



Program Overview

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Michigan Library Association
3410 Belle Chase Way
Suite 100
Lansing, MI 48911
(517) 394-2774
MLA@milibraries.org
www.milibraries.org

The goal of MLA's Mentor Program is to support career development by providing encouragement, support and guidance to library science students, early-career librarians, mid-career staff looking to advance within their field, or library staff looking to transition into another position.

The Matching Process

In order to run a successful program, matching of mentors and mentees must be done with care. This is the first step in an effective relationship. MLA will utilize the information provided on the mentor and mentee applications to make thoughtful and informed matches.

Timeline

The MLA Mentor Program and schedule are subject to alterations when needed. The program encompasses a six-month commitment with a formal end to the relationship at that time. The program is comprised of three phases including:

Phase I – Months One and Two

This is the time that both parties begin communication and set goals and objectives for the individual process. MLA will provide resources and tools to help you make the most out of your partnership, including encouragement to meet in-person to help set a strong foundation for the months to come. Communication is key during this phase to make sure expectations and goals are fully understood by both parties. A formal survey will be sent after two months to gauge your progress and compatibility.

Phase II – Months Three and Four

Additional tools, tips, and resources are provided by MLA to help strengthen your relationship. A formal survey will be sent to both parties at the four-month mark to gather additional input on the program.

Phase III – Months Five and Six

The goals and objectives of your relationship are fulfilled. A final evaluation will be sent to both parties regarding your relationship and the MLA Mentoring Program overall. This marks the end of the formal relationship, but MLA encourages mentors and mentees to keep lines of communication open into the future.

Required Activities for Mentors and Mentees

1. Each pair will define their own goals and objectives at the beginning of their mentoring relationship
2. Establish a communication plan that both parties are willing to follow
3. Activities specific to the mentee's professional goals and interests

Program Evaluation

Each pair will define their own goals and be given the opportunity to evaluate their relationship following each phase. MLA will provide support by checking in often with the mentor and mentee and will also offer resources when needed. A final evaluation will be sent at the conclusion of the formal relationship.



Ten Tips for a Successful Mentor/Mentee Relationship

A successful mentor/mentee relationship should be fulfilling and beneficial for all involved. Utilize these ten tips for a more effective and productive relationship:

Mentor	Mentee
1. Keep Communications Open	
Help your mentee set realistic expectations. Also, if you know you will be unavailable because of business or personal travel, let them know.	Be up front. Let your mentor know what your goals are and what you hope to take away from the program.
2. Offer Support	
Encourage communication and participation. Help create a solid plan of action.	Remember that your mentor is there for you, but only as a guide.
3. Define Expectations	
Help set up a system to measure achievement.	Review your goals. Make sure your mentor knows what to expect from you.
4. Maintain Contact	
Respond to your e-mails. Answer questions and provide advice, resources and guidance when appropriate.	Be polite and courteous. Keep up with your emails and ask questions.
5. Be Honest	
Be truthful in your evaluations, but also be tactful.	Let your mentor know if you don't understand something or have a differing opinion.
6. Actively Participate	
Engage in your own learning while you are mentoring, collaborate on projects, ask questions and experiment.	Listen. Ask if you can observe your mentor's library if he/she is local.
7. Be Innovative and Creative	
Share your ideas, give advice and be a resource for new ideas.	Offer ideas on what activities and exercises you can do together.
8. Get To Know Each Other	
Remember that people come from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Get to know each other on an individual basis.	Remember that people come from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Get to know each other on an individual basis.
9. Be Reliable and Consistent	
The more consistent you are, the more you will be trusted.	The more consistent you are, the more you will be trusted.
10. Stay Positive!	
Recognize the work the mentee has done and the progress made.	Remember that your mentor is offering feedback and not criticizing.