

**Twin Falls County
Veterans Treatment Court
Mentor Program Handbook**

Mission Statement

The mission of the Veterans Treatment Court Mentoring Program is for veterans to serve as mentors to fellow veterans who have entered the court system for various unlawful reasons. These veteran mentors will provide a trusted individual the veteran offender can relate to and confide in to help support the veteran through their readjustment to a productive civilian life. The veteran mentor will act as a mentor, advocate and ally thereby restoring their sense of camaraderie and promoting the successful completion of their program.

The Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court Veterans Mentor Program

The Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court relies on cooperation and collaboration among the criminal justice system, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, veteran 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 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 veteran service organizations, the Twin Falls County 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 he or she is not alone and knows the mentor and the court are there for them.

Experience has shown that veterans are more likely to respond more favorably with another veteran than with others who do not have similar experiences. It appears that when a veteran, who has found his/her way into the courts, is talking to another veteran, he/she would be more relaxed and less tense about their situation. It appears that these conversations between veterans are more on the level of peers rather than from a position of authority or professionalism.

This change in demeanor is seen as an opportunity to make a deeper impact on the lives of the veterans that come into the courts. Based on these observations it appears clear that peer mentors are an essential addition to the Veterans Treatment Court team. It is anticipated that their active, supportive relationship, maintained throughout treatment will increase the likelihood that a veteran will remain in treatment and improve his/her chances for sobriety and law-abiding behavior.

Mentoring Program Duties and Responsibilities

Veteran Mentor Coordinator

Essential to the coordination, maintenance and success of the mentoring program is the mentoring coordinator. The role of the Veteran Mentor Coordinator is to recruit, train, supervise, and coordinate mentors within the Veterans Treatment Court program.

The Veteran Mentor Coordinator is responsible for recruiting potential mentors, screening candidates, and selecting individuals to become Veterans Treatment Court Peer Mentors. The Veteran Mentor Coordinator will be responsible for training selected candidates in skills to facilitate a mentoring session and skills specific to the Veterans Treatment Court Program. The Veteran Mentor Coordinator will also be responsible for individual and group supervision as well as scheduling mentors to be present during the Veterans Treatment Court proceedings. The Veteran Mentor Coordinator must also coordinate all activities with the Judge and the Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- 1) Recruit and train volunteer Veterans Treatment Court Peer Mentors.
- 2) Assist in the retention of volunteer mentors.
- 3) Organize and conduct training for volunteer mentors.
- 4) Assist in supervision of mentors.
- 5) Assist in the development of specialized training projects for the program.
- 6) Perform duties as assigned by the Program Director and the Judge.
- 7) Sustain and evolve the Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Program

Veterans Treatment Court Peer Mentor

The role of the Veterans Treatment Court Peer Mentor is to act as a coach, a guide, a role model, an advocate, and a support for the individuals he/she is working with. The mentor is intended to encourage, guide, and support the veteran participant as he/she progresses through the court process. This will include listening to the concerns of the veteran participant and making general suggestions, assisting the participant in determining what their needs are and supporting the veteran participant at a time when they may feel alone in a way that only another veteran can understand.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- 1) Meet with the veteran participant once a week for at least one hour.
- 2) Attend court sessions when scheduled.
- 3) Participate in and lead mentoring sessions with veteran participants when assigned by the Judge.
- 4) Show compassion and be understanding of the difficulties veteran participants face.
- 5) Assist the veteran participants as much as possible to resolve his/her concerns around the court procedures as well as interactions with the Veterans Affairs system.
- 6) Be supportive and helpful to the other mentors within the program.

Requirements:

- 1) Have a genuine concern for veterans in the legal system.
- 2) Be in good standing with the law.
- 3) Be a veteran of one of the branches of the United States Military, including the Army, Marine Corp, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, or their corresponding Reserve or Guard branches.
- 4) Adhere to all of the Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court Program policies and procedures.
- 5) Commit to program participation for a minimum of (1) year or until the Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court participant graduates.
- 6) Complete required training, as specified by the court, prior to participation in the Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Program.
- 7) Participate in any required additional training as required by the Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court.
- 8) Visit with the Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court participant(s) for at least one (1) hour each week.
- 9) Do not engage in any drug use, alcohol use, sexual activities or any other unlawful activities with the Ada County Veterans Treatment Court participant(s).
- 10) Notify the Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator if the Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court participant becomes suicidal, wants to harm others, or engages in unlawful activities.

