



**SPOKANE VETERANS FORUM** \_\_\_\_\_

**POLICIES**

Spokane Veterans Forum  
Policies, March, 2017

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## Introduction

The Spokane Veterans Forum (SVF) is a 501-(c)(3) non-profit, all-volunteer organization dedicated to the Mission: ***No Veteran Left Behind.***

The Spokane Veterans Forum has established these Policies in the spirit that all people participating in SVF meetings and events will encounter a respectful, safe and supportive environment. These Policies establish standards that apply to all SVF volunteers and Veteran Defendants (Associates) participating in or directly connected to meetings sponsored or supported by SVF.

### 1. Spokane Veterans Forum Mission and Structure

The Spokane Veterans Forum provides mentoring, educational, therapeutic, and life enhancing services to military veterans referred from regional Veterans Enhanced Therapeutic Courts (VET Court)\*. The SVF is an all-volunteer organization and there is no cost to veterans.

\* VET Court is a therapeutic court program designed to provide a non-adversarial resolution process for qualified veterans all branches and theaters of service who have committed a legal offense.

The SVF is a separate entity from the VET Courts. SVF is designed to assemble and focus services in support of the veterans during their court ordered resolution process. The referred veteran defendant is matched with a volunteer mentor, also a veteran or spouse of a veteran, who provides support as they participate in the SVF program. Veteran defendants are required to be in contact with their mentors on a weekly basis at a minimum and to attend the formal SVF meetings held monthly.

To have a strong, immediate and lasting effect for each veteran, it is important that they be in the company of other veterans as early and as often possible. This is the role of SVF.

SVF operates unique "Forum" meetings each month. At the Forum meeting, veterans share a community meal and participate in educational programs that are relevant to veterans' issues. Celebration ceremonies are conducted during the Forum to acknowledge graduates of the SVF program.

The SVF trains volunteer veteran mentors. Through successful participation in the SVF program and their individual respective treatment services, participating veteran defendants may have the consequences of their offense substantially reduced; all done with other veterans at their side.

## **2. Organization**

- 2.1 The term “Associates” used in the SVF policies refers to all volunteer persons responsible for and performing in the following SVF functions: Officers of the Court, members of the SVF Board of Directors (Board), members of the SVF Operations Staff, Mentors and Veteran Defendants.
- 2.2 The SVF Board of Directors is responsible to establish policies and standards for all aspects of SVF operations and community relations.
- 2.3 The SVF Operations Staff is responsible to organize and manage all functions of the SVF organization. Operations Staff members are elected or appointed by the Board of Directors.\*
- 2.4 Mentors function as an essential resource in support of veteran defendants’ recovery process. Mentors must be a veteran or the spouse of a veteran.
- 2.5 The SVF organizational charts are attached to these policies (Attachments 1 and 2).

\* Refer to the SVF Web Site for listings of Board and Operations Staff

## **3. Policy Administration**

- 3.1 The Policies in this document supersede, revoke and replace any other policies published prior to the distribution of these Policies. Provisions of these Policies may be modified, revoked, interpreted, changed or contravened by the Board of Directors at any time with or without notice, at its sole discretion.
- 3.2 If any of these policies conflict with any rules, regulations, and/or conditions prescribed by any court, funding source or regulatory body, those regulatory specifications shall prevail.
- 3.3 These Policies will be posted to the SVF Web Site and will be available to all Associates.

## **4. Equal Opportunity**

SVF is an equal opportunity organization which means that every Associate has the right to function in surroundings that reflect respect for each individual. SVF will not allow or contenance unlawful discrimination in any action, statement or decision based on a person’s race, creed, color, national origin, sex, honorably discharged veteran, sexual orientation, presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability or any other basis prohibited by law.

## 5. Standards for Association

### 5.1 *At-Will Association*

Association with the SVF by mentors, staff and board members is on a volunteer, at-will basis. This means that association with SVF is subject to the mutual consent of each Associate and the SVF. Accordingly, while the SVF has every hope that relationships will be mutually beneficial and rewarding, for both the Associate and SVF, the SVF retains the right to terminate the relationship at any time, with or without cause, for any reason not expressly prohibited by law or by the SVF Bi-Laws.

### 5.2 *Background Check*

To ensure the safety of our veteran defendants, volunteer mentors, staff and guests, SVF volunteers and Veteran Defendants may not begin affiliation with SVF until a background check is completed by a VET Court and their association has been approved.

### 5.3 *Advance Approval: Visits from or Speaking to VIP's or Media*

- A. Associates may not speak to the news media as an official or unofficial spokesperson of SVF without prior clearance from the SVF Board of Directors.
- B. If an Associate wishes to invite or has knowledge of a visit by a VIP, including an elected official, or a representative of the media to a SVF meeting or function, he/she must inform the Probation Officer and the President of the SVF Operations Staff (President) of the planned visit and secure approval for the requested visit from the President.

