

**National Capital Area
Paralegal Association
(NCAPA)**

Mentorship Program

Third Edition Handbook 2019



Pascalie Goddard

National Capital Area Paralegal Association (NCAPA)
Mentorship Program Handbook

First Edition: Pascale Goddard and Christine Villarreal (2014)

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National Capital Area Paralegal Association (NCAPA)
Mentorship Program Handbook

Introduction

This document provides recommended guidelines for establishing the NCAPA Mentorship Program (the “Program”).

NCAPA recognizes the value of mentoring as an instrument of organizational learning. The Program will provide an opportunity for successful individuals (mentors) to share wise counsel, knowledge, and offer advice to new members or paralegals. This interactive activity will not only enhance the skills of experienced NCAPA members but aims to also enhance professional and career skills of new paralegals entering the organization. The mentor can help mentees learn to handle various situations, enhance their developmental skills, and avoid some of the pitfalls that can potentially side track a career or delay promotion opportunities. This Program has the potential of broadening skills, experience, and expertise throughout the organization.

The Program is designed to become an integral part of NCAPA’s culture to help paralegals realize their goals and potential. Additionally, it is intended to help all members to develop personally, professionally, and to enhance their professional relationships.

Mentoring is one of the oldest forms of human development

It is believed that mentoring has existed since the Ancient Greek era. In the Odyssey, when King Odysseus went off to fight the Trojan War, he left Telemachus, his son and only heir, with a trusted friend to teach him how to become a good leader. That wise and sensitive man’s name was Mentor. However it wasn’t until the 1970’s that mentoring came to a rise in the United States (E. Parsloe, 2000). It was earlier described as “an innovation in American management” (G.S. Odiome, 1985).

Definitions of a Mentor

- Person who shares experience, knowledge, and wisdom about a particular occupation, their occupation or about the workplace in general.
- “One who is a trusted counselor or guide” - Webster’s Dictionary.
- “Anyone who has a beneficial life-style or style-altering effect on another person, generally as a result of personal one-on-one contact; one who offers knowledge, insight, perspective, or wisdom that is helpful to another person in a relationship which goes beyond duty and obligation.” Gordon Shea (expert on mentoring)

<u>Successful Mentee/Mentor Relationships</u>	
Mentee	Mentor
Tiger Woods	Bill Wash (Coach - San Francisco 49ers) Earl Woods (Tiger’s Father)
Alexander the Great	Aristotle (Greek Philosopher and Scientist)
Venus Williams	Richard Williams (Venus’ Father) Pam Shriver (Professional Tennis Player)
Michelle Obama	Valerie Jarrett (Chicago lawyer and civic leader)

What is Mentoring?

- **Tutoring:** Passing on knowledge, identifying and closing gaps in a learner's knowledge and needs.
- **Coaching:** Providing specialized attention to the individual being coached to help improve performance (e.g., in making discovery production).
- **Counseling:** Providing feedback to help improve individual behavior or general performance of duties and to align the interests of the individual with the interests of the organization/employer.
- **Mentoring:** Using the mentor's knowledge, insight, perspective and wisdom to help mentees achieve their personal satisfaction and fulfillment. Mentoring may also include aspects of coaching and counseling.

General Policy

All NCAPA members are eligible to participate in the program. All participants of the Program are encouraged to commit to a six (6) month formal mentoring partnership with periodic check-in from the Mentorship Committee (the "Committee"). At the end of the Board year, the formal support will end. However, participants are encouraged to continue their partnership on an informal basis including future mentoring activities. Time spent on developmental activities will vary depending on the agreement signed by the mentor and mentee. **It is recommended that partners meet at least once a month for one-hour.** However, each partnership will work out an arrangement that is best for both parties.

The Program Objectives:

- ❖ Career development
- ❖ Improve and effectively manage skills in the workplace
 - ❖ Improve the paralegal profession and morale

Program Overview

Management

The Program is managed and administered by the Committee. This Committee will provide support and monitor program activities to ensure that objectives are met. The Committee and NCAPA Board will evaluate the Program periodically to make any necessary changes. Feedback will be solicited from both mentors and mentees.

Administration

- The Committee will match mentors and mentees based on similar areas of interest and other criteria, if they have not already chosen a mentor or mentee on their own.
- The Committee will provide an orientation at the beginning of the mentoring session, and will offer support to mentors, mentees throughout the mentoring period.
- **Mentors will have a formal meeting with the mentee once a month for at least one hour to build a relationship, confidence, and explore any issues, new challenges, or simply to gain a different perspective of the paralegal field.** This will provide the mentee(s) with a sounding board to explore career options and open up new communication channels and learning opportunities.
- Mentors will serve as a coach, teacher, counselor, and challenger to help the mentee handle various situations and avoid pitfalls that can develop, especially early in the mentee's career.
- **Committee approval is required to participate in the Program.**

Program Length

The 2019 Program will run for six (6) months from February 2019 through August 2019. The Committee and NCAPA Board reserve the right to make any adjustments to the program. Each participating mentee and mentor must agree to work together for at least a six (6) months minimum.

