

MENTORING MODEL GUIDE

Overview

The mentoring program is designed to provide employees opportunities to interact with agency professionals and establish partnerships that create valuable learning experiences for program participants. The objective is to (1) meet needs in areas where training and expertise are desired (2) develop and strengthen interpersonal networks for agency colleagues (3) share and transfer knowledge that enhances performance skills and supports the professional development and success of employees seeking to advance in their career or profession, and (4) provide employees greater insight into various state agency operations.

Eligibility

Participation in the program is voluntary and open to all employees regardless of race, religion, color, national origin, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age (40 or older), political affiliation, National Guard or veteran status, genetic information, or disability.

Requirements

The mentoring program is established on trust, mutual respect and a collaborative, reciprocal relationships based on commitment and responsibility on the part of both the mentor and mentee.

Participation in the mentoring program requires that the mentor and mentee:

- Attend a mentoring program Information Session
- Sign the Mentee/Mentor Agreement at the beginning of their partnership
- Establish goals and objectives, and develop an Action Plan (AP) or Individual Development Plan (IDP)
- Meet on a mutually agreed upon schedule for the duration of the partnership
- Commit to a reasonable duration for the partnership (See “Duration” below)
- Track progress and provide feedback

➤ Duration

The duration of a mentor’s and mentee’s involvement in the program is dependent upon the guidelines stipulated by the governing agency; however at least a one-year partnership with regular communication between participants and at least one meeting per month are recommended.

Participation in and completion of the program does not guarantee mentees a promotion or selection into a future position within an agency.

Expectations

For the purpose of this mentoring program, a mentor is an experienced individual who advises and trains a less experienced employee or colleague and shares unique experiences, skills, and strengths in support of a mentee’s professional development. Mentors are expected to establish

an open, trusting, respectful relationship with the mentee and:

- Attend the Mentoring Program Information Session
- Take the lead in the mentoring relationship
- Guide the mentee in setting SMART goals and developing an AP or IDP
- Support the mentee's efforts toward accomplishing their goals
- Evaluate the mentee's progress and provide constructive feedback
- Spend a minimum of ___ hours per month in conversations with the mentee and meet one-on-one with the mentee at least ___ times per month.
- Recommend, monitor, and approve assignments and activities
- Track and report progress to the program coordinator

For the purpose of this mentoring program, a mentee is a less experienced individual who receives guidance and helpful advice from a more experienced colleague. By virtue of having a mentor, a mentee has a unique opportunity to obtain training, insight and valuable feedback that could be essential to advancing their career and professional development. Mentees are expected to foster an open, honest, respectful relationship with the mentor and:

- *Meet the defined eligibility criteria (Be in good standing in their employment as evidenced by current NC VIP ratings... with at least ___ months/years of agency service)
- Attend the Mentoring Program Information Session
- Provide a completed Needs Assessment Form to the Mentor at the start of the partnership
- Spend a minimum of ___ hours per month in conversations with the mentor and meet one-on-one with the mentor at least ___ times per month.
- Track and report monthly progress, assignments, and activities

*Extenuating circumstances may be reviewed at the discretion of the program coordinator or manager and acceptance may then be allowed with appropriate approval when all requirements are not clearly met.

Opportunities and Objectives

The mentorship is a giving and receiving collaboration between all involved. It can effectively leverage shared efforts, ideas, and perspectives to help a mentee achieve a stated goal. The mentor, mentee and agency also have many opportunities that can become objectives in this collaboration. These include but are not limited to:

Mentor

- Gain knowledge/experience
- Enhance leadership skills
- Enhance communication skills
- Raise profile within the agency
- Further the agency's mission
- Promote and reflect the agency's values

Mentee

- Develop interpersonal skills
- Acquire experiential learning in a new or advanced area or field
- Increase knowledge (esp. of state government and agency infrastructure)

- Broaden network / build professional relationships
- Increase satisfaction / engagement
- Improve self-confidence
- Identify professional / career advancement opportunities

Agency

- Increase staff competencies and skills
- Foster job satisfaction and employee engagement
- Develop existing workforce / promote from within
- Reduce turnover
- Identify, assess, and leverage agency talent
- Aid in succession planning
- Foster collaboration (vs competition) within the agency
- Align with the agency's Vision and Values

