

**LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE**

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM HANDBOOK

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1. INTRODUCTION

Objective: To provide an opportunity for members of the Oregon Chapter of the American Public Works Association to develop their leadership and professional skills.

The program involves a 1 on 1 style mentorship pairing that will help mentees establish goals and optionally prepare a career development plan (CDP). Mentorship discussion topics may include (but are not limited to):

- Preparing and planning for the future
- Formulating and implementing policy
- Leading an organization or team
- Communicating using effective strategies
- Building relationships and partnerships, and maintaining a network of partners
- Managing and investing in staff
- Managing information
- Managing money and resources
- Managing infrastructure
- Managing municipal services
- Navigating career growth

About Mentoring

Mentoring plays a key role in developing one's career. The mentoring partnership is an agreement between two people who share experiences and expertise to help with one another's personal and professional growth. Traditionally, a mentor is someone of substantial experience, talent and professional standing who nurtures the career of a less experienced individual, or "mentee." Many types of mentoring relationships take place in the work environment, such as supervisory mentoring, formal mentoring, situational mentoring, and informal mentoring. The key to successful mentoring is to recognize and respect each other's strengths and differences, clarify expectations and roles, establish clear goals and potentially a Career Development Plan (if desired), and mutually manage the logistics of the mentoring process to ensure that discussions take place.

2. DEFINING A MENTOR

A mentor is an experienced individual who serves as a trusted counselor, loyal adviser, and coach who helps and guides another individual's development. Mentors are confidants who help mentees reflect on the competencies they are developing; provide perspective; and offer open, candid feedback. Mentors have a unique

opportunity to serve as a "sounding board" for mentees on issues and challenges they may not share with individuals within their own organization. Mentors are interested in and willing to help others.

The success of the mentoring relationship depends on the time and commitment invested in the relationship. A strong mentoring relationship helps mentees adjust to and succeed in the work environment. When solid communication and commitment are established between employees and the work organization, the incidences of employee dissatisfaction and turnover may be reduced.

Mentors should be fully supportive of mentees' professional development and should provide encouragement and guidance. However, it is not the role of a mentor to advocate on behalf of the mentee in terms of promotion, special assignments, or changes in employment.

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS OF A MENTOR

Mentors should possess knowledge, skills and abilities that are aligned with public works.

ACHIEVER



A mentor is an achiever—one who sets and continually evaluates career goals and strives to reach them. A successful mentor is usually one who takes on more responsibility than is required, volunteers for extra activities, and climbs the proverbial career ladder at a quick pace. A mentor attempts to inspire a mentee with the same drive for achievement.

PEOPLE ORIENTED



A mentor is one who is genuinely interested in people and has a desire to help others develop and grow. A successful mentor is one who provides sufficient time with the mentee, possesses good people skills, and knows how to effectively communicate and actively listen. A mentor must also be able to resolve conflicts and give appropriate feedback.

GOOD MOTIVATOR



A mentor needs to be able to motivate a mentee through encouraging feedback. A mentor will expand a mentee's experiences while noting the advantages and rewards associated with accepting new challenges.

EFFECTIVE TEACHER



A mentor must thoroughly understand the skills and knowledge required by the mentee's position and goals and should be able to effectively teach these skills to the mentee.

SECURE IN POSITION



A mentor must be confident in their career so that pride for the mentee's accomplishments can be genuinely expressed. A mentor should appreciate a mentee's developing strengths and abilities and enjoy being a part of the mentee's growth.

VALUES AND WORK



A mentor takes pride in public works. A mentor understands how to develop mission and vision statements and values and supports public works initiatives. A mentor is respected by their peers and management and serves as a role model. Keep in mind that a mentee looks to their mentor for guidance on interpreting policies and procedures. In order to provide this guidance, a mentor needs to know and understand this information.

RESPECTS OTHERS



A mentor is one who shows respect for another's well-being. Each individual, including the mentor, has certain vulnerabilities and imperfections that must be accepted. A mentor should learn to accept a mentee's weaknesses and flaws, just as the mentee must learn to accept the weaknesses and flaws of the mentor.