Time Requirement

A reasonable amount of **official time** (up to 1 hour per month) is recommended for mentoring relationships. At the discretion of the mentee and mentor, other sessions may be scheduled on their own time. Each mentoring relationship will vary according to needs and interests; there are no restrictions on informal mentoring. Participants are urged to "check-in", frequently, with one another, via informal phone calls or emails.

Mentee-Mentor Matching Process

The mentee will have the opportunity to select three potential mentors that would best match their needs. The mentee will be able to select from a list of eligible applications, and submit his/her selection to the Committee. The Committee will review applications for final determination and to ensure balanced matches. The Committee will propose tentative matches of mentors and mentees. The Committee reserves the right to designate NCAPA's Executive Board to determine final matches. The Board shall match the mentor and mentee based on similar areas of interest or other criteria. Efforts will be made to match mentees with mentors who can best support their respective developmental needs. **Both mentee and mentor are given the opportunity to agree upon final matches.**

A system has been incorporated in the Program in the event that an initial match or ongoing relationship is not satisfactory; provisions will be made for re-matching. The mentor and mentee may turn to the Committee for guidance and assistance. Unsatisfactory mentoring relationships may be terminated at any time during the six-month period by contacting the Committee. An attempt will be made to match the mentee with another mentor. **Normally re-matching will only be undertaken during the first month of the program.**

Mentee-Mentor Agreement

Each mentee-mentor pair will sign a written agreement that will identify a set of measurable goals to be completed during the Program period. This document will serve as a contract between the mentor and mentee. The Committee will provide the agreement format.

Program Features

The Committee will serve as the Program Coordinator. Throughout the six-month period, the Committee will provide all participants with an orientation and periodic encouragement and Program activities by suggestions, tips, and tools to enhance the mentoring relationship and participant career enhancement.

The orientation, which will be an in-person event, will consist of an overview of the Program, expectations, time commitments, other aspects of the Program, and help addressing questions for potential participating members.

The mentoring activities will be in the form of articles and or a workshop (in-person or virtual).which will highlight topics relative to the paralegal field. The workshop would provide participants with information on benefits of using a recruiter, tips on preparing for interviews and resume formatting, and Social-Media use.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Program is responsible for all mentoring activities, as stated above, and assisting in coordinating mentor assignments (if necessary).

Role of the Mentee

- Participate in all Program activities by attending orientation, mentor/mentee meetings and other scheduled events (if any).
- Develop short and/or long-term goals at the onset of the mentor/mentee relationship.
- Be willing to accept feedback, be patient, and be cooperative.
- Accept the Program boundaries (i.e., the mentor serves a career counselor, not an advocate).
- Use the Program to enhance present career direction and identify future skills necessary for career growth.
- Accept responsibility for the mentor/mentee relationship by calling the mentor and initiating contact for meetings. The mentee is responsible for developing and fostering the mentoring relationship.

Role of the Mentor

- Serve as an unbiased confidant and counselor with whom the mentee may discuss work-related issues and other concerns perceived as impeding job performance.
- Provide objective and positive suggestions on appropriate office conduct and work ethics.
- Provide objective and positive suggestions on how the mentee may improve work proficiency and productivity.
- Participate in all Program activities by attending orientation, mentor/mentee meetings and other scheduled events (if any). Participation is **required** unless workload is negatively impacted.

Mentoring Program Guidelines

- Both parties must keep all information discussed in sessions confidential within the NCAPAs ethical parameters and legal restrictions.
- Participation is optional.
- Participants must meet at least once every two weeks for one hour during the formal mentoring process.

Number of Participants

Applicants who wish to choose their own mentee/mentor partner should write the name on their application and encourage this person to apply. Both people must apply to be matched. The Committee will consider your preference but cannot guarantee a match.

Eligibility Requirements

Participating as a mentor or mentee is strictly voluntary; however, the following requirements must be met:

- Mentors and Mentees **must** be active members of NCAPA.
- Mentors must have at least three to five years of paralegal experience.

To Be A Successful Mentee, You Should:

- Be prepared to make a serious effort to set career goals and achieve them.
- Commit yourself to take the initiative to foster a positive relationship with your mentor.
- Listen to your mentor's suggestions, evaluate them, and take appropriate action.
- Be prepared to commit time and effort to work toward your goals in addition to the official time for the mentoring partnership.

