

Charleston County Veterans Treatment Court



MENTOR GUIDE

Edition 1.2 Revised September 2018

Mentor Program Mission Statement

The Mission of the Veteran's Mentoring Program is to make certain to the best of our abilities that no veteran is left behind. We will find them, offer them assistance, assess their needs, and help them solve their problems. We will support the veteran through their readjustment to civilian life, assist the veteran in navigating through the court, treatment, and VA systems, and act as a mentor, advocate and ally.

Mentor Program Goals

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

The Mentor Program

The Charleston County 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 or qualified active duty personnel of the U.S. Armed Forces who volunteer their time to assist the Court. Veteran Mentors provide advice, personal experiences, recommendations and guidance to veterans. Many of our Veteran Mentors are drawn from a number of veterans service organizations, the Charleston 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; 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.

Experience with the Charleston County Drug Court and the Charleston County Mental Health Court has shown that veterans respond more favorably to other veterans who have served and share similar experiences. Observations have shown that veterans are more comfortable when talking with a fellow veteran.

The conversation and interactions between the Veteran Mentor and Veteran Participant are on the level of peers rather than from 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. Based on these observations it became clear that Veteran Mentors would be an essential part of the Charleston County Veterans Treatment Court. We anticipated that the active and supportive relationships maintained throughout treatment would increase the likelihood that a veteran would remain in treatment and improve their chances of maintaining sobriety and law-abiding behavior.

Veteran Mentor Coordinator

The Mentor Coordinator is essential in maintaining the success of the Charleston County Veterans Treatment Court Veteran Mentor Program. The Mentor Coordinator is responsible for recruiting prospective mentors, screening candidates, selecting Veteran Mentors, and educating them about the Charleston County Veterans Treatment Court. 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 also coordinate all activities with the Court team staff, Court Coordinator, and the Judge.

Veteran Mentor Coordinator Duties and Responsibilities

- Recruit and train volunteer Charleston County Veteran 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 Program Director and the Judge
- Sustain and evolve the Veteran Mentor Program

Charleston County Veterans Court Veteran Mentor Coordinator Contact Information

Name: _____

Work: _____

Email: _____

Please contact the Mentor Coordinator with any questions, comments, or peer mentor referrals.

Veteran Mentor Role Description

The Veteran Mentor acts as a coach, a guide, a role model, an advocate, and a support 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 and making general suggestions, assisting the veteran in determining their needs, and acting as a support for the veteran, especially when a veteran participant may be feeling isolated.

Veteran Mentor Duties and Responsibilities

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

Veteran Mentor Eligibility Requirements

- Have a genuine concern for veterans in the legal system
- Be in good standing with the law.
- A veteran or qualified active duty personnel of 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 branches. The veteran Mentor must have an Honorable Discharge.
- Agree to adhere to all of the Charleston County Veterans Treatment Court program's policies and procedures and its Mentoring Program.
- Commit to participation for a minimum of (1) year or until Charleston County Veterans Treatment Court participant graduates.
- Complete the required Mentor Orientation Program and any training as specified by the court prior to participation in the Charleston County Veterans Treatment Court.
- Participate in any required additional training as required by the Charleston County Veterans Treatment Court.

- Complete and file the application form with the VTC Mentor Coordinator and complete the screening process.
- Complete and sign the CCVTC Mentor Contract.
- Do not engage in any drug use, alcohol use, sexual activities or any other unlawful activities with the Charleston County Veterans Treatment Court participants.
- Have a complete understanding of the CCVTC Mentor Duties and Responsibilities.

For more veteran mentor information or an application, please contact the Charleston County Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator or the Program Coordinator.

Recruitment Policy

The Charleston County Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator assumes the majority of the responsibility for recruiting new mentors. The Charleston County Veterans Treatment Court team, its collaborative partners and current Veteran Mentors are strongly encouraged to refer highly respectable and reputable veterans to the Charleston County 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 perspective mentors.

Inquiry Policy

All inquiries about participating as a Veteran Mentor will be directed to the Charleston County Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator. The Charleston County 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 section “Veteran Mentor Requirements” to participate in the program. Extenuating circumstances may be reviewed at the discretion of the Charleston County 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 Charleston County Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Program, the Court, and the veteran participants must communicate their knowledge or concerns to the Charleston County Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator, the Program Coordinator, or the Judge.

Screening Policy

Each prospective Veteran Mentor must complete a screening process conducted by the Charleston County Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator. The decision to accept or deny an applicant will be made by the Mentor Coordinator, the Program Coordinator, 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 Charleston County Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator, Program Coordinator, and 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 Mentors and 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 not be limited to the following:

- Observe several court sessions
- Discuss the experience of observing the 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 Charleston County 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 Charleston County Veterans Treatment Court. The Charleston County Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator is responsible for planning and implementing recognition activities.

How to apply to become a Mentor in the Charleston County Veterans Treatment Court Program

Contact CCVTC Mentor Coordinator to receive an application or the Program Coordinator.

hsellers@charlestoncounty.org
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Charleston County Probate Court
100 Broad Street, Suite 469
Charleston, SC 29401
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