Mentors can, in fact, help a mentee explore their vulnerabilities and imperfections. Without passing judgment, a mentor must also recognize that differences in opinions, values, and interests will exist. By embracing such differences, a mentor projects openness to others.

OTHER ASPECTS



Individuals who have had positive formal or informal experiences with a mentor tend to make good mentors themselves. Good mentors are experienced individuals who have a reputation for helping others develop their skills. Maintaining the confidentiality of the mentor/mentee relationship is also crucial for success. It is also important to maintain a healthy working relationship between mentors and mentees, this program is not to be used as an opportunity for recruitment.

MENTOR ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND EXPECTATIONS

Mentoring is an active partnership between committed employees to foster professional growth and career development. For the mentoring program to be successful, mentors and mentees must be active and committed participants.

Mentors have specific responsibilities:

- Act as a sounding board for the mentee's ideas, goals and aspirations, and encourage action toward achieving them.
- Commit to teaching, guiding, and training.
- Assist in developing and completing the mentee's Career Development Plan.
- Assist the mentee in setting developmental goals and plans to achieve them.
- Be available to discuss problems and concerns of the mentee as they occur.
- Communicate with the mentee regularly.
- Discuss the expectations of the mentoring partnership.
- Discuss work-related concerns that impede performance or career growth.
- Identify developmental objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, result-oriented, and within a specific timeframe (SMART Goals).
- Maintain confidentiality within mentoring relationships.
- Reach agreement with the mentee on a schedule of regular mentor/mentee meetings.
- Provide advice, coaching, and/or feedback to the mentee on a regular basis.
- Provide developmental feedback to the mentee.
- Provide advice to the mentee on issues related to their career development.
- Provide feedback to the mentee regarding their strengths and developmental needs.
- Provide objective and honest feedback.
- Share organizational knowledge gained from personal experience.

3. DEFINING A MENTEE

A mentee is a self-motivated individual seeking to continuously promote personal development. A mentee recognizes personal strengths and weaknesses and actively seeks methods for personal growth.

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS OF A MENTEE

A successful mentoring relationship not only depends on the characteristics of the mentor, but also depends on the characteristics of the mentee. The following are desirable characteristics of a mentee. Through this program it is expected that the amount of effort will yield comparable results – you get out what you put in.

POSITIVE ATTITUDE



Having a positive attitude when approaching this program is one of the most important traits for a mentee to possess because positivity and curiosity can lead to success. A mentee with a poor or "defeatist" attitude will likely not be able to reap the full benefits of this program. An optimistic mentee is more likely to tackle difficulties and stay on course.

EAGERNESS TO LEARN



A mentee has a strong desire to learn and develop their skills and abilities. A mentee seeks educational and/or training opportunities whenever possible to broaden their capabilities. A mentee strives to elevate their level of technical skills and professional expertise to gain a greater mastery of the job.

ABILITY TO WORK AS A TEAM PLAYER



A mentee usually interacts with others as part of the requirement of their position. It is important that the mentee cooperate and communicate well. A mentee must be a team player and contribute as much as possible to the mentoring relationship. To do this, a mentee should do the following:

- Initiate and participate in discussions
- Seek information and opinions
- Suggest a plan for reaching goals
- Clarify or elaborate on ideas
- Resolve differences
- Accept praise and criticism

PATIENT



A mentee must be willing to put time and effort into the mentoring relationship. They must persevere through difficulties that arise during the learning process and should recognize that career growth and advancement does not happen overnight.

RISK TAKER



A mentee must be willing to explore the unknown. This means that a mentee must move beyond tasks that they have mastered and accept new and more challenging experiences. Task changes are never easy. A mentee must realize that to grow professionally it is necessary to assess oneself, develop new skills, and interact with others. One must be willing to take chances.

MEETINGS WITH MENTORS



Mentees have an opportunity to capitalize on the wisdom of their mentors' experience. Mentoring meetings help mentees hone their personal and professional capabilities while increasing individual and organizational effectiveness.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN



Mentees may choose to design and define a Career Development Plan with assistance from their mentor. The Career Development Plan will be developed jointly.

