

Veterans Courts and Highlights of Veteran Mentors Program

JUSTICE ANNETTE ECKERT (RET.)

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Background/History

JUDGE ANNETTE ECKERT (RET.)



Background/History of Veterans Court in Illinois

- Task Force
- Veterans and Servicemembers Court Treatment Act: 730 ILCS 167
- Implementation Manual for Veterans Courts
 - <http://www.dillonconsult.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Veterans-Court-Protocol-State-of-Illinois.pdf>
- Developing a Veterans Court - St. Clair County



Veterans and Servicemembers Court Treatment Act as Amended

- Sec. 15. Authorization. The Chief Judge of each judicial circuit **shall** **may** establish a Veterans and Servicemembers Court program including a format under which it operates under this Act. The Veterans and Servicemembers Court may, at the discretion of the Chief Judge, be a separate court or a program of a problem-solving court, including but not limited to a drug court or mental health court. At the discretion of the Chief Judge, the Veterans and Servicemembers Court program may be operated in one county in the Circuit, and allow veteran and servicemember defendants from all counties within the Circuit to participate.
- Effective date. January 1, 2018.

Nuts and Bolts of Implementation

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Implementation Steps

- Data/Need
- Stakeholders
- Team Members
- Review of Literature
 - 10 Key Components of Veterans Courts
- Review Illinois Problem-Solving Court Standards and Certification
- Map Resources and Gaps

Implementation Steps Continued

- Identify possible models for the court/program
 - Court vs. Track
 - If Track, the of which problem-solving court
 - Pre-plea, post-plea, pre-sentence, post-sentence
- Identify program goals and objectives
- Define Target Population

Implementation Steps Continued

- Screening and Assessment
- Referral Process
- Program Levels/Phases
- Incentives, Sanctions and Therapeutic Responses
- Documents Needed
- Training
- Mentors

Funding

- County Funds
 - Problem-Solving Court Fee: 55 ILCS 5/5-1101(d-5)
- State Funds
 - Adult Redeploy Illinois
- Federal Funds
 - Bureau of Justice Affairs (BJA)
 - Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
 - www.grants.gov
- Foundations

Sustainability

- Education
- Evaluate the Program/Data
 - Public Safety
 - Cost Savings
 - Quality of Life
- Diversify Funding Sources

Illinois Problem-Solving Court Standards and Certification

KELLY GALLIVAN-ILARRAZA

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PROBLEM-SOLVING COURT STANDARDS



*ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of the ILLINOIS COURTS
SPECIAL SUPREME COURT ADVISORY COMMITTEE for
JUSTICE and MENTAL HEALTH PLANNING*


PSC STANDARDS

- REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PLANNING, ESTABLISHMENT, CERTIFICATION, OPERATION AND EVALUATION OF ALL PSC IN ILLINOIS
- ENSURE UNIFORMITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES FOR ALL OF THE PROBLEM SOLVING COURTS THROUGHOUT ILLINOIS

SECTION 4 – PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

4.1 - INITIAL PLANNING PROCESS

- a) Collaborative process with a group of stakeholders
- b) Complete the following:
 - 1) Review the statistical data to determine target population
 - 2) Establish program goals and objectives
 - 3) Develop Eligibility and exclusionary criteria

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- 4) Determine capacity and type of PSC
 - 5) Identify resources for staffing and treatment
 - 6) Create timeline for implementation
 - 7) Observe other PSC
 - 8) Review the Sequential Intercept Model
 - 9) Complete MOU
 - 10) Designate a PSC Coordinator

SECTION 4 – PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

4.2 - WRITTEN POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Consistent with applicable state and federal laws, Supreme Court policies and procedures and the P&P of the circuit. Must incorporate interventions and approaches consistent with EBP.

