

Quality and Productivity Commission
26th Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
"Investing in a Quality Future"

2012 APPLICATION

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces):

NAME OF PROJECT: LOS ANGELES COUNTY VETERANS COURT

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: SEPTEMBER 13, 2010
(Must have been implemented at least one year - on or before June 30, 2011)

PROJECT STATUS: Ongoing One-time only

DID YOU SUBMIT THIS PROJECT BEFORE? Yes No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. Summarize the problem, solution, and benefits of the project in a clear and direct manner

1 Approximately 18% of all California's veterans live in Los Angeles County. As a result,
 2 there is a growing trend of veterans facing charges stemming from substance abuse
 3 and mental illness. Research has shown that traditional services do not always meet the
 4 needs of veterans adequately and that they respond more favorably to a treatment court
 5 process with those who have common past experiences and needs. The Veterans
 6 Court was established in September 2010 as a collaborative pilot program to respond to
 7 the needs of veterans with addiction, mental illness, co-occurring or other military
 8 related disorders. The 18-month program is a specialized drug court that combines
 9 intensive judicial supervision with federal and local treatment services. Utilizing a multi-
 10 agency and multi-disciplinary team approach, the Court aims to reduce recidivism and
 11 reintegrate veteran offenders back into their communities by providing access to
 12 intensive treatment services and case management while minimizing incarceration.
 13 Approximately 25,550 State and County custody bed days were avoided and 10,000
 14 days of treatment and ancillary services were provided. Of the 75 veteran participants, 7
 15 have graduated and only 5 have been terminated from the program and incarcerated.

(1) ESTIMATED/ACTUAL ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ESTIMATED/ACTUAL ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ESTIMATED/ACTUAL ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) TOTAL ESTIMATED/ACTUAL BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$ 3,000,000	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 3,000,000	X

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS Los Angeles County Public Defender 210 West Temple Street, 19 th Floor Los Angeles, CA 90012	TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 974-2801
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PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME Joanne Rotstein	TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 974-3036 EMAIL jrotstein@pubdef.lacounty.gov
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PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE <small>(PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME)</small> Joanne Rotstein	DATE 6/26/12	TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 974-3036 EMAIL jrotstein@pubdef.lacounty.gov
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DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE Ronald L. Brown	DATE 6/26/12	TELEPHONE NUMBER (213) 974-2801
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21

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FACT SHEET – LIMITED TO 3 PAGES ONLY: Describe the **Challenge, Solution, and Benefits** of the project, written in plain language. Include a discussion of the technology and linkage to the County Strategic Plan. The description should identify Performance Measures.

CHALLENGE (suggest ½ to one page)

SOLUTION (suggest ½ to one page)

BENEFITS (suggest 1 to 2 pages)

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN:

VETERANS COURT SUPPORTS OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS,
FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY AND INTERGRATED SERVICES DELIVERY

Challenge

Approximately 18% (360,000) of California's veterans live in Los Angeles County. As a result, there is a growing trend of veterans appearing before the Los Angeles Superior Court (Court). They often face charges stemming from substance abuse and mental illness. Drug and mental health courts serve veteran populations frequently. However, research has shown that traditional services do not always meet the needs of veterans adequately and that they respond more favorably to a treatment court process with others who are similarly situated and who have common past experiences and needs. Many veterans are entitled to treatment through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and veterans treatment courts can connect them with these benefits. This connection to benefits and services would help veterans address the issues that brought them before the Court.

Solution

The Veterans Court pilot program began on September 13, 2010. The program is a multi-agency collaborative effort of the Court, Public Defender, Alternate Public Defender, District Attorney, VA and Public Counsel. This voluntary 18-month program provides individually tailored reintegration, case management and treatment plans

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that promote sobriety, recovery, stability, social responsibility, self reliance, family unity and reduced recidivism. The Veterans Court is based on the Drug Court model, which combines intensive supervision, mandatory drug testing, positive reinforcement, appropriate sanctions and court-supervised treatment to address veteran issues. The Veterans Court accepts veterans who have served in the U.S. military, are entitled to benefits through the VA, and suffer from post traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, substance abuse, sexual trauma and mental health issues related to their military service. The Veterans Court team includes a judge, deputy district attorney, deputy public defender, deputy alternate public defender and the VA Outreach Specialist. Public Counsel assists the team on ancillary issues. Referrals to Veterans Court are made countywide by the participating agencies and the private bar.