Selecting a Mentor

Identifying, recruiting, and selecting a mentor is an important step for the program coordinator and the mentee. A mentor's function is to guide and accelerate the learning and development process as well as career progression for the mentee. Identifying who will be a good mentor for the mentee is something the program coordinator must consider, keeping in mind that an ideal mentor pool is broad and diverse. The program coordinator should match mentees with the best-fit mentor based on the mentee's objectives and the mentor's skills and role in the agency. Maintaining a list of available mentors and their area of expertise is recommended.

The program coordinator should recruit mentors from available staff and tie the mentoring program to the mission and values of the agency. This tie-in can be added to recruitment statements and announcements when underscoring the need for and value of the program.

When selecting a mentor, the program coordinator should identify and discuss their:

- Current job or role
- Career path or progression
- Strengths and skills
- Interests (esp. in being a mentor--Their "why")
- History or experience in mentoring if any
- Idea of an effective mentoring partnership

Equally, when matching a mentor with a mentee, discuss with mentees their:

- Current job or role
- Professional or career development needs and goals
- Desired strengths and skills
- List of what the mentee could learn from a mentor
- Idea of an effective mentoring partnership

It is best to match mentors with mentees who are:

- Not direct reports

- Diverse and can offer differing experiences and perspectives.
- Likely to develop skills and capabilities needed in the agency
- Committed to their professional development

Mentor-Mentee Agreement

The mentoring program is designed to be a rewarding and productive partnership that fosters open dialogue, knowledge sharing and the free expression of thoughts and ideas. Participants are expected to treat each other with respect and consideration always maintaining professional and ethical conduct during the mentoring relationship. Participants should keep meeting discussions confidential and not disclose, share, duplicate or distribute each other's personal information without consent. Requests for confidentiality should be honored. Participants should share any concerns or potential issues regarding the partnership with their mentor/mentee and, if necessary, the program coordinator.

Initial Meeting

The initial meeting between a mentor and mentee lays the groundwork and is crucial to establishing a rewarding and successful mentor/mentee relationship. The meeting should occur soon after the first contact when participants receive their mentor/mentee assignment. Scheduling at least one hour for the initial one-on-one meeting is recommended.

The mentor should review the mentee's background, work history and skills prior to the initial meeting and discuss these during the meeting. The mentor should also review and discuss the Needs Assessment Form that will be provided by the mentee during the meeting. The mentee can also provide this form in advance of the meeting, if desired.

The mentee should learn as much information as possible about the mentor (career path, expertise, role, and responsibilities in the agency, etc.) prior to the initial meeting and be prepared to discuss those areas that are of interests to them in skills development and goal setting. The mentee should have a list of the objectives, skills, training, and the career trajectory they are interested in pursuing, and any questions they would like answered.

To assist mentors and mentees with their initial and ongoing meetings, the program coordinator or manager can suggest areas to focus on and topics to discuss. This can be beneficial in subsequent meetings when more guidance is required.

➤ During the initial meeting, the mentor and mentee will:

- Make introductions (briefly share information about themselves)
- Cover the ground rules
- Establish a schedule
- Set learning and development goals and objectives
- Create or outline an Action Plan (AP) or Individual Development (IDP)
- Discuss and sign the Mentor-Mentee Agreement

Setting Learning and Development Goals

The mentorship Action Plan (AP) or Individual Development Plan (IDP) will help define goals and objectives and determine the steps for how the mentoring partnership will work. At least a rough draft of the plan should be completed during the initial meeting. The mentee should identify up to three (3) objectives or areas of improvement that are most relevant or appropriate for them and be clear on what they hope to accomplish. The plan can be modified, expanded, and updated throughout the mentoring process but should not deviate too far or frequently from its original course. A review of the plan and the outcomes of the partnership, relative to goals set and achieved, should be discussed, and documented during the final meeting at the conclusion of the mentoring partnership. Outcomes should also be shared with the program coordinator.

