



Charlotte County Veterans Treatment Court
Veteran Mentor Handbook

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NO VETERAN LEFT BEHIND

HONOR-COURAGE-COMMITMENT

EST. 2025



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Mission Statement

The mission of the Charlotte County Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) Mentor Program is to ensure that every participating veteran in VTC has a fellow veteran who acts as a mentor, advocate, and ally.

Goals of the Veteran Mentor

To act as an ally and friend and help the veteran successfully readjust to civilian life.

Veterans Mentor Program Description

The Charlotte County VTC relies on cooperation and collaboration among the criminal justice system, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, various veteran service organizations, and community treatment agencies to provide comprehensive treatment for veteran participants. Additionally, the Court utilizes veteran mentors; veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces who volunteer their time to assist the Court, providing advice, personal experience, and guidance to veteran participants. Veteran mentors come from veteran service organizations, government organization, and/or the community and may include, but are not limited to, those who have served in peacetime, Vietnam, Desert Storm/Shield, Operation Enduring Freedom, and/or Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The veteran mentor relationship promotes and fosters, through encouragement, a “can do” attitude in the veteran. The mentor provides motivation to accomplish treatment goals, fosters confidence that participants are not alone, and ensures the participant and the Court that they are there for them.

Research has shown that veterans respond more favorably to other veterans who have served in the military and share similar experiences. Veterans appear to be more comfortable when talking with fellow veterans who works in conjunction with the court program. The veteran mentor converses and interacts with the veteran participant as a peer rather than as an authority figure.

The resulting change in demeanor of the veteran participant marks mentorship as an opportunity to make a profound impact on the veteran. Based on these observations, it is clear that veteran mentors are an essential part of the Charlotte County Veterans Treatment Court program. We believe that these active and supportive relationships maintained throughout treatment increase the likelihood that a veteran remains in treatment and improves his or her chances of maintaining sobriety and law-abiding behavior.

Veteran Mentor Role Description



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The veteran mentor acts as a coach, a guide, a role model, an advocate, and a support for the veteran participant as they progress through the court process. This includes listening to concerns, making general suggestions, assisting the veteran in determining his or her needs, and acting as a support for the veteran, especially when he or she may be feeling isolated.

Veteran Mentor Duties and Responsibilities

- ※ Visit with the veteran participant, either telephonically or in person, approximately one hour each week.
- ※ Be supportive and understanding of the difficulties the veteran is facing.
- ※ 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 a veteran of one of the branches of the United States Armed Forces, including the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Space Force and their corresponding Reserve and Guard branches.
- ※ Adhere to all of the Charlotte County VTC program's policies and procedures.
- ※ Commit to participation for a minimum of one (1) year or until the participant graduates.
- ※ Complete the required initial training as specified by the Court prior to participation in VTC.
- ※ Participate in any additional training as required by the Charlotte County VTC.
- ※ Do not engage in any drug use, alcohol use, sexual activities or other unlawful activities with the Charlotte County VTC participants.
- ※ Notify the Mentor Coordinator 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
- ※ Knowledge of community resources and services

Screening Policy

Each prospective veteran mentor must complete a screening process conducted by the Treatment Courts Manager and Court. The decision to accept or deny an applicant will be made by the Mentor Coordinator, the Treatment Courts Manager, and the Judge. Feedback regarding the prospective mentor's denial may or may not be given. The decision to provide or withhold



feedback is solely at the discretion of the VTC Mentor Coordinator, the Treatment Courts Manager, and the Judge. The volunteer mentor screening procedure includes, but is not limited to:

- ✧ Completing a written application form
- ✧ Completing a background check

Training Policy

Training is crucial for volunteer mentors and initial training is especially important 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 not be limited to the following:

- ✧ Observation of VTC sessions
- ✧ Discussion of the prospective mentor's court observation experience
- ✧ Completion of the Justice for Vets Mentor Corps Professional Development online training

Eligibility Policy

Each veteran mentor must meet the eligibility criteria outlined in section "Veteran Mentor Requirements" to participate in the program. Extenuating circumstances may be reviewed at the discretion of the VTC Mentor Coordinator.

Recruitment Policy

The VTC Mentor Coordinator assumes the majority of the responsibility for recruiting new mentors. The Charlotte County VTC team, its collaborative partners, and current veteran mentors are strongly encouraged to refer highly respectable and reputable veterans to the VTC Mentor Program. Additionally, VTC team members and veteran mentors are strongly encouraged to attend and host informational sessions and training for prospective mentors.

Recognition and Awards

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

The VTC Veteran Mentor Coordinator

The Mentor Coordinator is essential in maintaining the success of the VTC Mentor Program. They are responsible for recruiting prospective mentors, screening and selecting candidates, and educating them about Veterans Treatment Court. The Mentor Coordinator is also responsible for individual and group supervision as well as scheduling mentors to be present during court



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proceedings. Additionally, the Coordinator is responsible for relaying mentor activities to the court team staff, court coordinator, and the Judge.

Veteran 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 mentors
- ※ Assist in developing specialized training projects
- ※ Perform duties as assigned by the Treatment Courts Manager and the Judge
- ※ Sustain and evolve the Veteran Mentor Program

Veteran Mentor Coordinator Contact Information

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Knowledge of a Prospective Mentor's Negative History

Current veteran mentors with knowledge that a prospective mentor has a negative history and/or background must communicate his or her knowledge or concerns to the VTC Mentor Coordinator, the Treatment Courts Manager, or the Judge. Withholding this information may jeopardize the integrity of the VTC Mentor Program, the Court, and/or the safety of veteran participants.

Unacceptable Behavior Policy

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