



Mentor

# Handbook

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CIVSA Mentorship Program



2026



# Table of Contents

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1. What is a mentor?

2. Types of Mentors

3. How to be a Great Mentor

4. Mentor-Mentee Meetings

5. Expectations & Agreement

6. Mentor-Mentee Timeline



# What is a Mentor?

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## A Mentor is...

Someone who helps a mentee grow, develop, make decisions, and receive guidance for their future. The mentor acts as a role model for the mentee, but mentoring relationships are beneficial to both parties.

Yes, your role is to help your mentee grow and learn, but this is a great opportunity for you to learn and grow as well.

### Being a mentor:

- Drives self-awareness
- Expands the mentor's professional network
- Improves leadership skills
- Increases awareness of available talent throughout the organization
- Increases likelihood of receiving a promotion
- Increases visibility throughout the organization

## Mentoring is:

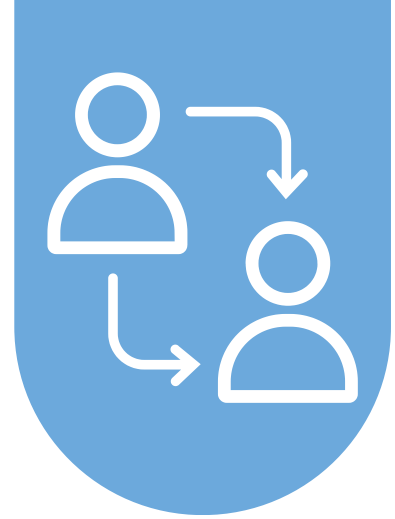
- Developmental: It is a development program that grows knowledge, networks, and careers.
- Candid and specific: A good mentoring relationship provides honest and specific feedback and a route to growth.

## Mentoring is not:

- Replacement for formal development: Mentoring cannot take the place of formal training - it should compliment formal development activities.
- Personal counseling: It is best to seek help on personal issues from a life coach or mental health professional.

# Types of Mentors

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## **Advisor | *sounding board***

An advisor is someone who makes suggestions and recommendations on what their mentee should do. Advisors also give advice based on their professional expertise and personal experience.

## **Developer | *guidance; structure/direction***

A developer is similar to a coach but is an observer without specific goals for performance improvements. Developers are good listeners and will point out red flags they recognize in their mentees.

## **Broker | *facilitation; identify gaps***

A broker is great at connecting their mentee with opportunities to grow. Rather than discussing possibilities for growth, a broker will determine what their mentee wants to learn and then connect them with whoever is an expert in that area.

## **Challenger | *explorer; provokes positively***

A challenger thrives on tough love and playing the devil's advocate. They won't stand for poor attitudes or faulty logic. They will push back on their mentees if they begin to complain about their challenges without considering possible solutions. Mentees that want someone to "tell them how it is" will thrive under these mentors.

## **Clarifier | *teaches org values/politics***

A clarifier is a great companion to their mentee. A mentee who is independent and can pursue their growth without much direction would benefit from a clarifier. A clarifier will quickly be able to fill the gaps in the mentee's knowledge based on their own experience within the organization.

## **Affirmer | *enhances self-esteem; empathetic***

An affirmer is great for mentees that respond well to a soft shoulder. Rather than tough love, affirmers are great listeners. If a mentee is going through a stressful situation they can trust that their mentor will be there to talk through it with them.

# How to be a Great Mentor

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- **Help Your Mentee Set Goals**
- **Practice Active Listening**
- **Share Experience & Advice**
- **Recommend Tasks & Resources**
- **Be Available and Responsive**
- **Respect Confidentiality**
- **Encourage Independence**
- **Celebrate with your Mentee**

## **Don't**

Talk more than you listen  
Discredit their goals/ambitions  
Provide vague or unactionable feedback  
Be overly positive  
Break trust



START  
HERE

# Mentor-Mentee Meetings

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## Recommendations for meetings

- Prepare a day before & create an agenda
- Identify next steps after each meeting
- Follow up with mentee on action items (*if applicable*)
- Set reminders to share resources, educational sessions, etc.
- Don't forget important events (*birthday, CIVSA/work anniversaries, etc.*)

## Optional Questions

Use the following questions to guide your first mentoring conversation, which will help you get to know one another and establish mutual expectations and goals. Then, note both parties' responses for future reference.

### **Questions to understand their background:**

1. What is your educational and professional background (*including your current role and how long you have been with the organization*)?
2. What are your greatest strengths? Areas to improve on?
3. What are your short-term career goals? Long-term career goals?
4. What are your hobbies/interests outside of work?

### **Questions to get a sense of what your mentee is expecting:**

1. What do you see as my role as your mentor?
2. What ground rules should we set (*ex: confidentiality, openness, honesty*)?
3. What topics are off-limits (*ex: performance reviews, personal lives*)?
4. What do you think will be challenging about this relationship?
5. Are there any topics of urgent interest?
6. What topics do you want to cover in our conversations?
7. What do you hope to gain from this relationship?
8. How do you prefer to communicate between meetings?
9. When is the best time for you to meet?



