



MENTOR PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Before You Begin

- Proactively participate in the program - it's important to help develop others in this profession.
- Get to know the person you are mentoring and understand what his/her goals are for the program.
- Share your knowledge and experiences with the person you are mentoring.
- Have fun, network and learn from the relationship.

Preparation

These questions will help you prepare for your first mentor meeting. Complete these questions and begin thinking about your goals and expectations of the relationship.

1. What outcomes do you most want from the relationship?
2. What do you need to do as the mentor to make this work?
3. What are some features of my job that I like best? That I like least?
4. What are my major accomplishments since I started the position I am in?
5. How can I best help my mentee?
6. What have I done for my personal and professional development?
7. What one thing do I wish someone had told me when I first started out in the business?
8. What does it take to be successful in the landscape profession?
9. Describe your perception of the roles and responsibilities of both the mentor and the professional.
10. How did you first get involved with NALP?

Role of Mentor

Your role as a mentor is to be a resource to the Mentee in the relationship. Foster a trusting and open relationship that allows you to give direction and feedback when needed, assist in career development, and be a confidential sounding board. Mentoring is a two-way street and requires that you commit to the relationship.

Guidelines

- Be positive and honest
- Respect the professional you are mentoring. Never make them feel foolish for asking a question.
- Be perceived as approachable and available.
- Get to know your Mentee on a personal level.
- Provide guidance on career development.
- Make your role as a mentor a high priority.
- Share your experiences and tell your stories – personal scenarios offer valuable, and often unforgettable, insight.
- Share your failures and successes – both types of stories are powerful lessons that provide valuable opportunities for learning.
- Ask questions that make the professional you are mentoring think - good questions require comparison, evaluation and reflection.
- Ask questions. What does the professional you are mentoring think about his/her career? How would he/she like for you to help him/her? What expectations does he/she have of you?
- Support and praise the Mentee when the situation merits support and praise.
- Encourage two-way feedback. Periodically assess the mentoring relationship. Is it giving each of you what you anticipated in the teaching relationship? Offer positive and constructive feedback on the relationship.
- Don't be afraid to say "I don't know but I'll follow up and get back to you."

First Meeting Agenda

This worksheet provides a topic agenda for your first mentee/mentor meeting. It is suggested that your initial meeting focus on defining your relationship by discussing roles and responsibilities, expectations, needs and goals. The first meeting sets the tone for the teaching/learning relationship. This tool will help you plan and prepare.

Review the meeting agenda, prepare necessary notes and use as a discussion outline.

Before the Meeting

- Complete your preparation planning worksheets.
- Review the first meeting agenda.
- Attend to necessary logistics. Schedule time, advance notice and no telephone interruptions.

During the Meeting

- Get acquainted.
- Review the agenda to determine desired outcomes of the meeting.
- Discuss expectations, roles, responsibilities and needs.
- Record decisions and outcomes.
- Discuss what went well and what improvements can be made for your next meeting.
- Schedule next meeting (not more than 30 days is suggested.)

After the Meeting

- Review objectives that were accomplished.
- Determine future meeting topics.
- Summarize meeting results and next steps.

First Meeting Checklist

Get to Know Each Other

- Share information about your professional and personal life
- Learn something new about your mentee/mentor

Establish Guidelines

- When and where will we meet?
- How will we schedule meetings?
- How will we communicate between meetings?
- What agenda format will we use?
- Will there be any fixed agenda items to be discussed at every meeting, aside from checklist?
- How will we exchange feedback?
- How will we measure success?

Confirm Next Steps

- Schedule date, time, and place of future meetings

Mentoring Meeting Journal

Record and discuss points in each of your mentoring meetings. Use these notes to within 7 days of each meeting.

Meeting date: ____/____/____

Check-in: (how are things going, work/life balance)

Goal Discussion: (goal setting/progress to date)

Action Items: (to-do's before the next meeting)

Next Meeting Date: ____/____/____

Getting Acquainted – Questions you may be asked by your Mentee

Below are some helpful questions and topic ideas for you to use during your mentoring meetings.

- How did you get to where you are in your career/business and can you describe your struggles and achievements along the way?
- What are your professional needs and goals?
- Do you have three words of advice you can offer me so that I can continue to progress?
- What are the most valuable lessons you have learned during your career? How might I apply it to my business?
- What skills do I need to nurture that will help me to be extraordinary in my current job?
- What issues would help me understand the direction of my business?
- What is the best way for me to connect to the community I serve?
- What are some political difficulties that I can learn to avoid that will enhance my effectiveness in the community I serve?
- Who would be the most effective people I need to associate myself with to improve the opportunity for advancement in the career?
- Considering my goals, what can I do to expand my skill base?
- Any ideas on how I can independently assess my true career potential?

Building Professional Relationships

- How do I cultivate successful professional relationships in NALP?
- What can I do to network to develop more contacts?
- What communication skills are critical for effectively dealing with people in my work?
- What areas of involvement in NALP would you recommend to me?

Balancing Your Personal and Professional Life

- The hours I work make it challenging to have personal time outside of work. Do you have any helpful suggestions?
- Any creative solutions for balancing my personal life with work?

Summary of the 16 Laws of Mentoring

- 1. The Law of Positive Environment**-Create a positive environment where potential and motivation are released and options discussed.
- 2. The Law of Developing Character**-Nurture a positive character by helping to develop not just talent, but a wealth of mental and ethical traits.
- 3. The Law of Independence**-Promote autonomy; make the professional independent of you, not dependent on you.
- 4. The Law of Limited Responsibility**-Be responsible to them, not for them.
- 5. The Law of Shared Mistakes**-Share your failures as well as your successes.
- 6. The Law of Planned Objectives**-Prepare specific objectives for your relationship.
- 7. The Law of Inspection**-Monitor, review, critique, and discuss potential actions. Do not just expect performance without inspection.
- 8. The Law of Tough Love**-The participants acknowledge the need to encourage independence in the professional.
- 9. The Law of Small Successes**-Use a stepping-stone process to build on accomplishments and achieve great success.
- 10. The Law of Direction**-It is important to teach by giving options as well as direction.
- 11. The Laws of Risk**-A mentor should be aware that a professional's failure may reflect back upon him. A professional should realize that a mentor's advice will not always work.
- 12. The Law of Mutual Protection**-Commit to cover each other's backs. Maintain privacy. Protect integrity, character, and the pearls of wisdom you have shared with one another.
- 13. The Law of Communication**-The mentor and the professional must balance listening with delivering information.
- 14. The Law of Extended Commitment**-The mentoring relationship extends beyond the typical 9-to-5 business day and/or traditional workplace role or position.
- 15. The Law of Life Transition**-As a mentor, when you help a professional enter the next stage of his life or career, you will enter the next stage of yours.
- 16. The Law of Fun**-Make mentoring a wonderful experience laugh, smile, and enjoy the process.