**Category 3 Program Narrative Outline**

This template was developed by the National Drug Court Resource Center (NDCRC) to assist jurisdictions with preparing their project narrative files for the FY 2023 Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Veterans Treatment Court Discretionary Grant Program. Below is a synopsis of the elements that must be included in the project narrative file for **Category 3 applicants** for statewide programs. Applicants applying under Categories 1 or 2 should use their respective documents.

**A) Description of the Issue**

Within this section, the applicant should explain its inability to fund the program adequately without federal assistance. For each category, the applicant must provide verified sources for the data that support the description of the issue (i.e., U.S. Census or other federal, state, and local databases).

* Describe the state’s current role and strategy to support via subawards, through existing VTCs and by creating new VTCs or other problem-solving approaches in courts to address the needs of veterans in the criminal justice system.
* Describe the extent to which the state and these courts meet the needs of the eligible population as defined in this solicitation, if they are operating at capacity, and the nonbudgetary reasons if they are not operating at capacity. Describe the issue or need that the statewide grant seeks to address.
* Provide information about the extent to which the proposed enhancement incorporates evidence-based treatment practices and/or services. Address access to treatment options including MAT (medication plus counseling), reducing risk for overdoses and overdose fatalities, supporting the provision of coordinated recovery support services such as transitional housing, peer support, and family related services.
* Describe how the project proposes to enhance the potential for long term success of participants and graduates, including building positive supports for those in recovery in the programs.
* Describe how the applicant seeks to enhance the capacity of veterans treatment courts to use data and research, implement with fidelity to the VTC model, the Ten Key Components of Veterans Treatment Courts, and tracking program outcomes.
* Provide state data and any evaluation findings that demonstrate the state VTC program’s impact on the community and veterans involved in the criminal justice system.
* Describe the gaps the applicant seeks to address with grant funding, particularly those that impact the collection of key program, recidivism, and treatment-related outcomes data to assess the efficacy of the veterans treatment courts.
* Describe other enhancements being proposed to support VTCs in the state.

For applications that seek support to subaward new VTCs and/or enhance the operations of local VTCs:

* Describe the nature and scope of the SUD problem in the jurisdictions to be targeted. Include data on race, ethnicity, age, gender, arrest volume (i.e., specifics on the general arrestee population, including the percentage screened for VTC and what percentage of those are admitted into VTC), and crime patterns for adult defendants.
* Describe how the court will identify, assess, and prioritize participation and services for high risk/high needs veterans.
* Explain the problems with the local jurisdiction’s current response to cases involving substance use disorders. Identify how and to what extent the proposed program will address the current arrest volume. Describe how the current number of treatment slots meets the needs of anticipated referrals.
* Explain what other challenges these jurisdictions face, including overdoses and overdose fatalities; co-occurring mental health challenges, including PTSD, TBI, or other disabilities; and other public health and homelessness challenges.
* Describe the proposed target population, including criminogenic risk levels (high, medium, low), SUD treatment needs, and the average jail or prison sentence that potential participants face, if any.
* Describe current efforts that document the jurisdiction is ready to plan and implement a veterans treatment court. Indicate whether the VTC team to be funded has received training on the VTC model.
* Document the commitment of the state and local jurisdictions to prioritize court resources and services for veterans with high criminogenic risk and treatment needs, including persons with repeat criminal justice involvement SUDs.
* Describe how the applicant will map and develop more resources to support the program and how those services would be monitored for quality and effectiveness.
* Provide local data and describe how the applicant will assess and use any evaluation findings that demonstrate the program’s impact with regard to participant recidivism and functional outcomes.
* Describe areas where the state needs to enhance the capacity of veterans treatment courts and practitioners statewide. Needs may be different based on the geographical location of the treatment court program (i.e., urban, suburban, or rural).
* If planning to implement or enhance TTA statewide, provide the target number of VTCs for which TTA services will be provided. BJA will measure the grantee against this target number, if the applicant is selected to receive an award. Include the data source used to determine the target number.
* Describe gaps and/or locations with more significant needs or limited capacity and services.
* Discuss how activities anticipated for the Byrne State Crisis Intervention program will be coordinated with the proposed activities in this application.

**B) Program Design and Implementation**

For this section, the applicant should address the following items and then address the specific category requirements below.

