
13TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



VETERANS TREATMENT COURT MENTOR PROGRAM

“We are Veterans helping Veterans”



The 13th Judicial Circuit Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Program

The Veterans Treatment Court relies on cooperation and collaboration among the criminal justice system, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, veteran's service organizations, and community treatment agencies to provide comprehensive treatment for veterans. In addition to these entities, the Court also relies on Veteran Mentors. Veteran Mentors are veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces who volunteer their time to assist Veteran Court participants. Veteran Mentors provide advice, personal experiences, recommendations, and guidance to veterans. Many of our Veteran Mentors are drawn from a number of veteran's service organizations, the local community, and government organizations. Veteran Mentors include, but are not limited to: those who have served in peacetime, Vietnam, Desert Storm/Shield, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The Veteran Mentor relationship promotes and fosters through encouragement a **“can do”** attitude in the Veteran Participant. In return the veteran becomes motivated to accomplish his or her goals in treatment, feels that he or she is not alone, and knows that the mentor and the Court are there for them.

Experiences in the 13th Judicial Circuit's Drug Court and Mental Health Court have shown that veterans respond more favorably to other veterans who have served and share similar experiences, and it has been observed that veterans are often more comfortable speaking with a fellow veteran. Based on these observations it has become clear that Veteran Mentors will be an essential part of the Veterans Treatment Court. The Veteran Mentor is not a treatment provider.

The conversation and interactions between the Veteran Mentor and Veteran Participant are as peers rather than a position of authority. The change in demeanor of the Veteran Participant becomes an opportunity to make a profound impact on the veterans who enter the Court. We anticipate that the active and supportive relationships maintained throughout treatment will increase the likelihood that a Veteran Participant will remain in treatment and improve their chances of maintaining sobriety and law-abiding behavior.

Mission Statement of the 13th Judicial Circuit Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Program

The Mission of the Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Program is to ensure that every participating veteran in the 13th Judicial Circuit Veterans Treatment Court has a fellow veteran that acts as a mentor, advocate, and ally.

Goals of the 13th Judicial Circuit Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Program

The goals of the Mentor Program is for mentors to act as an ally and friend, and help the veteran successfully readjust to a productive civilian life, free of crime.

Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator

The Veterans Mentor Coordinator is essential in maintaining the success of the 13th Judicial Circuit Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Program. The Mentor Coordinator is responsible for recruiting prospective mentors, screening candidates, selecting Veteran Mentors, and educating them about the Veterans Treatment Court Program. The Mentor Coordinator will also be responsible for individual and group supervision as well as scheduling mentors to be present during the Court's proceedings. The Mentor Coordinator will coordinate all activities with the Court team staff, Treatment Court Administrator, and the Judge.

Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator Duties and Responsibilities

- ★ Recruit and train volunteer Veterans Treatment Court Mentors.
- ★ Assist in the retention of Veteran Mentors.
- ★ Organize and conduct training for Veteran Mentors.
- ★ Assist in supervision of Veteran Mentors.
- ★ Assist in developing specialized training projects.
- ★ Perform duties as assigned by the Judge and Treatment Court Administrator.
- ★ Sustain and evolve the Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Program.

Veteran Mentor Role Description

The Veteran Mentor acts as a coach, role model, and advocate for the Veteran Participant. The mentor encourages, guides, and supports the Veteran Participant as they progress through the court process. This includes listening to the concerns of the Veteran Participant and making general suggestions, assisting the veteran in determining their needs, and acting as a support for the Veteran Participant, especially when a Veteran Participant may be feeling isolated.

Veteran Mentor Duties and Responsibilities

- ★ Meet with the Veteran Participant a minimum of one hour once a week.
- ★ Be supportive and understanding of the difficulties the Veteran Participant is facing.
- ★ Assist the Veteran Participant as much as possible in resolving their concerns regarding court procedures.
- ★ Be supportive and helpful to other Veteran Mentors.

