

Increasing Access for Forensic Veteran Populations: Review of a Local
Nikola Alenkin, PhD, LCSW

Level

Introductory/Intermediate

Track

Clinical

CE

CPA/BBS/BRN/CJER

Bio

Nikola Alenkin, PhD, LCSW, has been in the field of social work for over 25 years. He has worked with marginalized populations in Skid Row, Los Angeles as well as communities of color in East Los Angeles, and currently supervises associate social workers working toward their licensure. Nikola's clinical experience includes administration/management of programs within the public and private sectors, as well as delivery of direct clinical services to those most in need. He has also been an educator of social work, psychology and child and family studies for over 20 years. Nikola currently works with the Department of Veterans Affairs, working in the largest residential treatment facility for veterans in the country, is a faculty member in the school of social work at California State University, Los Angeles and is co-founder and co-director of California Organizing and Policy Institute.

Narrative

In 2018, the Veterans Treatment Court Improvement Act outlined the hiring of at least 50 additional Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO) staff throughout the country to assist the Department of Veteran Affairs in increasing its breadth of access to services for incarcerated veterans. In 2021, the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) produced a report which outlined some of the improvements made by the VJO. The Domiciliary Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (RRTP) is one of the oldest and largest programs within the Veteran Affairs System which houses up to 270 veterans in a residential setting. This specific program is in Los Angeles County and serves thousands of veterans annually, a large percentage of which have law enforcement/incarceration histories. This lecture will review recommendations from the GAO with a specific overview of a local program and detail how these collaborative efforts increased access for veterans between a law enforcement agency, jail/prisons and this program.

Learning Objectives

1. Analyze the GAO report and its recommendations for improved/increased access for services to incarcerated veterans
2. Explain the data from the increased efforts to coordinate access for incarcerated veterans from jail/prisons and this program

3. Apply three aspects of this collaborative to your own program and approach with incarcerated veteran populations