

Veteran Mentor Handbook

We Continue to Serve



Fairfax Veterans Treatment Docket

General District Court

4110 Chain Bridge Road

Room 210

Fairfax, Va 22030

21 Dec 2014

MISSION

In recognition of the toll on Veterans that accompanies military service, the mission of the Fairfax County Veterans Treatment Docket is to serve the community and increase public safety by integrating and incorporating a coordinated treatment response for justice-involved Veterans with substance abuse and/or mental health issues with the goal of returning productive, law-abiding citizens thereby reducing recidivism and criminal justice costs.

WELCOME TO AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP CHANGE THE LIVES OF VETERANS

Nationally, there are nearly 200 Veterans Treatment Courts. The first of these courts formed in 2008 in Buffalo, New York and have been increasing in number at a steady pace since then. The record since then has demonstrated that the treatment approach, rather than a punitive approach, is highly effective when resolving the criminal justice issues of veterans who are suffering from mental health, substance abuse, unemployment, homelessness and other issues.

Fairfax County is the first jurisdiction in the Commonwealth of Virginia to organize one of these treatment programs. Known in Virginia as a "Docket" it will fulfill the same purposes as the courts in other states. When we are speaking of the larger effort we may sometimes refer to "Veterans Treatment Courts".

WHY A SPECIAL DOCKET FOR VETERANS?

Veterans are a unique population with unique needs. Service members have many shared experiences not shared with those who have not served and worn the uniform. Service members and their families experience unique stressors as part of military life unknown in the wider community. The well-known expression that only 1% of our citizenry serve in the armed forces clearly suggests that veterans and their families form a very unique group.

With *treatment* as the operative word, the resources of the criminal justice system are pooled to provide the care needed to provide a path for the offending veteran to return to society and family as a productive person.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Fairfax County Veteran's Treatment Docket is a jail diversionary program for offenders diagnosed with a legitimate mental illness and/or Substance Abuse. Offenders are referred to the program by, but not limited to, Police Officers, District Justices, Attorneys, Probation Officers, Case Workers, Treatment Providers, The Fairfax County Behavioral Health Administration, and Judges. The treatment team consisting of the Fairfax County Veteran's Treatment Court Coordinator, a Veterans Affairs Justice Outreach (VJO) Specialist, Veterans Affairs, local providers, a representative from the District Attorney's office, Case Managers, and the Fairfax County Behavioral Health Administration evaluates the appropriateness of the referrals and then the offenders are either accepted into Veteran's Treatment Court or referred back to the criminal justice system. In order for an offender to participate in Veteran's Treatment Court, he or she will be required to enter a guilty plea to the offense with which they are charged.

Once an offender is placed into the Veteran's Treatment Docket, the Veteran will be linked with all necessary services and assigned a specialized mental health Probation Officer through Fairfax County Adult Probation. The Adult Probation Officer is responsible for monitoring offender compliance with the court system while the VJO is responsible for assisting offenders in accessing necessary services and providing advocacy as needed.

Phase I Orientation

The treatment plan will be developed the Veteran and the Treatment Team to select personal achievement goals in addition to the treatment plan., such as achieving a GED, vocational or educational counseling, anger management, parenting skills, etc.

Phase 2 Stabilization

The treatment plan will be updated by the Veteran and the counselor to identify goals and objectives. Counseling and meetings will focus on areas that are challenging and identifying ways to cope with stressful situations.

Phase 3 Community Re-integration

The on-going recovery will be assessed , including maintaining total abstinence from all drugs. This phase focuses on daily living skills and is designed to support the Veteran returning to the family and the community. Veterans will submit a request to graduate.

The Mentor as Tutor

In Phase 3 the Veteran Mentor may be of assistance to the Veteran as a resource in the writing of the graduation application. Assisting the Veteran with clarity of thought, writing skills and composition may reduce stressors associated with this key component of Phase 3.

10 KEY COMPONENTS OF VETERAN'S TREATMENT DOCKET

Key Component #1: Veterans Treatment Docket integrates alcohol, drug treatment, and mental health services with justice system case processing.

