

An Invaluable Service for Veterans

The VDP is supported by over 70 veteran organizations, public defense programs and mental health groups, including the American Legion, AMVET, Marine Corp League, United War Veterans Council, VFW, National Alliance for Mental Illness NY, and a majority of county public defense programs, such as Brooklyn Defenders, Ontario County Public Defender Office and Buffalo Legal Aid Society.

“The VDP attorneys are literally saving lives with their knowledge and expertise.” *Ross Keim, Disabled U.S. Army Military Policeman*

“The service that the VDP provides is invaluable. The legal system does not know what difficulties veterans face when they come home from war, and what demons they carry within themselves.” *Terry Travis, U.S. Marine Sergeant, Two Iraq Tours*

“The VDP is the best thing to come along for a veteran who needs help in criminal matters; an organization that has a heart and soul.” *Lawrence Fuchs, U.S. Army Vietnam Veteran*



“We strongly support the VDP’s important work to help justice-involved veterans regain their status as productive members of society.” *Mathew Tully, NYS Dept. Commander, Military Order of the Purple Heart*

“Our statewide veteran council, representing 37 veteran groups, such as Disabled American Veterans, strongly support the critically important work of the VDP. The VDP is truly defending those who defended America.”
Tom DeMeo, President, NYS Council of Veterans Organizations

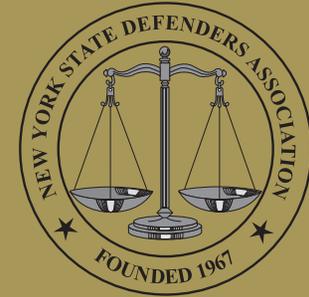


Veterans Defense Program NYS Defenders Association

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New York State
Defenders Association

Veterans Defense Program

The Veterans Defense Program provides training and legal assistance to attorneys defending veterans and service members in the family and criminal court systems.



The VDP provides a treatment-oriented mitigation approach leading to family restoration and reintegration into society.

Enhancing Justice & Fairness

The Veterans Defense Program (VDP) is part of the New York State Defenders Association, a statewide non-profit organization working to improve the quality and scope of publicly supported legal representation for people who cannot afford a lawyer.



Defending Those Who Defended Us

The VDP provides training, support, and legal assistance to promote trauma-informed effective representation of veterans and service members in New York State's criminal and family court systems. The first of its kind in the nation, the VDP was launched in response to a crisis situation as growing numbers of veterans with service-related mental health illnesses were lost in the criminal justice system.

Invisible Wounds of War

Studies report that depressive disorders, substance abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) among veterans are at epidemic proportions.



Of the 375,000 Post-9/11 and Vietnam veterans in the state, approximately 112,000 have PTSD, TBI or depression. Studies show 50% of those veterans are untreated.

The U.S. Veterans Administration (VA) and the National Academy of Medicine report that veterans with mental health conditions are at significant risk of arrest as their trauma symptoms may lead them to criminal conduct. PTSD and TBI are linked to incarceration, antisocial behavior, and violence among veterans. Moreover, the numbers are expected to increase. According to the VA, the veteran population will increase 46% between 2014 and 2019.

Legal Support Services

Expert VDP attorneys provide innovative and case-specific legal assistance, research, and consultation in criminal and family court veteran cases.

On a daily basis, the VDP advises public defense attorneys representing veterans on military culture and its impact on clients, service-related mental health ailments, and client-centered legal approaches focused on treatment and sentencing mitigation.



The VDP assists attorneys during every step of a case, from pre-trial motions to sentencing and re-entry. For instance, VDP attorneys will conduct in-depth research and interviews, make court presentations, and write mitigation memoranda. The VDP provides direct legal representation or comprehensive "second chair" assistance in strategic cases.



Training Programs

The VDP conducts continuing legal education trainings across the state for hundreds of public defense attorneys and presentations to bar associations, government agencies, and veteran organizations. An Accredited Provider of Mandatory Continuing Legal Education, VDP trainings receive rave reviews with one seasoned public defender stating, "This was the best training I have ever attended. Very moving, informative, and wonderful." For the Training Calendar, go to <https://nysda.site-ym.com/?page=VetsDef>



Expert Referrals & Guidance

The VDP guides defenders on obtaining appropriate military or mental health experts.

Veterans who call the VDP receive guidance and expert referrals on criminal defense or family court issues.