To Be A Successful Mentor, You Should:

- Be able to serve as a role model and resource person for a mentee.
- Demonstrate proficiency and initiative in your own career.
- Commit to providing counsel and guidance to the mentee on how to achieve his/her full potential.
- Demonstrate patience and cooperativeness when dealing with others.
- Be able to provide feedback on career and professional issues, which could impede a mentee's career development.
- Ask constructive questions.
- Be a good listener.
- Exhibit tact, diplomacy, and sensitivity in working with others who may be from a different age group, background, or culture.

Application Procedures

Interested mentors and mentees must apply to participate in the program through an application process. You must complete the application and take the following steps:

1. Fill out the enrollment form and mentoring agreement attached (mentee or mentor).
2. Submit application forms via email to mentorship@ncapa.com.

NCAPA Mentor Enrollment Form

Mentor Profile	
Name:	
Date:	
Home Address:	
City/State/ZIP Code:	
Home Phone:	
Cell Phone:	
Employer Name:	
Work Address:	
City/State/ZIP Code:	
Work Phone:	
Email Address:	
<p>I prefer to be contacted by phone <input type="checkbox"/> or email <input type="checkbox"/> both <input type="checkbox"/>.</p>	
<p><u>Paralegal Experience:</u> Brief description of job duties and/or responsibilities</p>	
<p>Areas of legal experience:</p>	
<p>Years of Experience:</p>	
<p><u>Education:</u> Professional Certifications/Memberships Held</p>	
<p>College/University Attended:</p>	
<p>Major/Degree Attained:</p>	
<p><u>Other Comments:</u></p>	
<p></p>	

Please return completed form via email to mentorship@ncapa.com.

NCAPA Mentee Enrollment Form

Mentee Profile					
Name:					
Date:					
Home Address:					
City/State/ZIP Code:					
Home Phone:					
Cell Phone:					
Employer Name:					
Work Address:					
City/State/ZIP Code:					
Work Phone:					
Email Address:					
I prefer to be contacted by phone <input type="checkbox"/> email <input type="checkbox"/> both <input type="checkbox"/>					
Paralegal Interests: Area(s) of law that you would like to learn more about					
<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 33%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Family/Civil <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Litigation <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Property (IP) <input type="checkbox"/> Financial/Banking <input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal </td> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 33%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Tax <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate/Securities <input type="checkbox"/> Antitrust <input type="checkbox"/> Bankruptcy <input type="checkbox"/> Constitutional <input type="checkbox"/> Contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental </td> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 33%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration <input type="checkbox"/> International <input type="checkbox"/> Employment <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit </td> </tr> </table>			<input type="checkbox"/> Family/Civil <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Litigation <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Property (IP) <input type="checkbox"/> Financial/Banking <input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal	<input type="checkbox"/> Tax <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate/Securities <input type="checkbox"/> Antitrust <input type="checkbox"/> Bankruptcy <input type="checkbox"/> Constitutional <input type="checkbox"/> Contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration <input type="checkbox"/> International <input type="checkbox"/> Employment <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit
<input type="checkbox"/> Family/Civil <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Litigation <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Property (IP) <input type="checkbox"/> Financial/Banking <input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal	<input type="checkbox"/> Tax <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate/Securities <input type="checkbox"/> Antitrust <input type="checkbox"/> Bankruptcy <input type="checkbox"/> Constitutional <input type="checkbox"/> Contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration <input type="checkbox"/> International <input type="checkbox"/> Employment <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit			
Paralegal Experience: Brief description of job duties and/or responsibilities:					
Areas of legal experience:					
Years of Experience:					
Paralegal Work/Internship/Volunteer Experience:					
Education: Professional Certifications/Memberships Held:					
College/University Attended:					
Major/Degree Attained:					
Other Comments:					

Please return completed form via email to mentorship@ncapa.com.

Mentoring Agreement

The following are the conditions agreed upon for the Mentorship Program and include the expectation that both parties will evaluate the relationship periodically to ensure it continues to meet their needs.

Duration of the formal mentoring relationship:

Frequency of meetings and additional logistical details:

Goal(s) of the Mentor:

Goal(s) of the Mentee:

Additional Comments:

Mentor Name: _____

Mentor Signature: _____

Mentee Name: _____

Mentee Signature: _____

Please return completed form via email to mentorship@ncapa.com.

Mentoring Action Plan

Development Goal:

Development Objectives:

Action Step:

Others Involved _____ Target Date: _____

Action Step:

Others Involved _____ Target Date: _____

Action Step:

Others Involved _____ Target Date: _____

Progress Review Dates:

Must be submitted upon COMPLETION of mentorship via email to mentorship@ncapa.com.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do we need a Mentoring Program?

