



LIFE CHANGING

VACRO Women's Mentoring Program Role Description for Volunteer Mentors

The Project

The VACRO Women's Mentoring Program (VWMP) is a program that matches women who are exiting prison or on Community Correctional Orders with volunteer mentors.

VWMP Mentors provide emotional support, practical assistance and appropriate role modelling, forming a relationship that will facilitate the difficult process of reintegration into the community.

Program Aims and Objectives

The aims of the VACRO Women's Mentoring Program are as follows:

- To assist women exiting prison and women on Community Correctional Orders to successfully reintegrate into their community through the provision of support by voluntary female mentors from the community.
- To foster pro-social choices and behaviours and reduce the likelihood of reoffending through role-modelling of appropriate behaviours, gentle challenging of anti-social behaviours and cognitions and reinforcement of positive change.
- To reduce the incidence of self-harm and accidental death among released women prisoners through the provision of social support and the addressing of various contributory factors, such as drug use.
- To provide transitional support to a range of 'special needs' groups identified as in need of additional support services.

Position Objectives

To provide a 'best practice' service delivery for the female participants, assist the transition from prison to the community, connect women with their community, and provide ongoing support and positive role modelling.



LIFE CHANGING

Key Functions of Mentors

1. *Support:* A key aspect of the mentoring role is to provide emotional support. To this end mentors need to be able to display a non-judgmental attitude, and to be able to listen to participant's concerns and respond in an appropriate manner.
2. *Role Model:* The mentor functions as a model of good communication skills and pro-social behaviour. The mentor needs to be able to challenge problematic behaviours without appearing judgmental or authoritarian. It is essential that the mentor displays a law-abiding behaviour at all times.
3. *Practical Assistance:* Mentors may assist participants with practical tasks related to their reintegration into the community, such as navigating Centrelink and DHS, confronting difficult situations like crowded shopping centres, and so on. It is appropriate for the mentor to use her discretion and set boundaries in this respect.

Role Responsibilities

Mentors' responsibilities include the following:

- To conform to ethical standards of behaviour as outlined in the VACRO Code of Conduct.
- To abide by VACRO policies and practices.
- To complete all required training modules for accreditation as a mentor.
- To attend and contribute to regular supervision and ongoing training.
- To report all concerns regarding the safety of participants or others to the Program Coordinator as soon as practically possible.
- To collect information as required about all contact with matched program participants.
- To abide by prison regulations and the law at all times.
- To provide written quarterly reports to the Program Coordinator.

Accountability

This position reports to the VACRO Women's Support Services Coordinator.



LIFE CHANGING

Conditions of Appointment

All applicants are required to disclose to the Program Coordinator any criminal offence history. The successful applicant will be required to undergo a police criminal record check. A prior criminal record will not automatically disqualify a person from becoming a mentor.

Persons convicted of violent or sexual offences will not be eligible to become mentors. Potential mentors with criminal records will need to be cleared by the Women's Prisons Region for access to the prison/s.

A Working with Children Check (volunteer) is also required.

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a formal written volunteer agreement and agree to abide by VACRO's Code of Conduct.

We encourage applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Selection Criteria

Successful applicants will be female (VCAT Exemption No: A164/2007), and will have:

- Good verbal and written communication skills.
- Highly developed interpersonal and liaison skills.
- The capacity to be assertive and set firm boundaries.
- The ability to exhibit a non-judgmental attitude to offending behaviours, whilst at the same time challenging inappropriate behaviours.
- The capacity to commit to the program for at least twelve months.

For more information contact:

Gen Anderson – VACRO Women's Support Services Coordinator
Telephone: 9605 1961 or Email: ganderson@vacro.org.au