OTHER ASPECTS



A mentee should lead by evaluating their own strengths and weaknesses, setting goals, initiating discussions, and maintaining communication. They should also be aware of how much personal information they share.

MENTEE ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND EXPECTATIONS

The most successful mentees are those who are motivated and feel empowered to plan and manage the direction of their professional lives. They take responsibility for their development, learning, and professional growth. Furthermore, they come to the mentor/mentee relationship open to receiving coaching, feedback, and guidance from the mentor.

Mentees in the mentor/mentee relationship have the following specific responsibilities:

- Accept responsibility for attending meetings with mentor and creating Career Development Plan, if applicable.
- Acknowledge that the development of their careers can be achieved through a process of intentional planned experiences and assignments.
- Be open to new discoveries and possibilities that will result in a higher level of potential.
- Be willing to discuss with their mentor developmental problems and concerns as they occur.
- Collaborate with their mentor to identify competency strengths and weaknesses.
- Demonstrate a willingness to commit to the mentoring process.
- Be receptive to learning and developing a learning relationship with a mentor(s).
- Develop a Career Development Plan that identifies objectives and necessary training.
- Discuss the expectations of the mentoring partnership.
- Discuss ideas, goals, aspirations and a plan for action with their mentor and supervisor.
- Maintain confidentiality within the mentoring relationship.
- Meet with the mentor on a regular basis (i.e., monthly, weekly) or as established by the mentoring agreement.
- Participate as an active listener when receiving feedback.
- Participate in open and honest discussions with the mentor.
- Seek advice from their mentor on norms and expectations.
- Seek feedback from their mentor and others regarding the mentee's strengths and additional developmental needs.
- Take initiative and be proactive in their own career development.
- Work with the mentor on networking at all position levels and get introductions to others who might be able to help with advice, knowledge, etc.

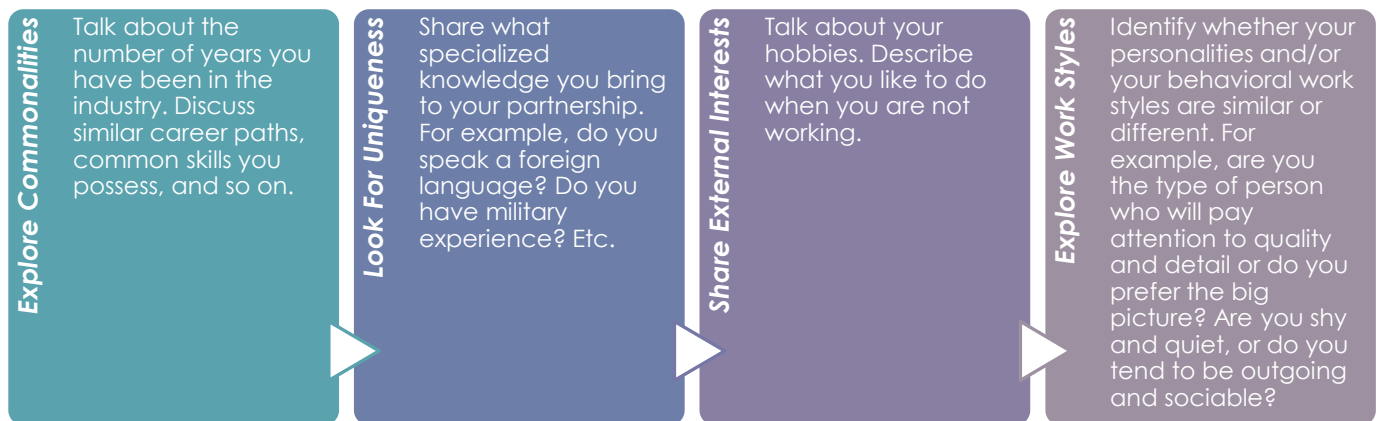
4. GETTING STARTED!

