



**Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism**

# **Mentoring Plan**

## **For New Lawyers and Mentors**

Revised Edition 2014



Dear Colleague:

*On behalf of the Justices of the Illinois Supreme Court, I thank you for your participation in the Lawyer-to-Lawyer Mentoring Program.*

*This program creates an opportunity for an experienced lawyer to provide professional guidance and share practical knowledge and skills with a new lawyer during the critical transition period from law student to legal practitioner. Mentoring programs serve two important goals: (1) the development of relationships between new and more experienced lawyers; and (2) providing education on professional responsibility topics. Completion of this program also qualifies for 6.0 Professional Responsibility CLE credits.*

*Your commitment to this year-long undertaking should benefit not only you but also the profession at large. Good mentoring is extremely valuable for building and maintaining an identity and common purpose in our profession.*

*Please accept our gratitude for your time and effort in this worthy endeavor.*

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rita B. Garman".

Hon. Rita B. Garman, Chief Justice  
Illinois Supreme Court

## Welcome to the Lawyer-to-Lawyer Mentoring Program

This document contains all the information you will need to successfully complete the Lawyer-to-Lawyer Mentoring program, and the forms you will sign and submit to your Program Administrator, at or shortly after your orientation session. When questions arise, please contact your Program Administrator.

### Mentor and New Lawyer Requirements and Checklist

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Participate in program orientation, develop your mentoring plan, and sign your mentoring agreement and pledges.

Chances are that you are reading this while sitting at your program orientation session. Today, you will be asked to do four things:

- a. Watch a brief presentation on the history and logistics of the Program;
- b. Sign the Internal or External Lawyer Mentoring Agreement, found on pages 9 and 10, and give a copy to your Program Administrator;
- c. With your mentoring partner, agree upon activities in your Mentoring Plan, found on pages 5 - 7;
- d. Sign the Mentoring Plan Pledge (new lawyer should also sign the Pledge of Professionalism) found on page 8, and give a copy to your Program Administrator.

The *Mentoring Plan* is intended to serve as a guide or roadmap for the mentor and new lawyer. It lists action items grouped by the five areas of the professional responsibility requirements in Illinois Supreme Court Rule 794(d).

Together, you and your mentoring partner should develop a personalized plan for the one-year mentoring term by discussing the specific action items in the attached Plan, deciding upon the concepts, skills, topics, and shared professional experiences you'd like to address during the mentoring term.

As a pair, you should incorporate as many of the action items as feasible into your *Mentoring Plan* and customize your plan to the particular practice setting, individual needs, and personal goals of the new lawyer. To satisfy the requirements of the mentoring program and receive CLE credit, your completed Plan must include at least one activity from each of the five categories. Note that there are blank lines in each category where you can designate your own activity.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Participate in a minimum of eight (8) face-to-face meetings, completing the action items agreed upon within the one-year term.

Once you have agreed upon your Plan, you will hold a minimum of eight (8) in-person meetings over the course of the mentoring term and complete the agreed-upon Plan within the one-year time period. Some suggestions to enhance your mentoring experience:

- a. The particular action items or activities you select are not set in stone. To the extent interests, needs, or opportunities change during the course of the mentoring relationship, you can agree to add or substitute an activity you may not have initially selected.
- b. Consider putting your first few meetings on your calendars today; this will get you off to a strong start.
- c. To facilitate the dual purpose of education and relationship-building, we recommend neither rushing to complete the action items in a shorter time period, nor waiting until the end of the one-year term.
- e. See the corresponding section of the [Mentoring Plan Supplement](#) for additional information on a particular action item. The Supplement suggests activities, discussion topics and references for each action item in the Mentoring Plan.

\_\_\_\_ 3. At the end of your year-long mentoring term, provide signed Attestation of Completion to your Program Administrator, then complete the online CLE application to obtain your professional responsibility credits.

As your mentoring year comes to a close, you may request a *Plan Completion Attestation* form from your Program Administrator, if he or she has not already provided it. When you have completed your Plan, sign and return the Attestation to your Program Administrator. Thereafter, on or after the anniversary date of your orientation, you may complete the Commission's [online form](#) to obtain your six (6) Professional Responsibility CLE credits. Please note that no partial credit will be given.

If issues develop that may prevent you from completing the *Mentoring Plan*, please consult with your Program Administrator promptly for instructions.

Thanks again for participating, and for your contribution to professionalism in Illinois. We hope that you will find the program rewarding.