Desirable Qualities:

- 1) Active listener.
- 2) Empathetic.
- 3) Encouraging and supportive.
- 4) Tolerant and respectful of individual differences.
- 5) Knowledge of community resources and services.

Mentoring Program Policies

Recruitment Policy

The Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator assumes the majority of the responsibility for recruiting new mentors. The Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court team, its collaborative partners and current veteran mentors are strongly encouraged to refer highly respectable and reputable veterans to the Twin Falls 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 concerning participation in the mentoring program, outside of an informational session or sharing the application and information sheet are directed to the Veteran Mentor Coordinator. It will be the responsibility of the Veteran Mentor Coordinator to contact any prospective mentors.

Eligibility Policy

Each mentor must meet the eligibility criteria in order to participate in the program. Extenuating circumstances may be reviewed at the discretion of the Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator.

Screening Policy

Each potential Veterans Treatment Court Peer Mentor must complete the screening procedure. The Veteran Mentor Coordinator will be responsible for walking each applicant through the screening procedure. This procedure will include completing a written application form and a personal interview.

The Mentor Coordinator will submit background check authorizations for applicants to the Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator for a check of Idaho State records. The decision to accept or reject an applicant will be made by the Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator, the Judge, and the Veterans Treatment Court team members. Any and all records will be kept confidential and maintained by the Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator.

The Veterans Treatment Court Peer Mentor screening procedure will include, but not be limited to:

- 1) Completing a written application form.
- 2) Completing a personal interview.
- 3) Completing a background check.

Training Policy

All Veterans Treatment Court Peer Mentors must complete the required initial training procedures.

This procedure will include:

- 1) Observe several court session.
- 2) Shadow three mentoring sessions with three different mentors.
- 3) Lead three mentoring sessions while being observed.
- 4) Discuss/lead mentoring sessions and observation forms.
- 5) Complete individual supervision with the Veteran Mentor Coordinator.

Matching Policy

The Veteran Mentor Coordinator will match Veterans Treatment Court Peer Mentors and veteran participants at each court appearance. As mentors are not always present at each court session the Veteran Mentor Coordinator will have to match the available Veterans Treatment Court Peer Mentors with the veteran participants in need.

Whenever possible the Veteran Mentor Coordinator will make matches based on the following criteria:

- 1) Combat or non-combat experience.
- 2) Male for male and female for female.
- 3) Branch of service.
- 4) Specific skill of a peer mentor matched to the need of a participant.
- 5) Similar age/gender/ethnicity

The Veteran Mentor Coordinator will also take into consideration the requests of the peer mentors and participants, alike, in making matches.

Record-Keeping Policy

Each contact between Veterans Treatment Court Peer Mentor and veteran participant is documented in the Veterans Treatment Court Peer Mentoring Log which will be updated at each court appearance by the peer mentor.

Confidentiality Policy

Veterans Treatment Court Peer Mentors training will include a mandatory confidentiality workshop.

Instructions on Federal and State confidentiality policy will be reviewed including but not limited to:

- 1) What information should be kept confidential, who has access to confidential materials, what confidential information can be used for, how it will be kept confidential, and the limits of confidentiality.
- 2) In addition, guidelines will be reviewed specific to what information should be included and should not be included in the Veterans Treatment Court Peer Mentor log as well as how information about the peer mentors will be protected.

Unacceptable Behavior Policy

It is the policy of the Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court Program that unacceptable behaviors by a Veterans Treatment Court Peer Mentor will not be tolerated while participating in the program. Behaviors that do not match with the mission, vision, goals, or values of the Veterans Treatment Court Program will be considered unacceptable and are prohibited during court proceedings and mentoring sessions. Any

unacceptable behavior, as determined by the Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator, the Judge, or the Veterans Treatment Court team members, will result in a warning and/or disciplinary action including suspension or termination from the program.

Transporting of Veteran Participants using Personal Owned Vehicles

Veterans Treatment Court Peer Mentors will provide the Veteran Mentor Coordinator with a photocopy of their current driver's license and insurance coverage along with a signed vehicle use agreement.

