



## **Veteran's Court**

Fifteenth Judicial Circuit of Florida  
West Palm Beach VA Medical Center

The purpose of the following document is to provide a general framework of common principles,

policies, and practices for the Palm Beach County Veterans Treatment Docket. This will:

- Minimize duplication of efforts and ensure greater coordination as court supervised Veteran treatment programs are established;
- Maximize coordination and sharing of scarce monitoring and treatment resources;
- Strengthen efforts to obtain federal, state, and local funding; and
- Facilitate development of coordinated long-range plans for financing Veterans Treatment Court operations.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Veterans Treatment Docket is specifically designated and staffed to supervise felony or misdemeanor combat and non-combat Veteran defendants who have been referred to a comprehensive and judicially monitored program of treatment and rehabilitation services.

The Veterans Treatment Docket represents a very non-traditional approach to criminal offenders who have served both during peace and wartime. Rather than focusing only on the crimes they commit and the punishments they receive, Veterans Treatment Court also attempts to solve some of the participants' underlying health and psychosocial problems.

The Veterans Treatment Docket is built upon a unique partnership between the Judiciary, Veterans Administration, West Palm Beach VA Medical Center (WPB VAMC), State Attorney, Public Defender, Probation (Felony and Misdemeanor), Clerk and Comptroller, Administrative Office of the Court, Sheriff, and other community partners from the criminal justice and treatment communities. It is a program that structures treatment intervention around the authority and personal involvement of a single Veterans Treatment Docket Judge. Veterans Treatment Docket is also dependent upon the creation of a non-adversarial courtroom atmosphere where a single judge, dedicated court staff, and the treatment team work together toward the common goals of breaking the cycle of substance abuse and criminal behavior, and addressing mental and physical health issues. An environment with clear and certain rules is created, and each participant's compliance is within his or her own control.

Because of the unique problems and opportunities that present themselves in working with Veterans, treatment and rehabilitation strategies must be "reality-based." The Veterans Treatment Docket must therefore recognize that:

- Veterans are often most receptive to successful interventions when they are in the crisis of arrest and incarceration, so intervention should be immediate and up-front.
- Preventing gaps in communication and ensuring offender accountability are of critical importance, so court supervision must be coordinated and comprehensive.
- Mental health issues combined with addiction can be a longstanding, debilitating condition, so treatment should be expected to be long term and comprehensive.
- Addiction seldom exists in isolation from other serious problems that undermine rehabilitation, so treatment must include integration of other available services and resources such as educational assessments, vocational assessments, training and job placement.
- Progressive sanctions and incentives must be integral to the Veterans Treatment Docket intervention strategy to address relapses and promote recovery.

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The goals of the Veterans Treatment Docket are to:

- Reduce participant contacts with the criminal justice system;
- Reduce costs associated with criminal case processing and re-arrest;
- Introduce participants to an ongoing process of recovery designed to help them become stable, employed, and substance free while continuing mental health care through community/peer counseling groups or the VA.

The National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) has developed the following Ten Key Components for Drug Courts, which have been utilized as the foundation of the Veterans Treatment Court as follows:

- 1) Veterans Treatment Court integrates drug and alcohol and mental health treatment services with justice system case processing.
- 2) Using a non-adversarial approach, prosecution and defense counsel promote public safety while protecting participants' due process rights.
- 3) Eligible participants are identified early and promptly placed in the Veterans Treatment Court program.
- 4) Veterans Court provides access to a continuum of alcohol, drug, and other related treatment and rehabilitation services.
- 5) Abstinence is monitored by frequent alcohol and other drug testing.
- 6) A coordinated strategy governs Veterans Treatment Court responses to participants' compliance.
- 7) Ongoing judicial interaction with each participant is essential.
- 8) Monitoring and evaluation measure the achievement of program goals and gauge effectiveness.
- 9) Continuing interdisciplinary education promotes effective Veterans Treatment Court planning, implementation, and operations.
- 10) Forging partnerships among the Veterans Treatment Court, public agencies, and community-based organizations generates local support and enhances the Veterans Treatment Court's effectiveness.

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## **I. ADMINISTRATION**

### **a. VETERANS TREATMENT DOCKET DEFINED**

#### **i. Palm Beach County Veterans Treatment Docket**

1. The operational Veterans Treatment Program of the Palm Beach County Docket will reflect the overall uniformity of procedures and principals set forth in this document.