* Must include a plan that demonstrates how all individuals eligible for the veterans treatment court will have equal access to the program. This should include protocols for collecting and examining access and retention data.
* Must include a plan that demonstrates the early identification of eligible veterans for referral to veterans treatment court. The plan may include coordination with a VJO and the use of VRSS and SQUARES.
* Describe how this application will enhance access to recovery support services such as educational and/or vocational and transitional housing services or peer support, including supporting alumni networks or peer recovery activities. If delivering recovery support services, describe the agency and personnel that will administer the services and how those services are coordinated.
* Demonstrate that eligible VTC participants promptly enter the program following a determination of their eligibility. The applicant must also explain that people receive treatment services while incarcerated, if available, and will begin VTC treatment services immediately upon release.
* Describe which, if any, evidence-based principles and practices included in NADCP’s 10 best practice standards will be implemented as discussed under “Best Practice Standards.”
* Discuss the applicant’s commitment to admit and provide evidence-based interventions to participants with opioid, stimulant, and other SUD needs, including strategies for early assessment and entry into treatment to prevent overdose. Describe the strategies that will be used during this phase to assess for the risk of overdose, the need for critical access to treatment services, and how to prevent overdoses. Describe the range of treatment modalities that will be provided to address substance use, mental health, and co-occurring disorder treatment and support needs of participants, including those with a history of violence and PTSD and/or TBI as a result of their military service.
* The VTC Discretionary Grant Program allows participants to pay for treatment and restitution; however, it does not allow imposing a fee on a participant that would interfere with their rehabilitation. In the application, indicate how participants will be notified of the fee and include provisions for determining how these costs would not interfere with their rehabilitation or graduation.
* Demonstrate that the VTC for which funds are being sought will not deny any eligible client access to the program because of their use of FDA-approved medications for the treatment of a substance use disorder. Please refer to the Program Description Specific Information section’s discussion on MAT for additional information.
* If the applicant is seeking priority consideration for Priority 1(A), it should address in this section how the proposed project(s) will address issues related to racial equity and/or the removal of barriers to access and opportunity, and/or contribute to greater access to services, for communities that have been historically marginalized, underserved and adversely affected by inequality.
* Discuss how activities anticipated for the Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program will be coordinated with the proposed activities in this application, if applicable.

**Category 3: Statewide Applicants**

Describe the specific design of and objectives for the proposed statewide improvement, enhancement, or expansion of veterans treatment court programs. Provide a program strategy identifying how one or more of the following statewide initiatives will be accomplished:

* Building capacity to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion in programs for all eligible participants, including expanding use of programming that addresses the cultural needs of participants, the ability to review and assess equal access to the program and services, and sanctions and incentives.
* Supporting state or local implementation of VTCs, particularly in areas at high risk for overdose that have a significant presence of veterans with needs for whom there is limited resources or capacity to address those needs.
* Enhancing courts’ capacity to identify veterans, coordinate with VA staff, and use VRSS.
* Enhancing court capacity to access treatment and VA services, including MAT; prevent overdose fatalities; and/or provide key peer recovery services such as educational and/or vocational and transitional housing services.
* Building or enhancing peer recovery activities such as alumni networks and family support activities for parents in treatment courts.
* Implementing best practice standards and fidelity assessments.
* Enhancing services for either veterans who were dishonorably discharged or have disabilities, including traumatic brain injuries.
* Providing a TTA program and/or strategy to operationalize VTC teams.
* Tracking or compiling state VTC data and research information and resources, including a data collection system.
* Developing or enhancing a statewide TTA program and/or strategy for operational veterans treatment court teams.
* Enhancing data and research capacity, including automated collection of core data for all veterans treatment courts in the state and conducting a statewide VTC evaluation.
* Making subawards to local VTC programs.
* Disseminating statewide VTC information to enhance or strengthen programs for veterans in the criminal justice system.
* Describe which, if any, evidence-based principles and practices included in NADCP’s Ten Key Components of Veterans Treatment Court will be implemented and how the proposed use of funds will assist in their implementation. If the state is proposing to increase or improve implementation of its own state standards, describe those standards and how they will be implemented. (See the Ten Key Components of Veterans Treatment Courts discussion under the Program Description: Specific Information section.)
* Describe the system and process for coordinating delivery of TTA to drug courts statewide. Detail how the state will assess, implement, and monitor the TTA needs of veterans treatment courts. The plan may include support from BJA’s TTA providers (e.g., National Association of Drug Court Professionals/Justice for Vets, Center for Court Innovations, and Tribal Law and Policy Institute).
* Describe how the applicant will address gaps in transitional housing, peer support, and other key recovery support services. Describe how the program will enhance family support services for veterans treatment court participants.
* Describe how the state will enhance local courts’ capacity to assess and reduce the risk of overdose and overdose fatalities by veterans including use of naloxone and access to MAT.
* Describe how the enhancement efforts will be maintained after federal assistance ends and how current collaborations and evaluations will be used to leverage ongoing resources.

