**Program Concept**

**MRPA Mentorship Program**

The Program shall be called the MRPA Mentorship Program. The program is a Mentee development program for emerging leaders, young parks and recreation directors, and students of parks, recreation and related fields. The purpose of the program is to provide each Mentee with additional Mentee development opportunities that an effective membership program can offer. The program will have three levels of mentorships:

- Director/Young Director
- Professional/Young Professional
- Student

This manual provides guidelines and suggestions for beginning and maintaining a Mentor/Mentee relationship. This program is designed to complement the career counseling relationship an employee may have with their supervisor. It is *not* intended to replace any of the formal or informal counseling/mentoring relationships that already exist within or outside a person’s place of employment. MRPA encourages Mentees to develop several informal mentor/mentee relationships throughout their careers to support and foster the park and recreation profession.

**Oversight**

- The program will be managed by a Mentorship Committee of MRPA.
- The committee shall be made up of three people- Past President (Chair), University Rep, YPN Rep.
- The Committee shall have the responsibility to implement and oversee the program.

**Benefits of a Mentorship Program:**

- A successful mentor program provides opportunities for mentees including:
  - Unique and personal access with a prominent parks and recreation professional on a one-to-one basis
  - Explore work through interactions with Mentors in the parks and recreation career of their choice
  - Gain an experienced practitioner’s perspective on career situations
  - Identify and plan short term and long term development career plan with the assistance of a successful Mentor
  - Heighten awareness of the career opportunities in the parks and recreation field
  - Realize the value of networking
  - Develop a meaningful Mentor/Mentee relationship over a specified period of time

- A mentor program benefits the Profession by allowing participants to:
  - Contribute to the development of Mentees
  - Assist Mentees in beginning careers
  - Give back to the Profession
Eligibility

● **Mentees** must:
  o Be members of MRPA
  o Have a position (part-time or full-time) or be a student in the parks and recreation field
  o Have 5 years or less of full-time working experience in the parks and recreation field.
  o Be willing to commit time to the Mentorship program for a specific time and for a minimum of two hours per month
  o Complete and submit a Mentee application (online)

● **Mentors** must:
  o Be members of MRPA
  o Be willing to commit time to the Mentorship program for a specific time and for a minimum of two hours per month
  o Complete and submit a Mentor application (online)

Application process

● Enrollment will occur during the open recruitment of the program
● Application will be available on the MRPA website
● After the end of the recruitment period, all applications will be reviewed by the committee and matched

Matching Mentors with Mentees

● Matching mentors with mentees will be based on such factors as: mutual areas of professional interest, schedules, geographic proximity, etc.
● Interviews or follow up calls by the committee may occur with mentors or mentees to clarify areas of interest and commitment level of participants.
● Assignment will be made by the committee and information will be sent out to each mentor and mentee
● A date by which mentors and mentees should make contact will be established annually

Monitoring the program

One of the key components will be the monitoring and evaluation of the program. This will include:

● Follow up with participants to ensure that mentors and mentees have been contacted.
● Conduct periodic group meetings throughout the program including sharing of information and ways to improve.
● Request a written summary of the mentor experience from all mentees.
● Conduct year end group meetings to discuss way to improve the program.

Evaluation of the program

● All participants shall complete an evaluation at the end of the program.
● All input shall be referred to the Committee.
● The Committee Chair shall provide a final report to the MRPA Board at the end of the mentor year.
Switching Mentors/Mentees

- If a mentor or a mentee no longer feels comfortable with their match, they should direct their comments to the Chair of the Mentorship Committee. The Chair will first attempt to work with the respective Mentor/Mentee to identify how to make the match work. If unsuccessful, the Chair will work to find a new mentor for the mentee and vice versa.

MRPA Mentorship Program Code of Ethics

As a participant in the TRAPS Program, I agree to:

- Treat others within the Mentor Program with respect.
- Put an honest effort and commit sufficient time towards each mentoring relationship established (recommended three [1-3] hours per month for mentors and mentees).
- Not promote goods or services from sources in which I have a financial or personal interest.
- Not accept fees or commissions.
- Represent oneself honestly.
- Recognize the diversity of the Mentor Program and respect the variety of cultural norms, beliefs, practices, and values it contains.

Mentors

As a mentor within the MRPA Program, I agree to:

- Not use any ideas, products or materials that a mentee has, or may develop, to further my business or financial interests; and maintain the confidentiality of all ideas, products or materials that have been entrusted to me by my mentee.
- Encourage my mentee to maintain the highest ethical standards.
- Maintain a high standard of personal and professional conduct with my mentee.
- Always communicate in a truthful manner.
- Support the goals of my mentee.
- Avoid the intent or appearance of unethical or compromising practice in relationships, actions and communications.
- Accept only assignments for which I am qualified by my experience and competence.
- Immediately acknowledge any influences on my objectivity to my mentee.
- Refer my mentee to other professionals for issues or questions for which I feel unqualified.

Mentees

As a mentee within the MRPA Program, I agree to:

- Maintain the confidentiality of my mentoring relationships.
- Communicate regularly and openly with my mentor.
- Honor my commitment to my mentor.
- Complete any tasks agreed upon between my mentor and myself.
- Hold all sensitive information provided through my Mentor relationship in strict confidence.
Roles of Mentors

Your role as a mentor is to be a resource to the Mentee in the relationship. You need to foster a trusting and open relationship that allows you to give direction and feedback when needed, assist in career development, and be a confidential sounding board. Mentoring is a two-way street, and requires that you commit to the relationship.

