Become a TFMA CFM Mentor or Mentee

Overview

Do you need professional guidance in preparing for the CFM exam or you a newly certified CFM or perhaps a community official that has questions about the National Flood Insurance Program? Mentoring is a traditional method for assisting in the training of those who are wishing to take the CFM exam; orienting individuals to "life as a CFM" once they have passed the exam and individuals that may have questions related to floodplain management. The TFMA – CFM Mentor Program consists of a team of CFM’s assembled by TFMA to assist local floodplain administrators, community floodplain managers, CFM’s and the general public with problems, issues and requirements related to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in Texas.
Goal

- A goal of the TFMA - CFM Mentor Team program is to encourage continuing education through attending conferences and workshops at the local, state and national level; assist floodplain managers and new CFM’s in building “network” relationships at those conferences; and become a resource of where to find information and answers about issues and problems related to floodplain management and related Federal and State programs and the NFIP.

Overview

- The TFMA - CFM Mentor Program is a valuable means for supporting the development - even accelerating the professional growth - of existing and experienced CFMs. Individuals who share knowledge, experiences, and skills to benefit someone else provide valuable leadership. The Mentor Team members also learn to hone their floodplain management skills through teaching and assisting others.
- The Texas Floodplain Management Association (TFMA) has established a CFM Mentor Committee. The Chair of the Mentor Committee will enlist a group of volunteer mentors and subject matter experts for the Mentor Team. CFM Mentor Team members must be a CFM in good standing and have a minimum of five years floodplain management experience.

To Become a CFM Mentor Team Member

- To become a CFM Mentor Team Member, all you have to have is a willingness to teach and to share your experiences as a CFM or floodplain manager and a commitment to assist (in person, on the phone, or on-line - whatever is mutually agreed on) with the floodplain management community or public that requests assistance. It also helps to pinpoint specific skill areas where you have strengths and also to know the strengths of your colleagues so that if you don’t know the answer, you know where to go to find it. It should be noted that the TFMA Mentor Program is not meant to take the place of the State NFIP Coordinator or FEMA Region VI for questions or issues of importance about floodplain management.
How to receive assistance

The TFMA CFM Mentors will be listed on the TFMA website at www.tfma.org by area of expertise allowing inquirers to select the category for their question or assistance request. Each category will list one or more CFM mentors in each technical category. Each Mentor has expressed a willingness to assist floodplain managers (in person, on the phone, or on-line - whatever is mutually agreed on). It should be noted that the Mentor is not meant to take the place of the State NFIP Coordinator or FEMA Region VI for questions or issues of importance about floodplain management.

How to get started

- For CFM Mentors and Subject Matter Experts:
  - Provide your preferred contact information to the Chair of the TFMA CFM Mentor Committee. Provide periodic "brief" reports to the CFM Mentor Committee to help evaluate the TFMA Mentor Program. Brief summary may be "In July, assistance was provided to 4 floodplain managers regarding NFIP program requirements", or provide specifics regarding a specific problem that was addressed following a Mentor Program contact.
  - The Chair of the TFMA CFM Mentor Committee will add and remove CFM Mentors from the Mentor List when requested by the Mentor or periodic rotation of Mentors annually or when deemed necessary by the Coordinator.

- The person desiring assistance (Mentee) will have the responsibility of initiating the contact with Mentors thus starting the Mentor process. If required, the Mentor may refer the requestor to one or more Mentor or Subject Matter Experts should assistance be requested in other specialty areas.
  - For Mentor/Mentee relationships in which the Mentee is already a CFM, the Mentor will assess the needs of the Mentee and if needed provide references to on-line resources or Federal/State or other contact information if needed.
Successive meetings

- For Mentor/Mentee relationships in which the Mentee is preparing to take the CFM exam, the Mentor and Mentee will agree on dates and times for successive study sessions through the taking of the CFM exam. After the exam, the Mentor will either:
  1) Assess weaknesses as outlined in a non-passing exam;
  2) Begin to work on new goals and strategies to assist the Mentee in preparing to retake the CFM exam; or
  3) Begin to mentor the Mentee as a new CFM.