START  
HERE

# Mentor-Mentee Meetings

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## First Meeting Checklist

A few things to check off before, during, and after your first meeting to make sure you're off to a good start.

### Before your first meeting:

- Follow/request your mentee on LinkedIn
- Send them a welcome email + bio about you + schedule your first chat
- Consider what you want to get out of the relationship

### During your first meeting:

- Complete the mentor-mentee agreement and set parameters
- Introductions + discuss why you both are here
- Identify what your mentee is looking for/needs to best help guide them

### After you first meeting:

- Review and reflect what was discussed
- Share resources relevant to what your mentee wants/needs
- Schedule your next mentor-mentee chat

## Optional Activity Recommendations

- Book discussions
- Podcast/Webinar discussions
- Virtual meet-up with another mentor-mentee pair
- Resume Review/Revision (*always a good idea to keep your resume updated!*)
- TED Talk watch/listen & discuss
- Virtual Trivia Games
- Vision Boards

# Expectations & Agreement

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## Discussions



- Willingness to discuss failures and successes
- Identify professional development goals, priorities, and career interests
- Maintain privacy/confidentiality of conversations
- Listen actively
- Provide honest feedback

## Time & Scheduling



- Be accountable for scheduling meetings with mentee
- Respect each other's time and schedule
- Do the pre-work for mentor-mentee meetings
- Follow-up on action items during meetings
- Agree upon method(s) of communication

# Mentor-Mentee Timeline

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**SEP**

1st meeting to be scheduled

**OCT**

CIVSA Mentor-Mentee Social Activity (*optional*) + 2nd meeting

**NOV**

3rd Meeting + Mentors Meet-up (*optional but encouraged*)

**DEC**

Optional Meeting (*encouraged*) + Holiday Activity

**JAN**

4th/5th Meeting (*if pair met in month of Dec*)

**FEB**

CIVSA Mentor-Mentee Social Activity (*optional*) + 5th/6th Meeting

**MAR**

6th/7th Meeting + Mentors Meet-up (*encouraged, but optional*)

**APR**

7th/8th Mentor-Mentee Meeting

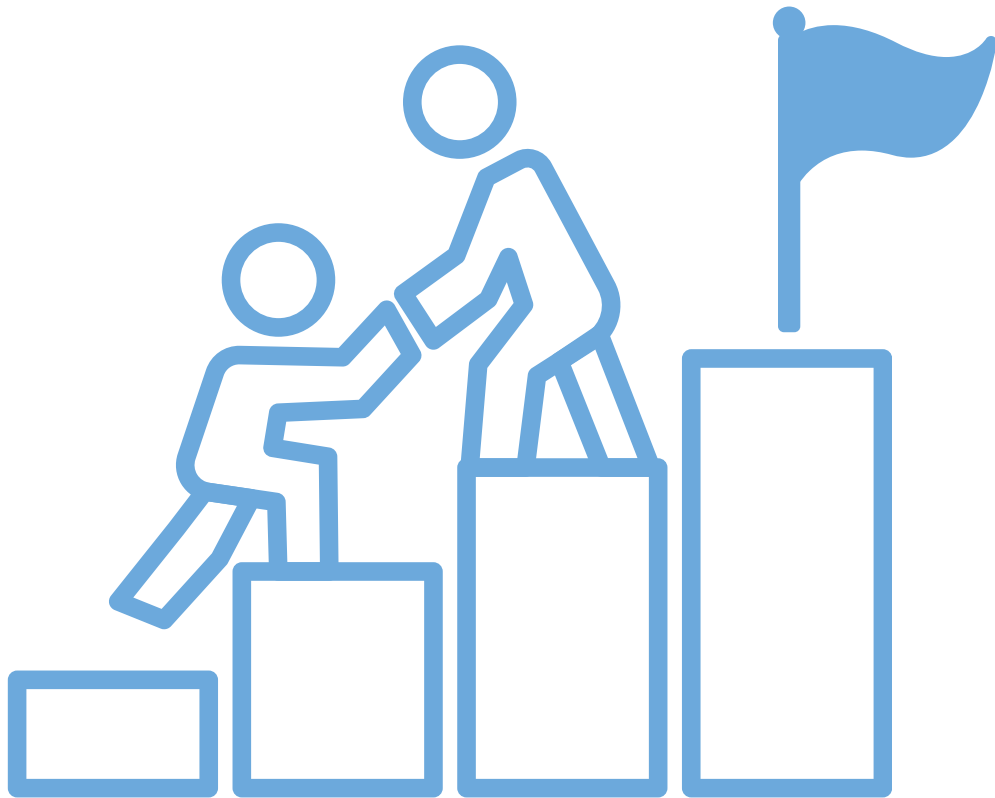
**MAY**

Mentor-Mentee Conference Meet-up (*if attending*)  
OR Final Mentor-Mentee Meeting online



# CIVSA

MENTORSHIP



## CONTACT INFO

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