### 5.4 *Mentor Training*

SVF Conducts monthly training sessions for volunteer Veteran Mentors. The purpose of the training is to develop and apply consistent standards and techniques involved in the process of mentoring Veteran Defendants.

### 5.5 *Solicitation*

- A. Unauthorized persons are not allowed access to SVF meetings or functions for the purpose of soliciting or distributing business, fund raising, political or other material or for other reasons not connected with the SVF.
- B. No one associated with SVF may distribute unauthorized printed materials during SVF meetings or activities.
- C. Distribution of unlawful or obscene materials is prohibited.
- D. Intrusive fundraising is not allowed at SVF meetings or functions. Associates may not solicit support for fundraising from those over whom they have authority or control.

### 5.6 *Political Activity*

SVF Associates are prohibited from:

- A. Distributing printed materials at SVF meetings without prior approval from the President.
- B. Participating in political activities during a SVF meeting or function.

- C. Using any SVF facility, equipment or official authority to coerce any other Associate to contribute anything of monetary value to a political organization.

#### 5.7 *Firearms/Weapons*

No one may bring firearms or other weapons onto a SVF Forum or other SVF meeting.

### **6. Ethics and Conduct**

6.1 SVF Associates are expected to adhere to the highest standards of ethics and conduct.

The following are basic guidelines to assist Associates to assess situations in which ethical behavior and proper conduct are in question. No list can be so exhaustive as to provide direction for all the variable circumstances that may arise. The personal good judgment of all is indispensable.

#### 6.2 *Guidelines:*

- 1) Respect the privacy of persons served and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of SVF affiliation.
- 2) Demonstrate a genuine interest in all persons served, and display dedication to their best interests; help them help themselves.
- 3) Respect the rights, views and confidences of Associates and visitors; treat all individuals with fairness, courtesy, respect and good faith.
- 4) Protect veteran defendants from exploitation, neglect, and abuse while receiving services.

### **7. Conflict of Interest**

7.1 The highest standards of conduct and honesty are expected of all persons involved in the regular operation of Spokane Veterans Forum, including the Board of Directors, Staff, and Mentors. It is the obligation of all such persons to avoid involvement in activities which might conflict, or which might appear to conflict, with SVF responsibilities. The conflict of interest guidelines contained in this Policy are intended to help such persons avoid involvement in actual or apparent conflicts of interest, and to protect both them and SVF from potential legal prosecution, damage to reputation and financial loss.

While it is useful to provide basic guidelines to assist affiliates in assessing potential conflict situations, no list can be so exhaustive as to provide direction for all the variable circumstances that may arise. The personal good judgment of all is indispensable.

#### 7.2 *Definition*

A conflict of interest is considered to exist if such person's actions or activities on behalf of Spokane Veterans Forum result in preferential treatment or an improper gain or advantage to the person, such person's family or business associates, or conversely, has a detrimental effect on SVF's interests. It can include an instance in which such person fails to exercise due care, skill,

and judgment on behalf of SVF in the performance of such person's duties because of a conflict of interest.

### 7.3 Guidelines

All SVF Associates:

- A. Have a duty to act in the best interests of SVF. Therefore, all such persons have a duty to avoid conflicts of interest and to conduct themselves in a manner that maintains the integrity and accountability of SVF.
- B. Who have a financial or family interest in a business that furnishes goods or services or contracts with SVF should not undertake to act for SVF or enter into negotiations or contracts with that business, either directly or indirectly, on behalf of SVF, without prior approval of the Board of Directors.
- C. Should avoid outside employment or business activity which may conflict, or appear to conflict with SVF interests. Directorships or consultation agreements for which such person is compensated must be approved in writing by the Board of Directors.
- D. Must provide full disclosure of any business, financial enterprise or activity that might influence, or appear to influence, decisions or actions concerning SVF matters. Disclosure must be made at least verbally to the Board of Directors, or whenever a significant change in interest occurs.
- E. Should not use confidential information or special knowledge acquired as a result of their relationship with SVF to, in any way enhance their own personal financial wellbeing by using such inside information to their own advantage.
- F. May not use SVF personnel, including veteran defendants, to perform personal services for themselves or others if improper gain or benefit would result.
- G. Must not make unauthorized use of SVF funds, equipment, property or other resources for personal benefit or for the personal benefit of any other person.
- H. Are discouraged from accepting personal gifts or favors from persons with whom SVF has a business relationship. To avoid improper influence, or the appearance or suggestion of such, personal gifts of more than nominal value should not be accepted.
- I. May not be involved in SVF matters pertaining to a member of his or her immediate family, insofar as said matter affects such family member's role, evaluation or advancement at SVF , without first making a full disclosure to the Board of Directors

## 8. Drug Free Environment

8.1 SVF is committed to provide a drug-free environment in which Associates may safely participate in SVF meetings and events. Implementation of this Policy shall conform to applicable law.