Fairfax County Veterans Treatment Docket promotes sobriety and assistance in receiving the necessary substance abuse services and mental health services. The Docket will work with the local Veteran's Outpatient Clinic in regards to assessing and receiving the necessary substance abuse and mental health services, as well as case management services if deemed necessary.

Key Component #2: Using a non-adversarial approach, prosecution and defense counsel promote public safety while protecting participants' due process rights.

Fairfax County's legal community will work in conjunction with one another to assist our Veterans in progressing through the court process as well as impacting the likelihood for consistent and long-term legal compliance.

Key Component #3: Eligible participants are identified early and promptly placed in the Veterans Treatment Docket program.

Early identification of veterans entering the criminal justice system is an integral part of the process of placement in the Veterans Treatment Docket program. Individuals ranging from our local police force to our defense attorneys will screen for military experience in order to refer eligible individuals to the Veteran's Treatment Docket.

Key Component #4: Veterans Treatment Docket provides access to a continuum of alcohol, drug, mental health and other related treatment and rehabilitation services.

While initial focus is on mental illness and substance abuse, the Veterans Treatment Docket Treatment Team will assist participants in obtaining all services necessary and addressing any other needs. These include, but are not limited to, employment, education, medical needs, financial needs, housing, and social supports.

Key Component #5: Abstinence is monitored by frequent alcohol and other drug testing.

Veterans Treatment Docket participants will be subject to random drug screens throughout the program to ensure compliance with program rules and assist in rehabilitation.

Key Component #6: A coordinated strategy governs Veterans Treatment Docket responses to participants' compliance.

A veteran's progress through the treatment court is measured by his or her compliance with their individualized treatment plan developed by Treatment Team. The Treatment Team will coordinate and communicate regarding participant compliance and / or treatment plan change.

Key Component #7: Ongoing judicial interaction with each Veteran is essential.

The judge is the leader of the Veterans Treatment Docket Team. This active, supervising relationship, maintained throughout treatment, increases the likelihood that a veteran will remain in treatment and improves the chances for sobriety and law-abiding behavior. Ongoing judicial supervision also communicates to veterans that someone in authority cares about them and is closely watching what they do.

Key Component #8: Monitoring and evaluation measures the achievement of program goals and gauge effectiveness.

Data will be collected and monitored regarding the Veteran's Treatment Docket progress. The Fairfax County Treatment Docket Team Committee will hold monthly meetings to assess data and discuss any changes that may need to occur to encourage program success and growth.

Key Component #9: Continuing interdisciplinary education promotes effective Veterans Treatment Docket planning, implementation, and operations.

All Veterans Treatment Docket staff will participate in any available educational opportunities that help them to further provide quality service to the Docket participants. These include training opportunities from any accredited institution as well as the local Veterans Affairs office.

Key Component #10: Forging partnerships among Veterans Treatment Docket, Veterans Administration, public agencies, and community-based organizations generates local support and enhances Veteran Treatment Docket effectiveness.

The Veterans Treatment Docket Coordinator will be responsible for providing community outreach in order to coordinate with other local entities. This includes publishing data, conducting educational presentations, attending local events, and communicating the overall success of the program. Linking with local community based organizations is a vital aspect of the program.

*Excerpted from "Defining Drug Courts; The Key Components" published by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals; The Drug Court Standards Committee.

GOALS OF THE VETERAN MENTOR PROGRAM

To the best of our abilities...

- 1– Help our fellow Veterans receive the services they need to reach their full potential as productive members of society.
- 2– Help our fellow Veterans navigate the court system, treatment system, and VA system.
- 3– Become aware of the needs of our fellow Veterans and help them adjust to civilian life.

WHAT THE MENTOR PROGRAM IS ABOUT

The Fairfax Veterans Treatment Docket relies on cooperation and collaboration between the criminal justice system, the Department of Veteran Affairs, as well as community treatment agencies to provide comprehensive treatment for veterans. In addition to these entities, the Docket relies heavily on the Veteran Mentors, honorably discharged veterans of the Armed Forces who volunteer their services to the Court. As part of the Docket Team, Mentors provide advice, personal experiences, recommendations and guidance to the Veterans involved with the legal system. Many of the Mentors are drawn from the membership of **Veteran Service Organizations** and government organizations. The experiences of military service provide peer-to-peer opportunities for conversation, understanding and bonding.

