

WAM MENTOR POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position:	Volunteer Mentor
Reports to:	Mentor / Program Coordinator

The Program:

Women and Mentoring – WAM Limited (WAM) is an early intervention, community-based crime prevention program for adult women who are being charged, or are likely to be charged, with a criminal offence. Our aim is to reduce female incarceration and recidivism, and to promote women's social inclusion.

WAM was established in 2009 as a pilot project working with the Neighbourhood Justice Centre in Collingwood. In 2014 WAM became an independent organisation, and in 2015 WAM commenced working at the Sunshine Magistrates' Court with funding from the Melbourne Women's Fund.

In 2017, WAM was successful in a substantial funding application to the Victorian Legal Services Board (VLSB) grants program, and this has enabled WAM to expand its work to Melbourne and Heidelberg Magistrates' Courts and replicate the program in Broadmeadows by 2020.

WAM has also recently been successful in securing a separate pool of funding to bring the program to Frankston Magistrates' Court. WAM aims to provide mentoring for 200 women over three years – a significant step up from previous activity.

The program aims to support women at their own pace by providing a trusted mentoring relationship with a community volunteer. This relationship encourages self-determination and self-advocacy to assist women to meet their social and legal goals.

Participants are referred to the program from various sources including Victoria Police, Corrections, Court Services, legal services and community organisations. Women may also self-refer. Mentors are trained and resourced to provide appropriate support to the program participants.

Our values are integrity, respect, belonging, empowerment, and social justice.

Position Summary:

WAM mentors are good listeners who trust that women are the experts of their own experiences. Mentors believe in a community that is safe and welcoming for all women.

WAM mentors are carefully selected, screened, and trained before working in the program. Each mentor is required to participate in regular supervision with program staff and other WAM mentors.

Key functions of the mentoring role are:

1. **Building rapport:** Mentors focus on listening carefully and attentively to their participant and to focus on hearing the strengths; feeding back about how utilising her strengths she may be able to manage issues and difficulties herself (rather than fixing them for her).
2. **Practical Assistance:** Mentors could write court support letters, assist participants to search out and access resources, send appointment reminders, and other tasks as required by the participant. Often this involves working with professional services such as court, police, and the social service sector.
3. **Boundaries:** The mentor is a voluntary representative of WAM and behaves professionally at all times. However, as the role is voluntary, the mentor is also required to consider when activities that are beyond the scope of their role and access assistance and referrals with informed consent from the participant.
4. **Social connectedness:** Mentors work with participants on connecting with the community around them. Mentors are knowledgeable about opportunities for positive connections in volunteering, employment, social, activity groups.

Responsibilities

- To complete all required training modules for endorsement as a mentor.
- To participate in ongoing training and supervision.
- To conform to ethical standards of behaviour as outlined in the WAM Code of Conduct and Mentor Handbook.
- To engage fully as a mentor with their matched participant.
- To abide by the policies and practices outlined in this and other related program documents.
- To contribute to ongoing program development and evaluation as part of the action research dimension of this project as required.
- 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 contact with participants.
- To inform the Program Coordinator if they are charged with a criminal offence.
- To provide written reports to the Program Coordinator as required.

Limitations of Mentoring Role

Mentors do not provide legal advice. Mentors are not a replacement for counselling and other professional interventions. When faced with situations such as alcohol and other drug use, mental health issues, legal issues, family violence, or financial issues the mentor's role is to listen, encourage and support the participant to utilise appropriate services.

Conditions of Appointment

All applicants will be required to disclose to the Program Coordinator any criminal offence history and undergo a criminal record check. A prior criminal record will not automatically disqualify a person from becoming a mentor, this will be treated confidentially and worked through on a case-by-case basis.

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

Key Selection Criteria

ESSENTIAL

Successful applicants will identify as women and will have:

- The ability to demonstrate effective active listening skills
- The ability to exercise self-awareness
- An alignment to WAM values (integrity, empowerment, respect, belonging, social justice)
- Availability during the day, either to receive phone calls or meet face-to-face
- The ability to exhibit a non-judgmental attitude to alternate life choices/ life styles
- A warm and practical approach
- The capacity to commit to the program for at least twelve months
- The capacity to be assertive and set firm boundaries

DESIRABLE

Some existing knowledge of local community services and the criminal justice system would be a great advantage.

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

For more information contact:

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Frankston Program Coordinator

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