



Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism

**Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism
Lawyer-to-Lawyer Mentoring Program**

**Mentoring Plan
For Mentors and Mentees**

Revised Edition 2022

Welcome to the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism's Lawyer-to-Lawyer Mentoring Program

This document contains all the information you will need to successfully complete the Lawyer-to-Lawyer Mentoring Program. Please contact your Program Administrator when questions arise.

Mentor and Mentee Program Requirements and Checklist

□ 1. Participate in the Program Orientation.

Chances are that you are reading this while sitting at your program orientation session, with your mentoring partner, or on your own. Today, you will be asked to do three things:

- a. **WATCH** a brief online [Program Orientation](#) on the logistics and CLE requirements of the Program;
- b. **COMPLETE** the online [Mentoring Agreement](#); and
- c. **REVIEW** your [Mentoring Plan](#) with your mentoring partner (see pages 4-9).

The Mentoring Plan is intended to serve as a guide or roadmap for the mentor and mentee relationship. It lists action items grouped by the five areas of the professional responsibility requirements in Illinois Supreme Court Rule 794(d): Professionalism, Legal Ethics, Civility, Diversity & Inclusion, and Wellness, Mental Health & Addiction.

As a pair, you should incorporate as many of the action items as feasible into your Mentoring Plan and customize your Plan to the practice setting, individual needs, and personal goals of the mentee. To satisfy the requirements of the mentoring program and receive CLE credit, you must complete at least one action item from each of the five categories. Note that there are blank lines in each category where you can designate your own activity.

Together, you and your mentoring partner will use the Mentoring Plan throughout the one-year mentoring term to personalize the experience. You will engage in the specific action items throughout the Plan, deciding upon the concepts, skills, topics, and shared professional experiences you'd like to address over the course of the year.

□ 2. Participate in a minimum of eight (8) face-to-face or virtual mentoring sessions.

You will both utilize the action items in the Plan to hold a minimum of eight (8) in-person or virtual meetings over the course of the one-year mentoring term. Again, you must complete at least one activity from each of the five areas of professional responsibility requirements over the course of these meetings to qualify for CLE credit in the mentoring program.

Virtual Meetings Allowed

As an organization dedicated to promoting professional responsibility in the legal and judicial professions, the wellbeing of those we serve is our highest priority. We want to make it as easy as possible for those participating in our mentoring program to connect with each while still facilitating productive meetings in their mentoring relationship.

Participants may hold any or all their required minimum eight meetings over the one-year term through the use of a video-assisted communication channel, such as Zoom, Teams, and FaceTime, as an alternative to in-person meetings, which remains encouraged when physically possible and safe to do so.

Some suggestions to enhance your mentoring experience:

- a. Consider putting your first few meetings on your calendars today; this will get you off to a strong start. Setting a monthly, recurring meeting often helps pairs stay on track.
- b. Be flexible in using the Plan. You can explore different action items in the Plan as your interests, needs, or opportunities change during the mentoring relationship.
- c. To facilitate the dual purpose of education and relationship-building, we recommend neither rushing to complete the action items in a shorter time period, nor waiting until the end of the one-year term.
- d. See the corresponding section of the [Mentoring Plan Supplement](#) for additional information on a particular action item. The Supplement suggests activities, discussion topics and references for each action item in the Mentoring Plan.

□ **3. Complete the online CLE application at the end of your year-long mentoring term.**

As your mentoring year comes to a close, on or after the anniversary date of your Orientation, all mentors and mentees must complete the online [CLE Credit and Attestation Certification](#) form.

This helps the Commission continue to improve the program from your valuable feedback and will provide mentees and mentors with their CLE certificate for **six (6) hours of Professional Responsibility CLE credit** under Supreme Court Rule 795(d)(11) including **one (1) hour** in the area of diversity and inclusion and **one (1) hour** in the area of mental health and substance abuse pursuant to Illinois Supreme Court Rule 794(d)(2).

Please note that no partial credit will be given. You should receive a certificate of completion via email within 1 business day of submission.

Thank you again for participating, and for your contributions to professionalism in Illinois. We at the Commission hope that you will find the Program rewarding!