While in the courtroom, a Mentor is assigned to a Veteran appearing before the Judge and discusses any on-going problems or issues of interest to the Veteran. This relationship fosters and promotes, through encouragement, a **Can Do** attitude in the Veteran; 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 entire Docket Team are parts of the solution and not obstacles.

Experience in established Veterans Treatment Courts has shown that veterans respond more favorably to other veterans who have served and have similar experiences, and will talk more comfortably with a fellow veteran who has volunteered to serve as a Mentor.

The conversation and interaction between Veteran and Mentor are on the peer-to-peer level rather than one person possessing authority over another. The change in demeanor in the Veteran becomes an opportunity to make a profound impact while the treatment program progresses. Active and supportive relationships, maintained throughout treatment will increase the likelihood that a Veteran would remain in treatment and improve the chances of sobriety and law-abiding behavior.

THE VETERAN MENTOR COORDINATOR

The Coordinator is to recruit, train, supervise, and coordinate Veteran Mentors. The Coordinator is also responsible for individual and group supervision and scheduling Mentors to be present during the Docket. The Coordinator works with the Docket Team, the Docket Coordinator, and the Judge.

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VETERAN MENTORS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Specialty Courts have been in operation for decades. The first drug treatment court was formed in 1989 in Miami-Dade County, Florida, and mental health treatment courts have also been established. Nationally, Veterans Treatment Courts make use of one of the unique aspects of military life: **comradeship**. Veteran Mentors are the means to create a bond between the offender veteran and another veteran. This non-adversarial bond can open a line of communication between the two veterans.

Bookmark JusticeforVets.org and learn what Mentors are offering!

Justice for Vets Conference July 27-30, 2015 Washington, DC

PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE FAIRFAX VETERAN MENTOR PROGRAM (to be created in class)

VETERAN MENTORS

The Veteran Mentor acts as a coach, guide, role model, advocate, and a support for the Veteran during the treatment program. This includes listening to the concerns of the Veteran and making general suggestions, assisting the Veteran to determine needs, and acting as a support for the Veteran, especially when the Veteran may feel isolation.

The Veteran Mentor is not a therapist, counselor, treatment provider, legal advisor, probation officer, or judge. It is important to stay between the lines.

REQUIREMENTS FOR VETERAN MENTORS

- 1– Be an Honorably Discharged Veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States; active, reserve or National Guard.
- 2– Have a genuine concern for veterans in the criminal justice system.
- 3– Be in good standing with the law and pass a background investigation.
- 4– Submit a copy of the most recent DD-214.
- 5– Commit to participate for a minimum of 6 months.
- 6– Participate in required training.

VETERAN MENTOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1– Attend Court sessions when scheduled.
- 2– Participate in and lead mentoring sessions with Veterans when assigned by the Judge.
- 3– Be supportive and understanding of the difficulties other Veterans are facing.
- 4– Assist Veterans as much as possible to resolve their concerns about the Court procedures.
- 5– Assist Veterans to access and navigate the Veterans Affairs system.
- 6– Be supportive and helpful to other Veteran Mentors.
- 7– Maintain required records of mentoring contacts and sessions.
- 8– Be aware of and maintain required privacy and confidentiality.

DESIRABLE QUALITIES OF A VETERAN MENTOR

- 1– Active listener
- 2– Empathic
- 3– Encouraging and supportive
- 4– Respectful of individual differences
- 5– Develop a growing knowledge of Veteran Affairs services
- 6– Develop a growing knowledge of community resources and services

MENTOR PROGRAM POLICES AND PROCEDURES

Recruitment Policy

The Veteran Mentor Coordinator assumes the majority responsibility for recruiting new Mentors. The Fairfax Veterans Treatment Docket Team, its collaborative partners, and current Veteran Mentors are strongly encouraged to refer highly respected and reputable veterans to the Veteran Mentors Program.

