

NEW JERSEY WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION TOOLKIT

Matching Senior Lawyers Mentors With Junior Lawyer Mentees

ABOUT NJWLA

The New Jersey Women Lawyers Association (NJWLA) is an independent association whose mission is to advance and retain women in the legal profession through education and activism, to promote qualified women to the highest levels of law firm, government, academic, community and corporate positions and to endorse qualified female attorneys for appointments to the state and federal judiciary. NJWLA is proud to expand its initiatives to include the NJWLA Mentoring Program.

MENTORING PROGRAM

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

A. Quick Facts: The NJWLA Mentor Program

- Is a program geared toward the social and professional advancement of junior lawyers with 10 years or less in practice.
- Matches senior lawyer mentors (10 years or more in practice) from a variety of legal fields with junior lawyer mentees.
- Provides mentors who are committed, encouraging, motivating and supportive.

B. Goals and objectives of the program

- Empower women with professional and social guidance.
- Promote NJWLA's mission.

C. Obligations at a glance

- One-year commitment to the program.
- Fulfillment of your mentee or mentor responsibilities, including once-a-month contact with your mentor or mentee if at all possible.
- Participation in NJWLA's topical conferences/open forum discussions, to be held occasionally as a resource for mentees and mentors. **(Details to follow)**

II. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS IN THE MENTOR/MENTEE RELATIONSHIP

A. Mentor Roles and Responsibilities

NJWLA's Mentoring Program has three main goals for each mentor: (1) supporting each mentee; (2) acting as a resource; and (3) helping a mentee achieve his/her goals. The roles a mentor adopts will differ depending on the

needs of your mentee. Sometimes you may be performing one role, other times you may be performing several.

We encourage mentors to invite their mentee to bar events, lunch with other lawyers and other networking events and activities. Below are general roles and responsibilities that a mentor may assume.

- i. Guide.
 - Help junior lawyers navigate through the transition from student to professional, from junior associate to senior associate, etc.
 - Reveal any “unwritten rules” for developing and maintaining a professional demeanor and reputation.
 - Provide information on the dynamics of a law firm, in-house law department or government agency.
 - Everybody makes mistakes, share yours!
- ii. Motivate: Encourage and support.
 - Motivate your mentee to identify and take concrete steps toward ambitious goals.
 - Focus on what your mentee is doing successfully and relate this positive feedback to your mentee.
- iii. Coach: Provide constructive feedback to promote professional growth.
 - Encourage positive behavior with positive feedback.
 - Discourage negative behavior with constructive feedback.
- iv. Advise: Help your mentee develop his/her professional interests and set realistic goals.
 - Set goals that are reachable, specific, clear and time framed.
 - Goals are not static; keep goals flexible and modify them when necessary.
 - Direct your mentee to career resources that he/she may require.
- v. Be a Role Model: Always project high standards of professionalism and a positive attitude.
 - Remember mentees are likely to imitate their mentors.
 - Provide an opportunity for your mentee to learn the positive attributes of an experienced lawyer.
- vi. Respect: Respect your mentee’s time and confidentiality.
 - Don’t share a mentee’s personal feelings or ideas with a third party unless authorized by your mentee.
 - Respect your mentee’s time as if it were your own.

- vii. Communicate: Be clear about your needs and limits.
 - Communicate early on your preferred method of communication, the best days to be reached and your time constraints.
 - Set boundaries from the beginning.
- viii. Professionalism: Conduct a professional relationship at all times.
 - Work through a conflict with care and respect.
 - Contact the Mentor Program Committee for assistance if necessary.
- ix. Evaluate: Continually evaluate how well you are meeting the goals of the program.
 - Invite your mentee to discuss any concerns.
 - Encourage your mentee to meet his/her goals, not your own.
- x. Recognize: Recognize your mentee when he/she achieves goals you have discussed.
 - Send a congratulatory email or note, or take the time to make a phone call.

B. Mentee Roles and Responsibilities

Below are some general roles that a mentee should expect to play as well as a description of the mentee's responsibility as a participant in program.

- i. Team Player
 - Identify and share your needs with your mentor.
 - Be receptive to feedback.
- ii. Planner
 - Set realistic goals with your mentor.
 - Contribute ideas to solving problems.
- iii. Communicator
 - Don't be afraid to ask questions!
 - Communicate clearly and effectively.
 - Listen and be respectful.
- iv. Respect: Respect your mentor's time and confidentiality.
 - Don't share a mentor's personal feelings or ideas with a third party unless authorized by your mentor.
 - Respect your mentor's time as if it were your own.
- v. Communicate: Be clear about your needs and limits.
 - Communicate early on your preferred method of communication, the best days to be reached, and your time constraints.

- vi. Professionalism: Conduct a professional relationship at all times.
 - Work through a conflict with care and respect.
 - Contact the Mentor Program Committee for assistance if necessary.
- vii. Evaluate: Continually evaluate how well you are meeting your goals.
 - Be committed to self-development.
 - Be able to work interdependently.
- viii. Recognize: Recognize your mentor when you achieve goals you have discussed.
 - Send a thank you note or email or take the time to make a phone call.

C. Program Expectations

NJWLA expects all mentors and mentees to be committed to the program. However, we understand that conflicts may arise. Once a mentor is assigned a mentee, we recommend communication at least once a month whenever possible. If at any time a mentor or mentee feels she cannot work with her mentee or mentor, please contact any Women's Leadership Committee Co-Chair (contact details below and <http://www.njwla.org/>). The Women's Leadership Committee will work to resolve the issue or reassign mentees if necessary. If at any time the mentor or mentee no longer wish to participate in the program, please contact a Women's Leadership Committee Co-Chair.