Eligibility to Participate in the Mercer County Veterans Court Program

- Must have current criminal charges in the Mercer County Court System.
- Served in the active military service and separated under any condition other than dishonorable. Some exceptions do apply.
- Served 24 continuous months or the full period called to active duty. Some exceptions do apply.
- Veteran must be given permission from the District Attorney's Office to become a participant in the program.
- SORNA BASED OFFENSES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED INTO THE PROGRAM.
- Violent Offences will be accepted on a case by case basis.

Structured Program Assists the Veteran with Treatment and the Criminal Justice System

The Mercer County Veterans Court Program is a two year program that assists the participants with underlying issues that may be connected to the crime committed. The program is a military style structured court session. There are requirements by the participants to help them successfully complete the program. Camaraderie is in full force with the participants, mentors as well as a large number of Veterans Court Team members.

A VETERANS CREED

I am [*former rank*] [*first and last name*], a veteran of the United States [*branch of service*]

As one of my nation's fittest and finest, I answered my nation's call to duty.

I mastered the weapons of war and became expert in defense and security—and I make no apology for my skills.

I am a warrior and have seen and done things that many may not understand.

I have proudly served my country with honor and dignity.

I am one in fifteen—a seven-percenter—a member of a team spanning the nation—veteran brothers and sisters, bonded by our common values and experiences.

I now stand ready to serve my veteran teammates.

I will help them face and conquer their enemies, including the demons from within.

I will never abandon an injured veteran teammate.

If they need support—I will carry them. If I cannot carry them—I will call for help.

When I struggle with my own pain, my veteran teammates will support me; and I will reach out of the darkness and grasp their helping hands.

I will never quit; I will never give up; I will never accept defeat.

I AM…A UNITED STATES VETERAN!

Mercer County Veterans Court

A Treatment Program for Veterans within the Criminal Justice System.

Mercer County Veterans Court

President Judge Daniel P. Wallace

Veterans Court Coordinators

Aimee Oxenham
and
Steven Edwards

138 S. Diamond St.

Mercer, PA 16137

(724) 662-3800

Extension: 2425 & 2431

Mercer County Veterans Court

There are more than 700,000 Veterans incarcerated throughout the nation. Veterans struggle with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder transitioning back into the civilian lifestyle, homelessness, mental health, drug or alcohol addiction and criminal involvement.

Veterans Treatment Courts have been put in place as an alternative to incarceration or other types of punishments. Treatment court enables Veterans to get treatment, take accountability and have structure while taking care of their criminal charge. They are able to have Veteran specific treatment. The program provides the proper support that is needed however, it still requires them to follow a strict regimen of requirements and tasks.

Veterans Court is administered by a team of professionals consisting of prosecutors, defense counsel, probation officers, a Veterans Administration social worker and several mental health professionals. The Veterans Court Team is under the supervision of Common Pleas Court Judge Daniel P. Wallace.

The Mercer County Veterans Court Team consists of many Veterans from the coordinators to the Judge. The team discusses each case bi-weekly to ensure the Veteran is receiving the proper treatment and support and also is complying with the requirements of the program.

What to do next:

If you are interested in applying for Veterans Court you must fill out an application with your attorney. It will then be forwarded to the Veterans Court Coordinator for processing. You will have to schedule an intake to further the process and see if you are eligible. For any questions please contact the Veterans Court Coordinators, Aimee Oxenham, at (724) 662-3800 extension 2425 or Steven Edwards, at (724) 662-3800 extension 2431.

If you are interested in applying to be a Veterans Court Mentor please see the next column for information and who to contact.

VOLUNTEER VETERAN MENTORS NEEDED

Veteran Mentors are assigned to each of the participants in the Veterans Court Program. They are there to assist the Veteran in navigating through the treatment program successfully. Mentors are available for support when needed. They are able to help with many ongoing issues with the participating Veteran.

VOLUNTEER VETERAN MENTOR PROGRAM

To become a VETERAN MENTOR:

- You must either be currently serving in the Armed Forces or must be an Honorably Discharged Veteran (a DD-214 must be provided).
- Submit an application to either the Mentor Coordinator, or to Chris Thrasher, the Veterans Court Coordinator.
- After approval by the Mentor Coordinator a 90 minute online training program must be completed. Found at: www.veterans.pacourts.us or http://paveteranmentor.rmu.edu

Contact Information:

Mentor Coordinator:
724-662-3800 ext. 2159

Aimee Oxenham, Coordinator
724-662-3800 ext. 2425
axenham@mercercountypa.gov

Steven Edwards, Coordinator
724-662-3800 ext. 2431
sedwards@mercercountypa.gov