### **b. ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSE OF THE VETERANS TREATMENT DOCKET TEAM**

- i. The Veterans Treatment Docket program will establish a team comprised of operations staff from the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit Court of Florida, and the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center. This team will meet on a regular basis for the purpose of resolution of daily operational issues.

## **II. OPERATIONS**

### **a. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **i. Duty of Agencies to Make Necessary Adjustments to Programs**

1. Participating agencies will support the Veterans Treatment Docket by making appropriate adjustments to internal policies, practices, and procedures to ensure successful day-to-day operations. The Court, State Attorney, Public Defender, Administrative Office of the Court, Probation, VA, and law enforcement agree, where appropriate, to:
  - Provide administrative support for the development and compliance with uniform policies and procedures for all Veterans Treatment Docket operations;
  - Encourage communication and cooperation among dedicated Veterans Treatment Docket personnel; and
  - Develop procedures to collect and maintain statistical and evaluation information based upon county-wide and Veteran Health Administration standards.

ii. Adherence to Confidentiality of Client Records

1. Participating agencies will strictly observe clients' rights to confidentiality in accordance with Florida Statutes including HIPPA, and Florida Statutes including sections 456.057(7)a, and 90.503 (2)."

➤ VA staff and residential treatment programs will obtain and file in Veteran treatment records, "Consent to Release Information," forms signed by participants to authorize exchange of information between participating individuals/agencies. Separate consent forms must specify the Veterans Treatment Docket Judge and the representative for the State Attorney, the Public Defender, and the Probation (Felony or Misdemeanor) Department. Additional signed forms will be obtained as necessary to designate other agencies serving the participants. (Attachment A)

b. OPERATIONAL AGREEMENT

i. Operational Agreement Between Agencies

1. Participating agencies will establish, as necessary, a countywide Operational Agreement to ensure the continuity of legal policies, the integrity of the therapeutic intervention, and other standards necessary to the operation of Veterans Treatment Docket.

ii. Renewal of Operational Agreement

1. The operational agreement will be updated as needed.

c. PERSONNEL

i. Staff Assignment

1. Participating agencies will make full or part-time staff assignments of interested, appropriate professionals dedicated to the Veterans Treatment Docket to ensure stability and continuity of day-to-day operations and to strengthen collaborative relationships between the key professionals except holidays and weekends.
2. The VJO Coordinator may be physically present at the Palm Beach County Veterans Treatment Docket.

ii. Training and Orientation

1. Participating agencies will provide assigned staff with an orientation to the Veterans Treatment Docket concept and training in the day-to-day Veterans Treatment Docket operations.
2. The VJO Coordinator will provide orientation to court staff on the mission and goals of the Veterans Treatment Docket.
3. The VJO Coordinator will provide training to the local police departments, jail, and Court personnel.
4. VJO Coordinator will work collaboratively with Veteran Service Organizations to develop mentoring program.

**III. INTAKE AND REFERRAL**

a. PROMPT ASSESSMENT

i. Time Frame for Enrollment

1. Public Defender will provide information regarding the nature and purpose of Veterans Treatment Docket and the consequences of abiding or failing to abide by the rules; explain all of the rights that the defendant will temporarily or permanently relinquish, and assist in the evaluation of potential defendants for eligibility and willingness to participate.
2. Defendants in custody will be referred to the VJO for assessment of eligibility and placed on the docket for the Veterans Treatment Docket within the statutory time frame required to ensure prompt program enrollment and participation. Defendants out of custody and/or referred by other courts (OR releases, bail-outs, diversion fallouts) will be assessed for eligibility and suitability as soon as reasonably possible. Upon Veterans agreement to be assessed to participate in the Veterans Treatment Docket, the VJO Coordinator will be notified.

ii. Assessment for Eligibility

1. VJO Coordinator will obtain a list of identified Veterans scheduled for the Palm Beach County Veterans' Treatment Docket.
2. Upon receiving notification or corrections of the list of identified

Veterans the VJO Coordinator will determine the Veteran's VA eligibility and enrollment status, in coordination with representatives from Eligibility and Enrollment department at the WPB VAMC prior to the initial appearance in the Veterans Treatment Docket.

