



RI Veterans Treatment Court Veteran Mentor Program

MENTOR GUIDE

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Mission Statement of the RI Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Program

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

Goals of the RI Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Program

To act as an ally and friend and help the veterans lead a law-abiding lifestyle as well as successfully address any mental health and/or substance related issues she/he may be presently experiencing that is adversely impacting their quality of life.

The RI Veterans Treatment Court Veterans Mentor Program

The RI Veterans Treatment Court relies on cooperation and collaboration among the criminal justice system, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, veterans service organizations, and local 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 the Court. Veteran Mentors provide advice, personal experiences, moral support and guidance to veterans. Many of our Veteran Mentors are drawn from a number of veterans service organizations, the RI community and government organizations. Veteran Mentors include but are not limited to those who have served in peacetime, Vietnam, Desert Storm/Shield, pre-911 operations, 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.

Nationwide, Veteran Treatment Courts have shown that veterans respond more favorably to other veterans who have served and share similar experiences. Anecdotal evidence suggests that veterans are more comfortable when talking with fellow veterans.

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 RI 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 RI 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 RI 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 RI 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 VTC Coordinator and the Judge
- Sustain and evolve the Veteran Mentor Program

RI Veterans Court Veteran Mentor Coordinator Contact Information

COL (Ret) Bill Babcock

Work: 401-524-4664

Email: babbie1@cox.net

Please feel free to contact Bill with any questions, comments, or 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 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, or their corresponding Reserve and Guard branches.
- Adhere to all of the RI Veterans Treatment Court program's policies and procedures.
- Commit to participation for a minimum of (1) year or until RI Veterans Treatment Court participant graduates.
- Complete the required initial training as specified by the court prior to participation in the RI Veterans Treatment Court.
- Participate in any required additional training as required by the RI 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 unlawful activities with participants.
- Notify RI Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator, Bill Babcock, if the RI Veterans Treatment Court 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

For more veteran mentor information or an application, please contact the RI Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator, Bill Babcock at 401-524-4664.

Recruitment Policy

The RI Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator assumes the majority of the responsibility for recruiting new mentors. The RI Veterans Treatment Court team, its collaborative partners and current Veteran Mentors are strongly encouraged to refer highly respectable and reputable veterans to the RI 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 RI Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator, who 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 RI Veterans Treatment Court Mentor and Resource 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 RI Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Program, the Court, and/or the veteran participants must communicate their knowledge or concerns to the RI Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator, the Program Director, or the Judge.

Screening Policy

Each prospective Veteran Mentor must complete a screening process conducted by the RI Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator. The decision to accept or deny an applicant will be made by the RI Veterans Treatment Court Mentor and Resource Coordinator, the RI Veterans Treatment Court Mentor 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 RI Veterans Treatment Court Mentor, Program Director, 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 RI 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 RI Veterans Treatment Court. The RI Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Coordinator and Program Coordinator are responsible for planning and implementing recognition activities.