



**Cobb County Veterans
Accountability
and
Treatment Court
Mentor Handbook**

Judge Reuben Green

Introduction

Cobb County Veterans Accountability and Treatment Court (VTC) seeks to divert eligible veteran defendants with substance dependency and/or mental illness that are charged with felony criminal offenses, to a specialized criminal court. The court substitutes a treatment problem solving model for traditional court processing. Veterans are identified through evidence based screening and assessments. The veterans voluntarily participate in a judicially supervised treatment plan that a team of court staff, veteran health care professionals, veteran peer mentors, and health care professionals develop with the veteran. At regular status hearings, treatment plans and other conditions are periodically reviewed for appropriateness, incentives are offered to reward adherence to court conditions, and sanctions for non-adherence are handed down. Completion of their program is defined according to specific criteria. Many will have their charges dismissed upon successful completions and others are assured of a non-incarcerative sentence upon completion.

Many veterans are known to have a warrior's mentality and often do not address their treatment needs for physical and psychological health care. Often those who are referred to the VTC are homeless, helpless, in despair, suffering from alcohol or drug addiction, and others have serious mental illnesses. Their lives have been spiraling out of control. Through this program, the veteran is offered the opportunity to regain stability in their lives, to have their families strengthened, to have housing for the homeless, and to have employment for the employable.

Our Program Mission

To successfully habilitate veterans by diverting them from the traditional criminal justice system and providing them with the tools they need in order to lead a productive and law-abiding lifestyle.

Our Program Goal

To increase public safety by reducing recidivism; provide better alcohol and drug treatment through the VA; turn tax burdens into tax payers; and provide intensive case management and structure to the veteran participants.

Mentor Program

An essential part of VTC is the addition of volunteer mentors as part of the support team that encourages, guides and motivates mentees to complete the 18 month treatment program for physical, psychological and substance abuse conditions stemming from their military service.

A properly trained and engaged mentor will develop active and supportive relationships with the mentee and will increase their chances of recovery and significantly reduce recidivism.

Mentor Mission

Cobb County Veteran Mentor Program ensures every participating veteran in VTC has a fellow veteran acting as a mentor, advocate and ally through the 18 month program.

Mentor Goals and Objectives

Provide peer-to-peer support to assist the veteran mentee with adjustment challenges. Mentors will assist and support the mentee in navigating through the VTC program.

Mentee Profile

1. Honorable Discharged Veteran
2. Mental health issues
3. Abuser of drugs/alcohol
4. Facing criminal charges in Cobb County

Program Structure

Phase 1 = 3 months

Phase 2 = 5 months

Phase 3 = 4 months

Phase 4 = 6 months

Mentor Duties and Responsibilities

1. Attend all scheduled court sessions with your veteran mentee; notify Mentor Coordinator of any absences
2. Participate/lead mentoring sessions required by the Mentor Coordinator of Court Officials
3. Support the treatment progress of your veteran mentee and encourage the participant to comply with treatment
4. Attempt to identify and resolve personal and family problems interfering with the success of the VTC. Attempt to solve these problems at the lowest level possible
5. Strive to volunteer 8 hours per month or 96 hours annually in support of VTC
6. Commit to the Cobb County VTC program for a minimum of 18 months
7. Complete Mentor Training program annually
8. Pass a security background check
9. Work to understand the psychological war wounds the veteran mentee is suffering from and provide a guiding and nurturing hand towards recovery
10. Dress code: Business attire

Mentor DOs

1. Be a good listener.
2. Offer suggestions and guidance throughout the program.
3. Problem solve with the mentee.
4. Remain available to your mentee throughout the program. Remember both of you are bonded in service to our country and you are in the best position to understand the mentee's military issues.
5. Report all threats of harm to self and others to the Mentor Coordinator and Judge Green.

Mentor DON'TS

1. Do not act as a Drill SGT.
2. Do not judge the veteran mentee. This action is reserved for Judge Green.
3. Do not provide LEGAL COUNSEL to the mentee.
4. Do not provide any type of funding to the mentee.
5. Do not provide PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING.

VTC Mentor Coordinator Duties and Responsibilities

1. Assume the major responsibility for recruiting qualified mentors. Provide input for the Cobb County Mentor Recruitment Program.
2. Coordinate the Cobb County mentor orientation program and any specialized training. Conduct all training requirements annually.
3. Communicate with all mentors monthly to ensure mentor needs/resources are adequate.
4. Attend all court sessions and carry out additional duties assigned by VTC team.

Mentor Application Requirements

1. Honorably discharged veteran from the US Military, or Active Duty, or Reservist
2. Complete volunteer mentor application
3. Provide a copy of your DD 214
4. Have no felony convictions
5. Pass a security background check
6. Attend two court sessions prior to receiving your veteran mentee

Mail the application and DD 214 to the following address:

Cobb County VTC
ATTN: Judge Reuben Green
Cobb Superior Court
70 Haynes Street
Marietta, GA 30060-9642

VTC Mentor Coordinator contact information:

Ernie Hines
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678-232-3737

