

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT (USAID)



CIVIL SERVICE MENTORING PROGRAM GUIDE

United States Department of State
United States Agency for International Development (USAID) CIVIL SERVICE
MENTORING Program Guide



Mentoring — It's Your Program!

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WHAT IS MENTORING?

Mentoring links employees with experienced professionals in a mutually beneficial learning situation that fosters development and professional growth. Mentoring can take many forms. This Guide describes “formal mentoring” in the Civil Service Mentoring Program, open to employees of the Department of State and the Agency for International Development. Additional information on formal and informal mentoring (which we call situational) is available at the State Department and USAID Mentoring intranet sites.

What are the Civil Service Mentoring Program Goals?

Primary goal: foster participants’ development and professional growth. This growth will prepare employees for existing and future career opportunities, enhance job satisfaction, and build morale.

Secondary goals:

- help participants understand State Department/USAID cultures, increase communication throughout the organizations,
- support succession planning, foster diversity, and aid in the recruitment and retention of highly skilled Civil Service employees.

What are the Mentoring Program Benefits?

The program benefits both organizations and employees in that it:

- Fosters career development and acquisition of knowledge and skills
- Encourages employees to assume responsibility for their organization
- Helps employees build realistic career expectations
- Provides role models

- Supports succession planning by preparing employees for existing and future career opportunities
- Provides better internal communication
- Builds a greater sense of community
- Provides opportunities to pass on our culture and traditions
- Enhances recruitment and retention—winning the war for talent

Will my participation in the Mentoring Program guarantee the job I want?

No. It is up to mentees to seek out and apply for suitable job vacancies. Individual assistance on preparing knowledge, skills, and abilities statements and job interviewing skills is available without charge to Department employees through the Career Development Resource Center located in SA-1, Columbia Plaza.

WHAT IS THE CS MENTORING PROGRAM FRAMEWORK?

What are the components of the Mentoring Program?

- ◆ **Open Informational Meetings**
In the Department Notices announcing the Civil Service Mentoring Program, potential mentees, mentors and supervisors are invited to a Kick-Off Session and other Informational Meetings to learn more about the program.
- ◆ **Application**
Eligible employees who are interested in the program complete an on-line Mentee or Mentor Application Form.
- ◆ **Matching**
Mentees and mentors are invited to indicate their preferred partners after viewing brief biographies and other relevant information. The Mentoring Committee matches the mentees and mentors, taking into account

their preferences as well as the developmental needs of the mentees and skills of the mentors.

◆ **Mentoring Partnership**

A mentee is paired with one mentor through the Mentoring Program.

◆ **Mentee/Mentor Training**

Mentees and mentors attend a one-day Mentee/Mentor Training Session to acquire skills needed for a successful mentoring experience.

◆ **Mentoring Agreement**

Each pair completes a Mentoring Agreement setting out roles, expectations, and meeting logistics (meeting times, dates, places, who initiates contacts).

◆ **Scheduled Mentee/Mentor Meetings**

Mentees and mentors meet for two to four hours a month during official duty hours. Each pair determines the meeting dates, times, and places.

◆ **Mentoring Action Plan**

With the assistance of their mentor, each mentee prepares and implements a personal Mentoring Action Plan. The plan identifies three developmental needs of the mentee to be addressed during the year, activities to be undertaken to meet these needs, and resources required. Mentees consult their supervisors regarding resources.

◆ **Mentoring Forums**

During the program year, Mentoring Forums and workshops further skill and career development.

◆ **Graduation**

During the last Mentoring Forum, participants celebrate their completion of the Mentoring Program. Mentees and mentors are encouraged to continue their partnership on an informal basis.

Who is eligible to participate in CS Mentoring?

Civil Service employees of all grade levels are eligible to participate as mentees. Civil Service and Foreign Service employees of all grade levels are eligible to participate as mentors. Mentees and mentors must complete Application Forms.

What is the time commitment in CS Mentoring?

The program lasts nine months. After graduation, partners are encouraged to continue their relationship on an informal basis as long as it is mutually beneficial. During the program year, mentees and mentors meet for two to four hours a month, attend a one-day Mentee/Mentor Training Session and Mentoring Forums and optional workshops during official duty hours.

Whose approval do I need to enter the CS Mentoring Program?

All applicants should discuss their interest in the program and the time commitments with their supervisor. For most employees, the supervisor's signature on a hard copy of the application is not required. A signed application should be provided to their management by participants located outside the Washington D.C. area, due to bureau's need to fund travel to orientation and evaluations sessions. All employees in the Bureau of Consular Affairs and those employees of other bureaus who are stationed beyond the greater Washington area should check with their management for special policies before applying.

Can I be both a mentor and a mentee at the same time?

Given the commitment of time and energy, one formal mentoring relationship at a time is preferred.

Can a mentee have more than one mentor?

Not in the formal program. Mentees are paired with only one mentor, although they are encouraged to find additional informal mentors as needed to develop specialized skills or explore new fields.

Can mentors and mentees be peers?