Recognition and Awards

At least once a year, all mentors will be recognized for their role in the Twin Falls County Veterans Court. The Veteran Mentor Coordinator is responsible for planning and implementing recognition activities.

Possible recognition activities include:

- 1) An annual recognition event.
 - a. Veterans Treatment Court Peer Mentors are recognized for their length of service to the mentoring program and/or utilizing outstanding peer mentors in the recruitment and training of new peer mentors.

Goals of the Veterans Treatment Court Mentoring Program

- ✓ Help our fellow veterans receive the services they need to reach their full potential as productive members of society.
- ✓ Help our fellow veterans navigate the Court system, treatment system, and VA system.
- ✓ Assess the needs of our fellow veterans and help them adjust back to civilian life

Thank You for Your Service!

Volunteer Mentor Application

Name: _____
(Last) (First) (M.I.)

Home Address: _____
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

DOB: ____/____/____ Email Address: _____

Emergency Contact: _____
(Name) (Relationship) (Number)

Branch of Service: _____ Time in Service: _____

Separation Date: _____ Type of Discharge: _____

Specialty While in Service: _____

Combat Veteran: Yes No

Name/Number of Campaign(s) Served: _____

What does being a mentor mean to you?

What are your reasons for wanting to participate in the Veterans Treatment Court mentoring program?

What skills and experiences do you bring to the Mentor Program which will be helpful to you, other mentors, and the veterans in the program?

What do you hope to take away from volunteering with the Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Program?

What are your interests, hobbies and skills?

Previous volunteer experience:

References (Please provide name, address and phone/email of three non-family members who can provide references on your ability to perform this position):

1.

2.

3.

Print Full Name

Date

Signature of Applicant

BACKGROUND CHECK AUTHORIZATION

Please read this form carefully and sign in the space provided below. Your written authorization is **REQUIRED** for the completion of the application process.

I, _____, hereby authorize the Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court and the Department of Veterans Affairs to investigate my background and qualifications for purpose of evaluating whether I am qualified for the volunteer position for which I am applying. I hereby consent to a criminal background check and release of any information and/or records held by any public agency, branch of the military, law enforcement office, business, employer, or other institution for the purpose of evaluating my character and fitness for this position. I understand that I may withhold my consent and that in such case, the application process is terminated and an investigation will not take place.

Print Full Name

Date

Signature of Applicant

Date of Birth: ____/____/____

Driver's License Number and State: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Agreement

I, _____, agree to the following to be a volunteer mentor in the Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court.

- I am a veteran of one of the branches of the United States Armed Forces or their corresponding Reserve and Guard Branches.
- I will adhere to all of the Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court programs policies and procedures.
- I commit to participation for a minimum of one (1) year or until the Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court participant graduates.
- I will complete required training, as specified by the court, prior to participation in the Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Program.
- I will participate in any required additional training as required by the Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court.
- I will visit with the Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court participant(s) for at least one (1) hour each week.
- I will not engage in drug use, alcohol use, sexual activities or any other unlawful activities with the Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court participant(s).
- I will notify Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator if the Twin Falls County Veterans Treatment Court participant becomes suicidal, wants to harm others, or engages in unlawful activities.

Print Full Name

Date

Signature of Applicant

Vehicle Use Agreement

INSTRUCTIONS: All Veterans Court Mentor volunteers who use their personal vehicle for Veterans Court mentor business must complete this form. Mentors who do not attest to proof of current personal vehicle liability insurance will be prohibited from driving their personal vehicles for Mentor-related business. If any information provided on this form should change, it is the Mentors' responsibility to complete and submit an updated form. Original copies of the Vehicle Use Agreement will be maintained in the Canyon County Veterans Treatment Court Coordinators Office.

MENTOR AGREEMENT:

I, _____, acknowledge that I have received and read the Veterans Treatment Court Policy manual, as well as, the Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Manual. I understand the concerns and agree to comply with the policy. Failure to comply is considered a violation of the Veterans Treatment Court policy.

Name: _____

Address: _____

DOB: _____

DL #/State: _____

Auto Insurance Company: _____

Auto Insurance Policy #: _____

Print Full Name

Date

Signature of Applicant