

Peer Support

Project Team: Kira Rosemond, Naomi Mitchell, Kassie Burkey, Jessie Schreiber, Kirsten Hubbard, Zoe Matos



VETERAN COURT CONTACTS

INTERVIEWED BY GROUP 4

Contact: Darnelle O'hair

Title: Peer Mentor Coordinator (2017-present)

Court: Adam's County Court for Veterans (Colorado)

Contact: Aaron L. Decelle

Title: Former Veteran Coordinator (2017-2018) Former Mentor Director (2018-2020)

Court: Northwest Counties (Arkansas)

**graduate student currently working on veteran mentor survey*

Contact: Cell: 479-799-3338 Email: aldecell@uark.edu

Contact: Richard Hall

Title: Current Peer Coordinator

Court: Cherokee County (Georgia)

Contact: Cell: 770-377-2515

Contact: Del Saam

Title: Current Peer Coordinator

Court: McLean County (Illinois)

Website references found [HERE](#)



OVERVIEW OF PEER SUPPORT

What are peer groups? How are they unique?

- Peer support groups are made up of individuals of similar interests and experiences
- Veteran peer groups are unique to veterans involved in the justice system. Peer groups are lead by a peer coordinator, along with peer mentors who are veterans and have been through the justice system to serve as a therapeutic and supportive element helping veterans towards their recovery in the treatment court process.

How are mentors currently being trained?

- Primarily short seminars online
- Training is dependent on funding, and depth of training differs among counties
- It is important to take note of the efforts of WarriorNOW's training initiatives that are composed of expert instructors for online courses
 - Broad training: mental health and substance use topics, suicide prevention, judicial system topics, etc

Who delivers peer services? How are mentors selected and trained?

- Peer Coordinators
 - In charge of recruiting mentors, screening and managing volunteers
- Mentors
 - Selected through an interview process
 - Confirmed by the judge to determine whether mentor will be a good fit
 - Training can come from other coordinators or Justice for Vets has trainers that can come and train mentors



OVERVIEW OF PEER SUPPORT

CONTINUED

What type of peer support is currently being provided in the treatment courts?

- 70% of veteran courts are programs specifically dedicated to caseload of justice-involved veterans while others are a track within treatment court
- Some coordinate with counselling services (e.g. National Institute for Change in Colorado for community-based group therapy)
- Mentors (Veteran serving as therapeutic support & recovery coach) often selected with input from judge, court coordinator, mentor coordinator
 - Mentors support participants with their mental health, securing housing, employment, education, transportation, and maintaining sobriety

Who is providing training?

