

## **Planning and Implementation of Expanded Trauma-Informed Services Hall County, GA Veterans Treatment Court**

### **ABSTRACT**

The project will serve justice involved veterans with substance use and mental health needs who are enrolled in a specialized Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) track within a local Drug Court. These participants often have trauma histories and require coordinated, veteran-informed services to support recovery and reduce recidivism.

Project activities will include funding a full-time treatment provider dedicated to the VTC, delivering individual and group counseling, and implementing veteran-specific treatment groups. The project will support training and consultation in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and training in the Battling Shadows curriculum to expand trauma-focused care. It will also fund two VTC team members to attend a national treatment court conference each year to strengthen program practices. All services will be coordinated with federal veteran's services, Veterans Justice Outreach, and local criminal justice partners.

Key deliverables will include the establishment of veteran-specific treatment groups, increased counseling capacity, implementation of trauma-focused interventions, and participation of staff in ongoing professional development. Expected outcomes include improved access to treatment, stronger participant engagement and retention in the VTC, enhanced trauma-informed care, and improved long-term recovery and stability for justice-involved veterans.

# Planning and Implementation of Expanded Trauma-Informed Services Hall County, GA Veterans Treatment Court

## Description of the Need

Hall County Treatment Services operates a comprehensive accountability court system with multiple tracks under a shared infrastructure, including the Veterans Treatment Court, which functions as a specialized track within the Hall County Drug Court. This integrated model maximizes efficiency while still supporting individualized, evidence-based services. In 2025, the Veterans Treatment Court served 14 participants, with 8 new enrollments and only 1 termination, resulting in a 93% retention rate and an average length of stay of 24 months, reflecting both the intensity of need and strong engagement. Despite having a well-established and effective program, there is a critical gap in the capacity to deliver veteran specific, trauma-informed treatment at the level required for this high-need population. Research indicates that a large majority of justice-involved veterans present with co-occurring mental health conditions and substance use disorders, underscoring the need for an integrated, accessible, and coordinated treatment model. While Hall County Treatment Services currently offers a wide array of evidence-based interventions (including Trauma Recovery Empowerment Model (TREM), Seeking Safety, Moral Recognition Therapy (MRT), Cognitive Behavioral Interventions (CBI), and Thinking for a Change (T4C), these services are not consistently tailored to the unique experiences of veterans.

Staffing limitations have prevented consistent implementation of veteran specific groups such as Battling Shadows, an MRT-based trauma curriculum designed for veterans. Current counselors carry caseloads of 30–40 participants, limiting their ability to provide specialized,

trauma informed care and rapid access to services upon entry. Veterans in the program frequently present with co-occurring Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and substance use disorders, when unaddressed, increase the risk of relapse, poor treatment engagement, and continued justice involvement. Trauma focused, evidence-based interventions such as Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) are not yet fully integrated into the Veteran Treatment Court due to funding and capacity constraints. EMDR is a structured psychotherapy designed to treat PTSD and trauma by using bilateral stimulation, guided eye movements and sounds while focusing on traumatic memories. Local resources and existing funding streams cannot support the additional need of a dedicated Veteran Treatment Court clinician, specialized in EMDR and other advanced trauma training without sacrificing services in other accountability court tracks. Federal funding is therefore essential to close this gap by adding dedicated clinical capacity and specialized training the jurisdiction cannot finance on its own, ensuring justice involved veterans receive the veteran specific, trauma informed treatment needed to improve outcomes and reduce recidivism.

### **Project Goals and Objectives**

The overarching purpose of this project is to expand and enhance trauma informed, veteran specific treatment for justice involved veterans served by the Hall County Veteran Treatment Court. Goal 1 is to expand treatment capacity for Veteran Treatment Court participants. Objectives under this goal include hiring a full-time treatment provider (40 hours per week) dedicated solely to Veteran Treatment Court participants and eliminating delays in access to treatment so that participants are connected to services immediately upon program entry. Goal 2 is to increase access to veteran specific, trauma informed treatment. Objectives

include implementing veteran specific treatment groups such as Battling Shadows within 12 months, training one treatment provider in EMDR and completing the required consultation hours and increasing the number of Veteran Treatment Court participants who receive both individual and group treatment services annually. Goal 3 is to strengthen program effectiveness through training and development. Objectives include sending two Veteran Treatment Court team members to the annual RISE Conference and integrating evidence based and trauma informed practices taught through this training into Hall County's program operations and treatment delivery. Together, these goals and objectives will increase treatment capacity, deepen the program's trauma responsive and veteran specific focus, and improve outcomes related to engagement, graduation, and reduced recidivism.

