



## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2024.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Prince William County, Virginia

Program Title: Great Prince William Veterans Treatment Docket

Program Category: Criminal Justice and Public Safety

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Christopher G. Mayers

Title: Sr. Probation and Pretrial Officer (Docket Coordinator)

Department: Criminal Justice Services

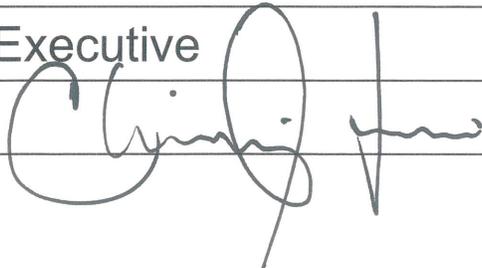
Telephone: 703-792-6923 Website: <https://www.pwcva.gov/department/criminal-justice-services>

Email: cmayers@pwcgov.org

### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Christopher J. Shorter

Title: County Executive

Signature: 

# Prince William County- Greater Prince William Veterans Treatment Docket (GPWVTD)

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## **Problem/Challenge Being Addressed**

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The Greater Prince William Veterans Treatment Docket (GPWVTD) addresses the needs of Justice Involved Veterans suffering from one or more of the following: serious mental illness, opioid use disorder, substance use disorder, alcohol use disorder and in some cases, they may also be in dire need of resources contributing to their stability in the community such as housing. The GPWVTD honors the veteran’s military service and sacrifice while delivering comprehensive supervision and therapeutic adjustments in order to return healthy veterans back into our community.

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## **Awards Criteria**

**(Innovation, Partnering or Collaboration, and a Model for Other Localities)**

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GPWVTD efforts meet awards criteria as stated in the application. Foremost among those is the way the program has developed strong relationships within our community and has opened opportunities for key stakeholders to provide the best care and support possible for veterans in Prince William County. GPWVTD stakeholders include the Courts, Judges, Commonwealth’s Attorney, Public Defender, Prince William Bar Association, Virginia Employment Commission, Department of Veterans Affairs, Virginia Department of Veteran Services (VDVS), Prince William County Community Services (PWCCS), the Prince William Criminal Justice Services Agency and the Police and Sheriff’s Departments.



In 2017, Prince William County took on the challenge of creating a Veterans Treatment Docket, without financial support from the State of Virginia or a Federal Grant. Prince William County organized key stakeholders and developed a plan to serve approximately 300 to 400 veterans who are arrested and processed through the Prince William- Manassas Adult Detention Center each year. In 2019, the Virginia Supreme Court Office of the Executive

Secretary (OES), approved the Greater Prince William Veterans Treatment Docket Program. During COVID-19, the first veteran entered the program and graduated successfully. As the GPWVTD sought ways to grow the program, support veterans, and make new leaders in our County, the GPWVTD team brainstormed ways to aggressively advertise the program. In 2020, the program incorporated significant evidence-based practices adopted by All-Rise, Justice for Vets, and the Office of Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia. Prince William County Criminal Justice Services sent Local Offenders Probation Officers to Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) Facilitator training, recruited community volunteers to mentor veteran participants, and developed partnerships with various veteran organizations. Although financial resources were limited, the GPWVTD had the support of Prince William County leadership and sought out justice involved veterans and educated them as well as their attorneys on this great program. The GPWVTD also provided learning sessions to veteran organizations, defense attorneys, commonwealth attorneys, and public defenders. As a result of the strong partnerships developed through community outreach and education, the GPWVTD has been able to connect veterans to treatment services, even if they choose not to pursue entry into the program; this additional level of intervention is in line with the treatment docket motto, "Leave no Veteran Behind."

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## **How the Program was Carried Out**

**(Including Financing and Staffing)**

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### **Overview**

The Mission: Of the 178,000 veterans living in Northern Virginia, more than 43,000 reside in Prince William County (per the U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Veterans face unique needs and challenges. It is estimated that 1 in 15 Veterans have substance use treatment needs, and a significant number are diagnosed with co-occurring mental health disorders including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI) and/or have experienced military sexual trauma. Currently, it is estimated that 22 veterans commit suicide a day. These unique challenges have caused many veterans to become entangled in the criminal justice system. Individuals who have

honorably served our Nation in the military deserve the same opportunities for assistance and care that was afforded to them while they were on active duty.