Very truly yours,



Erika N.L. Harold
Executive Director

1. Professionalism

Elected	Plan Supplement	Action	Completion Date
	1A	Introduce mentee to other lawyers in the community, in a variety of practice areas, through attendance at bar association (national, state, local and affinity) meetings and other networking opportunities.	
	1B	Help mentee get involved with a bar association or other organization (law or non-law related) that will benefit his/her professional development (e.g., organization directed toward the mentee's practice areas of interest, networking or community involvement interests, etc.)	
	1C	Meet at the local courthouse(s) and make appropriate introductions to members of the judiciary, court personnel and clerks of court. Discuss customary rules of civility or etiquette among lawyers and judges in the community.	
	1D	Observe proceedings (e.g. trial, oral argument of contested motion, appellate arguments) in local state and/or federal court with mentor; discuss what was observed including candor and professionalism of all parties and best practices.	
	1E	Observe a transactional event (e.g. real estate closing, business purchase, M&A closing) with mentor; discuss what was observed including the professionalism of all parties and best practices.	
	1F	Acquaint mentee with access to justice issues, various Illinois legal services organizations, and opportunities to engage in <i>pro bono</i> activities. If appropriate, work together on a <i>pro bono</i> matter, charitable event, or public service project.	
	1G	Assist mentee to volunteer at a legal aid organization to provide <i>pro bono</i> work; discuss the experience including duties and responsibilities for advising the <i>pro bono</i> client.	
	1H	Discuss law office management processes and procedures. Examples may be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Client Management Software. b. Time records. c. Records of client-related expenses. d. Billing system. e. Conflict check procedures. f. Client retainer and/or payment schedules. g. Fee agreements and/or Alternative Fee Arrangements (AFAs) h. Escrow and trust account, establishing an IOLTA, accounting, auditing, use of interest proceeds, proper procedures for handling client funds and other property. i. Filing system and procedures. j. Document retention plan. k. Calendar reminder systems. l. Information technology system. m. Client engagement. n. Library and research systems. o. Client feedback and key performance indicators (KPIs) p. Other resources (publications, seminars, equipment, etc.). 	
	1I	Discuss effective time management skills and techniques. Identify a specific time management issue or problem that you have faced or anticipate facing; develop a plan for improving in that area.	
	1J	Discuss how to staff a large litigation or transactional matter, including what is involved in effectively allocating firm and client resources.	

	1K	Discuss importance of client communication, how to maintain appropriate ongoing communication (returning telephone calls, email) to keep clients informed.	
	1L	Discuss methods of obtaining and responding to feedback from clients and coworkers. Explore methods of evaluating the performance of yourself and your organization (e.g. KPIs).	
	1M	Discuss proper legal counseling, and the duties and responsibilities of advising clients.	
	1N	Discuss business development and opportunities to develop referrals in an effective and professional manner (e.g., importance of responsiveness, understanding the client's business, client-service orientation; becoming a trusted advisor to the client).	
	1O	If you work in the same organization, mentee to attend mentor's meeting or phone conference with a new/prospective client in which legal advice, strategy, or the scope of the representation will be discussed. Discuss the meeting agenda and goals both before and after the client meeting, both sharing ideas for improvement.	
	1P	Discuss types of alternative dispute resolution such as mediation, arbitration, early neutral evaluation, summary jury trials, and collaborative representation.	
	1Q	Observe one of the proceedings referred in 1P. Discuss and evaluate what was observed.	
	1R	<p>If you work in a –</p> <p>Government setting, introduce the mentee to respective roles of other agencies, and to representatives thereof.</p> <p>Corporate setting, introduce the mentee to respective roles of other departments and how they engage with the legal department.</p> <p>Law Firm setting, introduce the mentee to other practice groups, knowledge management, and other segments of the firm.</p>	
	Alternative Action		
	Alternative Action		

2. Legal Ethics

Elected		Plan Supplement	Action	Complete Date
		2A	Discuss practices to maintain client confidentiality.	
		2B	Discuss how to screen for, recognize, and avoid conflicts of interest.	
		2C	Discuss roles and responsibilities of paralegals, assistants and other office personnel, and how to establish good working relationships with support staff and colleagues.	
		2D	Discuss the responsibilities of the client and the lawyer in decision-making, and the best ways to involve a client in their matter, whether litigation or transactional.	
		2E	Discuss a legal ethics issue the mentor has faced and how it was analyzed and resolved; or examine a recent ethical opinion including conduct, rules, and resolutions.	
		2F	Discuss how to prepare for negotiation of a legal matter, when and how negotiation is initiated, how to involve the client, ethical and professionalism obligations of negotiators, skills needed to be an effective negotiator and how to acquire them.	
		2G	Discuss common malpractice and grievance traps in your practice area or setting (e.g., attorney-client privilege, work product protection and client confidentiality; inadvertent production of privileged material; corporate entity as client, not the individuals; responsibilities of the subordinate lawyer vis-à-vis the partner under the ethics rules; duty of candor to the tribunal, particularly regarding whether an adverse but not controlling precedent must be disclosed to opposing counsel), and how to recognize and avoid common pitfalls.	
		2H	Discuss potential resources and procedures for dealing with complicated ethical issues, including conflict of interests.	
		2I	Discuss appropriate ways to handle situations where lawyer believes another lawyer has committed an ethical violation; the obligation to report misconduct; and the appropriate way to handle a situation where a new lawyer is asked by a senior member of the firm/organization to do something that is unethical or unprofessional.	
		2J	Discuss the grievance process and a lawyer's duty to cooperate with a disciplinary investigation.	
		2K	Attend a public hearing at the ARDC's Chicago or Springfield office (see ARDC hearings schedule) and discuss the proceedings.	
		Alternative Action		
		Alternative Action		