Additionally, Docket Team members and Veteran Mentors are strongly encouraged to host and attend information sessions and training for prospective Mentors, community groups, veterans service organizations, and the community at large.

Inquiry Policy

All enquiries about the Veteran Mentor Program and potential service as a Mentor will be directed to the Veteran Mentor Coordinator.

Eligibility Policy

Each applicant for service as a Veteran Mentor shall meet the criteria outlined in this handbook. Extenuating circumstances may be reviewed at the discretion of the Veteran Mentor Coordinator. Unusual or negative circumstances may be submitted to the Judge for review.

KNOWLEDGE OF A PROSPECTIVE MENTOR'S NEGATIVE HISTORY

Currently serving Veteran Mentors with knowledge of a prospective Mentor's history or background that may jeopardize the integrity of the Veteran Mentor Program, the Court, or the Veterans in the treatment docket must communicate that knowledge or concerns to the Mentor Coordinator, the Docket Coordinator or the Judge.

SCREENING POLICY

Each prospective Veteran Mentor must complete the screening process; the Mentor Coordinator is responsible for this process. The decision to accept to reject an applicant will be made by the Mentor Coordinator, the Docket Coordinator, and the Judge. The right to withhold or provide feedback to any applicant is solely at the discretion of the Mentor Coordinator, Docket Coordinator, and the Judge.

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

- 1– Completing a written application form
- 2– Completing a personal interview by the Mentor Coordinator.
- 3– A positive background investigation from the Fairfax County Sheriff's Department

TRAINING POLICY

Training is crucial and necessary for Veteran Mentors. All prospective Mentors must complete the required initial training or they will not be permitted to mentor during Docket proceedings. The training will include but not be limited to:

- 1– Observe at least two Docket sessions.
- 2– Shadow two mentoring sessions with two different mentors
- 3– Lead three mentoring sessions while being observed by the Mentor Coordinator or a qualified Mentor appointed by the Mentor Coordinator.
- 4– Complete the **Veterans File Cover Sheet** and **Veteran Contact Log** forms.
- 5– Discuss the mentoring sessions experience with the Mentor Coordinator.
- 6– Complete individual supervision with the Mentor Coordinator or a designated Mentor.

ASSIGNMENT POLICY

The Veteran Mentor Coordinator will assign Veteran Mentors to a Veteran at each Docket appearance. As particular Mentors may not be available at each session, the Mentor Coordinator will assign an available Mentor to the Veteran for that session. Whenever possible the Mentor Coordinator will assign Mentors based on the following criteria:

- 1– Previous sessions where that Mentor was assigned to a particular Veteran.
- 2– Same branch of service.
- 3– Same era, war or campaign.
- 4– Similar military specialties.
- 5– Specific skills of a Veteran Mentor that will benefit the Veteran
- 6– Similar age, gender or ethnicity.
- 7– Assigning a woman Mentor to a woman Veteran may facilitate discussion of traumatic experiences such as Military Sexual Trauma.

Assignment decisions may also take into account the requests of the Mentor or the Veteran. The Veteran Mentor Coordinator reserves the authority to assign a particular Mentor to a particular Veteran.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Opportunities for learning experiences will be scheduled and all Veteran Mentors are encouraged to participate. Periodic group meetings will be available for the Veteran Mentors to discuss their learning experiences.

DOCUMENTATION AND RECORD KEEPING POLICY

The Veteran Mentor Coordinator will provide a binder for the mentoring records of each Veteran and is the Custodian of the records. When the Docket is not in session the binder will be secured in a locked container in the locked room assigned to the Veteran Mentors Program. Keys will be maintained by the Veteran Mentor Coordinator.

- 1– Veteran Mentor Program records and documentation are required for the success of the Program, are mandatory, and are confidential.
- 2– When the Veteran appears at the initial Docket session, the **Veterans File Cover Sheet** form will be completed and filed in the binder.
- 3– During Docket proceedings, each contact between the Mentor and the Veteran will be documented by the Mentor on the **Veteran Contact Log** form in the binder.
- 4– Telephone numbers, email addresses and home addresses will be verified or updated at each Docket appearance.
- 5– Outside of the courtroom contact between Mentor and Veteran will be documented on the **Veteran Contact Log** as soon as possible, but prior to the next scheduled appearance of the Veteran before the Judge.