While we normally pair mentees with an employee about two grades higher, a peer under unusual circumstances may mentor a mentee. It might be beneficial for a mentee who is a new supervisor to be mentored by a peer who is an experienced supervisor or a mentee might request a mentor who has extensive knowledge or skill in a particular area.

Can supervisors mentor their subordinates in the CS Mentoring Program?

While supervisors are encouraged to mentor subordinates informally, mentors in the formal program must be outside the mentee's management chain (first, second or third line supervisor).

Can my mentor or mentee be located in the same office as me?

Yes, as long as you are not in a supervisor/employee relationship. However, since mentoring partners should be able to provide new and objective perspectives, we discourage selecting close friends or office-mates as mentoring partners. Also, mentor and mentee may want to consider how working in close proximity may affect the confidentiality of their mentoring relationship.

What if the person I want as my mentor is not registered as a mentor?

You can contact your prospective mentor and ask if he or she would be willing to partner with you. If the answer is "yes", ask the mentor to complete a Mentor Application Form and a

Mentor's Matching Preference form indicating you as their first choice mentee. Although there is no guarantee that mentees will be paired with their preferred mentors, the Mentoring Committee will take these preferences into account when matching mentors and mentees.

What if there are not enough mentors for the mentees?

Every effort will be made to obtain sufficient mentors for the number of mentees in the Civil Service Mentoring Program. If, however, there are insufficient mentors, the unmatched mentees will be encouraged to reapply when the next program is announced, and to seek out Situational Mentors. They will also be informed of other career development opportunities.

What if the mentoring partnership doesn't work out—No Fault Termination?

If either party determines that the relationship is not achieving its intended results, the mentoring relationship can be dissolved. Partners should first identify the issues and try to resolve them. If no resolution is possible, either partner may request a "no fault" termination by notifying the Program Coordinators. The Program Coordinators will consider the matter confidential and work to match the mentee with another mentor, if possible.

Is the mentoring relationship confidential?

Mentoring relationships are built on trust. Therefore, it is expected that what mentors and mentees discuss relative to the mentoring relationship will be held in confidence. Exceptions to the confidentiality rule include situations in which information provided by the mentor or mentee involves a life threatening situation or violation of law.

To ensure there are no misunderstandings about the confidentiality aspects of the relationship, both mentor and mentee should discuss confidentiality concerns at their first

meeting. Mentors and mentees should only share information that they are comfortable sharing and should consider the effect of shared information on the mentoring relationship.

As a general rule, mentors should not contact the mentee's supervisor regarding the mentee without their express permission. When both agree that communication with the mentee's supervisor would be beneficial, the mentor and supervisor may discuss him/her. Such situations might include helping the mentee identify developmental activities and addressing differing needs, priorities and perspectives of the supervisor and mentee.

When the mentee and mentor communicate using e-mail, they should recognize that neither can have any expectation of confidentiality, particularly when sending e-mails to and from the workplace.

Whom should I contact if I require reasonable accommodation to participate?

The Civil Service Mentoring Program Coordinators in HR/CSHRM, 202-663-2144, or x32140.

What are the responsibilities of a mentee?

- Attending an Open Informational Meeting (if possible) and the Mentee/Mentor Training to learn about the program
- Committing to the program and taking responsibility for his or her development and career
- Reviewing, signing, and implementing the Mentoring Agreement
- Meeting with the mentor two to four hours a month as agreed in the Mentoring Agreement. If a meeting must be rescheduled, contacting the mentor as soon as possible
- Identifying his or her developmental needs; preparing and implementing the Mentoring

Action Plan with the assistance of the mentor

- Communicating openly, honestly and tactfully with the mentor
- Being open to suggestions and willing to try new experiences
- Attending and actively participating in Mentoring Forums
- Completing program evaluation surveys and offering suggestions for improvement
- Respecting the confidentiality of the partnership

What are the responsibilities of a mentor?

- Attending an Open Informational Meeting (if possible) and the Mentee/Mentor Training to learn about the program
- Committing to the program and to aiding in the development of the mentee
- Reviewing, signing, and implementing the Mentoring Agreement
- Meeting with the mentee two to four hours a month as agreed in the Mentoring Agreement. If a meeting must be rescheduled, contacting the mentee as soon as possible
- Assisting the mentee to identify new developmental needs, and to prepare and implement a Mentoring Action Plan
- Communicating openly, honestly and tactfully with the mentee; suggesting options
- Attending and actively participating in the Mentoring Forums
- Completing program evaluation surveys and offering suggestions for improvement
- Respecting the confidentiality of the partnership

What is the role of the supervisor in the program?

Supervisors play a very important role in the program and can contribute significantly to a successful mentoring experience by:

- Committing to the program and being supportive of employees who wish to participate as either mentees or mentors
- Working with each participant on balancing job responsibilities and time to participate in the program during official duty hours
- Developing or enhancing their human resource development skills and showing interest in their employee's career development
- Attending an Open Informational Meeting to learn about the program
- Providing input, if requested, for the development of their employee's Mentoring Action Plans (e.g. identifying development needs, suggesting training and development activities)
- Building developmental activities into their employee's job, and requesting funds for external training and development as appropriate
- Celebrating their employee's successes and recognizing their accomplishments
- For supervisors of employees outside the Washington, D. C. area only, approving program participation and travel to orientation and evaluation sessions

Are supervisors involved in the mentoring partnership?