Many paralegals who have significant potential do not have mentors to help them identify their strengths, improve their performance, and set career goals. The mentoring program is a link to bring paralegals together who want to help others learn how to achieve their goals and those who are willing to take the initiative and seek a mentor's guidance. At the organizational level, the NCAPA hopes to encourage the use of mentoring as a developmental tool.

What are the program's goals and objectives?

NCAPAs mentoring program's goal is to provide mentees with the (a) coaching; (b) job and career information; (c) feedback counseling; and, (d) caring a mentor can give. Mentoring is an approach that provides members with the kind of support that often results in their making substantial contributions to the organization. To provide access to as broad a group as possible, mentors and mentees will vary by area of law, experience and other factors.

For mentees, what are the objectives?

- Gain exposure to different options, perspectives, and organizational cultures.
- Expand the range of contacts, and develop an ability to create their own networks.
- Discover and understand "the rules of the game" in the work world.
- Develop a greater sense of career direction and improved job performance.

What can the program do for me as a mentee?

It is up to you to take the initiative and take action. You must set your own goals for self-improvement, better work performance, and long-term career strategy. Your mentor will be there to serve as a guide, to help you refine your goals, and to support you as you work towards achieving them. However, it is up to you to personally achieve the goals you have set for yourself. They will help you refine your career plans, but cannot intervene for you.

What can my mentor do for me?

Your mentor can help you make a plan and encourage you to pursue it strategically. Your mentor can tell you how others see you and suggest ways to make positive changes. However, your mentor cannot make a decision for you, run your career, make calls for you, or use his or her influence for you. You have to take the initiative to do those things for yourself.

How do mentors benefit from the Mentoring Program?

Apart from the satisfaction of helping another person reach goals he or she has set, many mentors develop a new perspective, learn about another organization or area of law, gain additional insight into their own paths and values, and go through a reflective process similar to the mentee's. As they help someone else evaluate their career issues and goals, mentors often find themselves doing some worthwhile soul searching about their own careers as well. Given the opportunity to personally witness the positive impact of mentoring on the mentees, mentors are often inspired to reach out to their employees in more supportive ways or to seek informal mentors for themselves.

What is expected of the mentees?

Each mentee is responsible for defining a career goal and strategy (with the help of the mentor) and for striving to achieve career goals. At the logistical level, the mentee is responsible for meeting with the mentor at least two hours per month for the six-month period of the Program, developing a contract with the mentor and sending it to the Committee, responding to committee follow-ups to ensure the pair is progressing, evaluating their progress in the mentoring action plan,

sharing information with other mentees through informal gatherings, and participating in the final evaluation process.

How many mentees and mentors will be selected?

Anyone can be a mentor if he/she is willing to make the commitment. A mentor needs to be able to listen, offer suggestions, and maintain confidentiality. A mentor does not have to intervene for the mentee or tell them what to do. The Program recruiting process is to ensure the best possible match. Every mentee is guaranteed a match.

What if I know someone with whom I would like to be matched?

Both people must apply. Please indicate on both of your application forms that you would like to be matched. NCAPA does not guarantee the match, since it has to consider the needs of the group as a whole but will attempt to accommodate you.

How will a mentor and mentee work together?

The mentor and mentee will work together to develop and sign an agreement that indicates what each is responsible for, what the goals of the relationship are, how they assess how they are doing, and any other pertinent information.

What if I am not comfortable with my mentor/mentee?

The purpose of your first meeting is to see whether the two of you are compatible. The match is not final until you have both approved it. The Committee will check-in with you to see how your relationship is going and whether you are moving towards the goals you set. Please let the Committee know if things are not working the way you had hoped. Often, a problem in a relationship is a question of miscommunication that can be cleared up through open discussion. Occasionally, rematching will be necessary, but normally re-matching will be considered only during the first three to six months of the program.

How much time can I spend with my mentor/mentee?

You are given a recommended amount of one hour of official time each month to meet. It is up to you to negotiate and arrange meetings to ensure that mentoring does not interfere with your regular duties. If you must travel a significant distance to meet, consider meeting at the beginning or end of the day to make it more efficient, or consolidate your time together into longer meetings and meet fewer times during a month. You and your partner may agree to meet more than the one hour a month. Additional time must be spent outside of the normal working hours "on your own time," e.g. during weekends.

How long does the Program last?

Each Program will last six (6) months. However, participants are encouraged to continue their relationship based on their availability.

Where does the Program fit in the NCAPA approach to career development?

It is important for all of us to access our skills and developmental needs on a regular basis. Periodic self-evaluations can help identify the challenges we currently face and the skills and personal resources we need to successfully meet. The Program is a tool, which enables the participants to make a self-assessment based on the knowledge that they will receive from mentors. The Program will consist of a diversified group of participants who will share experiences, be empowered, and encouraged to approach their individual career development.