**VFW Mentorship Program Handbook**

**Introduction**

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) thrives when its leaders are prepared, its members are engaged, and its traditions are upheld. The **VFW Mentorship Program** is designed to develop future leaders, preserve institutional knowledge, and ensure our mission continues with strength and integrity. Every leader was once mentored—and every mentor builds tomorrow’s leaders.

**Programming Purpose**

The VFW Mentorship Program provides structured guidance and support for members to grow into effective leaders at the Post, District, and Department levels.

**Key Objectives:**

* Develop strong, confident leaders.
* Preserve and pass down knowledge, traditions, and bylaws.
* Support members through encouragement and accountability.
* Strengthening VFW’s impact in local communities.
* Ensure continuity of leadership for future generations.

**Five Stages of Mentorship**

**1. Initiation**

* Mentor and mentee are paired by Post or District leadership.
* Establish goals, expectations, and responsibilities.
* Build trust and open lines of communication.

**2. Cultivation**

* Mentor provides training, guidance, and feedback.
* Mentee learns actively, asks questions, and practices leadership.
* Regular meetings ensure steady progress.

**3. Separation**

* Mentee begins to lead with reduced oversight.
* Mentor steps back, allowing mentee to build independence.
* Focus shifts toward applying knowledge in real-world situations.

**4. Redefinition**

* Mentor and mentee transition to a peer-level relationship.
* Mentee begins contributing insights back to the mentor.
* Collaboration replaces instruction.

**5. Legacy / Renewal**

* Mentee takes on the role of mentor for new members.
* Knowledge is passed down, ensuring the cycle continues.
* Strengthens the VFW’s long-term mission.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**Mentors**

* Share knowledge of VFW bylaws, traditions, and leadership practices.
* Model professionalism, accountability, and service.
* Provide constructive feedback and encouragement.
* Create opportunities for mentees to lead.

**Mentees**

* Approach the mentorship with commitment and openness.
* Take initiative in learning and practicing leadership skills.
* Stay accountable to responsibilities and Department standards.
* Commit to becoming a future mentor.

**Program Structure**

**Selection Process**

* District Commanders or Post leadership identify and pair mentors with mentees.
* Pairings should align skills and experience with mentee goals.

**Meetings and Check-ins**

* Monthly one-on-one meetings are recommended.
* Use Post or District dashboards as a tool for accountability.
* Encourage open discussion of challenges, opportunities, and progress.

**Training and Development**

* Encourage mentees to participate in VFW training sessions, leadership workshops, and Department meetings.
* Use real-time leadership opportunities (events, reports, community projects) as practice for mentees.

**Evaluation and Feedback**

* Progress should be measured against Department standards.
* Mentors provide honest, respectful feedback to guide growth.
* District Commanders monitor mentorship effectiveness across Posts.

**The Cycle of Legacy**

The heart of the VFW Mentorship Program is renewal. Each mentee becomes a confident leader who will, in turn, mentor others. This cycle ensures the VFW remains strong, unified, and mission-driven for generations to come.

**Mentorship Program Worksheets**

**Mentor & Mentee Information**

* **Mentor Name:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **Mentee Name:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **Post/District:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* **Start Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Initial Goals (Initiation Stage)**

**Progress Check-in Notes (Cultivation Stage)**

* Month 1: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Month 2: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Month 3: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Leadership Responsibilities (Separation Stage)**

* Tasks/Events Led: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Feedback Notes: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Redefinition Stage Reflections**

* How has the mentee grown into a peer role? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Legacy Plan**

* How will the mentee begin mentoring others? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

⚔️ **“Every leader was once mentored. Every mentor builds tomorrow’s leaders.”**