

NEW JERSEY WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

MENTORSHIP TOOLKIT

Matching Lawyer Mentors With 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 relaunch its Mentorship Program.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

A. NJWLA Mentorship Program

- Is a program geared toward the social and professional advancement of lawyers and law students with 10 years or less experience.
- Matches mentors from a variety of legal fields with mentees.
- Provides mentors who are committed, encouraging, motivating, and supportive.

B. Mentor/Mentee Options

- Lawyers with 5 or less years' experience can sign up to be a mentee.
- Lawyers with 5+ years' experience have the option to be a mentee and/or mentor.
- Mentees have the option to choose mentors with a preferred seniority of 5-10 years' experience or 10+ years' experience.

C. Goals and objectives

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

D. Participants' Obligations

- One-year commitment to the program.
- Fulfillment of mentee or mentor responsibilities, including once-a-month contact with your mentor or mentee, if 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 FOR THE MENTORSHIP RELATIONSHIP

A. Mentor Roles and Responsibilities

NJWLA's Mentoring Program has three main goals for each mentor: (1) support each mentee; (2) act as a resource; and (3) help a mentee achieve their goals. The roles a mentor adopts will differ depending on the needs of the mentee. Sometimes the mentor may be performing one role, other times they 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 and law students navigate 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 their 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 they 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 program's goals.
 - Invite your mentee to discuss any concerns.
 - Encourage your mentee to meet their goals, not the mentor's goals.
- x. **Recognize**
 - Recognize when the mentee achieves goals.
 - Send a congratulatory email, note, or make a phone call.

B. Mentee Roles and Responsibilities

Below are some general roles that a mentee should expect to play and a description of the mentee's responsibilities.

- i. **Team Player**
 - Identify and share 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**
- Notify your mentor when you achieve goals.
 - 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 they cannot work with their mentee or mentor, please contact any Young Lawyers Division or Women's Leadership Committee Co-Chair (contact details below and <http://www.njwla.org/>). The Young Lawyers Division and 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 Young Lawyers Division or Women's Leadership Committee Co-Chair.