The GPWVTD was approved by the Virginia Supreme Court in 2019. With the support of Prince William County staff, elected officials, and many partnering agencies, the GPWVTD has sought out veterans who have entered the criminal justice system who are at high risk of recidivism and who are in high need of supportive services. While the programs of 2019 and 2020 look different, the mission is the same, to “Leave No Veteran Behind.” In seeing the toll that our nation’s longest war has had on our large veteran community, our program reviewed the data and determined that there was a large population of veterans entering into the local criminal justice system who were not high risk, but could greatly benefit from the evidence-based interventions and supportive services they would receive through their participation on the GPWVTD. While these veterans were assessed as low risk, they were found to still have a high need of treatment for PTSD, TBI, depression, suicidal ideation, and military sexual trauma. As a result of these findings, in 2023, the GPWVTD policy team created the policy and phase guidance for a multi-track Veterans Treatment Docket so that Veterans assessed to be Low-Risk/High-Need could participate on the docket, in addition to those assessed to be High-Risk/High Need. Since that expansion in services, the GPWVTD has served 31 High Needs, justice involved veterans of which 9 (nine) have graduated from the five-phase program which could take over 425 days to complete. Additionally, the program has expanded to include all levels of Prince William County Courts (General District, Juvenile and Domestic Relations, and Circuit).

Furthermore, within this past year, the GPWVTD policy team discovered there was a significant need to address stability factors of justice involved veterans while they were in a pretrial status. As a result, the GPWVTD policy worked with community partners and developed the Prince William County Coordinated Entry working group. This new group has facilitated coordinated services such as filling out forms for Veterans Health Administration (VHA) benefits to include housing and health benefits and has assisted Veterans in obtaining their military discharge forms. To date, 3 (three) referrals for health care and 2 (two) referrals for housing have been completed;

only one of these veterans participated in the GPWVTD program. The philosophy of the GPWVTD is to assist and support veterans even if do not end up participating in the docket.

The GPWVTD expanded its services further in 2024 after discovering the VHA does not conduct a level of care assessment. The Treatment Team jumped into action and coordinated with the Department of Veteran Services, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and Prince William Community Services. The team secured funding and developed a procedure for all veterans who are assessed as High Needs; a designation which refers to an individual's need to address substance use disorder and/or mental health diagnosis. The GPWVTD developed an easy-to-follow assessment track for veterans identified as High Needs. While this started as a need to conduct a level of care assessment, it was discovered that while a veteran is supervised by Pretrial Services at Criminal Justice Services, many services could be offered.

Based on the new findings and changes being made as a result, the GPWVTD program has modified the process of how justice involved veterans' cases are handled in the Prince William Courts; processes within four areas of focus have been modified:

1. Assessment

- The GPWVTD assesses as many of the approximately 300-400 veterans arrested in Prince William County as possible and provides services through the VHA, VDVS, or through Prince William County Community Services. Prince William County Community Services conducts mental health and substance abuse disorder assessments. These assessments are paid for by the Virginia Department of Veteran Services. Regardless of docket status, a referral is created for services with to the VHA or to a private insurance provider.

2. Treatment Docket Program (Criminogenic)

- The Prince William County Criminal Justice Services (CJS) Agency has dedicated four Local Offenders Program Probation Officers (PO's) to work with all veterans placed onto the docket. The majority of CJS staff who work with the veteran's docket are veterans or have a military spouse, thus they understand many of the "veteran systems"

shortfalls and how that can lead to crime. Probation Officers are trained to work with probationers and use techniques such as Motivational Interviewing, Effective Practices in Community Supervision, Carey Guide Tools, and other Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) based tools. Additionally, the PO's assigned to the Docket conduct MRT for the veterans.

- The Judge and Docket Team (Judge, Commonwealth Attorney, Public Defender, Treatment Team, and Coordinator) are trained to work with veterans utilizing the Virginia Supreme Court's Office of the Executive Secretary (OES)'s Incentive and Sanction Matrix which helps guide the team in using consistent and appropriate interventions based on level of severity of non-compliance as well as providing appropriate incentives in order to celebrate the success of the veteran participants. Each of these team members are required to attend Justice for Vets training(s).
3. Treatment Docket Program (Substance Use Disorders/Mental Health Treatment)
    - Over 95% of all judicial actions of the GPWVTD are to support a treatment adjustment in which the veteran's level of care is modified due to relapse or non-compliance.
  4. GPWVTD Veteran Mentors
    - Veteran Mentors are the backbone of the GPWVTD and have been honored by Prince William County at various volunteer recognition events. These selfless volunteers are why Veterans Treatment Dockets are so successful. Dedicated individuals are the essential connection needed to support a veteran; those that bore the battle. In 2023, the GPWVTD hired its first volunteer Veteran Mentor Coordinator and currently has 11 veteran mentors, who collectively have volunteered over 200 hours of service.

### **Staffing**

For FY25, Prince William County approved funding for a GPWVTD Coordinator (a position previously unfunded but filled by Price William County Criminal Justice Services Agency staff; currently a Senior Probation Officer and previously a Pretrial Officer served in an acting capacity). This additional position allows for an increase in the

number of justice- involved veterans that can be served. Currently, staff members working with the GPWVTD have other responsibilities while donating their time and professional services.