4.3 – PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK AND PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- a) PSC must develop a written PSC Handbook outlining the program requirements for the participants.
- b) Consistent with policies and procedures and include:
 - 1) Purpose, goals and eligibility requirements
 - 2) Team members and roles
 - 3) Assessment and enrollment process

4.3 – PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK AND PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS (continued)

- 4) Participant's responsibilities including court attendance and compliance with case supervision
- 5) Program phases and requirements
- 6) The use and administration of incentives, sanctions and therapeutic adjustments
- 7) Drug and alcohol testing procedures and requirements
- 8) Program outcomes, including requirements



4.4 TARGET POPULATION/ELIGIBILITY

- a) Assessed for eligibility using validated risk and clinical assessment tools
- b) Written legal and clinical eligibility and exclusionary criteria
- c) Eligibility and exclusionary Criteria defined objectively



4.5 EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICES

**4.6 STATISTICAL DATA MONITORING
AND REPORTING**

4.7 PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY

4.8 CERTIFICATION

PSC CERTIFICATION

- Submission of application for certification
- Initial review
- Site visit
- Certification application and site visit review
- Determination of certification by Illinois Supreme Court

Vet Court Innovation – Mentor Program

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Lake County Veteran's Treatment and Assistance Court Mentoring Program

Rudy Martin

VTAC Inception

- VTAC problem solving Court established in Lake County in 2011
- Mentoring component included since inception.
- Five active mentors are part of this original group.

Mentoring Component Need & Description

- Realization that Veterans relate better to other Veterans who have been through similar experiences.
- Each justice involved Veteran is assigned a mentor to assist in navigating Court and VA systems.
- The mentor is there to support readjustment to civilian life acting as a friend, advocate & ally.



Role of Coordinators

- Recruitment, training and retaining mentors
- Attend weekly Court staffing/sessions & monthly Mentor meeting
- Act as a positive support & liaison between justice involved Veteran and probation, team, & Court
- Maintenance and documentation of program binder & electronic documents

Recruitment

- Community College - College of Lake County: Volunteer Program & Veteran Retention Specialist
- Community Veteran Programs: VFW, American Legion, Wounded Warrior Project, VAC
- Public Relations: Brochures, Newspaper, Lake County TV, 19th Judicial Circuit Web Site, word of mouth

Training

- Initial training in conjunction with College of Lake County, follow-up training in conjunction with VTAC program coordinator Roxann Garza-Tershel.
- Training facilitated in conjunction with Probation/Psychological Services, LCHD, James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center, NADCP & IAPSC.
- Trainings have included Trauma Informed Care, Motivational Interviewing Suicide Prevention, PTSD, Addiction, Domestic Violence & Mental Health 101

Mentor Roster

Mentor last	first	e-mail	tx	Mentee (s)	SS	
Carrier	Larry	Rmartin@lakecountyil.gov	847-377-3964	3 names	L	
Wagner	Kirby	Rmartin@lakecountyil.gov	847-377-3964	2 names	L	
Villareal	Stanley	Rmartin@lakecountyil.gov	847-377-3964	3 names	XL	
Honeywell	Marie	Rmartin@lakecountyil.gov	847-377-3964	2 names	W/M	
Gamble	Jim	Rmartin@lakecountyil.gov	847-377-3964	3 names	L	
Davis	Ray	Rmartin@lakecountyil.gov	847-377-3964	Inactive Mentor	4 XL	
Ochoa	Peter	Rmartin@lakecountyil.gov	847-377-3964	1 names	L	
Romero	Albert	Rmartin@lakecountyil.gov	847-377-3964	2 names	M	
Friedlander	Steve	Rmartin@lakecountyil.gov	847-377-3964	3 names	XXL	
Arenas	Jonathan	Rmartin@lakecountyil.gov	847-377-3964	Inactive Mentor	L	
O'Conner	Thomas	Rmartin@lakecountyil.gov	847-377-3964		L	
Dickson	Kervin	Rmartin@lakecountyil.gov	847-377-3964	destationed & inactive	L	
Levandowski	Alan	Rmartin@lakecountyil.gov	847-377-3964			
Gorman	Robert	Rmartin@lakecountyil.gov	847-377-3964	2 names	M	
Williams	Tony	Rmartin@lakecountyil.gov	847-377-3964	1 names	2X	
McCarthy	Justin	Rmartin@lakecountyil.gov	847-377-3964	Inactive Mentor	M	
Outings Only						
Phone Only						

