



ELIGIBILITY POLICY

Each veteran mentor must meet the eligibility criteria to participate in the program. Extenuating circumstances may be reviewed at the discretion of the Veteran Mentor Coordinator (VMC).

TRAINING POLICY

All prospective mentors must complete the required initial training or they will not be able to mentor during court proceedings. Training may include but not be limited to the following (the first wave of mentors may have different training):

1. Observe several court sessions
2. Shadow three mentoring sessions with three different mentors
3. Lead three mentoring sessions while being observed
4. Complete observation forms
5. Discuss experiences leading the mentoring sessions
6. Complete individual supervision with the VMC

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Confidentiality is an essential piece of successful mentoring. Veteran participants need to know that their testimony and their mentoring session with a mentor is highly secured and confidential. Veteran mentor training will include a mandatory confidentiality workshop.

CONTACT INFORMATION

MENTOR COORDINATOR
TSGT. JOHN PLEASANTS
PHONE: 540-491-3561
EMAIL: ctadjp1@ocnjcc.org

REQUEST FOR ACCOMMODATIONS BY PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceedings, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance use.

PLEASE CONTACT
Court Administration
Orange County Courthouse
425 North Orange Avenue, Suite 510
Orlando, Florida 32801

ADA phone: (407) 836-2303
If you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.

NINTH
Judicial Circuit Court
OF FLORIDA

425 NORTH ORANGE AVENUE, SUITE 510
ORLANDO, FLORIDA 32801
407-836-0651
WWW.NINTHCIRUIT.ORG

ORANGE COUNTY VETERANS TREATMENT COURT MENTOR PROGRAM



The Mission of the Orange County Veterans Mentor Program is to make certain to the best of our abilities that no one is left behind. We will support the veteran through their readjustment to civilian life, court process, and treatment plan. We will ensure that every participant veteran has a fellow veteran to act as a mentor, advocate, and ally.

MENTOR COMPONENT

An essential component of the Veterans Treatment Court program is the mentor program. This is where veteran mentors act as peer support to veteran participants. Veterans are better served by having a support system that includes fellow veterans who understand combat experience and the different aspects of military service. Mentors participate in a supportive relationship with participants to increase the likelihood that they will remain in treatment, attain and manage sobriety, maintain law-abiding behavior and successfully readjust to civilian life.

The mentor program consists of mentor coordinators and veteran mentors. Their roles, responsibilities, requirements and qualifications are discussed in the Eligibility Policy and Requirements and Qualifications for Veteran Mentors.

REQUIREMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS FOR VETERAN MENTOR

Each prospective mentor must complete the screening process. The VMC is responsible for conducting the screening process. The decision to accept or deny an applicant will be made by the VMC based on the process and criteria set forth in this handbook. 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 VMC.

The veteran mentor screening procedure will include, but not be limited to:

- Complete a written application form (including DD214/215)
- Pass a background check
- Not be an active employee of the Ninth Judicial Circuit Court, an active member of law enforcement, or a member of any organization that may present a conflict of interest with the mentor program
- Commit to working with the veteran through graduation (6 to 18 months)
- Complete a personal interview

RESPONSIBILITIES OF VETERAN MENTORS

The following responsibilities should be carried out by veteran mentors:

- Attend relevant training programs
- Communicate with the VMC regarding any issues
- Update mentor logs
- Maintain confidentiality
- Maintain appropriate boundaries with participants
- Be respectful and always speak with a positive tone
- Be respectful of individual differences
- Share personal experiences
- Promote and foster "can do" attitude
- Listen
- Be supportive and understanding
- Help motivate veteran to accomplish goals in treatment

While meeting with participants, mentors **MUST NOT**:

- Make clinical recommendations
- Give legal advice
- Provide psychotherapy
- Utilize a stern approach
- Inappropriately extend the boundaries of their relationship – no borrowing or lending of money, no sexual relationships, no drinking or drugs, and no unlawful activities
- Discourage participants from

HISTORY OF ORANGE COUNTY VTC

In August of 2013, Veterans Treatment Court in Orange County was established. Orange County Judge Jerry Brewer, working with State Attorney Jeff Ashton, laid the foundation for VTC. Orange County VTC held its initial session on October 30, 2013, with seven veterans, and graduated its first veteran on June 25, 2014.

ORANGE COUNTY VTC IS A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Ninth Judicial Circuit Court
- State Attorney's Office
- Public Defender's Office
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- Orange County Veterans Services Office
- Orange County Correction Services
- Orange County Bar Association Members
- State Probation
- Central Florida Safety Council