Veteran Mentor Requirements

- ★ Have a genuine concern for veterans in the legal system.
- ★ Be in good standing with the law.
- ★ Be honorably discharged from one of the branches of the United States Armed Forces, including the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, or their corresponding Reserve and Guard components. *(Veterans who have a dishonorable or bad conduct discharge are not usually eligible, but those with exceptional success stories are welcome to apply.)*
- ★ Adhere to all of the Veterans Treatment Court Program's policies and procedures.
- ★ Commit to participation for a minimum of six months and to the extent they are able, to mentor their assigned participant until that participant graduates from the Court.
- ★ Complete the required initial training as specified by the Court prior to participation in the Veterans Treatment Court.
- ★ Participate in any additional training as required by the Veterans Treatment Court.
- ★ Visit with the participant for at least one hour each week.
- ★ Do not engage in any drug use, alcohol use, sexual activities, or any other activities with the participants which are unlawful or may be viewed as unethical.
- ★ Notify the Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator or the Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist if the participant becomes suicidal, wants to harm others, or engages in unlawful activities.

Veteran Mentor Desirable Qualities

- ★ Active listener
- ★ Empathetic
- ★ Encouraging and supportive
- ★ Tolerant and respectful of individual differences
- ★ Knowledgeable of community resources and services

For more veteran mentor information or an application, contact Brandy Clark, the Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator, at (573)886-4178.

Recruitment Policy

The Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator assumes the majority of the responsibility for recruiting new mentors. The Veterans Treatment Court Team, its collaborative partners, and current Veteran Mentors are strongly encouraged to refer highly respectable and reputable veterans to the Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Program. Additionally, Veterans Treatment Court Team members and Veteran Mentors are strongly encouraged to attend and host informational sessions and training for prospective mentors.

Inquiry Policy

All inquiries about participating as a Veteran Mentor will be directed to the Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator. The Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator will respond to any prospective mentor inquiries within two weeks.

Eligibility Policy

Each Veteran Mentor must meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the Veteran Mentor Requirements section as well as be able to provide a DD Form 214 in order to participate in the

program. Extenuating circumstances may be reviewed at the discretion of the Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator.

Knowledge of a Prospective Mentor's Negative History

Current Veteran Mentors with knowledge of any prospective mentor's history or background that may jeopardize the integrity of the Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Program, the Veterans Treatment Court, and the Veteran Participants must communicate such information or concerns to the Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator, Veterans Treatment Court Administrator, or the Judge.

Screening Policy

Each prospective Veteran Mentor must complete a screening process conducted by the Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator. The decision to accept or deny an applicant will be made by the Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator, the Veterans Treatment Court Administrator, and the Judge. Feedback regarding the prospective mentor's denial may or may not be given. The right to withhold or give feedback is solely at the discretion of the Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator, Veterans Treatment Court Administrator, and the Judge.

The Volunteer Mentor Screening procedure will include, but not be limited to:

- ★ Completing a written application form.
- ★ Completing a personal interview.
- ★ Completing a background check.

Training Policy

Training is crucial and necessary for volunteer Veteran Mentors. Initial training is especially crucial for prospective mentors. All prospective mentors must complete the required initial training or they will not be able to mentor during court proceedings.

Training will include, but will not be limited to, the following:

- ★ Observe several Veterans Treatment Court sessions.
- ★ Discuss the experience of observing the Veterans Treatment Court sessions.

Unacceptable Behavior Policy

Unacceptable behaviors will not be tolerated while a Veteran Mentor is participating in the program. Because of the direct impact a mentor has on a Veteran Participant, behaviors that are not aligned with the mission, vision, goals, and values of the Veterans Treatment Court are unacceptable and prohibited.

Recognition and Awards

At least once a year all mentors will be recognized for their role in the Veterans Treatment Court. The Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator is responsible for planning and implementing recognition activities.