



LACMC Mentorship Program Handbook



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
LACMC

A MESSAGE FROM THE MENTORSHIP COMMITTEE

Dear LACMC member,

Mentoring has made a big difference in my life. At critical moments, I've been lucky enough to have people willing to share their experiences and provide guidance, helping me navigate my career. Is this a quote? I know firsthand that each of us can benefit from wise counsel, expanding our expertise, increasing our knowledge, and developing as leaders.

Knowing how valuable mentorship programs can be in leaders' professional development at all levels, my team and I are honored to be heading LACMC's second cohort formal mentorship committee. LACMC is committed to making sure that our members have opportunities to mentor and to be mentored. As an organization, we feel this provides a new way to give our members the support necessary to grow and learn as public servants in our professional environment. This learning partnership is intended to enhance members' skills and professional growth and develop new connections across County departments, resulting in lasting friendships.

Please remember: **Mentorship requires intentional investments of time and energy; you get back what you put in!** Thank you for your commitment to developing your fellow County leaders and the time commitments of this mentorship program. We appreciate all of our mentors, mentees, supporters, retirees, and members who continue to support these programs and help LACMC further enhance the County's management environment.

Warmest Regards,

Mory Mostafavi

LACMC Mentorship Committee Chair

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: What is the LACMC Mentorship Program?.....	3
Participant Requirements	3
Mentorship Program Goals	3
Characteristics of Successful Mentoring Relationships	4
Benefits of Mentorships.....	4
Roles and Responsibilities.....	5
The Mentor	5
The Mentee.....	5
The Mentorship Committee.....	5
Mentor Best Practices.....	6
Six Roles of a Mentor	6
Getting Started.....	7
Mentee Best Practices	9
Tips to Make the Most of Your Mentorship.....	9
Additional Resources	10

INTRODUCTION

Mentoring is defined as a professional relationship in which an experienced person (the mentor) assists another person (the mentee) in developing specific skills and knowledge to enhance the participants' professional growth.

The LACMC recognizes that a critical component of the County's succession planning process is transferring knowledge and experience between County leaders. The LACMC Mentorship Program will build on these efforts by providing a systematic approach for LACMC members to share leadership insights, professional skillsets and enhance public service leaders' network across departments.

The LACMC Mentorship Program is structured around one-on-one relationships between mentees and seasoned leaders serving in all areas of County service. The mentoring partnership is a twelve-month commitment, where mentors and mentees agree to meet a minimum of once a month over the calendar year.

To be considered for a role as either mentor or mentee, individuals must be current LACMC members and submit a completed Mentorship Program application. The Mentoring Program Committee will assess applications on an annual basis and match mentees who meet program requirements with a mentor based on their desired areas of growth, personal interests, and professional skillsets.

Participant Requirements

- One year of program commitment
- Willingness to provide and receive feedback during and after the program
- Meet a minimum of 12 times during the one-year partnership

Mentorship Program Goals

The goals of the LACMC Mentorship Program are to:

- Provide participants with the opportunity to gain institutional knowledge and professional development through one-on-one peer mentorship
- Retain highly qualified and experienced LACMC members
- Motivate members to pursue avenues for promotion and inform employees about the County's organizational structure
- Create a culture of learning, sharing, and networking within the LACMC and County
- Guide LACMC members in achieving their career goals
- Develop mentees into future mentors

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

The most critical component of a successful mentoring partnership is a relationship between the mentor and mentee that is built on trust, open communication, and respect. A successful mentoring relationship allows individuals to gain personal and professional growth in a safe and impartial environment, removed from their daily chain of command. All participating individuals need to be committed to the relationship and the goal of professional development. Mentoring is a two-way relationship; both mentors and mentees should experience benefits.

A successful mentoring relationship requires honest feedback, clear communication of goals and expectations, and mutual respect between the mentor and mentee; optimal benefits occur when active participation is on both sides. Mentors can guide their mentees by providing feedback and addressing critical questions and concerns. The mentor can convey the organization's culture and best practices to the mentee through their daily work routine, professionalism, and attitude towards their job. The most effective mentors are willing to assist their mentee by initiating ideas and cultivating a learning environment that facilitates the mentee's core competencies and professional skill sets. Mentees, who are open to learning and accepting feedback, will benefit the most from participating in the program.