## 1. Professionalism

Elected	Plan Supplement	Action	Completion Date
	1A	Introduce new lawyer to other lawyers in the community, in a variety of practice areas, through attendance at bar association (national, state, local and affinity) meetings and other networking opportunities.	
	1B	Meet at the local courthouse(s) and make appropriate introductions to members of the judiciary, court personnel and clerks of court. Discuss customary rules of civility or etiquette among lawyers and judges in the community.	
	1C	Acquaint new lawyer with access to justice issues, various Illinois legal services organizations, and opportunities to engage in <i>pro bono</i> activities. If appropriate, work together on a <i>pro bono</i> matter, charitable event, or public service project.	
	1D	Discuss law office management matters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Time records.</li> <li>b. Records of client-related expenses.</li> <li>c. Billing system.</li> <li>d. Conflict check procedure.</li> <li>e. Client retainer and/or payment schedules.</li> <li>f. Fee agreements.</li> <li>g. Escrow and trust account, establishing an IOLTA, accounting, auditing, use of interest proceeds, proper procedures for handling client funds and other property.</li> <li>h. Filing system and procedures.</li> <li>i. Document retention plan.</li> <li>j. Calendar reminder systems.</li> <li>k. Information technology system.</li> <li>l. Methods of keeping clients informed about progress of their matters.</li> <li>m. Library and research systems.</li> <li>n. Other resources (publications, seminars, equipment).</li> </ul>	
	1E	Discuss effective time management skills and techniques.	
	1F	Discuss how to staff a large litigation or transactional matter, including what is involved in effectively allocating firm and client resources.	
	1G	Discuss importance of client communication, how to maintain appropriate ongoing communication (returning telephone calls, email) to keep clients informed.	
	1H	Discuss proper legal counseling and the duties and responsibilities of advising clients.	
	1I	If applicable, discuss how to develop business in an effective and professional manner.	
	1J	Discuss types of alternative dispute resolution such as mediation, arbitration, early neutral evaluation, summary jury trials, and collaborative representation.	
	1K	Observe one of the proceedings referred in 1L. Discuss and evaluate what was observed.	
	1L	If you work in a government setting, introduce the new lawyer to respective roles of other agencies, and to representatives thereof.	
	Alternative Action		
	Alternative Action		

## 2. Legal Ethics

Elected	Plan Supplement	Action	Completion Date
	2A	Discuss practices to maintain client confidentiality.	
	2B	Discuss how to screen for, recognize, and avoid conflicts of interest.	
	2C	Discuss roles and responsibilities of paralegals, secretaries and other office personnel, and how to establish good working relationships with support staff and colleagues.	
	2D	Discuss the responsibilities of the client and the lawyer in decision-making, and the best ways to involve a client in their case.	
	2E	Discuss preparation and proper behavior during discovery.	
	2F	Discuss how to prepare for negotiation of a legal matter, when and how negotiation is initiated, how to involve the client, ethical and professionalism obligations of negotiators, skills needed to be an effective negotiator and how to acquire them.	
	2G	Discuss common malpractice and grievance traps in your practice area or setting, and how to recognize and avoid common pitfalls.	
	2H	Discuss potential resources and procedures for dealing with complicated ethical issues, including conflict of interests.	
	2I	Discuss appropriate ways to handle situations where lawyer believes another lawyer has committed an ethical violation; the obligation to report misconduct; and the appropriate way to handle a situation where a new lawyer is asked by a senior member of the firm/organization to do something that is unethical or unprofessional.	
	2J	Discuss the grievance process and a lawyer's duty to cooperate with a disciplinary investigation.	
	2K	Attend a public hearing at the ARDC's Chicago or Springfield office (see ILARDC <a href="#">hearings schedule</a> ) and discuss the proceedings.	
	Alternative Action		
	Alternative Action		

## 3. Civility

Elected	Plan Supplement	Action	Completion Date
	3A	Discuss the Commission's <a href="#">Survey on Professionalism</a> and how issues of incivility impact the legal profession and the administration of justice.	
	3B	Discuss the professional conduct duties of the lawyer to the client and to the administration of justice.	
	3C	Discuss strategies for managing incivility and highly charged situations.	
	3D	Discuss how to deal with a "difficult" client.	
	Alternative Action		

#### 4. Diversity and Inclusion

Elected	Plan Supplement	Action	Completion Date
	4A	Develop an awareness of diversity and inclusion issues in the legal profession by reading recent published studies and articles, and discussing them.	
	4B	Discuss personal experiences involving diversity and inclusion in your academic or work setting/s.	
	4C	Discuss what your organization or employer has done, or could do, to increase diversity and inclusion.	
	4D	Attend a diversity awareness or training workshop or CLE, and discuss.	
	Alternative Action		
	Alternative Action		