3. Civility

Elected	Plan Supplement	Action	Completion Date
	3A	Discuss the Commission's Survey on Professionalism and how issues of incivility impact the legal profession and the administration of justice.	
	3B	Discuss the professional conduct duties of the lawyer to the client and to the administration of justice.	
	3C	Discuss how incivility, if left unchecked, can erode into other improper behaviors such as bullying and harassment. Analyze why instances of bullying and harassment may go unreported in organizations and how to address them on an individual and systematic level.	
	3D	Discuss preparation and proper behavior during discovery or transactional negotiations.	
	3E	Discuss strategies for managing incivility in highly charged situations.	
	3F	Discuss how to deal with a "difficult" client.	
	3G	If you work in the same organization, mentee to accompany mentor to a negotiation. Discuss the meeting agenda, strategy, and goals both before and after the meeting, both sharing ideas for improvement.	
	3H	If you work in the same organization, mentee to accompany mentor to a discovery conference with opposing counsel. Discuss the meeting agenda, strategy, and goals both before and after the meeting, both sharing ideas for improvement.	
	Alternative Action		
	Alternative Action		

4. Diversity and Inclusion

Elected	Plan Supplement	Action	Completion Date
	4A	Develop an awareness of diversity and inclusion issues in the legal profession by reading recent published studies and articles, and discussing them.	
	4B	Discuss personal experiences involving diversity and inclusion in your academic or work setting(s).	
	4C	Discuss what your organization or employer has done, or could do, to increase diversity and inclusion.	
	4D	Discuss strategies for self-promotion, such as how to make the “ask” for greater responsibilities, assignments, and involvement in client-facing contacts.	
	4E	Discuss how to improve diversity awareness as a skill for oneself and others, including implicit or unconscious bias.	
	4F	Discuss the importance of identifying individual qualities and diverse experiences among all employees in the work setting to enhance different skillsets and problem-solving abilities. Examine how these qualities might impact the culture of the office and how clients are served.	
	4G	Explore how allyship can actively promote the advancement of diversity and inclusion through intentional, positive and conscious efforts in organizations and discuss how to be an ally.	
	4H	Discuss the differences of sponsorship and mentoring, and how both are important to advancement as employees navigate the workplace and career advancement.	
	4I	Attend a diversity awareness or training workshop or CLE and discuss.	
	Alternative Action		
	Alternative Action		

5. Wellness, Mental Health and Addiction

Elected	Plan Supplement	Action	Completion Date
	5A	Discuss various career paths such as large firm, small firm, government and non-profit practice, corporate counsel, and nontraditional legal positions and identify resources for exploring options.	
	5B	Discuss long term and short-term career objectives and identify ways to achieve them.	
	5C	Discuss strategies for finding a balance between career and personal life, keeping daily stress in perspective, reconciling job expectations with actual experience and maximizing career satisfaction.	
	5D	Discuss prominence of substance abuse and mental health issues in the legal profession; review warning signs of substance abuse or mental health problems; what to do if the mentor, mentee, a colleague, or a superior is faced with a substance abuse or mental health problem; and the resources for assistance.	
	5E	Discuss ways to positively deal with the criticism of employers and clients.	
	5F	Discuss how to respond to a colleague, opposing counsel, or other individual experiencing a personal event of substance abuse or mental health concerns.	
	5G	Explore methods for improving and maintaining physical and mental health through well-being techniques.	
	5H	Discuss “emotional intelligence” and why it is so important in the legal profession. Explore emotional awareness; the ability to harness emotions and apply them to tasks like thinking and problem solving; and the ability to manage emotions, which includes regulating your own emotions and cheering up or calming down other people.	
	Alternative Action		
	Alternative Action		