



**Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism**

# **Lawyer-to-Lawyer Mentoring Plan**

**For Mentor and New Lawyer Pairs**

**Revised Edition 2011**



*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 qualifying for non-traditional CLE credit in Illinois serve two important goals: (1) the development of relationships between new and more experienced lawyers; and (2) providing education on professional responsibility topics requiring situational or practical explanation.*

*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.*

*Respectfully,*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas L. Kilbride".

*Hon. Thomas L. Kilbride, Chief Justice  
Illinois Supreme Court*

## Mentor and New Lawyer Requirements

1. Participate in program orientation
2. Sign *Mentoring Agreement (Internal or External)* and *Mentoring Plan Pledge* (both attached) and provide to your Program Administrator
3. Develop *Mentoring Plan* with your mentoring partner and provide copy to your Program Administrator
4. Participate in a minimum of eight (8) face-to-face meetings
5. Complete the action items you and your partner selected in your *Mentoring Plan*
6. Attest to completion and provide attestation to your Program Administrator
7. Complete online *Attorney Application: Mentoring CLE Certificate* to obtain professional responsibility credit

The *Mentoring Plan* is intended to serve as a guide for the mentor and mentee so that successful completion of the mentoring program can be achieved. The *Mentoring Plan* lists action items grouped by areas of the professional responsibility requirement (Illinois Supreme Court Rule 794(d)). In order to develop a personalized plan for the mentoring term, the new lawyer and mentor should discuss the specific action items in the *Mentoring Plan* and decide upon the concepts, skills, topics of discussion, and shared professional experiences they intend to address during the one year mentoring term.

The new lawyer and mentor may incorporate as many of the action items as feasible into their *Mentoring Plan* and customize their 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, however, the *Mentoring Plan* decided upon and/or ultimately completed must include at least one activity from each of the five categories. The particular action items or activities selected by the mentoring pair are not necessarily set in stone. To the extent interests or needs change during the course of the mentoring relationship, and the mentoring pair decides to complete or substitute an activity that they may not have initially selected, the mentoring pair is free to do so.

There are two minimum requirements for successful program completion:

1. Participants engage in a minimum of eight (8) in-person meetings over the course of the mentoring term; and,
2. Mentor and new lawyer complete the actions elected, or subsequently revised, in their *Mentoring Plan* (which shall include at least one action item from each of the five categories) within the one-year time period.

It is the shared responsibility of both the new lawyer and mentor to complete their *Mentoring Plan* during the mentoring term. In order to facilitate the dual purpose of education and relationship building, the Commission strongly recommends that completion of the *Mentoring Plan* span the entire one year timeframe. Rushing to complete the action items in a shorter time period arguably hinders the development of effective educational and relationship outcomes. Depending upon the instructions of the Program Administrator, mentors and mentees may be required to complete progress surveys throughout the mentoring term.

Upon completion of the *Mentoring Plan*, mentors and new lawyers will sign the *Plan Completion Attestation* and submit it to the Program Administrator. At this time, mentors and new lawyers must also complete the Commission's online *Attorney Application: Mentoring CLE Certificate* to obtain professional responsibility CLE credit. Note that no partial credit will be given. If issues develop that hinder the mentor or mentee from completing the *Mentoring Plan*, please consult with the Program Administrator for instructions.

## Mentoring Plan

### 1. Professionalism

Elected	Worksheet	Action	Completion Date
	1A	Introduce new lawyer to other lawyers in the community through attendance at bar association 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, Illinois's various legal services organizations, and opportunities to engage in <i>pro bono</i> activities.	
	1D	Discuss law office management matters: <ol 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. Client retainer and/or payment schedules.</li> <li>e. Escrow and trust account, establishing an IOLTA, accounting, auditing, use of interest proceeds, proper procedures for handling client funds and other property.</li> <li>f. Filing system and procedures.</li> <li>g. Document retention plan.</li> <li>h. Calendar reminder systems.</li> <li>i. Information technology system.</li> <li>j. Library and research systems.</li> <li>k. Other resources (publications, seminars, equipment).</li> </ol>	
	1E	Discuss effective time management skills and techniques.	
	1F	Discuss importance of client communication, how to maintain appropriate ongoing communication (returning telephone calls, email) to keep clients informed.	
	1G	Discuss proper legal counseling and the duties and responsibilities of advising clients.	
	1H	Discuss types of alternative dispute resolution such as mediation, arbitration, early neutral evaluation, summary jury trials, collaborative law practice.	
	1I	Observe one of the proceedings referred in 1H. Discuss and evaluate what was observed.	
	Alternative Action		
	Alternative Action		

## 2. Legal Ethics

Elected	Worksheet	Action	Completion Date
	2A	Discuss practices to maintain client confidentiality.	
	2B	Discuss how to screen for, recognize, and avoid conflicts of interest.	
	2C	Discuss role and responsibilities of paralegals, secretaries and other office personnel, and how to establish good working relationships with others in same office that are support staff, colleagues or senior partners.	
	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 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 the 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.	
	Alternative Action		
	Alternative Action		

## 3. Civility

Elected	Worksheet	Action	Completion Date
	3A	Discuss the Survey of Illinois Lawyers and how the 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		
	Alternative Action		

#### 4. Diversity and Inclusion

Elected	Worksheet	Action	Completion Date
	4A	Develop an awareness of diversity and inclusion issues in the legal profession.	
	4B	Discuss personal actions to support diversity and inclusion.	
	Alternative Action		
	Alternative Action		

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

Elected	Worksheet	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 goals 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 mentee, 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

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Mentor Signature:

Date

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### 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

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## Internal Lawyer Mentoring Agreement

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 the 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:

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Mentor Signature:

Date:

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## External Lawyer Mentoring Agreement

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 the 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 mentoring. 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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