3. If the Veteran's eligibility status is unable to be determined at the initial First Appearance hearing, and the Veteran identifies that he/she would like to enroll, the VJO Coordinator will direct the Veteran to the West Palm Beach VAMC with a copy of his/her DD-214, to enroll after the First Appearance hearing.
4. The VJO Coordinator will bring any relevant information gathered on the Veteran to the court.
5. The VJO Coordinator will meet with interested participants, and complete the initial VA intake form.
6. The VJO Coordinator will meet with Palm Beach County Court Administration, the Public Defender and probation (Felony or Misdemeanor) department as needed.

iii. Determination of Acceptance

1. To provide the greatest flexibility, with input from the State Attorney and defense counsel, the Veterans Treatment Docket judge will fashion a proposed resolution that will be appropriate in light of all circumstances and will also allow the Veteran offender to receive maximum benefit from the program while adhering to State Law and guidelines.

iv. Immediate Referral for Orientation

1. If accepted into the Veterans Treatment Docket, participants are immediately referred to the VA and, if appropriate, probation department for program orientation.

v. Admissibility of Statements during Assessment

1. No statement, or any information procured there from, made by the defendant to any Veterans Treatment Docket assessment team member during the course of the assessment for eligibility and prior to the



reporting of the Veterans Treatment Docket assessment team's findings and recommendations to the court, shall be admissible in any action or proceeding brought subsequent to the assessment, including for the purposes of impeachment, nor in the specific action in which the defendant is charged.

b. **ADVISEMENT AND COACHING**

i. **Determination of Potential Eligibility**

1. The Veterans Treatment team will determine eligibility for Veterans, at the earliest practical time. Further, once determination of eligibility has been confirmed the VJO will in turn inform the team.

ii. **Advisement and Explanation of Program**

1. The Assistant Public Defender will provide information regarding the nature and purpose of Veterans Treatment Docket and the consequences of abiding or failing to abide by the rules; explain all of the rights that the defendant will temporarily or permanently relinquish, and assist in the evaluation of potential defendants for eligibility and willingness to participate.

**IV. ASSESSMENT**

a. **ELIGIBILITY**

i. **Admission Criteria**

Consideration for admission to the Veterans Treatment Docket program will be available to United States military service Veterans who have an open, and who are approved for admission by the Court. To be accepted into the Veterans Treatment Docket, defendants may be required to plead guilty and agree to participate in the treatment plan outlined by the VA program and concurrence must be obtained by Judge. Defendants will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with the admission dependent upon the team's assessment as to whether or not the individual can be successfully treated. The team will consider both public safety and likelihood of good treatment outcomes in their decision.

1. Veterans accepted into the diversion program must be screened by the

receiving VA program. The VA program will take into consideration Veteran's current legal circumstances and determine whether the program can meet the Veteran's needs.

b. SUITABILITY

i. Screening Responsibility

1. All Veterans Treatment Docket participants will be screened for suitability by the treatment staff at the time of initial placement. The treatment team, consisting of staff from the VA and, if appropriate, probation department, will assist the Veterans Treatment Docket Judge in determining the overall suitability of defendants for the program by completing a comprehensive assessment.

- Risk assessment factors considered in admission to the Veterans Treatment Docket program include: family and community ties, gang affiliation or lack thereof, employment status, victim input and a summary of the defendant's prior criminal history and other factors which may be helpful in determining suitability for the Veterans Treatment Docket. Consideration of risk assessment factors is discretionary and is used by the Veterans Treatment Judge on a case-by-case basis.
- Final determination for the admission of a defendant to the Veterans Treatment Docket will be made by the Veterans Treatment Docket Judge based on recommendations from, and as appropriate with the concurrence of, the Assistant State Attorney, Assistant Public Defender, VA, and Probation.
- The treatment team will assist the Veterans Treatment Docket Judge in determining ongoing participant suitability through periodic risk/needs assessments. This will assist in monitoring progress, identifying relapse cues and changing the Veterans' treatment plans as necessary.

ii. Characteristics of Suitability

1. Characteristics defining suitability of Veterans Treatment Docket

participants include but are not limited to the following:

- Must be willing to comply with the conditions of Veterans Treatment Docket.
- Must be capable of complying with Veterans Treatment Docket program requirements, including all requirements of outpatient and residential treatment programs.
- Must demonstrate a sincere willingness to comply with all Veterans Treatment Docket program requirements, including all requirements of outpatient and residential treatment programs.

## **V. THE COURTROOM**

### **a. SPECIALIZED COURTROOM**

#### **i. Establishment of a Specialized Courtroom**

1. The Court recognizes the Veterans Treatment calendar as a priority and will establish a specialized, separate docket, dedicated to the evaluation, treatment, and supervision of eligible and suitable Veterans Treatment Docket participants.