The first mentoring meeting is critical. The most important part of beginning the relationship and the mentoring process is for the mentor and mentee to get to know each other, and to clarify their mentoring goals. The following steps may be broken out in several meetings, if necessary, in order to maximize effectiveness.

1. GET ACQUAINTED

The initial meeting between the mentor and mentee is critical to the success of the relationship because it sets the tone. It is extremely important (especially if the mentor and mentee don't know each other well) to take the time to create a climate of trust and of safety. Each relationship will be unique and adapted to the mentor and mentee as individuals. Below are some discussion guidelines to help the mentor and mentee get to know each other.

The mentor and mentee should take the time early in their relationship to get to know each other – at both a personal and professional level. The effort will help them build trust and can go a long way toward helping to successfully launch their relationship.



2. DISCUSS OVERALL GOALS

For the mentee, the following questions provide an ideal opportunity to help the mentor understand the mentee's specific career goals and open the door to describing their vision of the future:

- Where do you want to be three to five years from today?
- What do you want to be known for?
- What is your niche?
- What type of reputation have you built?

Once the mentor has received a good understanding of the mentee's vision, it is equally important to spend time addressing the mentee's current skills and abilities as they relate to overall career goals:

- What are your three greatest strengths?
- What areas offer the greatest opportunity for improvement?

This conversation should be closed by identifying the top three mentoring goals so both mentee and mentor can begin to set the proper expectations and objectives for the partnership.

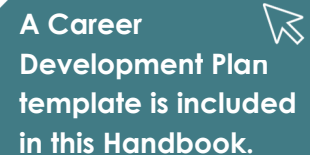
3. DISCUSS LOGISTICS

There is nothing quite as important as agreeing upfront on what is to be accomplished.

- Establish a meeting schedule (Where? When? How long? Frequency?)
- Determine who will initiate meetings.
- Consider geographical differences and make accommodations.
- Outline the parameters for information sharing. For example, "What we discuss stays between the two of us." Or "What we discuss stays between the two of us unless you give me permission to share it with others."

4. CREATE A CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This stage of the relationship is a collaborative effort. Mentors create a safe environment for the mentee to examine behaviors or areas that they want to change. A key outcome of this conversation is a Career Development Plan. A mentor can be a wealth of knowledge during this stage by sharing resources, developmental ideas, and opportunities.



A Career Development Plan template is included in this Handbook.

Some key items to consider in the Career Development Plan include:

- **Review top mentoring goals** – after initial discussions, each show list their goals in order of priority.
- **Create a list of learning activities** – The most successful plans are those that have a range of learning activities that encourage:
 - Learning by doing (e.g., special project, writing a memo, etc.)
 - Learning from others (e.g., shadowing, situational mentoring, etc.)
 - Learning from challenging experiences or "stretch assignments" (e.g., project outside of department, leadership role, etc.)
- **Create a timeline** – Determine how many hours, days, or weeks it will take to complete each activity.

- **Begin the mentoring journey** – Always keep in mind that the actual journey is an important part of the mentoring process and many times can be the most rewarding!

5. DISCUSS NEXT STEPS

The mentor and the mentee may want to review the mentee's job competencies and skill set and set goals or identify areas in which support from the mentor may be helpful.

At the next meeting, the mentor and mentee can agree on the goals and decide what developmental activities may be useful for the mentee. They can also complete a Career Development Plan.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR GETTING ACQUAINTED

FOR THE MENTOR

The following are guidelines for how to get started with a mentee and are based on research of "best practices" for mentoring programs. It is not possible to cover all these topics in one meeting, so these questions and discussion topics should be used to fit the mentor's own style and approach.

Talk about the mentoring relationship.

- Role of the mentor is to support the mentee, strengthen competencies needed to enhance job performance, and to support the mentee in career progression.
- Purpose of relationship is to support the mentee in their agenda and career goals. (The mentor and mentee need to have a realistic understanding and agreement of where the mentee is now and where they would like to be.)
- Partners should select developmental activities that will assist the mentee in achieving their goals.
- Partnership in which power is granted to the relationship, not the mentor. (The mentor is not the expert that is telling mentee what to do. The mentor is a partner who is sharing their knowledge from work experience.)
- The mentee should be mindful of what they need from the relationship and, if needs are not being met; possible solutions should be discussed with the mentor.
- The mentoring relationship is based on mutual learning and shared experience.
- The mentor should ask the mentee about career – related (and relevant) background information. If the mentee does not ask, the mentor should offer information that may be helpful.

