

LANCASTER COUNTY VETERANS COURT

MENTORING PROGRAM

I. **Description and Purpose**

The key component of any successful Veterans Court is a Veterans Mentor Program. In this program, a trained Veteran Mentor is paired with a veteran participant to provide support as he/she navigates through the court and treatment. Ideally, Mentors/participants will be paired by service whenever possible. The Mentor is present as an ally and friend, to assist the veteran through this difficult time. Our belief is that the shared experiences of another veteran will be critical in assisting the participant in regaining control of his/her life and successfully connecting to and maintaining treatment, which will lead to successful completion of the Veterans Court program.

The Mentoring Program offers support and encouragement for veterans in the court system by spending one-on-one time with the veteran participant on a regular basis to provide an opportunity to discuss concerns and receive feedback and support from another veteran. The Mentor will have a resource book at his/her disposal to refer veterans to a wide range of available services both within the veteran system and in the community at large. These include, but are not limited to: benefits, housing, spiritual needs, social/recreational needs, employment. The Mentor is a resource to the veteran, not a counselor.

II. **Mentor Coordinator Role:** Essential to the coordination, maintenance and success of the mentoring program is the Mentor Coordinator. His/her role is to recruit, organize and schedule trainings, supervise, and coordinate Mentors within the Veterans Court Program.

III. **Mentor Coordinator Duties:**

- Recruiting potential mentors
- Screening and selecting candidates
- Scheduling initial and ongoing training sessions for selected candidates in skills to facilitate a mentoring session and skills specific to the Veterans Court Program
- Providing individual and group supervision
- Scheduling mentors to be present during the Veterans Court proceedings
- Coordinating all activities with the Judge and the Coordinator of Drug Court and Veterans Court

IV. **Mentor Coordinator Criteria**

- Be a veteran of one of the branches of the United States Military, including the Army, Marine Corp, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Reserve or National Guard. The volunteer must have an Honorable Discharge and provide a DD 214 indicating this.
- Go through the Mentoring vetting process (background check)
- Adhere to all of the Lancaster County Veterans Court Mentor Program policies and procedures
- Commit to program participation for a minimum of one year.
- Be able to dedicate approximately 10 hours per week to the coordination of the Mentoring Program.

- Participate in the initial training necessary to become a Veteran Mentor, and any additional trainings required during the program commitment.
- Have good organizational and group facilitation skills
- Be a willing listener
- Be encouraging and supportive
- Be tolerant and respectful of individual differences

V. Volunteer Veteran Mentor Role: The role of the volunteer Veteran Mentor is to act as a coach, guide, role model, advocate and a support for the individual(s) with whom he/she is working. A Mentor is intended to encourage, guide, and support the participant as he/she progresses through the court process. This will include listening to concerns and making general suggestions, assisting the participant with determining needs, and acting as a support in a way that only another veteran can be or understand.

VI. Volunteer Veteran Mentor Duties

- Attending court session at least one time per month
- Participating in and leading mentoring sessions with veterans who are participants in Lancaster County's Veterans Court.
- Being supportive and understanding of the difficulties veterans face
- Assisting the participants as much as possible to resolve their concerns around the court procedures as well as interactions with the Veteran's Administration system.
- Being supportive and helpful to other Mentors in the program.

VII. Volunteer Mentor Criteria

- Be a veteran of one of the branches of the United States Military, including the Army, Marine Corp, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Reserve or National Guard. The volunteer must have an Honorable Discharge and provide a DD 214 indicating this.
- Go through the Mentoring vetting process (background check)
- Adhere to all of the Lancaster County Veterans Court Mentor Program policies and procedures
- Commit to program participation for a minimum of one year.
- Participate in the initial training necessary to become a Veteran Mentor, and any additional trainings required during the program commitment.
- Be able to dedicate 2 hours per month to one Veterans Court Team and Court session, and at least one hour per week to the participants of Veterans Court
- Be a willing listener
- Be encouraging and supportive
- Be tolerant and respectful of individual differences

VIII. Training of volunteers: All mentors must complete the required initial training procedures. This procedure will include:

- Observe several court sessions

- Shadow three mentoring sessions with three different mentors (*the initial mentor volunteers will be trained by current mentors in Buffalo, New York, the first Veterans Court in the United States.)
- Lead three mentoring sessions while being observed
- Discuss lead mentoring sessions and observation forms
- Complete individual supervision with the Mentor Coordinator

IX. Remuneration: The positions of mentor and mentor coordinator are both strictly volunteer and are unpaid. Expenses related to the Veterans Court may be paid as authorized by the President Judge.

**For questions regarding the Mentoring program, please email:

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