### **b. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE**

#### **i. Court Administrative Responsibility**

1. Court Administration will keep the Veterans Treatment Docket Judge aware of administrative procedures that affect Veterans Treatment Court operations, and ensure that Veterans Treatment Docket cases are processed within the established time lines and guidelines.
  - Veterans Treatment Court sessions include the admittance and orientation of new participants into the program, and progress reports on participants previously admitted.
  - The Court Clerk provides clerical support for the operation of the Veterans Treatment. This support includes the timely preparation of court files and courtroom calendars. All docket entries and/or minute orders follow common practices and protocols.
  - A representative of Court Administration will oversee all

clerical and management aspects of the Veterans Treatment Docket.

ii. Document Confidentiality

1. Veterans Treatment Court will comply with all Federal and State laws.

## VI. PROGRAM FEES

a. BASIS FOR FEES

i. Requirement of Payment of Fees

1. All Veterans Treatment Docket participants may be required to pay fees and court costs as required by statute and/or ordered by the Veterans Treatment Docket Judge. No one will be denied treatment due to inability to pay.

- Those Veterans Treatment Docket participants who are on formal probation, may be required to pay the costs of probation supervision.
- Fees and co-pays will also be assessed based on Veterans Health Administration Eligibility Priority Group determination for any treatment/medication it provides, as well as by any other residential program that the participant may enter.
- All fees must be paid prior to graduating from the program unless otherwise ordered by the court or unless participant does not have the ability to pay outstanding fees, and then a judgment will be entered.

b. COLLECTION

i. Collection Responsibility

1. The Probation Department and Veterans Health Administration will utilize established administrative procedures to ensure collection of fees unless it is determined by the Court that the Veterans Treatment Docket participant does not have the ability to pay outstanding fees, and then a judgment will be entered.
2. Those Veterans Treatment Docket participants who are on formal probation may be required to pay the costs of probation supervision.

## **VII. PROGRESSIVE RESPONSES**

### **a. INCENTIVES**

#### **i. Program Plan for Graduated Rewards**

1. The Veterans Treatment Docket will include a plan for graduated rewards which may be applied by the Veterans Treatment Docket Judge as an immediate and direct response to incremental success in program compliance. The Veterans Treatment Docket Judge, with input from the treatment team, will employ the following graduated rewards to encourage progress and program compliance:

- Encouragement and praise from the bench; and
- Ceremonies and tokens of progress, including advancement to the next treatment phase.

#### **ii. Graduation from Program/Dismissal of Charges**

1. At the time of graduation, and if the State is in agreement, the Court may dismiss the charges to which the participant previously pled guilty. The Court may also terminate probation.

### **b. SANCTIONS**

#### **i. Program Plan for Graduated Sanctions**

1. The Veterans Treatment Docket will include a plan for graduated sanctions which may be applied as an immediate and direct consequence for failure to comply with program requirements. The Veterans Treatment Docket Judge, with input from the treatment team, will employ the following graduated treatment interventions to assist participants in complying with the program

- Admonishment from the Court
- Written essay on a topic selected by the Court
- Increased frequency of court appearances
- Increased frequency of random drug testing
- Increased participation in individual and/or group counseling
- Completion of community service hours
- Increased frequency of self-help meeting attendance

- Placement in a residential treatment facility
- Brief periods of incarceration
- Formal probation violation

ii. Terminated from Program for Failure to Comply

1. Participants may be terminated from the Veterans Treatment Docket for willful failure to comply with the terms and conditions of probation, including any treatment plan imposed by the Court through the Veterans Treatment Docket treatment team. In ordering a participant's termination from the Veterans Treatment Docket, the court should consider such factors as, but not limited to, the following: the nature of the violation, the duration the participant has been in the program, the number of previous violations, the participant's criminal history, whether the participant's substance abuse can be abated within the time limitations set by the program, the participant's desire to achieve sobriety as evidenced by the nature and quality of prior positive steps to maintain sobriety, whether or not the participant agrees to comply with medications as prescribed, and whether the nature of the violation would have initially precluded the participant from being accepted into the program.
2. Upon a violation of probation, with the recommendation of the treatment team, and in those cases involving a suspended sentence, the Veterans Treatment Docket Judge may remove a participant from the program and impose any lawful sentence.
3. Notwithstanding the above, any crime committed while enrolled in the Veterans Treatment Docket may result in termination in the program.

