



Press Release

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Alaska's Veterans Courts Honor Veterans' Service

Anchorage & Fairbanks, Alaska, November 8, 2023 - Veterans Day is November 11, 2023. Most of our veterans return home strengthened by their military service, but some also struggle with trauma, mental illness (such as PTSD), and substance use disorders. These issues can be exacerbated by the loss of structure and camaraderie found in the military. Veterans' treatment courts (VTCs) provide treatment, accountability, and mentoring, and they help veterans involved with the criminal justice system with the benefits they've earned. VTCs save the lives, families, and futures of our veterans while also saving taxpayer dollars. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, there are over 460 veterans' treatment courts in operation in the United States.

The Anchorage and Fairbanks Veterans Courts honor and respect veterans' service to our country. Established in 2004 and 2022, Anchorage and Fairbanks Veterans Courts respectively have served over 430 veterans. The courts collaborate closely with the Veterans Administration to identify veterans who have criminal charges and are eligible for VA benefits, assist with referrals for services, and monitor progress through the program. The VA provides treatment services including substance use, mental health, and cognitive behavioral therapy.

A recent lookback showed that 81% of all participants exiting the court had no new criminal convictions up to five years after leaving. And 86% of those graduating from the court have remained crime-free and out of prison, contributing to a safer community and lowering criminal justice system costs.

Fairbanks Superior Court Judge Thomas Temple who presides over the Fairbanks Veterans Court said that the goal is to: "enhance the quality of life for the Veteran offender by breaking the cycle of criminality and connecting the Veteran to appropriate treatment and services." Judge Temple is a combat veteran, served as a rifleman and machine gunner in the U.S. Marine Corps.

[About the Anchorage Veterans Court](#)

[About the Fairbanks Veterans Court](#)

About the Alaska Court System: The mission of the [Alaska Court System](#) is to provide an accessible and impartial forum for the just resolution of all cases that come before it, and to decide such cases in accordance with the law, expeditiously and with integrity.