### **Project Design and Implementation**

The Hall County Veterans Treatment Court operates as a specialized track within the Hall County Drug Court, leveraging a shared accountability court infrastructure, assessment processes, and recovery supports to maximize efficiency while providing individualized services. This project represents a targeted enhancement of an existing, successful Veteran Treatment Court rather than creation of a new program. Core project activities include funding a full-time master's degree level clinician dedicated exclusively to Veteran Treatment Court participants to provide individual counseling, group therapy, and veteran specific treatment groups; deliver evidence-based services for substance use and co-occurring disorders; and coordinate closely with the Veteran Treatment Court team. The project will also support EMDR training and required consultation hours for one clinician, followed by ongoing clinical application of EMDR to address PTSD and trauma related symptoms among veterans. In addition, funding will support

acquisition and implementation of veteran focused trauma curriculum, such as Battling Shadows to establish and sustain structured veteran specific treatment groups. Two Veteran Treatment Court team members will attend the RISE Conference annually to strengthen adherence to national best practices, enhance the court's trauma informed and veteran responsive approach, and ensure reliance on evidence-based interventions rather than incarceration. Participants will enter the Veteran Treatment Court through established accountability court referral pathways, including defense attorneys, probation, and law enforcement, and will receive a clinical assessment, a validated risk/needs assessment, and an eligibility review by the Hall County's District Attorney's or Solicitor's Office. Veterans are identified early in the process through collaboration with the Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) Specialist. Once accepted, participants follow structured treatment phases that include regular court appearances, drug testing, judicial supervision, individual and group counseling, case management, evidence-based curriculum (TREM, MRT, Seeking Safety, CBI, T4C), recovery support services, and veteran mentorship. The dedicated Veteran Treatment Court's clinician, veteran specific groups, and EMDR services will expand the intensity and specialization of this framework, while ongoing monitoring of enrollment, waiting times for treatment initiation, retention, treatment participation, graduation outcomes, and recidivism will guide continuous quality improvement throughout the three-year project period.

### **Capabilities and Competencies**

Hall County Treatment Services brings substantial capabilities and competencies to this project, operating one of the largest accountability court treatment systems in Georgia and providing more than 70 treatment groups weekly across multiple programs. The agency

maintains in-house clinical services, a high-volume drug testing program, and extensive experience managing large participant populations, and multidisciplinary teams. The Veteran Treatment Court team is multidisciplinary, including a judge, coordinator, treatment providers, case managers, prosecutor, defense counsel, probation, law enforcement, and a Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist, all of whom have experience working with justice involved populations and high risk/high need participants. Existing use of evidence-based curricula such as TREM, Seeking Safety, MRT, CBI, and T4C demonstrates the program's commitment to research-based practice and its capacity to implement and sustain structured interventions with fidelity. The court's strong partnerships with the Veterans Administration, Veteran Justice Outreach, PTSD Foundation of America, North GA Vets Helping Vets, J's Place RCO, the Department of Community Supervision, the Public Defender's Office, the District Attorney's Office, and the Hall County Sheriff's Office further strengthen its ability to identify veterans, coordinate services, address housing and recovery needs, and respond quickly to participant crises. These established systems, skilled staff, and collaborative relationships position the agency to effectively implement the proposed enhancements, integrate advanced trauma focused services, and manage the project to achieve its stated goals and objectives.

## **Sustainability**

Sustainability is grounded in building internal capacity, embedding enhanced services within existing structures, and leveraging partnerships and data to secure ongoing support. By funding EMDR training and consultation hours for an internal clinician and acquiring veteran specific trauma curriculum such as Battling Shadows, the project creates permanent clinical competencies and treatment resources that will remain in place beyond the grant period. The

dedicated clinician position, once established and demonstrated as effective through improved outcomes, will be incorporated into long range planning and budgeting for Hall County Treatment Services and the accountability court system, with exploration of state funding, local appropriations, and future federal or foundation grants to support ongoing salary and benefits. Because the Veteran Treatment Court enhancements are integrated into the existing accountability court infrastructure, rather than operating as a standalone initiative, they will benefit from shared administrative systems, supervision, and program management that promote long term stability. The program will use ongoing monitoring of key performance indicators (enrollment, time to treatment initiation, retention, participation in veteran specific and trauma focused services, graduation rates, and recidivism) to document impact and build a compelling case for continued investment by state and local partners. Established collaborations with the Veterans Administration, Veterans Justice Outreach, community veteran organizations, and local justice agencies will continue beyond the grant term, ensuring ongoing access to complementary services such as medical and mental health care, housing, and peer support. Collectively, these strategies will support the continuation and gradual expansion of veteran specific, trauma informed services after federal funding ends.