#### 5. Wellness, Mental Health and Addiction

Elected	Plan Supplement	Action	Completion Date
	5A	Discuss various career paths such as large firm, small firm, government and non-profit practice, corporate counsel, and nontraditional legal positions and identify resources for exploring options.	
	5B	Discuss long term and short-term career objectives and identify ways to achieve them.	
	5C	Discuss strategies for finding a balance between career and personal life, keeping daily stress in perspective, reconciling job expectations with actual experience and maximizing career satisfaction.	
	5D	Discuss prominence of substance abuse and mental health issues in the legal profession; review warning signs of substance abuse or mental health problems; what to do if the mentor, new lawyer, a colleague, or a superior is faced with a substance abuse or mental health problem; and the resources for assistance.	
	Alternative Action		
	Alternative Action		

### Mentoring Plan Pledge

We, \_\_\_\_\_, Mentor, and \_\_\_\_\_, New Lawyer, agree upon this *Mentoring Plan* of activities and experiences elected above. We pledge that we will devote the time and effort necessary to carry out this *Mentoring Plan*.

New Lawyer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### New Lawyer Pledge of Professionalism

I acknowledge and accept the privileges and responsibilities inherent in being a lawyer and I will at all times conduct myself with the dignity befitting an advocate and counselor in a learned profession.

I commit myself to service without prejudice, integrity without compromise, and the diligent performance of my duties with the utmost good faith.

I acknowledge that I will be a zealous advocate while exhibiting civility, cooperation, and professional behavior at all times. I will remember that my responsibilities to the legal profession began as a student of the law and continue thereafter as a member of the bar.

I accept my new status as a legal professional and will behave in accordance with these high standards and ideals from this day forward.

This pledge I take freely and upon my honor.

New Lawyer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Internal Lawyer Mentoring Agreement**  
(Complete if Mentor and New Lawyer work for the same employer)

We, \_\_\_\_\_, Mentor, and \_\_\_\_\_, New Lawyer, agree to participate in the Mentoring Program in accordance with the terms of this agreement. We understand lawyer-to-lawyer mentoring is one component of new-lawyer training within our firm and is intended to include coaching, sharing experiences, learning and ongoing guidance and support. We understand the goals of mentoring include:

1. Fostering the development of practical skills;
2. Increasing knowledge of legal customs;
3. Creating a sense of pride and integrity in the legal profession;
4. Promoting collegial relationships among legal professionals;
5. Involvement in organized bar activities;
6. Improving legal ability and professional judgment; and
7. Encouraging the use of best practices and highest ideals in the practice of law.

We hereby certify that we have read the above *Mentoring Agreement* and agree to its terms.

New Lawyer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## External Lawyer Mentoring Agreement

(Complete if Mentor and New Lawyer do not work for the same employer)

We, \_\_\_\_\_, Mentor, and \_\_\_\_\_, New Lawyer, agree to participate in the Mentoring Program in accordance with the terms of this agreement. We understand lawyer-to-lawyer mentoring is one component of new-lawyer training in the practice of law. We recognize that mentoring is intended to include coaching, sharing experiences, learning and ongoing guidance and support. We understand the goals of mentoring include:

1. Fostering the development of practical skills;
2. Increasing knowledge of legal customs;
3. Creating a sense of pride and integrity in the legal profession;
4. Promoting collegial relationships among legal professionals;
5. Involvement in organized bar activities;
6. Improving legal ability and professional judgment; and
7. Encouraging the use of best practices and highest ideals in the practice of law.

We acknowledge and will abide by the following rules:

- \* Any communication between Mentor and the New Lawyer arising out of participation in the Mentoring Plan is for the sole purpose of guiding and teaching the New Lawyer about the practice of law and the issues that the New Lawyer is likely to face in the practice of law.
- \* Any communication between Mentor and the New Lawyer is not intended to be the rendering of legal or professional advice to the New Lawyer or his or her clients, and the New Lawyer will not rely upon such communications or cause any client to rely upon them. The New Lawyer will rely solely upon his or her own judgment, legal opinions, or independent research.
- \* No confidential or lawyer-client relationship is formed between Mentor and the New Lawyer as a result of participation in the Mentoring Program. The New Lawyer will not identify any client to the Mentor or reveal to the Mentor any client confidence, nor will the New Lawyer seek professional or legal advice from the Mentor about specific legal matters or clients. Instead all discussions about substantive legal matters between the New Lawyer and Mentor will be limited to hypothetical situations.
- \* Mentor is not assuming any liability or responsibility with respect to any legal matter of the New Lawyer's clients, nor will Mentor render professional services to, or take any responsibility either directly or indirectly for any aspect of representation of the New Lawyer's clients.
- \* Mentor will not co-counsel any matter with the New Lawyer, nor will Mentor make referrals to or accept referrals from the New Lawyer during the term of their mentoring term.

We hereby certify that we have read the above *Mentoring Agreement* and agree to its terms.

New Lawyer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_