

# NAWL MENTOR PROGRAM

*matching senior lawyers mentors with junior lawyers mentees*

## ABOUT NAWL

The mission of the National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL<sup>®</sup>) is to foster social and professional advancement of female lawyers by promoting the social, political and professional empowerment of women. NAWL was founded in 1899 and was the first nationwide association of women lawyers in the United States. Throughout its existence NAWL has been an advocate for women's legal rights. In 1912 NAWL campaigned for women's voting rights during the women's suffrage movement. Six years later, NAWL began an initiative to achieve for women the right to serve on juries. More recently through the Women Lawyers Journal, NAWL's quarterly magazine, NAWL has spread awareness on topics including domestic violence, gender bias, and sexual harassment in the workplace. NAWL is proud to expand its initiatives to include the NAWL Mentor Program. For more on NAWL's history visit our website at [www.nawl.org](http://www.nawl.org).

## MENTOR PROGRAM

### I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

#### A. Quick Facts: The NAWL Mentor Program . . .

- Is a program geared toward the social and professional advancement of junior lawyers with 10 years or less in practice.
- Matches senior lawyer mentors (10 years or more in practice) from a variety of legal fields with junior lawyer mentees.
- Provides mentors who are committed, encouraging, motivating, and supportive.

#### B. Goals and objectives of the program

- Empower women with professional and social guidance.
- Promote NAWL's mission.

#### C. Obligations At A Glance

- One-year commitment to the program.
- Fulfillment of your mentee or mentor responsibilities, including once-a-month contact with your mentor or mentee.
- Participation in NAWL's Mentor/Mentee Training Teleconference.
- Participation in NAWL's topical conferences/open forum discussions, to be held every other month as a resource for mentees and mentors.

### II. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND EXPECTATIONS IN THE MENTOR/MENTEE RELATIONSHIP

#### A. Mentee Roles

NAWL's Mentoring Program has three main goals for the mentee: (1) supporting the mentee; (2) providing mentors as a resource; and (3) helping a mentee achieve his/her goals. Mentees are expected to work with their mentors by taking an active role in their own development. Below are some general roles that a mentee should expect to play.

i. Team Player

- Identify and share your needs with your mentor.
- Be receptive to feedback.

ii. Planner

- Set realistic goals with your mentor.
- Contribute ideas to solving problems.

iii. Communicator

- Don't be afraid to ask questions!
- Communicate clearly and effectively.
- Listen and be respectful.

B. Mentee Responsibilities Mentees are encouraged to assume substantial responsibilities as a participant in the Mentor Program:

i. Respect: Respect your mentor's time and confidentiality.

- Don't share a mentor's personal feelings or ideas with a third party unless authorized by your mentor.
- Respect your mentor's time as if it were your own.

ii. Communicate: Be clear about your needs and limits.

- Communicate early on your preferred method of communication, the best days to be reached, and your time constraints.

iii. Professionalism: Conduct a professional relationship at all times.

- Work through a conflict with care and respect.
- Contact the Mentor Program Committee for assistance if necessary.

iv. Evaluate: Continually evaluate how well you are meeting your goals.

- Be committed to self-development.
- Be able to work interdependently.

v. Recognize: Recognize your mentor when you achieve goals you have discussed.

- Send a thank you note or email, or take the time to make a phone call.

C. Program Expectations

NAWL expects all mentees to be committed to the program. However, we understand that conflicts may arise. If at any time you feel you cannot work with your mentor, please contact the Mentor Program Committee Chair (contact details below and at [www.nawl.org](http://www.nawl.org)). The Mentor Program Committee will work to resolve the issue or reassign mentees if necessary. If at any time you no longer wish to participate in the program please contact the Mentor Program Committee Chair as soon as possible.

#### D. Mentor Roles

NAWL's Mentoring Program has three main goals for the mentor: (1) supporting the mentee; (2) acting as a resource; and (3) helping your mentee achieve his/her goals. The roles a mentor adopts will differ depending on the needs of your mentee. Some times you may be performing one role, other times you may be performing several. Below are general roles that a mentor may assume.

##### i. Guide:

- Help junior lawyers navigate through the transition from student to professional, from junior associate to senior associate, etc.
- Reveal any "unwritten rules" for developing and maintaining a professional demeanor and reputation.
- Provide information on the dynamics of a law firm, in house law department or government agency.
- Everybody makes mistakes, share yours!

##### ii. Motivate: Encourage and support.

- Motivate your mentee to identify and take concrete steps toward ambitious goals.
- Focus on what your mentee is doing successfully and relate this positive feedback to your mentee.

##### iii. Coach: Provide constructive feedback to promote professional growth.

- Encourage positive behavior with positive feedback.
- Discourage negative behavior with constructive feedback.

##### iv. Advise: Help your mentee develop his/her professional interests and set realistic goals.

- Set goals that are reachable, specific, clear, and time framed.
- Goals are not static. Keep goals flexible and modify them when necessary.
- Direct your mentee to career resources that he/she may require.

##### v. Be a Role Model: Always project high standards of professionalism and a positive attitude.

- Remember mentees are likely to imitate their mentors.
- Provide an opportunity for your mentee to learn the positive attributes of an experienced lawyer.

#### E. Mentor Responsibilities

A mentor's responsibilities, like their roles, will vary depending on the mentee. However, the following guidelines are universal:

##### i. Respect: Respect your mentee's time and confidentiality.

- Don't share a mentee's personal feelings or ideas with a third party unless authorized by your mentee.
- Respect your mentee's time as if it were your own.

##### ii. Communicate: Be clear about your needs and limits.

- Communicate early on your preferred method of communication, the best days to be reached, and your time constraints.
- Set boundaries from the beginning.

- iii. Professionalism: Conduct a professional relationship at all times.
  - Carefully consider whether to encourage a close friendship.
  - Work through a conflict with care and respect. Contact the Mentor Program Committee for assistance if necessary.
- iv. Evaluate: Continually evaluate how well you are meeting the goals of the program.
  - Invite your mentee to discuss any concerns.
  - Encourage your mentee to meet his/her goals, not your own.
- v. Recognize: Recognize your mentee when he/she achieves goals you have discussed.
  - Send a congratulatory email or note, or take the time to make a phone call.

#### F. Mentor Expectations

NAWL expects all mentors to be committed to the program. However, we understand that conflicts may arise. Once a mentor is assigned a mentee, you are expected to contact them via email or other preferred method of communication at least once a month. If at any time you feel you cannot work with your mentee, please contact the Mentor Program Committee Chair (contact details below and at [www.nawl.org](http://www.nawl.org)). The Mentor Program Committee will work to resolve the issue or reassign mentees if necessary. If at any time you no longer wish to participate in the program please contact

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