established their VTC in 2008 to serve active and retired military servicemembers. The goals of VTC are to enhance public safety and reduce recidivism by providing an alternative to incarceration through a collaborative, non-adversarial treatment approach for people in the criminal justice system who suffer from PTSD, TBI, mental health problems, sexual trauma, or substance use problems as a result of having served in the military. Since established, VTC has graduated an average of more than one servicemember a month; that's more than 150 servicemembers whose lives were saved, who were returned to their family and friends, and who were empowered with the skills necessary to succeed in life.

“Our Veterans Treatment Court provides an opportunity for the VA, our courts and our community to offer Veterans an avenue bridged with sobriety, hope, support and respect, to appreciate the freedoms for which they volunteered to fight,” said Shani Zakiya Nilo, a Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist, who has been with the OC VTC for close to three years now. “Our team works hard together to empower our justice-involved Veterans with the tools they need to succeed in life.”

“It is an honor and a privilege to work alongside our wonderful VTC team of professionals to support our veterans who become justice involved due to challenges they face as a result of their service to our country,” said Judge Thomas A. Delaney, the Supervising Judge of the Orange County Collaborative Courts who also presides over VTC. “We look forward to serving as a mentor court so that, together, we may all learn more about how to better serve our veterans and empower them to achieve the productive outcomes they deserve.”

NADCP’s mentor court network is supported by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. To learn more, visit <https://justiceforvets.org/>.

### **About NADCP**

NADCP is the premier training, membership, and advocacy organization for the treatment court model, which now includes nearly 4,000 programs found in every state and four territories of the United States. Since 1994, NADCP and its divisions—the National Drug Court Institute, the National Center for DWI Courts, and Justice For Vets—have trained hundreds of thousands of professionals spanning the legal, clinical, psychosocial, and law enforcement fields. NADCP regularly publishes cutting-edge, research-based materials, and the association works tirelessly to improve the response of the American justice system to people with substance use and mental health disorders. NADCP is a 501(c)(3) organization.

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