



GEORGIA STATE BAR LABOR & EMPLOYMENT SECTION MENTORSHIP ACADEMY

Co-Sponsored by NELA-GA

PROGRAM OUTLINE

I. Statement of Purpose

A volunteer mentoring program in which experienced, long-term section members are paired with less experienced members with 5 years or less of practice in the area of labor & employment law to foster professional development, open communication, and improved performance. The program endeavors to:

- A. Assist Mentees in navigating legal careers.
- B. Provide support and advice for professional development, including:
 1. locating and accessing organizational resources and resource people;
 2. identifying professional opportunities and career paths; and
 3. sharing skills and knowledge.
- C. Create a safe space for talking about professional, ethical and career development, including issues related to diversity and inclusion within the profession.
- D. Create motivation for marketing, professional development, performance, creativity, and innovation.

II. Participants

- A. The Mentorship Academy will be over overseen by a 3-member Administration Committee.

B. The Academy will be run by a 5-member Advisory Board, in conjunction with the Administration Committee.

C. Mentors

1. Mentors must have 15 or more years of practice in the area of Labor & Employment law. Participation will be voluntary, but the program will cast a wide net, encouraging broad participation by a diverse range of Mentors.
2. Some key characteristics of a good Mentor include:
 - a. Willingness to commit time to their mentoring responsibilities (be specific about how much time Mentors must commit in recruitment materials, e.g., 3 hours per month);
 - b. Sincere interest in helping another, less-experienced lawyers to grow professionally and accomplish professional goals. Mentors should regard the role as an opportunity rather than an assignment;
 - c. Strong interpersonal communication skills including the ability to listen and respond thoughtfully to others' concerns and questions;
 - d. Willingness and patience needed to provide guidance and coaching to someone who is in the process of learning and growing professionally. This involves providing constructive feedback as well as praise and encouragement; and
 - e. Sensitivity to cultural diversity and personal differences.
3. A full plan to recruit Mentors will be created by the Administration Committee and Advisory Board.

D. Mentees

1. Labor & Employment Section members with 5 years or less experience practicing in the area of Labor & Employment law, will be offered the opportunity to apply to participate and be matched with a Mentor. Participation will be voluntary.
2. Mentees will be given a number of options for preferences in their Mentor (such as inside/outside their demographic group, very experienced/close to their experience level, metro Atlanta, area of specialty, identity group, etc.) in their Mentor-Mentee match form. These will guide the selection of their Mentor.

III. Pairing Process and Criteria

- A. The Advisory Board will solicit applications for the Program.
- B. The Advisory Board will review the applications and will then solicit Mentors for the Academy year, based on the Mentee needs.
- C. The Advisory Board will pair Mentors and Mentees based on the criteria identified and prioritized in the mentoring applications. The number of pairings/participants will be limited to 15 years per Academy year.
- D. If, the number of applications exceeds the maximum participation for a given Academy year, the Advisory Board will establish criteria for selecting Program participants from the applicant pool.
- E. In addition to the Mentor-Mentee pairs, the Advisory Board will select individuals to serve as Points of Contact (POCs) on certain issues. POCs are persons who have volunteered to talk to anyone in the Program about the issues/topics for which they are serving as a POC. The Advisory Board will solicit and select POCs and introduce them to the full mentoring group at the Orientation.

For example, we may have POCs for:

- a. Specific race and identity groups: LGBT, African-American, Asian American, Hispanic/Latino, etc.
- b. Workers with disabilities
- c. Veterans
- d. Parents
- e. Practice Area or Emphasis
- f. Issue areas such as retirement planning, litigation, regulatory work, starting a practice, work/life balance, etc.)

IV. Program Activities

A. Orientation

After Mentors and Mentees are matched, the program will officially begin its mentoring activities with a group training and, if possible, a social event. All Mentors and Mentees will be invited to a reception or a brown bag to welcome them to the program, train participants on the Program and their respective roles and responsibilities, generate energy, and introduce everyone to the mentoring

community. The Advisory Board will introduce the POCs at this meeting.

B. Monthly Meetings

1. Mentors and Mentees are expected to meet (in person, if possible) every month. During the first week of each month, the Advisory Board will send an email with a recommended topic of the month, including resources and potential discussion questions. However, the Mentor or Mentee can agree to a different topic if they believe that it will better address the mentoring matters in their agreement.
2. Topics may be generated by surveying Mentors and Mentees, but may also include issues such as making a professional development plan, resources for career development, and addressing challenges with supervisors, developing a marketing plan, etc.
3. Mentors and Mentees will meet as a pair, or small group, to discuss these points and anything else the Mentee would like to discuss. While these meetings will ordinarily occur during the work day, participants recognize that the meetings must be scheduled in a way that does not interfere with the performance of required duties.

C. Quarterly Group Event

1. Each quarter, Mentors and Mentees will be invited to a career-development session. The Mentoring Advisory Board will survey the group about 4 months into the program to generate potential topics.
2. The quarterly sessions will be training sessions, lead generally by Mentors, Advisory Board members, or special guest speakers. The Advisory Board will seek Continuing Legal Education credit for the quarterly Group Events.

D. Year-end Evaluation and Celebration Event

Participants will come together to celebrate the year as a mentoring community. This event could be an evening happy hour or a lunch depending on the preferences of the participants in each office. The primary purpose would be social, but the event could be structured around certain topics such as conducting a Program evaluation and sharing some of the Program highlights.

E. Evaluation

1. Program participants will be encouraged to provide feedback at any time. The Advisory Board is encouraged to respond to and incorporate constructive feedback whenever possible.
2. In the 6th month of the program, the Board Chairperson will circulate a short evaluation to gauge how the program is going and whether it should be modified with the current class.
3. The evaluation will request a brief review of the participants' Program-related meetings and activities, with feedback on the pros and cons of these activities.
4. The Advisory Board will take the results of the mid-year evaluations and will create a plan for improving the mentoring program for the coming year.
5. In the 11th month of the program, Mentoring Advisory Board Chairperson will circulate a more comprehensive evaluation if deemed necessary.
6. The Mentoring Advisory Board will take the results and will create a plan for improving the program going forward into the next Program year.

F. Program Duration

1. Mentors and Mentees will be expected to complete a full year as a pair.
2. At the end of the year, the program may begin the cycle again and will solicit new participants.

V. Diversity and Inclusion

- A. One of the primary purposes of this Program is supporting diverse community that is the Georgia Labor & Employment practice of law. The Program endeavors to be inclusive and will attempt to meet that goal by encouraging broad Program participation, providing an array of diversity-related Mentor-Mentee match options, and creating POCs who can serve as resources on diversity-related issues. To increase the efficacy of these efforts, participants should be encouraged to provide feedback at any time on how to make the Program more diverse, more inclusive, and more effective at its diversity-related goals.
- B. An annual review of participation in the program should be conducted to determine if any additional steps to encourage diverse participation are needed.