**VIII. DATA COLLECTION AND PROGRAM EVALUATION**

a. AUTOMATION OF INFORMATION

i. Court Administration Responsibility

1. Court Administration, in collaboration with the WPB VAMC VJO Coordinator, will facilitate collection and maintenance of the statistical data for the program. Management of information will monitor daily

activities, evaluate quality of service provided, and produce outcome evaluations. Program evaluation activities will be part of the ongoing process.

ii. Requirements for Automated Data Collection and Formal Evaluation

1. The Veterans Treatment Docket will establish a coordinated, automated data collection and formal program evaluation process.

iii. The Veterans Treatment Docket Data System Design

1. The design of the Veterans Treatment Docket data-base system will include:
  - Maximum utilization of existing countywide justice information systems and interfaces,
  - Maximum utilization of existing county data communication networks;
  - Minimum reliance on manual data entry and report generation to reduce redundancy and errors;
  - Safeguards to ensure data integrity for all affected systems; and
  - Safeguards to ensure privacy and security of all records.

## IX. TREATMENT AND MONITORING

a. TREATMENT TEAM

i. Treatment Team Members and Approved Veterans Treatment Facilities

1. The Veterans Treatment Docket team consists of WPB VAMC clinicians, to include the Veteran Justice Outreach Coordinator, Probation Department, the Public Defender, and the State Attorney. Only established treatment facilities which are licensed and/or certified by the State and/or approved by the Veteran Health Administration and the Probation Department for Veterans treatment services will be utilized.

ii. Staff Liaisons to the Veterans Treatment Court

1. The WPB VAMC and Probation Department will designate specific staff and alternates to serve as liaisons to the Veterans Treatment Docket and to attend all Veterans Treatment Docket sessions.

iii. Summary Progress Reports

1. Prior to each Veterans Treatment Docket appearance, the treatment team will prepare and submit to the Court a summary progress report which documents test results, compliance with treatment appointments, and any relevant case information which can be appropriately shared with the Judge in open court.

iv. Maintaining Confidentiality

1. The treatment team will maintain confidentiality of all client information in accordance with Federal and State Laws.

v. Ancillary Services

1. The treatment team, in collaboration with the Veterans Treatment Court Judge, will assist participants by providing referrals to meet needs such as housing, education, vocational training, and job placement.

b. COMPREHENSIVE AND INTEGRATED SERVICES

i. Appropriate Treatment Programs

1. All Veterans Treatment Court participants will be offered a comprehensive and integrated program of treatment and rehabilitation services to be supervised by the Veterans Treatment Court Judge.

c. DRUG TESTING

i. Drug Testing Results

1. When appropriate the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center will issue drug screenings as deemed appropriate by the Court. Drug test results will be used to assist the court and treatment team in evaluating the participant's progress in the Veterans Treatment Court program. The results will be used to determine: if the participant is progressing satisfactorily; if the treatment plan needs to be modified; and, if the participant will be terminated or graduated from the program.

ii. Urinalysis

1. Drug testing will be initiated when appropriate and at the discretion of the VA and Probation Department staff based upon participant compliance and progress.



d. TREATMENT PLAN

i. Co-Occurring Problems to be Considered in Treatment Plan

1. The treatment plan will consider co-occurring disorders to maximize the opportunity of the participant's success. Treatment must also be culturally relevant to the participant's background.

ii. Long Term Residential Program

1. Participants in long term residential programs will satisfactorily complete the phases prescribed by those programs to successfully fulfill the Veterans Treatment Court program requirements for graduation. A participant may advance through Phase II of Veterans Treatment Court while in a residential program.

iii. Individualized Outpatient Treatment Plans

1. Individualized treatment plans for outpatient participants will consist of specified treatment objectives, therapeutic and rehabilitative activities and requirements for graduation.

**X. ROLE OF THE JUDGE**

a. FOCUS AND DIRECTION OF PROGRAM

i. Leadership

1. The focus and direction of the Veterans Treatment Court program are provided through the effective leadership of the Veterans Treatment Court Judge.

ii. Courtroom Non-Adversarial Atmosphere

1. The Judge will be responsible for maintaining a non-adversarial atmosphere in the Veterans Treatment Court. All staff must see their primary responsibility as the facilitation of the participant's recovery and rehabilitation.

b. PROGRAM ADVOCACY

i. Representation of Program

1. Within the limitations provided by the Code of Judicial Conduct the Veterans Treatment Court Judge must be willing to serve as the program advocate and represent the program in the community, before

government and criminal justice agencies and other forums.

