



Mentorship Program

Introduction

The MPRA Mentorship Program is a professional development program to bridge the gap between veteran members of the association and emerging new professionals, providing opportunities for the exchange of information, ideas, and resources between a Mentor and a Mentee. Through a collaborative, mutually beneficial partnership, both Mentors and Mentees will gain new networking opportunities, gain unique experiences and perspectives, and build a relationship to foster the park and recreation profession.

Overview

- **Goals of the program**
 - To bridge the gap between veteran members of the association and new professionals, providing opportunities for the exchange of information, ideas, and resources between mentors and mentees
 - Allow newer professionals in the field and newer members of the organization to gain networking opportunities, develop contacts within the field, and gain experience through their mentor
 - To foster a collaborative, mutually beneficial partnership between experienced members of the organization and young professionals
- **Benefits to departments whose employees participate:**
 - Improved employee interaction contributing to higher job performance
 - Learn the culture and duties of their job faster
 - Develop future leaders
 - Form partnerships with other departments
 - Possible increase in retention
 - Higher level of employee commitment and loyalty to the profession

Oversight

MPRA's Professional Development Committee manages and oversees the Mentorship Program.

Program Guidelines

Mentor:

- **Benefits**
 - Exposure to new ideas, educational methods, perspectives, new technologies, etc. through conversations with the mentee
 - The opportunity to help the mentee professionally
 - Opportunity to pass legacy of information, history, and stories to the next generation of employees
 - New professional contacts through mentee's contacts
 - Further develop coaching, communication, and counseling skills
 - Demonstration of commitment to MPRA and the professional field
 - Opportunities for personal reflection
 - Knowing that the profession will be enhanced as a result of your efforts
- **Guidelines**
 - Be honest and constructive
 - Share your experiences, both good and bad
 - Get to know your mentee
 - Encourage communication
 - Be available and approachable to your mentee
- **Requirements**
 - Be an MPRA Member
 - Willing to commit 2 year to the program
 - Put an honest effort and sufficient time toward the relationship
 - Make a minimum 6 contacts a year
 - Spend a recommended 1-2 hours per month of time
 - Provide a brief evaluation of your experiences to be shared with the Professional Development Team

Mentee:

- **Benefits**
 - Learn new ideas, knowledge of past experiences (what worked and what didn't), interpersonal and leadership skills from a prominent park and recreation professional
 - Receive encouragement to reach for higher goals and take risks with the oversight of an experienced professional
 - Gain self confidence
 - Gain insight on the culture of MPRA and of another departments
 - Develop a relationship with a person who could serve as a role model, sounding board to give feedback and criticism, and a source of stability if facing new challenges
 - Expand your professional network
 - The opportunity to learn weaknesses and how to address them

- Enhance your career
- **Guidelines**
 - Ask questions
 - Accept advice and feedback graciously
 - Be proactive in communicating with your mentor
 - Be respectful of your mentor's time
 - Learn from the experiences of your mentor
 - Be honest and share your perspectives from your level
- **Requirements**
 - Be an MPRA Member
 - Willing to commit 2 year to the program
 - Put an honest effort and sufficient time towards the relationship
 - Make a minimum 6 contacts a year
 - Spend a recommended 1-2 hours per month of time
 - Provide a brief evaluation of your experiences to be shared with the Professional Development Team

The Program

Annual Conference:

The Professional Development Committee will hold a session at annual conference to:

- Explain the values and goals of the mentorship program
- Provide examples and ideas of collaboration opportunities
- Allow previous mentors and mentees to share their experiences
- Introduce new mentees and mentors

Outside of Conference:

Throughout the year, the Professional Development Committee will continually provide ideas, opportunities, and resources to mentors and mentees. In the future, the committee will try to host specific events to encourage, engage, and support the mentorship program.

The committee will also periodically evaluate the success and opportunities with the mentorship program as well as individual mentors and mentees for future reference.

Collaboration Opportunities:

- Both parties could read the same book related to the profession and discuss through e-mail or conference call.
- Watch a webinar together
- Have a meal together at conference
- Mentor can invite mentee to join their department/section/group for a meal/meeting to meet new people and expand their professional network. (Especially if it is mentee's first time at conference and doesn't know many people)
- Attend a session together at conference
- Attend regional level events and socials together

- Schedule monthly conference calls to discuss projects that each other are working on
- Bring a new topic to each conversation i.e. “What’s the best idea you ever had that didn’t turn out the way you’d hoped?”
- Attend Legislation Action Day together

Application Process

Interested professionals should complete and submit an application during the application window. The Professional Development Committee will review applications and create mentorship matches focusing on compatible objectives, locations, and characteristics.

Switching Mentors/Mentees

If a mentor or mentee doesn’t feel that the organized relationship is working, they should contact the Professional Development Committee. The first attempt will be to try and identify and overcome any issues in order to make the match work. However, if that does not seem like the best option for either party, the committee will work to find a new mentor and mentee for the participants.