Discuss personal goals.

- The mentor discusses reasons for becoming a mentor and what they get out of it.
- If the mentor has never mentored before, discussion can center on what the mentor looks forward to about the process and what they would like to learn from it.
- The mentor asks the mentee what they would like to get out of the relationship.

Use these sample questions as a guide to talk with your mentee.

Here are some questions to ask your mentee to begin to get to know them better:

- Tell me about your job: How long have you been here? What do you do?
- Who is your supervisor? What do you like about your job? What is challenging or what don't you like about it? What are your strengths?
- What areas do you feel you need to develop skills in or learn more about?

- What do you like to do outside of work?
- Tell me about where you want to be in your career one year from now. What do you see yourself doing? In three years? In five years? (Be sure the mentee describes the nature of activities or work they would like to be doing, not just a job title.)
- What kind of support would you like from me? How can I be helpful to you?
- How would you like to be supported in order to accomplish your goals? (Forcefully pushed? Gently encouraged? Challenged?)
- What are you looking for in a coach?
- What is the best way to discuss areas in which I think you can improve?
- What do you hope to get out of this mentorship?
- Do you have anything else you wish to cover?
- Do you have any concerns?

Review responsibilities of the mentor and the mentee.

- Ask if there are any questions about the mentee's responsibilities.
- What areas of the mentor's responsibilities does the mentee feel would be particularly helpful to them?

Create a safe space for both the mentor and mentee.

- Commit to the relationship and keeping mentor/mentee agreements.
- Honesty. Be truthful about the mentee's strengths, weaknesses, and any other matters that may arise.
- Expect the mentee to be honest and direct as well. Allow the mentee to speak candidly if a need is not being met, something is not working, or if something is bothering them.
- Ask for permission to fail or to make mistakes if you are new at mentoring.
- Discuss the importance of CONFIDENTIALITY and ask mentee to agree on what is to be kept confidential.

Decide on the logistics and structures needed to support their relationship.

- Meeting times
- Length of meetings
- Meeting frequency
- Virtual Meetings or in-person
- How will meetings be structured to use the time together?

FOR THE MENTEE

- Why do you want to be a mentor?
- Have you been a mentor before? When? Where? For how long?
- Tell me about your career.
- What are your passions – professionally and personally?

- How long have you been at your current position?
- What do you do?
- To whom do you report?
- What do you like about your career?
- What is challenging or what don't you like about it?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses? Or what areas do you feel you need to learn more about?
- What do you like to do outside of work?
- Given my specific developmental needs (state these) and my expectations for the relationship (state these), what types of skills can you teach me? How can you help me reach my career goals?

BOUNDARIES, ETHICS, AND THE FINE PRINT

Mentors should follow workplace standards for appropriateness. While personal rapport and candid feedback are both characteristics of good mentoring relationships, advice should be career related. Mentors should take care to always respect the organization and private lives of those they mentor, particularly when it comes to giving advice. The mentor/mentee relationship should always remain professional.

WHAT IS A MENTOR NOT ABLE TO DO?

A mentor should never be used to bypass normal and appropriate procedures, or to exert pressure or influence on an individual (the mentee's supervisor) who is the appropriate decision authority. For example, if a supervisor denies a particular request for training or an assignment, there should not be a request or expectation for the mentor to intervene. Additionally, a mentor cannot guarantee promotions. Likewise, when aiding developmental activities, a mentor must be careful not to give any unfair advantage to the mentee(s) they mentor. Finally, a mentor should not give advice on personal matters.

WHAT ARE SOME SIGNS OF A SUCCESSFUL MENTORING RELATIONSHIP?