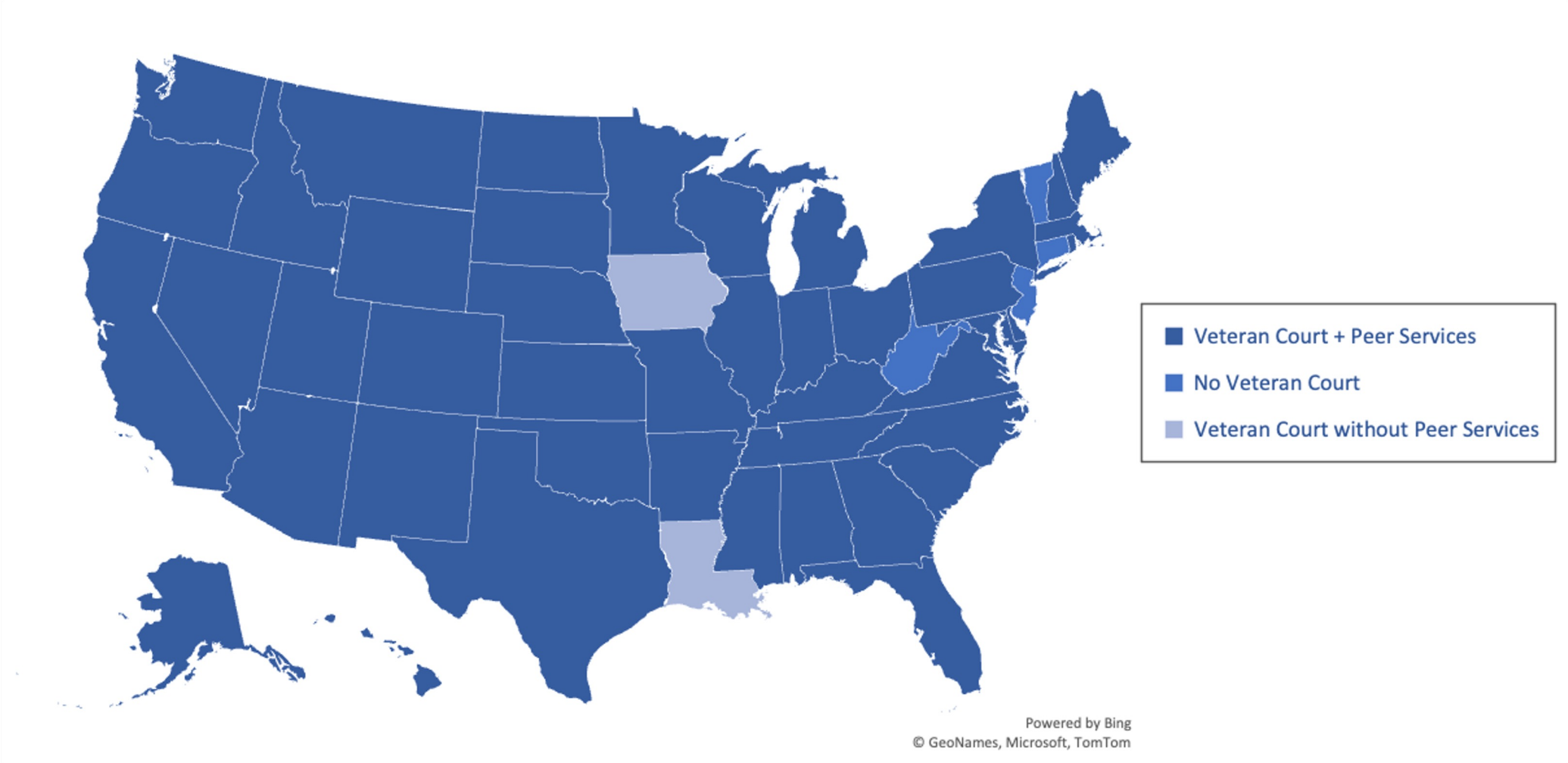
- Peer support supervisors provide training, education and supervision of peer specialists
 - Peer specialists/mentors are veterans recovered/recovering from mental health condition
- Within Veterans Health Administration, the largest integrated healthcare system for veterans, the supervisor should be a Licensed Independent Professional (LIP) (professional not required to work under supervision of another provider) to co-sign peer support providers' docs in Veterans' electronic medical records
 - Requirements depend on organization the Veterans Association is contracting with
- There are online training courses to become a peer specialist/mentor (I.e. netinstitute.org/ps_veteran/)
- Some programs have more informal training and mentors are not required to complete courses
 - This is more learning through personal experience with peer support therapy groups and working with their program coordinator

Do all courts have this element?

- Reference heat map for overview of veteran treatment court in the U.S. (almost all states have it, but not in every court/county)
- It depends on the availability of resources for the program and veterans in the community
 - First having a veterans' court track within an existing problem-solving court can often precede developing a stand-alone program in the future
- Other programs have more informal training for mentors- reference case study example



UNITED STATES VETERAN COURT: PEER SERVICES *COVERAGE



**Coverage defined as minimum of 1 county per state with verified peer services program currently in operation*



SUCCESSFUL ASPECTS OF PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Implementation of mental health, alcohol/drug treatment programs

Mentor Training Opportunities

Partnerships with veteran peer support organizations such as VA administration, etc~ provide outside resources i.e. employment, housing
Collaboration between

Maintaining judicial communication on progress

mentors and veterans to keep up with veteran progress and development in the treatment program

Access to continued behavioral healthcare



MODEL PEER SUPPORT GROUP

PROGRAMS:

