

# VETERANS TREATMENT COURT OF DANE COUNTY



## MENTOR APPLICATION PACKET

# ***'LEAVE NO VETERAN BEHIND'***

## **History and identified Need of a Veterans Treatment Court**

The first Veterans Treatment Court originated in Buffalo, New York under the leadership of Judge Robert T. Russell in January 2008. It was the first court in the nation that specialized and adapted to meet the specific needs of veterans. Since October of 2008, and owing to the success of the Buffalo Veterans Court, numerous veterans' courts have sprung up across the country. Some question, "Why a Veterans Court?" The answers are many, but the most understandable answer may be that veterans are a niche population with unique needs. Members of the military and veterans are a distinctive population and have been confronted with experiences that the general population has never had to face. The Buffalo model demonstrates that veterans respond more favorably to other veterans, veterans who are there during this difficult time, to support and work with them in this time of need.

One of the key components attributed to the Buffalo Veterans Treatment Court's success is **veteran peer mentors**. They are essential to the Veterans Treatment Court team. Active support from a veteran peer mentor throughout the treatment process increases the likelihood that a veteran will remain in treatment and improves the chances of sobriety and law-abiding behavior in the future. Mentors are volunteers who are veterans that might have had the experience of serving in Vietnam, Korea, Operation Desert Shield, Operation Enduring Freedom, or Operation Iraq Freedom. The veteran mentors serve in a variety of roles, including coach, facilitator, advisor, sponsor, and supporter. Mentors listen to the concerns and problems of the participants and assist them in finding solutions.

There are approximately 33,000 veterans who live in Dane County. There are not less than 150 veterans who are charged with a crime in the Dane County Courts each year. The Dane County Veterans Treatment Court was established in 2014 under the guidance of Judge Dave Flanagan who is a Navy veteran.

If you consider becoming a volunteer veteran mentor, you will be asked to make a commitment to work with your participant, attend court sessions as scheduled, and be available for mentor training sessions. Veterans Treatment Courts have been proven extremely successful and your involvement as a mentor only adds to the court's ability to turn the life of a veteran around and assist him/her to once again become a productive member of our society.

## Rules for Mentors

The mentor's primary obligation is to support the veteran. In all relationships, the mentor will protect the veteran's welfare and will diligently seek to assist the veteran in reaching his/her goals. In particular, the mentor will:

- Act professionally when representing the program and the sponsoring agencies
- Work with the mentor coordinator to resolve conflicts
- Confine your role to the limits of your training and competence
- Maintain objective and professional standards in relationships with the veteran
- Refrain from pushing your values, lifestyle or beliefs on the veteran
- Do not promise better outcomes than can reasonably be expected
- Do not exploit the veteran or the relationship, for personal advantage
- Do not become involved in any monetary business arrangements or commitments beyond those required for delivery of services.
- Sexual relations or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. Any reports of inappropriate behavior will be investigated and legal action may be initiated
- Verbal abuse, physical abuse, or violence will not be tolerated. Violence or abuse must be reported to the mentor coordinator immediately
- Protect all information concerning the veteran as confidential. Only give personal information regarding the veteran to people the veteran has identified on a signed release form
- Encourage the veteran to report knowledge of crimes or planned crimes to the appropriate law enforcement authorities
- In emergency situations, contact the mental health crisis team (if one is available) or police and then the mentor coordinator. If you are unsure whether to take action, consult with the mentor coordinator or the parole/probation officer. Only disclose information relevant to the situation.



# Veterans Treatment Court of Dane County

## Mentor Agreement

I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to the following to be a mentor in the Veterans Treatment Court of Dane County:

- I will adhere to the Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) policies and procedures.
- I commit to participation for a minimum of (1) year.
- I will participate in mentor training provided by the VTC.
- I will initiate contact with the veteran of not less than weekly phone contact and monthly face to face meeting.
- I will strictly avoid any drug use, sexual activities, or any other unlawful activities with the veteran.
- I hereby allow the VTC to perform a check of my background, including: criminal records, volunteer experience, military service and personal references.
- I will respect the veteran's privacy. I will not discuss his/her name, address, background, family relationships or the nature of his/her problems outside of what is required for the VTC. I understand that confidentiality continues even if I cease to be a volunteer.
- I will respect and preserve the confidentiality of information given to me by the veteran unless the veteran discloses an intent to harm any person, including self, or engage in unlawful activity. If I learn of such information, I will immediately notify the VTC mentor coordinator.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date