Mentor Guidelines

- Be positive and honest.
- Respect the Mentee you are mentoring. Never make them feel foolish for asking a question.
- Be perceived as approachable and available.
- Get to know your “Mentee” on a professional level.
- Provide guidance on career development.
- Make your role as a mentor a high priority.
- Share your experiences and tell your stories – personal scenarios offer valuable, and often unforgettable, insight.
- Share your failures and successes – both types of stories are powerful lessons that provide valuable opportunities for learning.
- Ask questions that make the Mentee you are mentoring think - good questions require comparison, evaluation and reflection.
- Ask questions. What does the Mentee you are mentoring think about his/her career? How would he/she like for you to help him/her? What expectations does he/she have of you?
- Support and praise the mentored when the situation merits support and praise.
- Encourage two-way feedback. Periodically assess the mentoring relationship. Is it giving each of you what you anticipated in the teaching relationship? Offer positive and constructive feedback on the relationship.
- Don’t be afraid to say “I don’t know but I’ll follow up and get back to you.”

Roles of Mentee

As a Mentee, you have a wonderful opportunity to benefit from the experiences of your mentor. Your mentor is there to provide support, direction, and feedback. But don’t forget that you have a responsibility for this relationship and what you get out of it. Be proactive in fostering the relationship with your mentor and don’t wait for him/her to contact you.

Mentee Guidelines

- Be proactive.
- Understand the significance of this Mentee relationship. It is a two-way exchange and you must be willing to give information and support.
- Be positive, honest, and open.
- Accept advice graciously, but make your own decisions. Only you know what is truly best for you.
- Take responsibility for managing your career.
- Demonstrate confidence. Your knowledge, skills and abilities provide valuable input to the relationship. Your mentor can gain just as much from you as you can from your mentor.
● Be dependable, responsible, and prepared for mentoring discussions.
● Ask questions – even the ones you are hesitant to ask. Your mentor is there to provide support and act as a provider of information.
● Respect your mentor. Their experiences can help you make the most of your own experiences.
● Confide in your mentor and respect the confidentiality of mentoring discussions.
● Be honest, open and sincere with your concerns. Your mentor may share information with you that they may not otherwise share outside of the relationship; be conscious of this and do not share information publicly that was shared within the mentoring relationship.
● Share your perspectives on life at your level. This will help your mentor keep in touch with people outside of their world of existence.
● Challenge and help your mentor to succeed as a mentor.
● Take responsibility for initiating and maintaining contact with your mentor.

Before You Begin…A Message to Mentors

Mentors, you’ve been selected.

● Proactively participate in the program - it’s important to help develop others in this profession.
● Get to know the person you are mentoring and understand what his/her goals are for the program.
● Share your knowledge and experiences with the person you are mentoring.
● Have fun, network, and learn from the relationship.

Mentoring Preparation

These questions will help you prepare for your first mentor meeting. Complete these questions and begin thinking about your goals and expectations of the relationship.

1) What outcomes do you most want from the relationship?
2) What do you need to do as the mentor to make this work?
3) What are some features of my job that I like best? That I like least?
4) What are my major accomplishments since I started the position I am in?
5) How can I best help my mentee?
6) What have I done for my personal and mentee development?
7) What one thing do I wish someone had told me when I was at the level of the mentee?
8) What does it take to be successful in a park and recreation career?
9) Describe your perception of the roles and responsibilities of both the mentor and the mentee.
10) What made you want to get involved with the Mentorship program?
11) How did you get involved in any affiliate you might have worked with?
12) How did volunteerism in these organizations help you nurture your career?
13) What were some of the more valuable lessons you learned from these acts of volunteerism?
14) Who was a mentor for you in your early years in the field? If you have a mentor now, who is it?
15) Why have you stayed in the park and recreation industry throughout your career?
Before You Begin…A Message to Mentee

Mentee, you’ve volunteered to participate:

- Proactively participate in the program – you have so much to gain.
- Get to know your mentor and share with him/her your goals and objectives of the program.
- Take responsibility for your career and personal growth.
- Have fun, network, learn from the relationship, and learn how to be a good mentor for others.

Mentee Preparation

*These questions are designed to stimulate your thinking and to help you prepare for your meeting with your mentor. Think about your personal and Mentee development plan and what you can do to help nurture this plan. Considerations you can think about include how you can contribute to the profession as a volunteer and what you can do to enhance career growth and development for yourself. It is recommended that you complete these questions and use this form as an outline for your first mentoring meeting.*

1) What do I consider the important competencies that my job requires?
2) What are some aspects of my job that I like best? What do I like least?
3) What are my major accomplishments since joining the organization? Since last year?
4) In what areas do I need to improve over the next three months?
5) In what areas of responsibility in my job do I feel I need more experience and training?
6) What have I done for my personal development?
7) What have I done to enhance the development of others?
8) What are my long-range plans? What type of work do I see myself doing five years from now? How am I preparing myself for this work?
9) How can I get involved in the professional associations?
10) Describe your perception of the roles and responsibilities of both you and the mentor.
11) What specifically do you hope to learn from this mentoring relationship?
12) What do you hope to contribute to the mentor from this relationship?