EXAMPLES FROM MCLEAN COUNTY PEER SUPPORT

PROGRAM

- **Teamwork:** getting veterans involved in the program community
 - Monthly activities involving mentors and veterans, inclusive of physical abilities and age, that facilitate discussions and togetherness (ex: bowling, gardening, corn maze, etc.)
- **Mentor diversity** (skills & backgrounds)
 - Mentors from all branches of the military with various specialties and backgrounds, some of whom have their own criminal history
- **Peer accountability**
 - Veterans in the peer support program are often present in court together, creating a community that holds one another accountable outside of the peer support group itself
- **Flexibility** of the program to fit the individual's needs
 - Veterans often have a TBI or substance use that affects how the treatment works (slower reaction times or understanding of parts of the program), so it is important for the program to work with and around these diverse learning abilities



CHALLENGES OF PEER SUPPORT SERVICES

- Finding & Retaining mentors
 - Majority of programs seek volunteer mentors
 - Both younger and older mentors work in these programs, but mentors are typically older while younger are preferred.
- Veteran services vary between counties, even within the same state
- Inadequate treatment facilities treatment facilities
 - For example, VA hospitals/facilities, a lack of funding and effort by VA does not provide adequate clinical service to justice involved veterans
- Typical time commitment requirement is 1x/month, so some volunteers default to "honorary" mentor positions that require less involvement
- Many veterans experience enrollment obstacles:
 - Example: some counties require veterans wanting peer support services to be enrolled in the VA, often a long process that prolongs the time it takes for them to receive help
 - Per the Coordinator in McLean county, it can take between 30 days and one year due to complete the VA process
 - Some veterans lack motivation to participate



BEST-IN-CLASS VETERAN COURT PEER SERVICES

AUDIENCE: FOUNDERS, COORDINATORS & ADMINISTRATORS

- **Mentor-mentee pairing:** Avoid immediate assignment, allow relationships to be built authentically
- **Community partnerships:** Establish to assist participants with employment, housing, etc., and to assist mentors with training
- **Coordinator and mentor knowledge:** Be aware of TBIs, mental illness, and substance use and how they affect a participant's success in the program
- **Surface community support options for mentees:** Seek out experts in advocacy, listening, and other resources



BEST-IN-CLASS VETERAN COURT PEER SERVICES

AUDIENCE: CERTIFIED MENTORS & PEER SPECIALISTS

- **Make a plan with mentee & track progress:** create together and revisit regularly to make sure they feel supported and reach milestones
- **Establish communication consistency:** complete phone calls to set meeting cadence, time, and place
- **Be physically present:** attempt to attend court with your mentee as often as possible
- **Ask for help:** Engage the Court Coordinator when you need mentor training or personal support