Meeting Minutes 10/7/16

Assign new cases Sanders to Steve & Dennis (assignment TBD) – case review

Roxann also advises that we will have two more females entering VTAC and all present are encouraged to recruit female Veterans as mentors

We spend some time discussing 10/16/15 Graduation – All mentors should attend

Mentor, Kervin Dickson's new duty/orders will have him leaving the Lake County area, Kervin is moved to inactive mentor status.

Team requests training be provided at the next Mentor's Meeting concerning substance abuse and its impact on family dynamic – Haymarket Recovery Coach/interventionist Bill Nee has agreed to make himself available for our group.

Information for activities are provided including Artwise Military Photo exhibit, Freedom Farm Fall Festival & Nidra Meditation Yoga are discussed (see link and attachments) - <http://waukeganartwise.com/exhibits/>

In an effort to engage our Mentees in helping local Veterans and families, we will be working with the USMC Toys for Tots campaign sorting and loading toys this holiday season.

Additionally I will research poppy building opportunities at the VAC for our next meeting

The Veteran's Closet is discussed as a good resource for our clients (see link) - <http://www.midwestveteranscloset.org/>.

Mentors are asked to submit lists for any families who may be in need.

Before adjourning Albert solicits support for a 5K fund raising event to be held next year that would support local Veterans.

Next Meeting Wednesday 11-04-16, Probation Training Room A at 8 AM – Presentation from Bill 8:30-9.

Team requests information regarding 11-1-16 Veteran's History Project (see below)

Responsibilities of Mentor

- Maintain regular contact with justice involved veteran
- Document interactions using mentor log
- Attend monthly meetings with coordinator
- Creates supportive environment in court
- Attend quarterly outings
- Attend events in Lake County aimed at supporting our local Veteran population.

Mentor Log

Mentors Name_____

Mentees Name_____

Date_____

Time spent_____

Location_____

Type of Contact: In Person or Over the Phone

Any signs of behavioral issues: Yes or No

Any compliance issues: Yes or No

If yes, date and time co-coordinator was advised:



Cost of Program

- Mentor & program coordinators time and effort considered part of job their duties
- Trainings with CLC covered through annual contract, Probation/Psychological Services , LCHD & LFHCC staff have been willing to donate time to train our mentors.
- Program has received donations from community organizations (Gurnee Exchange Club & Lake County Bar Foundation)
- Donations have also been received from local business, professional sports franchises & community based organizations

Worthiness of Program

- NACO Achievement Award to Program in 2015
- Liberty Award Recipient to Program on Law Day 2014
- Program received special recognition at CLC Volunteer Awards banquet 2013
- 3 Individual Mentors have been recognized at CLC banquet earning Volunteer of the Year Award.
- Immeasurable and lasting effect on both Mentor and Mentee



Role of the Mentor

- Being a friend, buddy, someone the Veteran can turn to when he has a question or concerns.
- Help him navigate his way through the court system, and the VA.
- Drive the Veteran to appointments if he is unable to drive himself.



Continued...

- The Mentors show support for their Veteran by standing with them at the bench before the Judge.
- Log sheets are kept and turned into probation monthly, the logs show frequency and content of the meetings between Mentor and their Veteran.
- One face to face contact with justice involved Veteran is required, most exceed the expectation. Usually face to face is out for coffee, or lunch.

War Bird Museum



Benefit to Mentor

- How rewarding of an experience it is for the Mentor being with his Veteran on graduation day and presenting him with the challenge coin. Quilts of Valor organization also presents each graduate with a handmade quilt.
- There are many graduated Veterans that keep in contact with their Mentor long after graduation.
- Anyone who has ever served in the military knows the special bonds that were created when you served and long after. This is why the Mentoring aspect of Vet Court works.

VTAC Graduates with Quilts



Kenosha Kingfish Baseball



Questions