These contacts may include telephone calls, text messages, emails, meetings for coffee, or impromptu meetings.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Confidentiality is an essential part of successful mentoring. Veterans need to know their sessions with a Mentor are highly secure and confidential. Veteran Mentor training will include a mandatory confidentiality component.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR POLICY

Unacceptable behaviors will not be tolerated while a Veteran is participating in the treatment program. Because of the direct impact a Veteran Mentor has on the Veteran, behaviors that are in conflict with the mission, vision, goals and values of the Fairfax Veterans Treatment Docket are unacceptable and prohibited during the entire time the Veteran is participating in the Treatment Program.

RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

- 1– Upon completion of Mentor training and acceptance into service as a Veteran Mentor an appropriate certificate will be presented to the Mentor.
- 2– An annual event will be scheduled to recognize the service of Mentors.

VETERAN MENTOR APPLICATION AND TRAINING CHECKLIST

NAME _____ LAST FOUR _____

APPLICATION

- ☐ Application received _____
- ☐ DD214 received _____
- ☐ Interview _____
- ☐ Background form received _____
- ☐ Background submitted _____ completed _____

TRAINING

- ☐ Initial training _____
- ☐ Observe 2 Docket sessions _____ and _____
- ☐ Shadow 2 mentoring sessions _____ and _____
- ☐ Lead 3 observed mentoring sessions _____, _____ and _____
- ☐ Complete the **Veterans File Cover Sheet** and **Veterans Contact Log** forms
- ☐ Discuss the mentoring sessions experience with the Mentor Coordinator _____
- ☐ Required training completed _____
- ☐ Certificate presented _____

- ☐ Justice for Vets Mentor Bootcamp _____

Remarks _____

Continuing Education _____

VETERAN MENTOR PROGRAM FUNDING AND REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

The Veteran Mentor Coordinator is responsible for program funds.; the Docket Coordinator will periodically review the fund records.

1- Funds to support the Veteran Mentors Program will be accepted from Veterans Service Organizations, community groups, and individuals. Grants, large donations or special funding opportunities will be explored.

2- Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8469, Fairfax Station, Va, will receive funds on behalf of the Veterans Mentor Program, maintain the funds as separate and designated funds, and issue checks on those funds as requested by the Veterans Mentor Coordinator.

3- For reimbursement of expenses or direct purchase of items, the **Request for Funds** form will be completed, approved and signed, then submitted to the Quartermaster of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8469.

Veteran Mentor Program Funds may be used for necessary expenses of the Program. Some examples are:

1- Transportation expenses, Metro passes

2- Parking expenses

3- Rent or utilities assistance; these types of assistance will only be by vote of the Veteran Mentors when the Veteran submits an unpaid bill, and a check would be cut to the billing agency.

4- Clothing necessary for employment interviews or actual employment.

5- Health and welfare of family members.

6- Expenses for items deemed necessary for the operation of the Mentor Program.

Display of Colors in Court Room 1E

The Veteran Mentors are entrusted with the care and display of the Colors.

The military Colors are stored in the Docket Coordinator's Office, Room 105.2.

While not on display the Colors will be cased.

Colors should be in place by 1:30pm, 30 minutes prior to start of docket and returned to Room 105.2 at close of session.

The US National and Virginia colors remain in Court Room 1E.

The military Colors are displayed, according to established precedence, centered on the shelf behind the Judge.

The lower part of the staff is unscrewed from the brass ferrule and not used.

The gold colored bases are placed on the shelf and the ferrules of the staffs are inserted into the bases.

The Colors are draped and arranged to present a formal and dignified display.



US National



Virginia



Army 17 June 1775



Marine Corps 10 Nov 1775



Navy 7 Sep 1781

(13 Oct 1775)



Air Force 18 Sep 1947



Coast Guard 4 Aug 1790

Judge

