APA California — Northern

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Individual Meeting #1 | Guidelines



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DATE AND LOCATION

Schedule a preferred date and time, duration, and provide a link if meeting virtually. If both participants are open to meeting in-person, please practice all safety precautions and select outdoor locations or well-ventilated indoor spaces.

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL

- Exchange contact information (preference for e-mail or telephone)
- Agree on frequency of communication, response time, and confidentiality

MENTOREE TIPS & TRICKS FOR SUCCESS

- Be proactive. Aim to reach out to your Mentor early and often.
- Respond in a timely and respectful manner - if a response requires more effort, signal your intentions and let them know.
- Prepare in advance of meetings to ask specific advice regarding career development. Discuss short-term and long-term goals with your Mentor so they can help you be **accountable**.
- Learning **opportunities** are everywhere. If your interest is on the private side or non-profit and your Mentor has experience on the public side, take notes, too. Their experience can inform how you should interact with professionals across the field.
- Whether you are unsure about your next move after graduation or looking for the next move in your career, talk about your challenges with your Mentor - they are great sources of **motivation and inspiration.**
- Education and early-career experiences are essential for your growth, but having a Mentor who has "been there, done that" and can share their **life experiences** is invaluable.
- Remain open and welcoming of feedback. Your Mentor may offer suggestions or constructive input that may **challenge** you and guide your **self-discovery** journey.

As a participant in the 2026-2027 Mentorship Program, Mentorees will benefit from interaction with a more experienced planning professional, and Mentors will play an inspiring role in the career of less experienced planners. Mentorees will be given an opportunity to further develop their career goals and knowledge of their pathway in the profession. Mentors will have the opportunity to share their knowledge and lessons learned with newer planners while gaining new perspectives. This first meeting will lay the foundation for the relationship.

Looking Ahead

- Confirm the next individual meeting for February or March, or if preferred, greater frequency of meetings

POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES

- Résumé, portfolio, cover letter, and/or online profile critique
- Discuss 1-year, 5-year, 10-year goals and compare Mentor's and Mentoree's prior and current goals
- Mock interview
- Share a Mentor's specific project in detail



American Planning Association
California Chapter
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Making Great Communities Happen

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Individual Meeting #1 | Discussion Topics

The first meeting is a unique opportunity to lay the framework of a new professional relationship so be curious and exploratory. Use this first meeting to better understand one another's backstory, experience, and what each brings to the table. Learning more about the self and articulating your goals for the mentoring relationship, for mentor and mentoree, will help both give and receive feedback. Feel free to guide your own relationship and map out your own journey. If you need it, the following are discussion topics and sample questions to guide the introductory meeting.

MENTOREE DISCUSSION TOPICS

Discuss goals and expectations of the mentorship relationship

Explain why you are interested in the planning profession and areas of specialization Share past projects and other milestones

MENTOR DISCUSSION TOPICS

Describe how you got into the profession and what your current job responsibilities are Recommend specific business skills necessary to succeed and strategies to develop these skills

- Joining organizations, networking opportunities, course selection
- Soft skills vs. technical skills

If applicable to experience level of Mentoree, provide a general overview of the building blocks of planning (e.g., public vs. private sector, different areas of specialization)

Share past projects and other milestones

Share a list of planning-related resources that he or she has found particularly helpful and discuss the list

ASK QUESTIONS (THESE GO BOTH WAYS!)

What was your first job? What was your first planning-related job?

Did you think you'd find yourself in this industry?

What do you like best about what you do? What do you find challenging?

What qualifications or experience make you successful in your position?

Where did you grow up and what do you find most memorable about your hometown?What changes do you see in the field of planning in the next ten years?

Outside of planning, what are you passionate about? How does this interest translate to your work, if at all?

List your top reasons that inspired you to sign up for the Mentorship program.

What was a time that you took a big risk and it paid off?



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