

TACOMA-PIERCE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

GUIDELINES & REQUIREMENTS

The purpose of the Tacoma-Pierce County Bar Association Mentorship Program is to foster informal professional relationships between experienced and less-experienced attorneys to better prepare them for the practice of law. Below are some guidelines to help facilitate a rewarding Mentor-Mentee relationship.

1. The Mentorship Program is not designed to create an employment opportunity or referral source.
2. Mentors serve on a voluntary basis. Mentees must always be respectful of the Mentor's time.
3. It is the Mentee's responsibility to initiate, schedule, and maintain once-a-month contact with the Mentor.
4. Mentor and Mentee should plan on a meeting once a month (e.g., for coffee or lunch).
 - Recommended topics to discuss include:
 - Background on Mentor's areas of practice and substantive discussion for current legal issues and anticipated developments in that area.
 - Mentee's background, experience and areas of interest.
 - Discussion of challenges that Mentor faced early in his/her career.
 - Sharing of "war stories" to help Mentee learn from the Mentor's experiences.
 - Mentor's practical advice on career development, client management and networking.
 - Comments/feedback on Mentee's brief writing or work sample that is redacted to eliminate all confidential information.
 - Practical application of the Rules of Professional Conduct.
5. Mentor and Mentee should plan to attend at least one Mentor Program or Bar event together.
6. If practicable, the Mentor should consider inviting the Mentee to attend at least one hearing or other activity during which the Mentee can observe the Mentor in practice.
7. Mentees are encouraged to ask questions regarding substantive, practical or ethical issues which they may encounter. Mentees should not be afraid to ask even the most basic questions. Remember that Mentors probably had similar experiences when they began their practice.
8. **WHAT NOT TO DO:**
 - When discussing a particular case, Mentors and Mentees must pose their questions in the hypothetical form, to avoid disclosing client identities and confidential information and to avoid any potential conflicts of interest.
 - Mentees and Mentors must not ask Mentors or Mentees to perform any legal research or work for them.

Mentors and Mentees should take appropriate steps to avoid even the appearance of the existence of an attorney/client relationship between the Mentor's and Mentee's clients.

- Mentees are reminded that any detailed conversation about the specifics of the problem and situation of a client may require prior consent from the client before disclosure. Failure to obtain such consent may violate the ethical rules.

The Mentor Program is designed to last one year; however, this period may be extended upon mutual consent.

9. A Mentor's advice to a Mentee on ethical or legal questions is not binding on the Washington Supreme Court or any disciplinary authority. Participation in the Mentor Program is not a means to limit liability for malpractice or ethical violations.

10. The Mentor is required to be a member in good standing of the Washington State Bar Association and to have professional liability insurance.

11. The Mentee is encouraged to have professional liability insurance.

12. Mentor and Mentee should provide bi-annual feedback to the Tacoma-Pierce County Bar Mentorship Committee for improvement of the Mentorship Program.