



IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER #2020-00-02

RE: ESTABLISHING MILITARY VETERANS AND SERVICEMEMBERS COURT
PROGRAM

WHEREAS, there is a recognized need to bring military veteran defendants with service connected behavioral health issues from the jail system into veteran treatment programs without compromising the safety of the public; and

WHEREAS, a centralized Military Veterans and Servicemembers Court program utilizing Department of Veterans Affairs and Veteran Mentor Volunteer resources and support system will permit improved access to resources available outside the scope of State and Local services; and

WHEREAS, it is recognized that a Military Veterans and Servicemembers Court was formally established in 2019 in Bay County serving all counties within the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to employ an efficient case management strategy to implement appropriate programming for this unique population of veterans and servicemembers; it is

ORDERED that pursuant to §394.47891, *Florida Statutes*, and effective with the entry of this order,

1. Each county within the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit may, and each is granted authority to, develop and implement a Military Veterans and Servicemembers Court Program to provide appropriate case management and services to veterans, as defined in §1.01, *Fla. Stat.*, and to Servicemembers, as defined in §250.01, *Fla. Stat.* Qualified participants are individuals who, either by pre-trial diversion, plea, or verdict are convicted of a criminal offense and who suffer from a military-related mental illness, traumatic brain injury, substance abuse disorder, or psychological issue. Any qualified participant may be sentenced pursuant to Chapter 921, *Fla. Stat.*, in a manner that appropriately addresses the severity of the illness, injury, or issue through services developed in that county and utilizing all available resources including those of the Department of Veterans Affairs and Veteran Mentor Volunteer programs and court programming.

2. Entry by any defendant into any program developed within any county within the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit must be pursuant to the criteria outline in §394.47891, *Fla. Stat.*
3. Any Military Veterans and Servicemembers Court Program developed in any county within the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit must have written policies and procedures. A copy of the policies and procedures for each Military Veterans and Servicemembers Court Program must be forwarded to the Chief Judge for approval and use including any alteration or change to the policies and procedures throughout the duration of the program.
4. Upon execution of a waiver of venue, agreement to plead pursuant to Fla.R.Crim.P. 3.170(b), and agreement to submit to jurisdiction of a Military Veterans and Servicemembers Court Program by a qualified participant, if represented that individual's counsel, and the assistant state attorney handling a qualified criminal case in any county within the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit which does not have an established Military Veterans and Servicemembers Court Program, the assigned judge may enter an order stating that venue is changed to a specific county in the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit which operates a Military Veterans and Servicemembers Court Program.
5. The Clerk in the county where a change of venue order has been entered as described in paragraph 4 shall transfer the file to the Clerk in the specified county. The Clerk in the specified county shall assign the case to the division of court which presides over an established Military Veterans and Servicemembers Court Program, and the assigned judges shall have full authority to manage the case to conclusion.

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers at Panama City, Bay County, Florida, this 28th day of January, 2020.



HON. CHRISTOPHER N. PATTERSON
CHIEF JUDGE



A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
BILL KINSAUL CLERK
OF THE CIRCUIT COURT

By Bill Kinsaul
Deputy Clerk