**Project Title:** Planning and Implementation of Expanded Trauma-Informed Services in Hall County Veterans Treatment Court

**Proposed Project Start Date:** 10/1/2026

**Proposed Project End Date:** 9/30/2029


<b>Federal Funding Requested:</b>	\$	257,630
<b>Applicant Match Funding:</b>	\$	-
<b>Program Income Funding:</b>	\$	-
<b>Total Estimated Funding:</b>	\$	257,630

Budget Category	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Personnel	\$ 56,638	\$ 56,638	\$ 56,638	\$ 169,914
Fringe Benefits	\$ 20,956	\$ 20,956	\$ 20,956	\$ 62,868
Travel	\$ 4,758	\$ 4,758	\$ 4,758	\$ 14,274
Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Supplies	\$ 744	\$ 640	\$ 640	\$ 2,024
Construction	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
SubAwards	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Procurement Contracts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other Costs	\$ 4,310	\$ 2,320	\$ 1,920	\$ 8,550
Total Direct Costs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Indirect Costs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Project Costs	\$ 87,406	\$ 85,312	\$ 84,912	\$ 257,630


Federal	\$ 87,406	\$ 85,312	\$ 84,912	\$ 257,630
Non-Federal	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Program Income	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -


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January 21, 2026

To: Whom it may concern

I am the Assistant Manager with the PTSD Foundation of America-Atlanta Chapter, and the Mentor Coordinator for the Drug Court Tango Track for veterans. I work very closely with Judge Deal and his staff. They do excellent work with the veterans I serve and we fully support them. If you have any questions or concerns that I can assist with, Please feel free to reach out to me.

Respectfully,

Jason M. Smith, CPS-MH  
Assistant Manager, PTSD Foundation of America  
Phone: 678-997-1603  
Email: [jason.smith@ptsdusa.org](mailto:jason.smith@ptsdusa.org)



4/16/2026

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of continued and expanded funding for The Hall County Veterans Court Program. As a person in recovery as well as the Executive Director of Recovery Community Organization in Hall County, I have personally watched how the lives of individuals in this program have been transformed by the work and support of this program. Veterans Court addresses complex trauma, substance use and reflect measurable and meaningful outcomes in the lives of those involved as well as their families.

I have watched an individual struggle on and off for years with his substance use disorder. He was in and out of jail, he would find recovery and maintain for a while but ultimately his recovery would falter. He went through residential treatment, he was a participant of other court mandated programs. I worked with him and the coordinators to get him accepted into Vet Court where he was able to address the struggles alongside his substance use with individuals that had been through similar experiences to his. He celebrated 3 years in 2025, had his own home, became the caregiver to his elderly father and mentored many participants in Vet Court to encourage and support them. He started running meetings and volunteering at our facility and poured his heart into service work. He passed away from underlying health conditions not so long ago, but he is the posterchild for success for this program and he maintained his recovery 100% abstinent until the very end.

That is the story of impact of just one individual, but there are countless others that have greatly benefited from the tireless work of the counselors, case managers, interns, judges and others that work to not only invest in the community safety, but also in long-term recovery, dignity and restoration for those who have served our country.

Please don't hesitate to contact me directly with any questions or to further expand on my support.

Sincerely,  
Jordan Hussey  
Executive Director J's Place Recovery Center  
[Executive.director@jsplacerecovery.org](mailto:Executive.director@jsplacerecovery.org)

*Drug Awareness, Inc. dba J's Place is a 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization, Federal Tax ID#83-0897362*



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<b>Grants.gov Tracking Number:</b>	GRANT14620697
<b>UEI:</b>	USZBJ4CMC7B6
<b>Submitter's Name:</b>	Sommer Green
<b>Assistance Listing Number:</b>	16.043
<b>Assistance Listing Title:</b>	Veterans Treatment Court Discretionary Grant Program
<b>Funding Opportunity Number:</b>	O-BJA-2025-172484
<b>Funding Opportunity Description:</b>	BJA FY25 Veterans Treatment Court Program
<b>Agency Name:</b>	Bureau of Justice Assistance
<b>Application Name of this Submission:</b>	Hall County Georgia
<b>Date/Time of Receipt:</b>	Apr 23, 2026 11:47:27 AM EDT


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


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