- For Mentor/Mentee relationships in which the Mentee is already a CFM, the Mentor will provide resources and/or contact information to the Mentee to meet his/her needs as the need arises.

Continuing the partnership

- Occasionally, the CFM Mentor will become a "big brother" or "big sister" to the new CFM for the first two years after passing the exam, or the first two years after establishing the Mentor/Mentee relationship. A longer period of time may be necessary if the Mentee so requests and it is agreed to by the Mentor. The Mentor will become the "go-to person", in most cases, for the new CFM and will provide advice and guidance, as applicable. The Mentor will also provide resources for the new CFM, when the Mentor cannot readily answer a question or solve a problem on their own. It's not the intent of this Program for the Mentor to become a "crutch", but rather a facilitator for guiding the Mentee to the people and resources that the Mentee needs to successfully fulfill their role as a new CFM, independent of the Mentor. It should be noted that the Mentor is not meant to take the place of the State NFIP Coordinator or FEMA Region VI for questions or issues of importance about floodplain management.
  - The Mentor may encourage training, continuing education, and networking among peers to promote the sound development of the new CFM.

Concluding the partnership

- Since the Mentor-Mentee relationship is a voluntary relationship for both the Mentor and the Mentee, either the Mentor or the Mentee can conclude the relationship at any point with proper professional courtesies being exercised.
  - Please remember that the Mentor-Mentee relationship can be concluded for a variety of reasons such as health, job responsibilities, family obligations and/or for many other unforeseen factors. It should be noted that conclusion of the Mentor/Mentee relationship does not necessarily mean that there have been conflicts between the Mentor and Mentee.
Feedback

The CFM Mentor Program will succeed if adequate feedback is received from both Mentors and Mentees. The preferred method of contact is email. The Chair of the CFM Mentor Committee will report periodically to the TFMA Board of Directors regarding the merits of the CFM Mentor Program. Therefore, be honest in evaluating the CFM Mentor Program - share both positive and negative feedback - the success of the Program depends on the feedback from the Mentors and the Mentees.

Are you ready to become a TFMA CFM Mentor or a CFM Mentee?

Five Essentials to Successful Mentoring Connections

In a successful mentoring connection, the Mentor and the Mentee must both want the relationship to work and be willing to commit time and energy to the process. Five elements are essential:
1. Respect:

This is established when the Mentee recognizes the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the Mentor and when the Mentor appreciates the success the Mentee has reached to date and the Mentee's desire to develop to their full potential.

2. Trust:

Mentors and Mentees should build trust through communicating and being available to each other, reliable, and loyal.

3. Partnership Building:

The Mentor and Mentee are professional partners. Barriers that partnerships face may include miscommunication, an uncertainty of each other's expectations, and perceptions of other people.

In order to overcome these barriers, they should work together to maintain communication, address and fix obvious problems as they occur, examine how decisions might affect goals, and have frequent discussions on progress.
4. Realistic Expectations and Self Perception:

A Mentor encourages the Mentee to have realistic expectations of the Mentee's capabilities, the amount of time and energy the Mentor can commit to the relationship, and what the Mentee must do to earn their support for his or her career development.

The Mentor gives honest feedback when discussing the Mentee's traits, abilities, talents, beliefs, and roles.

5. Time:

Set aside the time to meet, even by e-mail or telephone.

Don't change times unless absolutely necessary. Control interruptions.

Frequently "check in" with each other via informal telephone calls or e-mails.

Disclaimer

- TFMA disclaims any responsibility, or liability, for any information, guidance and direction provided by any Mentor or Subject Matter Expert contained herein.
TFMA CFM Mentor Application

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the Texas Floodplain Management Association CFM Mentor Program. It is the goal of TFMA's CFM Mentor Program to support the development and professional growth of aspiring, new, existing, experienced, and seasoned CFMs within the State of Texas.