

The Armstrong County Court of Common Pleas is starting a Veterans Court to address the growing number of Veterans involved in the criminal justice system. Veterans Treatment Court promotes sobriety, recovery, and stability through a coordinated response involving Armstrong County's Judges, Court Administration, the District Attorney, Public Defender, Adult Probation, the Mental Health Program, Domestic Relations, County Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. In addition, there are Veteran Volunteers, some of whom serve on the Treatment Team and others who serve as Mentors. The goal is to give each program participant the best possible chance of getting back on track as a healthy, productive Veteran and citizen.

With the establishment of the Armstrong County Veterans Court we are in need of male and female Veteran Mentors and a Mentor Coordinator.

What is a Veteran Mentor? The Veterans peer-to-peer mentoring program, is voluntary, and is an integral part of Veterans Treatment Court. The ability to speak with a fellow Veteran who has "been there" offers Veterans Treatment Court participants an informal way to ask questions, solicit feedback and discuss how they are feeling about their situation. Mentors are Court-trained volunteers, who have served in the US Military (including Guard and Reserves), and are assigned by Armstrong Veterans Treatment Court to work with a specific Veteran as he or she progresses through their involvement with the Court. Mentors serve as liaison, advocate and guide to fellow Veterans as they work to address issues related to their criminal case.

What is a Veteran Court Mentor Coordinator? The Veteran Court Mentor Coordinator, is voluntary, and performs a wide verity of tasks while interfacing with the Veterans Court Coordinator and the Court Team. As a liaison between the Team and the Veteran Mentors, the Mentor Coordinator's primary role is to ensure that established policies and procedures pertaining to Mentors and Veterans in the program are communicated and carried out.

For the Veteran Mentors and Veteran Mentor Coordinator there are no minimum education requirements for this voluntary role, but commitment, work ethic, empathy, and service to Veterans is a prerequisite.

The motto of the Mentor Program is that no Veteran is left behind. Mentors are paired with a Veteran to provide support as they work through the Veterans Court program. Mentors are present as an ally and friend to assist Veterans through this difficult time. The shared experiences of the Mentors and Veterans are critical in assisting the Veterans regain control of their lives. Having Veteran Mentors also enable the veteran to successfully connect to and maintain treatment; ultimately leading to successful completion of the Armstrong County Veterans Treatment Court Program.

If interested please contact Brian Zebracki VA Court Coordinator at 724-548-3491 or email mbzebracki@co.armstrong.pa.us