For applications seeking to make subawards to local courts, provide the following information on state efforts to implement new veterans treatment courts and/or scale up existing ones to better meet the existing and eligible defendant population that is high risk/high needs. Demonstrate how this proposal will assist in implementing that state strategy:

* Describe the detailed and randomized drug testing process and how it will occur throughout all components or phases of the program.
* Describe the mechanism which the court will use to ensure coverage and coordination of drug testing among all available agencies associated with the participants.
* Describe the proposed frequency of judicial status hearings and related criteria in the program.
* Describe how the program will ensure procedures are consistent in the status hearings.
* Describe the process the court will use to ensure procedural fairness throughout all court and program operations.
* Describe the plan for sustaining VTC programming after federal funding has ended.

**C) Capabilities and Competencies**

If the applicant is seeking priority consideration under Priority 1(B), it should describe within this section how being a culturally specific organization (or funding a culturally specific subrecipient organization at a minimum of 40% of the project budget) will enhance its ability to implement the proposed project(s) and should also specify which culturally specific populations are intended or expected to be served or have their needs addressed under the proposed project(s).

* Identify the personnel who are critical to the program’s successful implementation and discuss their roles, responsibilities, and qualifications. Discuss the organizational capabilities or competencies that will directly impact the ability to successfully implement the proposed enhancement and/or coordination of a state-based TTA program.
* Describe the personnel required to coordinate the state-based TTA program.
* Describe any needed support from BJA and its national TTA partners to implement the project, including efforts to train drug court staff and partners, collect data and conduct analysis, audit fidelity of the courts, enhance practices or access to treatment such as MAT and recovery support services, or support national recidivism studies. Describe how the applicant will coordinate with BJA and its TTA partners to implement these efforts.
* Describe any research partners or analytical staff members who will support data collection, analysis, and research, including their roles and goals. Describe how they will support equity and inclusion in access to program services, effective targeting and implementation fidelity, and program evaluation.

For applicants seeking to provide subawards to help launch a new veterans treatment court and/ or scale up an existing veterans treatment court:

* Identify each VTC team member who will have a significant role in implementing, managing, and enhancing a VTC program. Describe their role, responsibilities, and qualifications to ensure success of the proposed strategy. Key team members must include a judge, prosecutor, defense attorney, treatment provider, researcher/evaluator/ management information specialist, community supervision representative, and veterans treatment court coordinator.
* Identify personnel other than the team members who are critical to the program’s successful implementation and/or enhancement and discuss their roles, responsibilities, and qualifications. Discuss the organizational capabilities or competencies that will directly impact the ability to successfully implement the proposed application.
* Describe the VTC program’s proposed treatment partners, the history of the partnerships, and how the court will ensure that these substance use disorder treatment providers use evidence-based treatment services and monitor the quality and effectiveness of service delivery.
* Indicate whether the VTC team members have received training through the BJAsponsored Veterans Treatment Court Planning Initiative foundational training or through another opportunity. (See https://justiceforvets.org/resources/training/foundational-training/ ). If not, describe any training received or planning completed.
* Describe how effective communication and coordination among the team members will be implemented throughout the program period.
* Indicate whether the VTC team does or will include members from the local law enforcement and probation departments. If applicable, describe the roles of these members as they relate to staffing attendance, home visits, and court appearances. Attach an MOU signed by each key VTC team member, with the responsibilities outlined for each.
* Attach a letter of support from any local courts who have been identified to be a subrecipient under this project, if relevant, which outlines its commitment to the project.

**D) Plan for Collecting the Data Required for this Solicitation’s Performance Measures**

The applicant must describe its current ability to collect and analyze client-level demographic, performance, and outcome data and to regularly assess program service delivery and performance. All applicants must indicate their willingness and ability to report quarterly, aggregated, client-level performance and outcome data through BJA’s Performance Measurement Tool (PMT) as well as identify the person responsible for collecting the data. Statewide applicants are expected to report on behalf of their subawardees. In addition, grantees are expected to map community resources to support their programs, conduct or support evaluation of the programs, and to be able to assess equity and inclusion in their programs.

Note: An applicant is not required to submit performance data with the application. Rather, performance measure information is included as a notification that award recipients will be required to submit performance data as part of each award’s reporting requirements. Some measures are presented as examples, while others are the exact measures that every recipient will be expected to address.

OJP will require each award recipient to submit regular performance data that show the completed work’s results. The performance data directly relate to the goals, objectives, and deliverables identified in the “Goals, Objectives, and Deliverables” discussion. Applicants can visit OJP’s performance measurement page at www.ojp.gov/performance for an overview of performance measurement activities at OJP.

* Provide a plan detailing how subawards will be managed and evaluated.
* Describe who will be responsible for the quarterly reporting of the number and type(s) of state-based TTA services.
* Describe efforts at the state level to collect and share key data in the state’s treatment courts to support efficacy evaluations of the VTCs in reducing recidivism rates and improving outcomes for participants.