Prior to admission, the candidate is carefully screened for eligibility and suitability by the Veterans Court team and the treatment provider identified by the VA. The program is only available to veterans currently charged with nonserious, nonviolent felonies, who have no prior serious or violent "strike" convictions; however a District Attorney exception protocol exists for veterans who are suitable but otherwise ineligible, due to pending charges or prior convictions. Treatment is selected by the VA and approved by the Veterans Court judge. VA benefits cover most of the expenses of the selected program. Once accepted into the Veterans Court program, the VA provides daily supervision of the veteran and issues a

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progress report to the Veterans Court. The Veterans Court judge then orders the veteran to complete the treatment program and comply with any other terms and conditions of probation. Progress report court appearances are set by the Veterans Court judge as appropriate to meet each individual veteran's needs and ensure compliance with the goals of the program

Benefits

The program has demonstrated positive outcomes. Seventy-five veterans have been accepted into the Veterans Court program since it began on September 13, 2010. On March 27, 2012, the Veterans Court held its first graduation, with seven veteran graduates. To date, no graduates have been re-arrested. Of the 75 participants, only five have been terminated from the program and sentenced to jail or prison.

The Veterans Court creates options within the criminal justice system that tailor effective and appropriate responses for veteran offenders with post-service issues. It reduces recidivism, protects public safety and reintegrates veteran offenders back into their communities by providing access to intensive treatment services and case management while minimizing incarceration. Not only does incarceration fail to address the veteran's military related disorders, it is costly and adds to the problem of jail overcrowding which has become even more critical due to AB109 Realignment.

Finally, Veterans Court takes advantage of already established federally funded treatment and service programs to reduce County costs.

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COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFIT): Use this page to provide a breakdown of the estimated/actual costs benefits. As a suggestion, work with your fiscal staff.

Cost Avoidance: Anticipated costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes.

Cost Savings: A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes.

Revenue: Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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\$ 3,000,000	\$0	\$ 0	\$ 3,000,000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL= 12 MONTHS ONLY

The participating agencies have provided in-kind contributions of staff and court-time for Veterans Court that meets two mornings a week. The VA covers the cost of residential and outpatient treatment, housing and other necessary services for benefit eligible participants. A review of participants in the program between April 1, 2011 and March 31, 2012, demonstrates that Veterans Court participants received approximately 10,000 days of federally funded VA treatment and ancillary services rather than being incarcerated or provided treatment at County expense. Additionally, approximately 25,550 State and County custody bed days were avoided by veterans' participation in the program. This equates to cost avoidance of over \$3,000,000.

Incarceration Cost Avoidance Computation

- 139.5 years avoided
- 69.75 years (with Good Time/Work Time Credits of ½) avoided
- 69.75 years X 365 days = 25,459 days
- 25,459 days X \$130 custody bed per day = \$3,309,670

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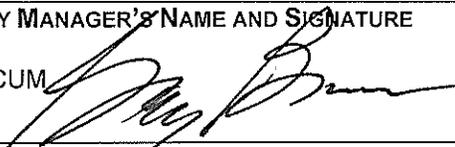
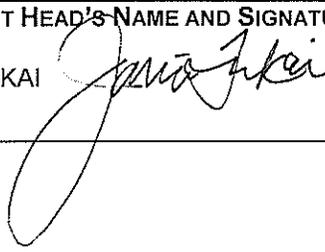
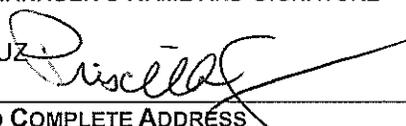
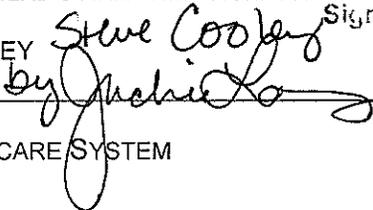
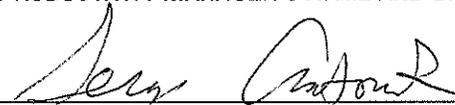
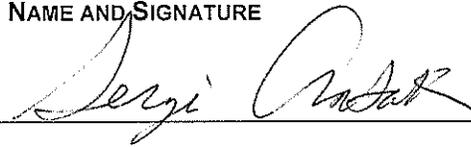
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FOR COLLABORATING DEPARTMENTS ONLY

(For single department submissions, do not include this page)

DEPARTMENT NO. 2 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS ALTERNATE PUBLIC DEFENDER 320 WEST TEMPLE STREET - 35 HALL OF RECORDS LOS ANGELES, CA 90012	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE GARY BAUCUM 	DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE JANICE FUKAI 
DEPARTMENT NO. 3 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS DISTRICT ATTORNEY 210 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 18-709 LOS ANGELES, CA 90012	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE PRICILLA CRUZ 	DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE STEVE COOLEY 
NO. 4 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS -VA GREATER LA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM 251 E. TEMPLE STREET LOS ANGELES, CA 90012	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE 	NAME AND SIGNATURE 
NO. 5 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS PUBLIC COUNSEL 610 SOUTH ARDMORE AVENUE LOS ANGELES, CA 90005	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE Paul Freese 	NAME AND SIGNATURE Paul Freese 
DEPARTMENT NO. NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS Los Angeles Superior Court	
Productivity Manager's Name and Signature SIGNATURE ON FILE	DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE SIGNATURE ON FILE

Signature on file