



The LeGaL Mentoring Program

Co-sponsored by the New York City Bar LGBT Rights Committee

Mission Statement

Through the **Mentoring Program**, **LeGaL** and **New York City Bar LGBT Rights Committee** seek to foster the **professional development** of LGBT law students and assist them in **navigating the unique issues** they might encounter during Law School and the beginning of their legal careers. The Mentoring Program aims to reinforce a **sense of community** among members of LeGaL while **enhancing the skills and career prospects** of participants.

About LeGaL and the New York City Bar

The LGBT Bar Association of Greater New York (LeGaL) is a bar association of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) legal community in the New York metropolitan area dedicated to promoting the expertise and advancement of LGBT legal professionals while serving the larger community. The LeGaL Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, oversees related charitable and educational activities by and for our membership and the public. As part of its mission, LeGaL is dedicated to serving the interests of the LGBT law student community as well as the needs of recently admitted attorneys from our community. For information on LeGaL, please visit lgbtbarny.org

The New York City Bar LGBT Rights Committee addresses legal and policy issues as well as employment rules and procedures in legal institutions and in the court system affecting lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender individuals. The Committee is comprised of a diverse group of attorneys from private practice, the corporate sector, public interest, government and academia. For information on the New York City Bar, please visit nycbar.org

Roles, Responsibilities, and Expectations of Mentors & Mentees

The LeGaL Mentoring Program matches practicing lawyers from a variety of legal fields and backgrounds with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) law students to promote their academic, professional and personal advancement.¹

**Please read the discussion of mentee and mentor roles contained herein as well as the Mentor/Mentee Standards of Conduct & Agreement at the end of this document.*

MENTEES

Mentee Roles

The LeGaL Mentoring Program will provide a mentor for support and to assist in achieving academic, professional and personal goals. Mentees should expect to play one or more of the following roles:

1. Team Player

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

2. Planner

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

3. Communicator

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

¹ *LeGaL Mentoring Program materials were adopted, with permission, from the Practicing Lawyers for Law Students (PALS) mentoring guidelines.*

Mentee Responsibilities

Below are general guidelines for students/newly admitted attorneys participating in the Mentoring Program as a mentee:

1. Respect

- Respect your mentor's time as if it were your own.
- Respond to your mentor's emails or calls in a timely fashion.
- Do not miss a scheduled appointment with your mentor (see LeGaL's "no-show" policy).
- Do not share any of your mentor's personal feelings or ideas with a third party without his/her express consent.

2. Communicate

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

3. Professionalism

- A professional relationship should be maintained at all times.
- Abide by the Standards of Conduct & Agreement (located at the end of this document).

4. Self-Evaluate

- Be committed to self-development and growth.

5. Feedback

- Take the time to call and thank your mentor. If you cannot, at least send a thank you note or e-mail.

Mentee Expectations

LeGaL expects all mentees to be professional and committed to the program. Besides the Responsibilities mentioned above, LeGaL expects that you will make every effort to manage your schedule accordingly and notify your mentor immediately of any changes that will affect your in-person meetings or other expectations that you have set with your mentor.

No-Show Policy: LeGaL has a strict "no-show" policy which does not permit mentees to cancel or reschedule a previously scheduled appointment with mentors more than three times in one school year. If you cancel or reschedule an appointment with your mentor more than three times, you will not be permitted to participate in the program.

Terminating Mentor Relationship: If at any time you feel you cannot work with your mentor, please contact LeGaL at info@le-gal.org. You will receive help to resolve the issue or to be reassigned if necessary. If at any time you no longer wish to participate in the mentoring program, please contact LeGaL as soon as possible.

MENTORS

Mentor Roles

A LeGaL mentor should act as a professional resource to his or her mentee and assist the mentee in achieving his/her communicated goals. Your role will differ depending on the needs of your mentee. Sometimes you will be performing one role; other times, you may be performing several. Below are general roles that a mentor may assume.

1. A Guide

- Help your mentee navigate the transition from undergraduate student or working professional to role of law student/new attorney.
- Provide information on the dynamics of a law firm, in-house law department, public interest organization, government agency or judicial clerkship experience.
- Feel free to share any tips for developing and maintaining a professional demeanor and reputation.
- Everybody makes mistakes, share yours!

2. A Motivator

- Encourage your mentee to identify and take concrete steps toward achieving his/her goals.
- Focus on what your mentee is doing successfully and relate this positive feedback to your mentee.

3. A Coach

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

4. An Advisor

- Set goals that are reachable, specific, clear and have a reasonable time frame for being achieved.
- Keep goals flexible and modify when necessary.
- Direct your mentee to career resources that he/she may require.

5. A Role Model

- 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 positive attributes of an experienced lawyer.

Mentor Responsibilities

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

1. Respect

- Don't share a mentee's personal feelings or ideas with a third party without express consent from your mentee.
- Respect your mentee's time as if it were your own.

2. Communicate

- Discuss, early on, your preferred method of communication, the best days/times to be contacted, and your time constraints.
- Set boundaries from the beginning.
- Invite your mentee to discuss any concerns.
- Recognize your mentee when he/she achieves a milestone.

3. Professionalism

- Carefully consider whether to encourage a friendship.
- Work through a conflict with care and respect. Contact LeGaL immediately if a perceived problem arises.
- Abide by the Standards of Conduct & Agreement (located at the end of this document).

Mentor Expectations

LeGaL expects that all mentors will be committed to the program. We understand, however, that conflicts may arise. If at any time you feel that you cannot work with your mentee, please contact LeGaL at info@le-gal.org. LeGaL 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 LeGaL as soon as possible.

**Please see Mentor/Mentee Standards of Conduct & Agreement on the next page.*

LeGaL MENTOR/MENTEE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AGREEMENT

Professionalism & Ethical Conduct: All mentors & mentees shall conduct themselves with the utmost professionalism and maintain high ethical standards in dealing with their mentors or mentees. This includes refraining from the pursuit, in any way, of a sexual/romantic relationship or encounter.

The following is intended to provide a framework for building a professional working relationship.

The Mentor Will:

- Commit to a period of between one to three years of time and support to my mentee during the pursuit of his/her juris doctor degree or in the early years of his/her career.
- Maintain confidential personal information shared.
- Introduce my mentee to legal practice options and make suggestions as to ways to achieve his/her goals.
- Guide, encourage, and motivate my mentee in selecting extracurricular options such as moot court, law journals, and participation in specialized law student groups.
- Acquaint my mentee with the complexity of the law school journey (intellectual and social).
- Maintain contact (in-person, email, telephone) at least three times throughout a semester.
- Acquaint my mentee with my legal practice area and discuss various curricular options whereby he/she can gain expertise in this area if desired. As the opportunities arise, introduce my mentee to others in the field.
- Make efforts to participate in various LeGaL mentor/mentee functions and activities.

The Mentee Will:

- Commit to a period of between one to three years of cooperation in working with my mentor.
- Maintain personal confidential info shared.
- Be receptive to the advice and counsel of my mentor.
- Inform my mentor of my areas of legal practice interest.
- Discuss areas of career interest and career options, such as internships and job offers with my mentor.
- Respond in a timely fashion to my mentor's communications or messages, as well as initiate contact (via phone or e-mail).
- Send my resume and cover letter to my mentor for feedback.
- Keep my mentor informed of my academic schedule and discuss course-related issues, as needed.
- Make efforts to participate in various LeGaL mentor/mentee functions and activities.