

NASSAU COUNTY VETERANS TREATMENT COURT SEEKS VOLUNTEER PEER-TO-PEER MENTORS

Veterans Treatment Court. The Nassau County Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) is a diversion court, in which veterans who are charged with relatively minor, non-violent offenses have an opportunity to earn reduced or dismissed charges or reduced sentences by successfully completing a court-directed treatment program. The treatment program might include, for example, a VA drug or alcohol rehab program.

The Mentor Program. An essential part of the VTC is a peer-to-peer mentor program, in which mentors who are veterans themselves provide support and encouragement by spending one-on-one time with the veteran (mentee) after he/she is accepted in the VTC; attend court sessions with the mentee; encourage the mentee to comply with his/her treatment program; and facilitate communication between the mentee and other members of the VTC treatment team. The Mentor is a resource to the veteran, NOT AN ATTORNEY OR COUNSELOR.

What Are the Mentor's Obligations? Mentors must attend an orientation and training program and participate in observational activities, including attending court proceedings and working with experienced mentors, before being assigned mentees. Mentors should expect to devote several hours a week to the program, including attending court sessions with their assigned mentees. Court sessions are held in the First District Court of Nassau County, 99 Main Street in Hempstead; mentees are typically scheduled to appear every two weeks initially, which may be converted to monthly appearances as they proceed with their year-long treatment programs. Mentors also are provided with a resource book to assist them in connecting their mentees with a wide range of available resources and services. The Mentor Program also offers support and supervision from a Mentor Coordinator as well as from the other mentors in the program.

What Are The Qualifications? Mentors should be honorably discharged veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces prepared to commit for a minimum 6 months. Active employees of the Unified Court System, active members of law enforcement or members of any other organization that may present a conflict of interest with the mentor program are not eligible.

How Do I Apply? Applicants must submit an application (copy attached) with a copy of their DD214, pass a background check and complete a short face-to-face interview before being accepted into the program.

Service as a mentor is unpaid, but a great opportunity for vets to carry out the warrior creed that no one is left behind, and work with a staff of treatment professionals to help fellow vets get their lives back on track.

For more information, contact VTC Mentor Coordinator Ken Rosenblum, 516.244.1965, kenr@tourolaw.edu.