Benefits to the Mentee:	Benefits to the Mentor:	Benefits to the Organization:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased self-esteem and confidence• Professional maturity• Career development• Learned leadership/Managerial skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional accomplishment• The satisfaction of helping someone else• Refined leadership and managerial skills• Recognition for participation in a job-related volunteer activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruitment and Retention• Knowledge transfer• Workforce development• Motivated members• Cost-effectiveness• Workforce succession planning• Strategic planning

All mentoring relationships evolve and change with time. As time passes, the needs and goals of the mentee may change. As the mentee grows and completes set goals, the mentor may identify new challenges for the mentee that further enhance the mentee's development and professional growth.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Mentor

The mentor is a knowledgeable and trusted leader who will assist the mentee by sharing knowledge, experiences, and resources. Mentors may perform many different roles. However, their primary purpose is to listen, support, and guide the mentee's professional development.

The mentor is responsible for driving the mentoring relationship, which entails:

- Providing opportunities for the mentee to learn new skills
- Actively listening and encouraging the mentee
- Assisting mentee with developing alternatives to work out a problem or situation
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Sharing professional lessons learned
- Following the ground rules
- Providing feedback to the mentee

Mentee

The mentee is responsible for being proactive in their professional growth and development. The mentee is responsible for attending meetings and completing assignments. The mentee needs to be willing to learn through constructive feedback and accept guidance from the mentor.

The mentee is responsible for actively participating in their professional growth, which entails:

- Identifying the specific skills and knowledge to be obtained
- Candidly discussing issues and considering advice
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Attending meetings as scheduled
- Following handbook ground rules
- Completing evaluations
- Completing development assignments discussed with mentor

Mentorship Committee

The Mentorship Committee provides oversight and administration of the LACMC Mentoring Program. The Committee works to continually improve the mentoring program, to ensure that it will succeed for all participating members. This includes:

- Tracking and maintaining mentorship program files
- Reviewing mentor and mentee applications
- Maintaining participant confidentiality
- Matching mentor and mentee
- Surveying participants throughout the year
- Maintaining program handbook, forms, and webpages

MENTOR BEST PRACTICES

The LACMC defines a mentor as someone who imparts wisdom to and shares knowledge with a less-experienced colleague. Ultimately, a mentor will help the mentee set and achieve goals, networking, and identifying the resources necessary to move forward in their career path.

Six Primary Roles a Mentor May Serve

- 1. Guide:** The mentor guides the mentee by providing specialized knowledge and possession of specific competencies that lead the mentee through skill enhancement and development. The mentor listens actively to the mentee to demonstrate respect and encourages the mentee to develop problem-solving skills by having the mentee show how they would attempt to solve the problem. The mentor offers guidance by presenting or sharing an approach to solve the problem.
- 2. Motivator:** The mentor will motivate the mentee through encouragement and support. The mentor can also inspire the mentee by utilizing assignments. The assignments can be those described in brochures and handouts provided by the Committee. The Committee's material and/or mentoring ideas are not required, rather informational, and suggested only. The mentor and mentee can also identify specific competencies they wish to improve upon and help them plan together on how to develop those competencies.
- 3. Sponsor:** As a sponsor, the mentor may present and create opportunities to assist the mentee with developing networks and establishing resources. This can be done by making recommendations of relevant resources and introducing the mentee to the knowledge required within their division, and introducing the mentee to other LACMC members, as appropriate.
- 4. Coach:** The mentor provides positive and constructive feedback. Positive feedback increases self-esteem and provides a sense of accomplishment. It is essential that feedback be frequent and directly linked to an observation made by the mentor.
- 5. Advisor:** The mentor advises and assists with setting realistic career goals with a reasonable time frame and relevant outcome based on the mentee's promotional pattern interest.
- 6. Role Model:** The mentor acts as a role model for the mentee by demonstrating behaviors emulated by the mentee. The mentee's sessions should be kept confidential to ensure trust and communication. The mentor displays interactions with others, advises how to handle certain situations, and provides an example of values, ethics, and professional practices considered important for self-development.

Getting Started

At the beginning of the mentoring relationship, the focus is on getting to know each other. The introductory period is vital for building trust in the relationship and developing an understanding of one another. The initial phase will start at the kick-off meeting where you will meet for the first time—an excellent time to spend a few minutes getting to know one another and scheduling your first mentoring meeting.

1. First meeting: Set the tone by coming to your first meeting with clear intent.

- Identify your expectations for participating in the program.
- Obtain information on the mentee's job experience, and share your career history
- Identify the mentee's short- and long-term goals
- Set the ground rules for the mentoring relationship; for example:
 - Tentative re-occurring meeting schedule and location
 - Best ways to communicate between meetings
 - Protocol for canceling a scheduled meeting
- Being timely and prepared for the meeting
- Get to know one another – enthusiasm, a positive attitude and sincerity is key!