Signs that a mentoring relationship is successful include the following:

- The mentee is open to change and transition, exploring possibilities, helping others, and learning from others.
- Both parties are inspired by the relationship and gain a great deal of satisfaction from it.
- There is a commitment to understanding, growing, and confronting problems while working toward their solutions.
- The mentee feels a bond or connection with the mentor, recognizing the relationship as one of value in which mutual interest, respect, and straightforward communication are constants.
- The mentee is comfortable going to the mentor when counsel and support are desired, taking responsibility for meeting their own needs in the relationship.
- The mentor helps the mentee to become more aware of their potential.
- The mentor has established a comfortable environment for learning and discussion and enjoys watching the mentee grow.
- When the mentoring relationship ends, both individuals regard each other as colleagues.

WHEN DOES A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP END?

Good mentoring relationships may end when the mentee has outgrown the need for the mentor's guidance and direction. At this point, the relationship generally evolves into a strong mutual respect for one another.

Other mentoring relationships end because they fail to become productive and comfortable. The mentor and mentee may never establish rapport, or one or both parties may not put forth adequate time or effort. There may be a failure to communicate goals, needs, intentions or expectations. The likelihood of this happening is greatest when mentors and mentees agree to the relationship without much consideration or discussion about needs and expectations.

Both mentors and mentees should feel free to end mentoring relationships that are not meeting expectations. In most cases, if one party feels it is not working, the other feels the same way. At this point, the mentee should be encouraged to find a new mentor immediately, in order to maintain their momentum. This program can be a resource for finding new mentors.

The mentoring relationship will likely not continue indefinitely. A formal mentor/mentee relationship typically lasts from 6 to 12 months.

Mentoring should be a beneficial and enjoyable process for both mentors and mentees.

CREDITS

Nasa.gov

US Government – Department of Human Resources – Mentoring program
www.hhs.gov APWA Donald L. Stone Center – Mentor Handbook

Northwest Public Works Institute – Mentor Handbook

APPENDIX - CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN TEMPLATE

Name: _____

Date: _____

Organization: _____

Phone: _____

Mentor's Signature _____

Update Completed: _____

Instructions:

1. Mentees are responsible for initiating and completing their plans.
2. If you are currently unsure of your medium-range and long-range goals, you may submit a plan with only your short-range goals completed (see sample below). When you are ready to update your plan, you can include your medium-range and long-range goals at that time.
3. Review your plan with your mentor and obtain your mentor's signature (acknowledgment of review). Keep one copy for your records and give one copy to your mentor.
4. You are encouraged to review/update your plan with your mentor, periodically. Updated plans should be discussed with your mentor.

Short-range Goals (1-2 years--Training/Education/Experience/Position):

1. May be a specific training goal such as increasing word processing skills, increasing supervisory skills, increasing presentation skills, or learning to operate specific pieces of equipment. May also include an educational goal such as completing a certificate program, a two-year degree, a bachelor's degree, or a master's degree.
2. May include specific experience such as an acting in capacity assignment and/or a career development assignment. May include a particular position you would like to attain such as Maintenance Supervisor, City Engineer, or Public Works Director.

Steps to Achieve Goal	Date Accomplished
1. May be specific training offered by the Coordinated Training Program such as WordPerfect, Excel, Meeting Skills, or Leadership Skills.	6/99 (include dates when plan is updated)

2. May include an external training that supports your goal.	
3. May include cross-training for a limited period.	
4. May include an educational goal such as completion of a certificate program, a two-year degree, a bachelor's degree, or master's degree.	
5. May include Acting in Capacity or Career Development Assignments.	
6. May include participation on committees and/or task teams.	
7. May include membership and participation in professional organizations.	

Career Development Plan

Short-range Goals (1-2 years--Training/Education/Experience/Position):	
1.	
2.	
Steps to Achieve Goal	Date Accomplished
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

Medium-range Goals (3-4 years--Training/Education/Experience/Position):

- 1.
- 2.

Steps to Achieve Goal	Date Accomplished
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

Long-range Goals (5+ years--Training/Education/Experience/Position):

- 1.
- 2.

Steps to Achieve Goal	Date Accomplished
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	