8.2 All Associates, participating in SVF meetings or sponsored events, including veteran defendants ordered by the Court to completely refrain from use of alcohol, drugs and marijuana, shall be free of the influence of alcohol or drugs. <sup>(1)</sup> Associates shall not possess, sell or consume any illegal or non-prescribed drug, alcohol or marijuana while participating in any SVF meeting or

event, which include meetings on any site where SVF functions are conducted, including parking areas or vehicles.<sup>(2)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> In the event a drug is medically prescribed and monitored by a physician, the Associate's ability to function safely will be a determining factor in a decision regarding the Associate continuing in their function at that time.

<sup>(2)</sup> The SVF Board may specify an exception to this Policy relating to staff and mentors' drinking of alcohol at certain sponsored SVF events.

### 8.3 *Enforcement*

All validated violations of this policy will result in remedial action by SVF to support the safety of all Associates.

## **9. Respectful Environment**

9.1 SVF is committed to maintaining an environment that is free from unlawful discrimination. Implementation of this Policy shall conform to applicable law.

9.2 SVF will conduct an annual briefing for Associates to inform them of the organization's standards for this Policy and will document the participation of Associates

## **10. Financial Management**

10.1 The Board of Directors will appoint a Treasurer to manage and document SVF financial transactions.

10.2 Standards and structure of the treasurer function are defined in the SVF By-Laws.

10.3 Records of financial transactions are open for inspection by all associates. Appointments for inspections with the treasurer will be scheduled in advance.

10.4 When Spokane Veterans Forum assets on-hand drops at or below \$2,000.00, the President of the Operations Staff shall be required to authorize all purchases. This authorization shall be documented and presented to the Treasurer bi-weekly. When the Spokane Veterans Forum funds drop at or below \$500.00, all purchases will cease until either funds increase above \$500.00 or the Forum is disbanded.

## **11. Food Safety**

- 11.1 SVF provides a unique benefit for all Associates: A meal is served to all participants at the monthly Forum meetings.

The following standards will be maintained by SVF to assure that food, whether brought in from an outside source, prepared on site or served on site, will be sourced, handled and served in a manner intended to ensure food safety.

- 11.2 The Logistic Director will be directly responsible for sourcing and purchasing food.
- 11.3 The Logistics Director will assure outside sources of food purchased for SVF events come from facilities that are certified by WA Health Department.
- 11.4 The Food Supervisor will be directly responsible for picking-up, preparing and serving food to participants at SVF Forum meetings or other events.
- 11.5 To ensure food safety standards the Food Supervisor will:
- A. Participate in a Food Safety Training Course certified by the State of Washington and maintain a valid Food Handlers Certificate. The SVF will pay the cost of the training course and certificate.
  - B. Supervise the volunteers who prepare, handle or serve food to maintain compliance with the following standards to ensure food safety.
    - 1) Appear to be free of illness
    - 2) Wash hands
    - 3) Wear clean rubber gloves
    - 4) Wear a hat or net on head to cover hair and facial hair

## **12. Mentor Vetting, Acceptance and Integration**

### **The Mentor Vetting and Acceptance**

Sections 12.1 – 12.3 of this Policy:

- A. Define the process that the Spokane Veterans Forum organization (SVF) will apply to conduct background checks and to interview/screen all mentor candidates before they are accepted as a SVF Mentor.
- B. Will be applied to all mentor candidates referred to the SVF by, or in the jurisdiction of, all VET/Drug Courts which refer Veteran Defendants to the SVF.
- C. Will be fully completed before a mentor candidate is accepted as a SVF Mentor.

### **12.1 Referral of a Mentor Candidate**

- A. A mentor candidate may be referred to the SVF by a number of sources: A VET/Drug Court, a Criminal Court, a SVF Mentor, a SVF Operations Staff member, a SVF Veteran Defendant, a veterans or other type of community organization, an attorney, etc.

