



# Press Release

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## **Anchorage Veterans Court Continues to Serve During Pandemic**

**Anchorage, Alaska, November 10, 2020** - Veterans Day is November 11, 2020. The Anchorage Veterans Court process honors and respects veterans' service to our country. Established in 2004, the program has served more than 366 veterans. The Anchorage Veterans Court accepts veterans who have criminal charges and are eligible for VA benefits. The Court collaborates closely with the Veterans Administration to identify eligible candidates and monitor their progress through the program. The VA provides treatment services including substance use, mental health, and cognitive behavioral therapy.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted services provided to veterans, the Anchorage Veterans Court continues to serve and support veterans even during this difficult time. Court hearings are currently being held telephonically each week to ensure regular contact with participating veterans.

According to Justice For Vets (a national organization advocating for veterans in the criminal justice system), there are over 350 veterans treatment courts in operation in the United States. These courts provide justice-involved veterans with the structure, accountability, treatment, and mentoring needed to repair their lives. By keeping veterans out of jail and prison, veterans treatment courts save their lives, families and futures, all while reducing costs to taxpayers.

Judge David Wallace, who has presided over Anchorage Veterans Court since 2010, stated that: "*We do not judge who you are, where you have been, or what you have done. We are here to help those who have served our country and want help. The Veterans Court can change your life for the better. If you are a veteran charged with a criminal offense, and need substance abuse, mental health or other treatment that hasn't been addressed, please talk to your attorney about the Veterans Court.*"

A recent lookback showed that 73% of all Anchorage Veterans Court participants exiting the program had no new criminal convictions up to five years after leaving. And 84% 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.

More information on the Veterans Court in Anchorage is available at  
<https://public.courts.alaska.gov/web/forms/docs/pub-121.pdf>

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