ii. Facilitation of Staff Participation

1. To encourage full commitment to the success of the Veterans Treatment Court program, the Judge will encourage program staff to participate in the design and implementation of the program.

iii. Partnerships with Participating Agencies

1. The Judge will form a partnership with the VA, State Attorney, Public Defender, Probation, law enforcement and the treatment team, which allows collaboration in sharing of resources and coordination of efforts.

iv. Participant Motivation

1. The Judge will be one of the key motivational factors in convincing the participant to achieve rehabilitation. Less formal and more frequent court appearances will be scheduled to allow the Judge to motivate and monitor the participants.

v. Court Proceedings

1. The Judge will conduct court proceedings such that all participants benefit by observation of others as they progress (or fail to progress) in treatment and the Court takes appropriate action.

## **XI. ROLE OF THE VETERANS JUSTICE OUTREACH COORDINATOR**

a. Liaison between the Court and the Veterans Health Administration

- i.
- ii. The VJO Coordinator will utilize computer access to VA electronic medical records, enrollment, and scheduling menus in the courtroom.
- iii. The VJO Coordinator will assist in determining a Veteran's eligibility and enrollment status.
  1. The VJO Coordinator will be provided the names of each identified Veteran to complete an initial screening, and to assist in determining eligibility.
  2. For Veterans who have not previously enrolled in VA health care, the VJO will coordinate with Eligibility and Enrollment at the WPB VAMC to expedite determination of eligibility status and enroll these Veterans

to ensure timely access to health care services.

- iv. The VJO Coordinator will coordinate care for Veterans, ensuring that they are referred and scheduled for appropriate substance abuse, mental health, and medical appointments. Treatment plans will be established as deemed appropriate by the Veterans Treatment Court Judge and VJO Coordinator.
  1. The VJO Coordinator will also ensure that Veterans are connected with the most appropriate case management team, based on the individual Veteran's needs (e.g., OEF/OIF Program, Primary Care Social Work, etc.).
  2. The VJO Coordinator will make referrals to the Palm Beach County Veteran Service Organizations, West Palm Beach Department of Veterans Affairs or the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) to apply for applicable benefits or discharge upgrades as needed.
  3. While the referred Veteran from Palm Beach County Veterans Treatment Court is engaged in treatment, the VJO Coordinator will ensure that all requested and appropriate clinical documentation needed by the Palm Beach County Veterans Treatment Court is submitted and communicated per established timelines.

## **XI. ROLE OF THE VETERANS TREATMENT COURT MENTOR PROGRAM**

- a. The Mission of the Peer Mentor Program is to ensure, to the best of the mentor's abilities, that no Veteran is left behind or forgotten. Peer Mentors work closely with Veteran participants of the Pam Beach County Veterans Treatment Court and offer them assistance, assess their needs, and help them solve their problems. Peer Mentors support the Veteran during readjustment to civilian life and assist the Veteran with navigating the Court, treatment, and the Department Veteran's Affairs system, while acting as a mentor, advocate, ally and role model.
- b. The Peer Mentor encourages, guides, and supports the Veteran participant as they progress through the court process. This includes listening to the concerns of the Veteran and making general suggestions, assisting the Veteran to determine their needs, and acting as a support for the Veteran, especially during this anxiety-provoking

time. The Peer Mentor's coaching, guidance, and support will demonstrate the special understanding that only another Veteran can provide.

c. Peer Mentor Requirements

- Be a United States military Veteran: Army, Marine Corp, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, or their respective Reserve or National Guard Branches.
- Be a good standing and law abiding citizen.
- Have genuine concern for veterans in the legal system.
- Adhere to all Palm Beach County Veterans Court policies and procedures.
- Commit to program participation for a minimum of six months.
- Attend court sessions as scheduled.
- Complete the screening process.
- Complete the required initial training.
- Participate in additional trainings throughout his/her time of service in the Court.
- Be ready to respond when needed in Court.

d. Peer Mentor Duties and Responsibilities

- Attend court sessions when scheduled.
- Participate in and lead mentoring sessions with Veterans when assigned by the Judge.
- Be supportive and understanding of the difficulties other Veterans are facing.
- Assist the Veterans as much as possible to resolve their concerns around the court procedures.
- Assist Veterans on how to access and navigate the Veteran's Affairs System
- Be supportive and helpful to other Peer Mentors.
- Work respectfully and professionally with the Veteran participant and other Peer Mentors.