Yes—their support is important. Applicants should discuss their participation in the program with their supervisors—including the time commitment; mentors and mentees should keep their supervisors informed of their activities and accomplishments throughout the year. Employees located beyond the Washington, D.C. area require supervisor's approval for participation and travel.

What are the qualities of an effective mentor?

- Committed to assisting and motivating mentees in developing their potential
- Able to build the mentee's self-confidence and self-esteem
- Demonstrates strong interpersonal skills such as tact, patience, empathy, and active listening
- Open-minded
- Knowledgeable about their organization's mission, vision, goals, values and culture and willing to share that knowledge
- Able to link the mentee with others from both inside and outside State/USAID who can foster the mentee's development
- Regarded as successful in their organization
- Willing and able to help the mentee set developmental goals, give candid feedback to the mentee on strengths and developmental needs observed, and to coach the mentee
- Role model and sounding board
- Advises the mentee on how to deal with real or potential obstacles
- Effective teacher and facilitator

- Willing to share personal experiences that are relevant to the needs of the mentee
- Seeks to learn from the mentoring experience

What are the qualities of an effective mentee?

- Takes responsibility for his or her professional growth and career
- An enthusiastic partner who makes the most of his or her time with the mentor
- Willing and able to identify developmental needs, set goals, and develop and implement an action plan to accomplish goals
- Communicates openly and honestly with his or her mentor
- Receptive to feedback and coaching
- Asks the mentor for suggestions and ideas
- Willing to seek challenging assignments and greater responsibility
- Identifies problems and possible solutions
- Willing to take reasonable risks
- Patient and does not expect immediate success and advancement

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

How often do mentors and mentees meet and where?

During the program year, each pair is expected to meet for two to four hours a month during official duty hours. Mentors and mentees may meet in such places as offices, break rooms, conference rooms, or the cafeteria. Each pair determines the best meeting place(s) for them. It is important that the place selected enable each partner to speak openly and not be concerned about other persons overhearing their conversations. Each pair specifies the plan for their meetings in the Mentoring Agreement.

Are mentors and mentees required to document their meetings?

No formal minutes of meetings are required. However, we encourage mentors and mentees to keep track of their activities and progress.

Is there any formal record of the mentoring partnership?

Yes. A record of the partnership is maintained in the Mentoring Program database.

What kind of training is provided?

Both mentors and mentees attend a one-day Mentee/Mentor Training Session at the beginning of the program. The training session provides information on the program and skills for a successful mentoring experience. In addition, Mentoring Forums are held to further skill and career development as well as to obtain feedback from participants and to evaluate the program.

What is a Mentoring Agreement?

A Mentoring Agreement sets initial expectations, roles, ground rules and meeting logistics (such as who calls a meeting, whether they alternate visits to each other's offices, how to reschedule).

What is a Mentoring Action Plan?

The Mentoring Action Plan, a required component of the Program, is a plan that identifies three of the mentee's developmental needs, activities to be undertaken to develop each need and the resources required. The mentee develops the plan with the mentor's assistance. Mentees are encouraged to seek input from their supervisors before finalizing their plans.

What is the difference between a Mentoring Action Plan and an Individual Development Plan (IDP, DS-Form 1922)?

The two have similar goals. The Mentoring Action Plan focuses on specific developmental needs that the mentee and mentor will address during their partnership. It sets the goals for that partnership and helps them to evaluate their progress. It is a required component of the Program. IDPs are prepared and implemented by the employee and his or her supervisor to address both short and long-term developmental needs and career objectives. The Mentoring Action Plan and IDP should complement one another.

What if mentees need assistance in identifying their developmental needs?

Mentees who require assistance in identifying developmental needs may contact the Program Coordinators, their Bureau Facilitator, the "Personal Development" guide on the resources page of the Mentoring Intranet site, and the Career Development Resources Center.

Where can mentors and mentees go for help?

While it is expected that most developmental needs will be addressed through the mentoring partnership, mentees and mentors may call or e-mail the Program Coordinators at any time. The Coordinators are available to meet with mentees and mentors together or separately as requested.

The Mentoring Intranet site provides resources for both formal and informal (situational) mentoring and links to other related sites and activities.

The Career Development Resource Center has a wide variety of books and videos on mentoring and other career development topics. These materials may be checked out from the Center. In addition, appointments may be made with a Career Counselor for one-on-one career development services.

How can I suggest improvements to the program?

Participants may provide suggested improvements to the program, orally or in writing, to the Program Coordinators at any time. Five months after beginning the program and at the end of the program, the Coordinators will send evaluation surveys to each participant. In addition, the Coordinators will meet with participants to evaluate the program. All evaluation surveys and suggestions for improvement will be kept confidential and be used as a basis for making changes to the program.