



COUNTY OF ERIE

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MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Erie County Veterans Affairs Office Awarded Grant for Veterans Treatment Court

Erie, PA – The Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs has awarded the Erie County Veterans Treatment Court a grant for \$4,900 from the Veterans Trust Fund. The grant funding is to be used to expand current treatment court services for veterans. This is the third year that the Pennsylvania Veterans Trust Fund has award grant funding.

The Pennsylvania Veterans Trust Fund is supported by donations from PA residents who can choose to donate \$3 when applying for or renewing their driver's license or photo ID, or renewing a motor vehicle registration. Proceeds from the sale of the *Honoring Our Veterans* license plate also contribute to the fund.

"The money will be used for educational materials, supplies for the mentor program, and incentives for participants. Veterans Court participants already receive intensive treatment for mental health issues and addiction. I'm excited to see the positive impact of adding incentives, as this will supplement the treatment the VA Behavioral Health Clinic already provides," said Erie County Veterans Affairs Coordinator Cherise Gibbs Pope.

The Erie County Veterans Treatment Court is a collaborative effort between the Veterans Affairs Office, District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, Office of Children and Youth, Adult Probation Office, volunteer veteran mentors, and the Erie VA Medical Center. The Court's mission is to provide a therapeutic justice program designed to assist veterans in the criminal justice system as the result of any psychological conditions resulting from the veteran's military service.

"It is an honor that Erie County will be able to expand our Veterans Treatment Court program, which has been successful due to the leadership of Judge Robert Sambroak and numerous county employees," stated Erie County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper. "Too often the unique needs of veterans are overlooked, and it is our duty to serve them as they once served our country," said Dahlkemper.

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