Creating a Meeting Schedule

Creating a meeting and check-in schedule is an essential task and critical component to establishing a positive and productive mentoring partnership. The key is adopting a schedule that can be fine-tuned to meet the needs of both participants and aligns with the AP/IDP. Work schedules / hours of operation, job duties and expectations, mentor / mentee needs, plan assignments, and any additional strategies for success should be factored in when creating the schedule. At least one face-to-face [in-person or virtual] meeting is recommended per month with periodic email and/or phone check-ins as needed.

Mentors should ensure that the schedule has structure, flexibility, and sets clear, well-defined expectations that both parties can stick to for the duration of the mentorship, keeping in mind that mentees who are non-exempt or support staff typically have less flexibility in their work schedule.

Adhering to the schedule will build trust, commitment and confidence throughout the mentoring partnership and make the most of the time invested.

Ground Rules and the Mentor-Mentee Agreement

Ground rules are a short list of expectations and agreements that guide how a mentor and mentee will work and learn together. Ground rules help each participant plan for, start and maintain productive discussions and interactions, and clarify expectations for behavior.

These rules are working agreements that help to build trust and respect between mentorship participants. They encourage openness, listening, respect, and facilitate the sharing of ideas and perspectives. They can often help prevent pitfalls like ambiguity, misunderstandings, or disagreements before they occur. While mentor and mentee are responsible for establishing their ground rules, it is recommended that the rules be shared with the program coordinator and cover:

- Setting and Managing Expectations
 - Be on time and stay on task
 - Communicate effectively
 - Be clear on objectives
 - Plan ahead
 - Value and respect your partner's job / role

- Responsibility and Accountability
 - Do the work
 - Take responsibility for mistakes
 - Tell the truth
 - Invest time wisely
 - Follow-through on commitments

- Opinions and Feedback
 - Ensure that feedback is constructive
 - Be specific
 - Listen
 - Be open to compromise
 - Agree to disagree
 - Focus on the behavior or product, not the person
 - Align feedback with goals

Evaluation

Assessments of the program, mentor-mentee experiences, and mentorship outcomes are also an integral part of the mentoring program. Mentor and mentee suggestions and feedback are vital for successful program continuation, development, and improvements. Constructive criticism is a crucial component of the mentor-mentee partnership and should be established early on as an expectation. The program coordinator will discuss individually with the mentor and mentee, upon conclusion of the mentorship, their experience to identify areas of success as well as areas for improvement in how the agency's program is designed and implemented.

Confidentiality

A degree of confidentiality is expected in a mentorship. Mentor and mentee should discuss early on what type of information should and will be kept confidential, as well as the limits of this confidentiality. The program coordinator can help establish confidentiality guideline and should stay abreast of all confidentiality agreements. The program coordinator should also maintain a file of all signed Mentor-Mentee Agreements.

Summary

It is recommended that, soon after the program is established, the program coordinator or manager hold an introduction to the Mentorship Program / information and Q&A meeting with agency staff who might be interested in the program and follow up annually with similar meetings or reminders.

SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Stakeholder	Assignment
<i>Agency Leadership</i>	Define goals and objectives for the program. Appoint program manager or coordinator to oversee the program. Provide needs assessment updates to and advise program coordinator(s) or manager(s) as needed. Maintain and update program policy and procedures as needed. Establish a recognition program.
<i>Program Manager/Coordinator</i>	Oversee mentoring program. Facilitate Mentor-Mentee Information Session/Training. Monitor and evaluate activities. Establish a mentor recruitment plan. Provide program assessments to agency leadership. Perform participant screenings. Coordinate information sessions, mentor/mentee matching / assignments, recognition events, and mentor partnership closures.
<i>Mentor</i>	Commit to train, advise, meet with, support, and motivate mentee. Monitor and evaluate mentee's progress. Create with the mentee an action plan (AP) or individual development plan (IDP) and meeting schedule. Inform program coordinator / manager of mentee's progress. Provide feedback and recommendations for program development.
<i>Mentee</i>	Commit to participate in mentoring activities actively and fully. Meet regularly with mentor. Track and complete assignments on schedule. Provide feedback to mentor and solicit progress assessments.