2. Establish a Relationship:

There is not a specific "correct" way to be a good mentor. Every mentoring relationship is different, and the goals and expectations will vary depending on the individuals. Here are tips to help build a successful and lasting mentoring relationship:

- Be yourself – all mentors bring their own style and strengths to the table.
- Listen to your mentee and then share your knowledge.
- Learn what is essential to your mentee by asking questions.
- Understand their expectations.
- If your mentee is not clear on their career goals, assist in exploring options and developing a career path. Encourage them to make a plan, put it into action, and follow-through.
- Reflect on your experiences. Were there mentors that helped develop your career? If so, what methods did they use, and were they successful?
- Understand that good relationships take time to cultivate.
- Be empathetic to any issues that your mentee may be addressing but stay neutral and do not get caught up in the problems.
- Understand your own personal vision and goals.
- Maintain and respect privacy, honesty, and integrity.
- Ask the mentee to express thoughts, ideas, and concerns freely, without judgement.
- Remember to be positive!

3. Discussions and Activities

Don't rely on your mentee to come to each meeting with questions prepared! Below are ideas on topics to discuss and activities in which to engage with your mentee.

Suggested Questions:

- Why did you decide to participate in the LACMC Mentoring Program?
- What do you hope to get out of participating in the program?
- What are your worries, frustrations, or concerns at work?
- What career options do you wish to pursue?
- What excites you about your job?
- What does success look like for you?
- What are your goals for your current position?
- Is there a problem you would like to work on? Why is it a problem? What are some possible ways to resolve the issue?

Sample Activities:

- Share your own experiences, successes, failures, and observations.
- Introduce your mentee to other managers to help them network.
- Bring the mentee to appropriate meetings with you, demonstrate how you conduct meetings.
- Please work with your mentee to identify their strengths and weaknesses and then determine a plan of action to address those weaknesses.
- Share books or articles relating to the mentee's development.
- Help mentee identify professional development opportunities.
- Work on brainstorming solutions for current challenges the mentee is facing.
- Roleplay to resolve a difficult situation.
- Ask your mentee to teach you something.
- Check-in on your mentee and see how they are doing.
- Discuss work and personal life balance.
- Make the meeting fun; enjoy your time together.
- Discuss "assignments" that can build your mentee's skills.
- Refer to additional resources, such as looking for ideas together in the "75 Things to Do with Your Mentee" booklet.

MENTEE BEST PRACTICES

It is a common misconception that the mentor provides advice and tells the mentee what to do. The mentee is an active participant and defines the needed knowledge, skills, and abilities. The mentee must have a clear understanding of the goals and expectations to assist the mentor with meeting them. In setting and defining these goals, it will help the mentoring relationship to stay on course.

The following are **key tips** to make the most of your mentorship:

- Commit to meeting with your mentor at least once a month.
- Discuss your expectations for the mentorship program.
- Agree on expectations for your mentoring relationship in the first meeting:
 - How often will you meet, and for how long?
 - Are calls or emails between meetings acceptable?
 - What is the protocol for canceling a scheduled meeting?
 - Where are your meeting places?
- Come to each meeting prepared with questions or areas where you would like feedback.
- Complete all professional assignments within the agreed-on time frame.
- Provide feedback to your mentor. This will help your mentor better support you and will further their professional growth as well.
- Listen to the information and guidance provided by your mentor. Don't focus on the reasons you *can't*; look for how you *can*.
- Conduct a self-analysis of your skill sets. Look at your last project and the areas that you experienced difficulty.
- Expect support from your mentor, not miracles. The mentor is there to provide guidance, act as a sounding board to help you determine how to handle situations and put things in perspective. The mentor is not there to solve your problems.
- Communicate clearly - remember your mentor will likely not be familiar with all aspects of your department or job function.
- Be teachable. To be an effective mentee, you must be willing to learn new things, obtain new perspectives, and be responsive to constructive criticism.
- Show appreciation and share credit for accomplishments with your mentor.
- Remember, this is your professional development. Be proactive and take the initiative. Take responsibility for its progress and the outcomes.

ADDITIONAL MENTORSHIP RESOURCES

There is a wealth of knowledge on how to establish and maintain mentorship relationships available online. For ease of access, below are links to curated articles on several relevant mentorship topics.

- [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](#)