



PRESS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

**Hon. Lawrence K. Marks
Chief Administrative Judge**

**Contact:
Lucian Chalfen,
Public Information Director
Arlene Hackel, Deputy Director
(212) 428-2500
www.nycourts.gov/press**

Date: June 5, 2019

Court Tailored to Justice-Involved Veterans Opens in Syracuse

Syracuse, New York – Chief Administrative Judge Lawrence K. Marks, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Michael V. Coccoma and Administrative Judge James C. Tormey, Fifth Judicial District, today announced the opening of a specialized part in Syracuse City Court tailored to justice-involved veterans charged with misdemeanors and felonies who may be suffering from addiction, mental health issues and other combat-related disorders.

The Syracuse Veterans Treatment Court—the first court for veterans to open in the Fifth Judicial District—was created to divert appropriate cases of justice-involved veterans, offering substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment and other customized services in lieu of incarceration. The new court is a partnership of the New York State court system, Onondaga County District Attorney William Fitzpatrick’s Office, Onondaga County Executive Ryan McMahon’s Office, the Onondaga County Bar Association, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, local veteran service providers and local treatment providers.

Like New York's other veterans' courts, the Syracuse court will combine rigorous substance and/or mental health treatment, intensive judicial monitoring, coordinated services to address unemployment and homelessness, and communication among various stakeholders. To help ensure the success of participants, the court will incorporate a core element of many of its counterparts—the utilization of peer mentors, military veterans who volunteer their time to offer support and motivation to help justice-involved veterans re-assimilate to civilian life.

Veterans who are not considered a public safety threat and are willing to comply with court-imposed conditions will be considered for participation in the new court. Former and current service members will be evaluated by a representative from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the court's coordinator to determine clinical eligibility. The assessment will also determine eligibility for any additional veterans' benefits, including health care, housing and educational aid. To participate, veterans must plead guilty to the top charge, unless otherwise approved by the prosecution. Participants may have their charges reduced or dismissed upon successful completion of treatment and other court mandates.

Hon. Theodore H. Limpert, a veteran and decorated fighter pilot, will preside over the Syracuse Veterans Treatment Court. Judge Limpert is familiar with problem-solving court approaches, having formerly presided over the Syracuse Human Trafficking Intervention Court.

"I am very pleased that this successful problem-solving court model is being expanded to serve the Fifth Judicial District. The new Syracuse court will address the underlying causes of criminal behavior, acknowledging the types of challenges faced by justice-involved veterans—to whom we owe so much for their service—and helping put them on the path to law-abiding, productive lives. I commend Judges Coccoma, Tormey and Limpert, the Onondaga County District Attorney's Office and our other justice system partners for their efforts in the opening of this specialized court," said Chief Administrative Judge Marks.

“The new Syracuse court offers veterans in the criminal justice system struggling with addiction and other combat-related issues the help they need and deserve—while holding them accountable for their actions. I am thankful to Judges Tormey and Limpert, to the Office of Court Administration, and to our many justice partners and stakeholders who made today’s launch possible,” said Judge Coccoma.

“I am pleased that the first Veteran’s Court in the Fifth Judicial District will be opening in Syracuse under the leadership of Judge Theodore Limpert, a decorated fighter pilot who served 30 years with the Air National Guard and flew seven combat tours overseas. This court, like the other active and successful problem-solving courts within the District, has been designed to reduce criminal recidivism and improve lives,” said Judge Tormey.

With the addition of the new Syracuse court, there are now 36 veterans’ courts in operation across the State. For more information about New York’s veterans’ and other problem-solving courts, visit: https://www.nycourts.gov/courts/problem_solving/.

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