



NJLA: New Jersey Library Association
The voice of New Jersey libraries and librarians

Mentoring Guidelines

The definition of a mentor is a trusted counselor or guide. A mentor has the ability to lead, inspire, and motivate his or her protégé by expanding his or her awareness, insight, and perspective. Mentors are a powerful force for developing employees and the organization.

The mentor may serve as an adviser, advocate, and coach, depending on the personalities and needs of the mentor and protégé. The mentor should contact new protégé's as soon possible to promote openness and plan to meet regularly with him or her.

Effective mentoring can occur in as little as two hours a month, but time together should be planned and maintained. The relationship can also be strengthened when the mentor invites the protégé to join in regular activities: having a meal, taking a walk, going to a conference, learning a new skill, attending a meeting, lecture, performance, or cultural social event.

Things to Remember:

- Private information is not to be shared outside of the mentoring relationship.
- Be honest and fair in your interactions.
- Promptly respond to each other's queries and contacts.
- Communicate on a regular basis.
- The focus of most successful mentoring is mutual learning. If your needs are not being met, please contact the current Mentor Committee Chair.

Role of NJLA:

- Promote and administer NJLA Mentoring Program.
- Maintain necessary records.
- Provide a venue for Mentor and Mentee to interact at NJLA Spring Conference or other event.
- Match Mentors and Mentees.

Program Monitoring:

After one year, the participants will complete and send to the Mentoring Committee a brief report on their experience with the program. Continuation of the relationship beyond the first year is optional, but strongly encouraged.

Roles and Responsibilities

A. MENTOR

A mentor asks the tough questions and communicates the unwritten rules of how things work, identifies potential relationships, assimilates the protégé into the culture and assists in developing goals to succeed.

Qualifications

A mentor must have the following qualifications:

- Ability to influence and persuade others in positions of power
- Credibility with colleagues
- Seniority in relation to the protégé
- The respect of peers and professionals
- Expertise in his or her field of knowledge
- A desire to help the protégé as well as the organization
- A willingness to commit time and energy to the relationship
- Ability to help the protégé set and attain goals

Responsibilities

A mentor is responsible for providing the following to this or her protégé:

- Vision and Insight
- Advice and counsel
- Support and encouragement
- Upward mobility
- Encouragement for building self-confidence and stronger self-esteem
- Crisis or failure control plans
- Insight into the library culture
- A solid role model
- Constructive feedback and critical analysis
- Regular meetings

Benefits

For mentors, the rewards of mentoring are the following:

- The personal satisfaction of giving back to the organization
- A legacy of personal knowledge, insight and experience
- Career enhancement, high visibility and prestige

B. PROTÉGÉ

A protégé seeks constructive feedback as well as encouragement and has a strong commitment to professional growth and the ambition to succeed.

Qualifications

A protégé must have the following characteristics:

- Desire to learn and grow
- Ambition to succeed
- Ability to accept risk
- Commitment and loyalty to the profession
- Both intelligence and common sense
- Strong commitment to education, goals and personal responsibility
- Ability to listen and follow through with directions

Responsibilities

A protégé must:

- Be receptive to feedback and coaching
- Seek out opportunities for substantive work assignments
- Assess his or her individual needs
- Construct a career plan
- Take initiative in skill development
- Be proactive in career development
- Actively participate in the mentoring relationship
- Take advantage of the training and assistance offered
- Observe the rules of confidentiality
- Develop and utilize the skills of professionalism

Benefits

The protégé gains the following benefits from being mentored:

- Assistance in defining career goals, strategies and options
- Help in building confidence to grow beyond the usual expectations
- Personalized education geared toward specific needs
- Less time spent on the wrong job
- Increased organizational awareness and political savvy
- Increased opportunity for advancement
- Increased leadership capabilities
- Increased risk-taking

Tips for a Successful Mentoring Partnership

For both the mentor and the protégé, the following contribute to a successful mentoring partnership:

- Establish boundaries
- Don't stereotype, generalize or assume that your mentor or protégé will not understand your perspective
- Be candid regarding issues of differences
- Be open about work and maintain a professional behavior
- Find a common denominator to put each other at ease
- Articulate any fears about working with a person representing a significantly different perspective
- Maintain records of activities and growth
- Keep your supervisor informed
- Meet regularly, but be flexible