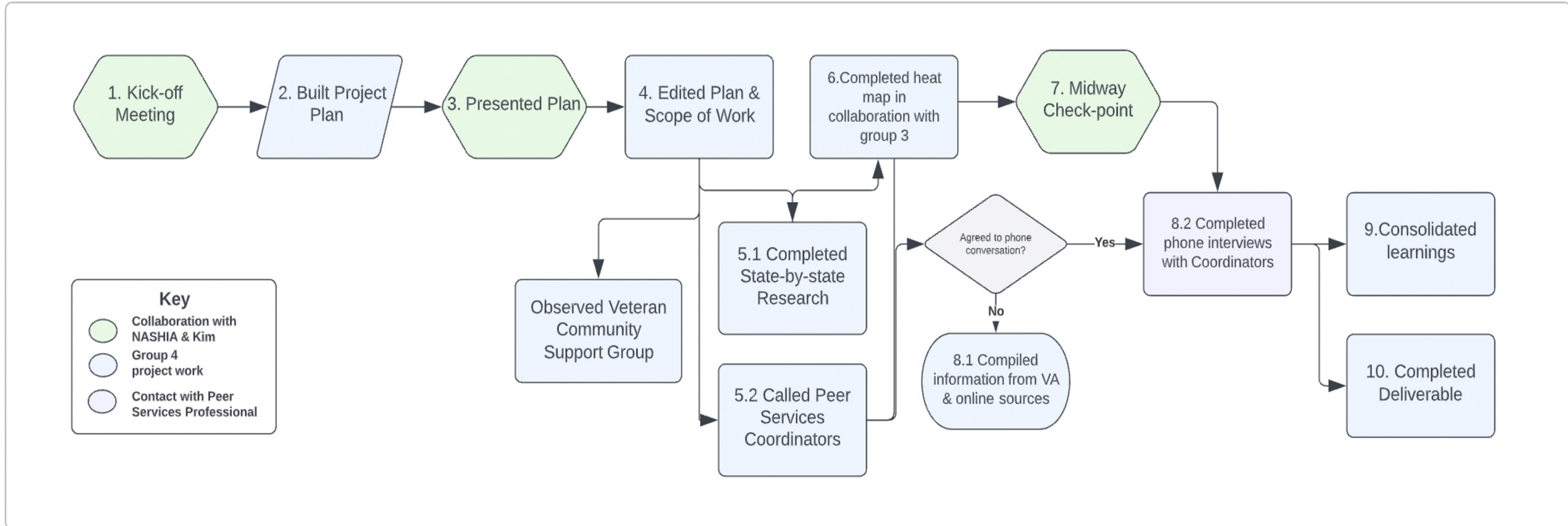
APPENDIX

- **PROJECT PROCESS DIAGRAM**
- **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**
- **VETERAN COURT REFERENCES**



APPENDIX

PROJECT PROCESS DIAGRAM



APPENDIX

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION – PROJECT PLAN

GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION

PROJECT TITLE	GROUP 4: NASHIA Peer Support Review
PROJECT POINT OF CONTACT	Naomi
PROJECT FULL TEAM	Zoe Matos, Kira Rosemond, Naomi Mitchell, Kassie Burkey, Jessie Schreiber, Kiristen Hubbard
EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE	3/7/22

DESCRIBE THE PROBLEM, PURPOSE, BUSINESS CASE, DELIVERABLES, AND GOALS OF THIS PROJECT

PURPOSE OF PROJECT	Provide 1) an overview of the peer support currently being provided with in the treatment courts, 2) who provides this? 3) how are they currently trained? 4) do all courts have this element?
SMART GOALS (ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA)	1) Understand Veteran Court Peer Services coverage across the U.S., 2) Determine attributes of successful existing peers services programs, 3) Give NASHIA a clear understanding of recommendations to inform structure of a new veteran court peer support program
EXPECTED DELIVERABLE(S)	1) Google slide: heat map (generated from Excel) showing state-level veteran court Y/N AND drill-down to which states have peer support Y/N 2) Google slide: describe common attributes across states w/peer support, providers, training structures 3) Google slide: describe "best-in class" peer support system & provide structural recommendation for decision-makers

DEFINE THE PROJECT SCOPE AND SCHEDULE

IN SCOPE	State-by-state high-level view of veteran courts, analysis of peer services, recommendations for ideal peer service structure, presentation (powerpoint slide & relevant excel doc)
OUT OF SCOPE	county-by-county view

Project Plan [HERE](#)



APPENDIX

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION – PROJECT PLAN

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE			
KEY MILESTONE	OWNER(S)	STATUS	DUE DATE
Project Kick-Off	All	complete	1/20/22
State-by-state list (Y/N)	All	complete	1/24/22
Submit plan to Kim	Naomi	complete	1/24/22
Check-in with Judy	All	complete	2/1/22
Additional edits	All	complete	2/14/22
Create presentation draft	All	complete	2/14/22
Finish data collection	All	complete	2/14/22
Check-in with Judy	All	complete	TBD
Mid-way Presentation	All	complete	2/14/22
Additional edits	All	in progress	3/4/22
Final Presentation	All	complete	3/7/22

DEFINE THE PROJECT CUSTOMERS	
KEY STAKEHOLDERS	Kim Gorgens
FINAL CLIENT/CUSTOMER	Judy Dettmer, NASHIA

DEFINE THE PROJECT RESOURCES	
PROJECT TEAM	Zoe Matos, Kira Rosemond, Naomi Mitchell, Kassie Burkey, Jessie Schreiber, Kiristen Hubbard
SUPPORT RESOURCES	Group 3, Darnelle O'hair (Adam's County)
DEPENDENCIES	Group 3 list of veteran courts (to audit with ours)

PROJECT DETAILS	
PROJECT DOCUMENTATION/RESOURCES	https://www.ncsc.org/topics/alternative-dockets/problem-solving-courts/veteraners-court/state-li-nks , https://research.va.gov/search.cfm?query=peer&searchType=ordOnly

Project Plan [HERE](#)

