

City Department News

East Valley Regional Veterans' Court awarded \$90,000 to fund court through June 2018

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Tempe, AZ - The City of Tempe has been awarded a \$90,000 grant to help continue funding the East Valley Regional Veterans' Court (RVC) operating costs through June 2018. The RVC is funded in part by the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services as made available through the Arizona Veterans' Donation Fund (VDF). A \$100,000 VDF grant was awarded in April 2016 to help establish the RVC. Tempe Municipal Court applied for and has accepted the grant on behalf of participating municipal courts.

A veteran court is a problem-solving court that uses a non-traditional approach to resolve cases involving U.S. military veterans and active duty personnel who have been charged with misdemeanor violations filed in municipal court. Many veterans need assistance addressing homelessness, substance abuse, mental health, anger management and conflict resolution issues. Oftentimes, these life issues contribute to veterans entering the criminal justice system and having cases in multiple courts.

The RVC centralizes dockets which are held weekly at the Tempe Municipal Court. The first RVC docket began in July 2016 with Tempe and Chandler Municipal Courts participating. Since then, Carefree/Cave Creek, Fountain Hills, Gilbert, Paradise Valley, and Scottsdale Municipal Courts have begun participating as well. In the first six months, 309 cases were referred, 263 veterans were served, and 66 veterans have successfully completed all program requirements and resolved their cases.

This treatment court provides expedited access to veteran-specific resources and benefits and assistance to veterans to help them meet obligations to themselves, their families, the court and their community. The regionalized approach provides an opportunity for all veterans cited into participating East Valley courts to have their cases heard in a Veterans' Court. Veterans have more treatment options to resolve their cases as they work with providers at a centralized location.