- B. The person/organization or any person affiliated with the SVF who refers a mentor candidate to the SVF will direct the mentor candidate to a SVF Mentor Advocate. *(Refer to the SVF Website for contact information: [Spokaneveteransforum.org](http://Spokaneveteransforum.org))*

#### 12.2 Introduction

The Mentor Referring a Mentor Candidate or a SVF Mentor Advocate Will be Responsible to:

- A. Welcome the mentor candidate and inquire about his/her interest in the SVF organization.
- B. Conduct a briefing for the mentor candidate that covers: The SVF Mission; the role of a SVF Mentor; the operation of the SVF and the relationship between the SVF and the VET/Drug Courts.
- C. Invite the mentor candidate to attend a Forum meeting as his/her guest.
- D. Refer the mentor candidate to access the SVF Website for complete information on the SVF.
- E. Communicate to the mentor candidate that the Mentor Page on the SVF Website contains two forms: The Mentor Volunteer Application Form and a Mentor Background Check Form (Forms).
- F. Communicate to the mentor candidate that if he/she desires to become a SVF Mentor, he/she will be required complete and submit the two Forms which will be used to conduct a background check. *NOTE: The Application and Background Check Forms include instructions to submit the completed Forms to the Spokane County VET Court Coordinator.*

#### 12.3 Background Check

- A. The Designated VET/Drug Court Coordinator Will be Responsible to:
- B. Receive the Forms submitted by mentor candidates referred by, or in the jurisdiction of, all VET/Drug Courts which refer Veteran Defendants to the SVF.
- C. Process the background check with the FBI Data Base in a timely manner.
- D. Generate a written communication addressed to the mentor candidate, the appropriate VET/Drug Court and the designated SVF mentor advocate to indicate whether the mentor candidate has passed the background check.

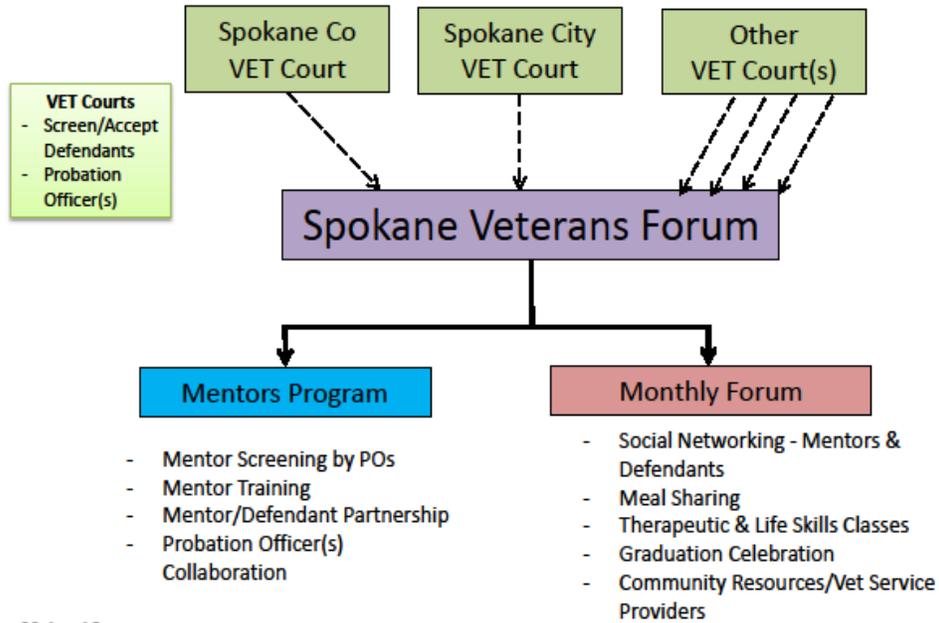
#### 12.4 Screening and Acceptance

- A. The SVF Mentor Advocate(s) Will be Responsible to:
- B. Contact the mentor candidate and invite him/her to attend the next scheduled Forum meeting or the Mentor training meeting.
- C. During the meeting, referred to above:
- D. Conduct a private screening interview.
- E. Review with the mentor candidate, as part of the interview the SOP, "Guidelines for Mentor Participation" *(Refer to Mentor Handbook)*.
- F. Determine if the mentor candidate is: Adequately motivated; Able to fulfill the duties of a Mentor and; Capable and willing to provide the required level of support to a Veteran Defendant.
- G. Communicate to mentor candidate whether they have been accepted as a SVF Mentor.
- H. Welcome the new Mentor to the SVF!

12.5 *Integration*

The SVF Mentor Advocate(s) Will be Responsible to:

- A. Monitor the match-up procedure with a Mentor and the veteran defendant.
- B. Assign a Mentor coach to guide/assist the new Mentor.
- C. Report the status of the Mentor/Veteran Defendant match-up to the appropriate Vet/Drug Court probation officer/court coordinator.
- D. Enroll the new Mentor in the SVF Mentor Distribution List.
- E. Instruct the new Mentor to contact and coordinate with the probation officer/court coordinator of the appropriate VET/Drug Court.



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# Spokane Veterans Forum

(501-C-3 Non-Profit Corp.)

