

# LACMC Mentorship Program FAQs

## **Mission and Vision**

The Mentoring Program Committee's **mission** is to create connections between professionals to share knowledge, information, skills, and perspectives across various professional experiences, empowering them to reach their full potential.

The Mentoring Program Committee's **vision** is to enable every participant professional, to develop positive professional relationships that empower them to promote and advance the ethics, principles, and knowledge of quality assurance.

## **WHAT IS THE LACMC MENTORING PROGRAM?**

The mentorship program is a year-long program designed to help mentees expand their professional networks, enhance their professional development, explore potential career possibilities, and interact with an experienced LACMC mentor for coaching and guidance. Each mentee/mentor pair is responsible for creating goals and supporting activities to help the mentee achieve their program outcomes. The mentorship program is not intended to replace the employee/supervisor relationship but provides an additional resource for professional and career development.

## **WHO CAN BE A MENTEE?**

The program is open for all LACMC members of all classifications. Please note, priority will be given to those who have not previously participated as a mentee.

## **WHO CAN BE A MENTOR?**

A mentor is a LACMC member who is interested in helping others with professional and career development. Previous mentees are welcome to participate as mentors.

## **WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT DATES OF THE PROGRAM?**

The program officially begins in January and lasts until December of the same year.

## **I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WANT TO DO WITH MY CAREER. SHOULD I STILL APPLY?**

Yes. Sometimes just talking with someone else is the best way to discover the next career steps. A mentor can provide different perspectives and work with the mentee to identify alternatives. The mentor may also introduce the mentee to other people who can assist in defining career goals.

## **CAN MENTORS AND MENTEES ARRANGE THEIR MEETING TIMES DURING WORK HOURS?**

LACMC leadership's support of the Mentorship Program assumes that participants will arrange their meetings in a responsible way, either during or after working hours, to nurture the relationship and still meet job requirements. One simplified approach is to schedule meetings offsite for morning coffee or lunch.

### **WILL PARTICIPATION IN THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM HELP ME TO BE PROMOTED?**

The objective of the program is to provide individuals with additional career development tools. However, there is no guarantee of salary increases or promotions. If an outcome of the program is that you identified new options or enhanced your skills, new career opportunities may be available.

### **I HAVE NEVER HAD A MENTOR BEFORE? HOW WILL I KNOW WHAT TO DO?**

There are guidelines, checklists, and other materials to help pairs establish goals for their relationships. There are in-person mentor workshops available, and The Mentorship Program Committee is also "on-call" for support at any time.

### **WILL IT COST ME ANYTHING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM?**

No, there is no enrollment fee for the program. The only additional cost may be buying your lunch or a cup of coffee when you meet with your mentor, but "brown bagging" it for lunch is ok too!

### **HOW DO I FIGURE OUT MY MENTEE 'S CAREER GOALS?**

To be a good coach or mentor, you don't need to know about the mentee's career goals. Look at what challenges may be similar to the challenges you have faced. Actively listen to your mentee about concerns and ask probing questions. It is not your job to come up with answers; the mentee likely knows the answer and can get to it with guidance.

### **WHAT DO I DO IF I'M NOT CONNECTING WITH MY MENTEE/MENTOR?**

As much as the Mentorship Program tries to pair mentees/mentors perfectly, you can't expect to walk in the door and have a deep connection. Relationships take time to grow, and trust takes time to build. Here are some tips for developing your relationship and making each meeting meaningful:

- Get to know each other: Build a rapport with one another by discussing personal interests such as how they spend their free time, what books they are currently reading, or what the mentor is working on in their career. You will probably have more in common than you realize, which will make it easier to relate when discussing career goals.
- Talk about mentoring: Every mentor/mentee relationship is different, so understand what each other want out of your meetings. Have either one of you participated in a mentorship program or had a mentorship relationship? What did you learn from it? What part of the approach did you like, and what would you change?
- Meet consistently and be reliable: It is essential to honor your commitment to your mentor/mentee, so this means that you should be on-time for your monthly meetings, be fully present in your discussions, and come prepared.

- Communicate frequently and take action with clear expectations: As a mentee, you should take the mentor's suggestions to heart and communicate your progress in between meetings. Both sides should clarify that they are following through on their discussions so that you both feel that you are investing time wisely. In conjunction with this, you should discuss expectations. What does success look like, and what is the timetable for achieving it?
- Be open and honest: Be straightforward with each other and welcome transparency. Mentors should not sugarcoat things, and a mentee should be open to all types of feedback. It would be best if you communicated your assumptions, needs, limitations, and expectations.