### **Funding**

The GPWVTD is supported by Prince William County Criminal Justice Services (CJS) for the execution and facilitation of the Docket. Prior to the Prince William County FY25 approved funding, CJS supported the Veterans Treatment Docket with no additional resources and coordination occurred using existing resources. However, the Board of County Supervisors recognized the importance of the Veterans Treatment Docket and approved a full-time dedicated Veterans Treatment Docket Coordinator effective July 1, 2024. Treatment is supported by key stakeholders who agreed to commit their time and resources into developing this great effort which has served to transform lives. VDVS has reimbursed over \$ 1772.00 to PWCCS for level of care assessments and talk therapy.-It has also provided additional support to include referrals and financial support to fund other community-based providers that assist our veterans.

### **Prince William County in Action**

The work carried out by several community stakeholders has made justice reform possible for justice involved veterans in Prince William County. The Judges, Commonwealth Attorney, Public Defender, Prince William County Bar Association, Criminal Justice Services, Community Services Department, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Virginia Department of Veterans Services have demonstrated that it is possible to fully understand the needs of a justice involved veteran in a quick and methodical way; identifying the high needs veterans, gaining their compliance through judicial authority, and assisting them in engaging in treatment programs, leads to success!

To date, the GPWVTD has served 31 veterans, graduated 9 (nine) veterans, and assisted another 13 veterans in Prince William County by quickly establishing care that they would have otherwise not have been able to obtain in a timely and organized way. Furthermore, the GPWVTD's interaction with the Prince William County Community

Services Department, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Virginia Department of Veterans Services has led them to partner with other counties who host a Veterans Treatment Dockets to alleviate the burden from the veteran paying for their level of care assessment while also-juggling the expenses of the legal system and their normal household expenses. The program provides a valuable service to the veteran and the community and provides dignity and honor to those who have served their country but are now in need of service.

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### **Executive Summary of Program (One Page)**

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The Greater Prince William Veterans Treatment Docket includes the Prince William County General District (GDC) and Juvenile and Domestic Relations (JDR) Courts. The Virginia Supreme Court approved the plan for a GDC and JDR docket in 2019. The Prince William County General District Court initially was the only court to accept participants in 2020, but referrals can now be received from all Prince William County Courts. The mission of the GPWVTD is to address the needs of justice involved veterans in Prince William County, Virginia. Of the 178,000 veterans living in Northern Virginia, more than 43,000 reside in Prince William County (per the U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Veterans face unique needs and challenges. It is estimated that 1 in 15 Veterans have substance use treatment needs, and a significant number are diagnosed with co-occurring mental health disorders including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and/or have experienced military sexual trauma. Currently, it is estimated that 22 veterans commit suicide a day. These unique challenges have caused many veterans to become entangled in the criminal justice system. Individuals who have honorably served our Nation in the military deserve the same opportunities for assistance and care that was afforded to them while on active duty.

Prince William County was approved to establish a Veterans Treatment Docket by the Virginia Supreme Court in December 2019. Since that time, the GPWVTD has helped 31 High Needs Veterans and has had 9 (nine) Veterans graduate from the program.

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## Brief Overview for Press Releases

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The Greater Prince William Veterans Treatment Docket (GPWVTD) is a collaborative effort among the courts, criminal justice agencies, treatment providers, local government, the Veterans Administration, and a variety of veteran's organizations. It is administratively managed by Prince William County Criminal Justice Services and has played a major role in addressing veteran substance use treatment needs, co-occurring mental health disorders including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI) and/or those veterans who have experienced military sexual trauma.

The Greater Prince William Veterans Treatment Docket is a collaborative effort that includes the Prince William County General District (GDC) and Juvenile and Domestic Relations (JDR) Courts. This program has been operating since 2020. The Virginia Supreme Court approved the plan for a GDC and JDR docket in 2019.

Since-inception, the GPWVTD has responded to the needs of Prince William County justice involved veterans by expanding pretrial services and interventions, enhancing procedures, and becoming the 2<sup>nd</sup> multi-track Veterans Treatment Docket in Virginia. The GPWVTD has had 31 veterans volunteer to participate in the docket who originally sought to have their charges reduced or even dismissed but found that they entered a program that honors their service and gives them the support they need by those who also bore the battle. The veteran, along with their volunteer veteran mentor, have found growth, understanding, and peace while they travel through the five-phase docket, often taking over 425 days to complete the rigorous program. Nine (9) veterans have completed the Veterans Treatment Docket and have been honored by all levels of government.

Effective July 1, 2024, Prince William County will add a GPWVTD Coordinator position in the county budget which will allow the program to grow as only 10% of the justice involved veterans have been able to take advantage of the program thus far. It is the hope that all high needs veterans will be able to enter the GPWVTD, honoring our vision that "No Veteran is Left Behind".