If you still do not feel comfortable discussing some issues with your mentee or mentor, focus on what you can learn from that person and look for other informal mentors for different needs.

#### **WHAT IF MY MENTEE/MENTOR HASN'T SCHEDULED MEETING?**

Reach out to your mentee/mentor and let them know that you are looking forward to meeting with them. He or she may feel ill-prepared; encourage him or her to meet anyway. The first meeting should focus on getting to know each other and becoming more comfortable. From there, it will make it easier to discuss your goals and priorities.

#### **WHAT DO I DO IF MY MENTEE/MENTOR DOESN'T LIKE STRUCTURE?**

Good mentoring relationships require planning and structure. Research shows that these tools are significant and have a high rate of success. Encourage your mentee/mentor to give it a try and add it as a potential goal.

If your mentee/mentor says they don't like structure, ask why that is the case and listen to their reasoning. They may be overwhelmed with work, and structure is what they need. They may not have clear expectations for what the mentorship program is. If this is the case, press the reset button and start discussing expectations and goals for the program itself. Such as: How often to meet and for how long? What type of relationship do they want from a mentor/mentee? What are their goals for the program?

#### **I HAVE A BUSY SCHEDULE AND HAVE TO CANCEL OUR MEETINGS. SHOULD I NOT BE A MENTOR/MENTEE?**

As a County employee, of course, you are busy! View this mentorship program as not only a commitment to your mentee/mentor but also to yourself. Both sides benefit from this relationship, whether it be setting career goals or working on management skills. Schedule your sessions far in advance and make them a priority. If you do have to cancel, be sure to get another time on the calendar immediately. Good mentorship requires reliability and frequent communication.

## I DON'T KNOW HOW TO START HELPING MY MENTEE. HOW CAN I START?

Sometimes you need to start somewhere! Some ideas are:

- Recommend a blog post, video, or book you've read that you can chat about.
- Introduce your mentee to someone they don't know at the company.
- Share a story about a challenging point in your career to create a safe space for sharing.
- Create a Google Doc for goals and use it as a working document to provide comments and feedback.
- Be conscious of your mentee saying "I should," "I'll try," instead suggest "I will", "I am".
- Encourage growth-mindset vs fixed mindset (setbacks = growth).

## I DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET TO KNOW MY MENTEE/MENTOR. WHAT CAN I ASK?

### Now

- What do you enjoy working on now?
- What are your greatest strengths?
- What challenges you?
- What are your most prominent areas for development?
- What do you want to do more of? Less of?
- In what areas are you getting feedback around work well done?
- In what areas do you want to develop in your current role?
- What accomplishment are you proud of?
- How would you describe your work style?
- How do you react to developmental feedback?
- What do people seek your help on?

### Next

- What aspects of the broader business at the County interest you?
- Are there untapped opportunities in the organization that interest you?
- How are our customers changing? How can you fill those changing needs?
- What are our most significant challenges? How can you help solve them?
- In what ways can you develop your skills to meet those challenges?
- What specific skills do you want to learn?
- How are your skills being underused? How can you apply these skills and interests in other projects or other areas of the organization?
- What is next for you?

### Future

- How could your skills and experiences support the Path Forward?
- What is your 6-month, one year, three year, and 5-year career goals?
- Are there untapped opportunities in your industry that interest you?
- What are you willing to invest in making a career change happen?
- What experiences do you want to gain?
- Within your current position?
- Within the team?
- Outside of work?

## **IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM, WHOM SHOULD I CONTACT?**

For questions and additional information, please contact us at [mentorship@managementcouncil.lacounty.gov](mailto:mentorship@managementcouncil.lacounty.gov)

### **ADDITIONAL MENTORSHIP RESOURCES**

- [The Leader as Coach](#)
- [What the Best Mentors Do](#)
- [Mentoring Millennials](#)
- [Things Every Mentor Should Do](#)
- [Advice for Men Who Are Nervous About Mentoring Women](#)
- [Tips for an Amazing Mentor Relationship](#)
- [Mentor Relationship Tips](#)
- [How to Catch and Keep a Quality Mentor](#)