

EASL Mentorship Program

Mentorship Program Guidelines

Thank you for participating in the Entertainment, Arts & Sports Law (EASL) Section's mentoring program. The term of each mentorship is for approximately three (3) months. The purpose of this program is to provide law students and new attorneys (0 to 5 years of experience) who practice or desire to practice in an EASL related area of law, with the opportunity to build one-on-one relationships with seasoned practitioners (5 years and more) for the purpose of providing professional development.

Being a successful lawyer requires more than a law school education. It also requires skills and experience gained through the actual practice of law and by interacting with those more seasoned in the field. Participation in the New York State Bar Association (NYSBA) activities generally and in those of the Entertainment, Arts & Sports Law Section (EASL) in particular, presents an excellent opportunity for junior attorneys and law students to interact with leaders. These leaders can help those new to the field to better navigate the entertainment law terrain.

The EASL Section's Mentoring Program seeks to foster relationships between experienced entertainment lawyers active in our section and law students/attorneys new to the field. A mentor-mentee relationship benefits both parties. The mentee gains access to practical advice and invaluable information regarding the entertainment law field from leaders with many years of experience. The mentor gains by giving back to the Section, to the legal profession and by enhancing his or her understanding of the needs and goals of the next generation of EASL lawyers. Finally, the EASL Section gains by helping to build bridges between the generations and to develop the next generation of Section leadership and EASL attorneys in New York.

WE ASK THAT THE MENTOR CONTACT HIS/HER MENTEE WITHIN A WEEK OF RECEIVING YOUR "PAIRING" SO THAT YOUR FORMAL RELATIONSHIP MAY BEGIN.

To be a Mentee:

1. You must be a law student or practicing attorney for 5 years or fewer; and
2. You must be in good standing with the EASL Section, with the NYSBA and, if applicable, must be in good standing as an attorney.

To be a Mentor:

1. You must be a practicing attorney for more than 5 years in any area of law and in any industry sector or vertical related to EASL (including but not limited to digital entertainment, television, radio, music, fashion, fine arts, literary works and related rights, motion pictures, theater, performing arts, and sports law); and
2. You must be in good standing with the EASL Section, with NYSBA and in good standing as an attorney.

Guidelines for Both Mentors and Mentees

1. Schedule an introductory meeting as soon as possible after the mentor relationship is confirmed, both to get to know each other and to discuss shared goals and expectations for the relationship, bearing in mind the specific interests and needs of the mentee.

2. Be respectful of each other's time, resources, and commitment. At the outset of the relationship, an understanding should be reached as to the frequency and nature of the contact between mentor and mentee.
3. The mentor should make every effort to introduce the mentee to the benefits of NYSBA and, especially the EASL Section. Where possible, the mentor should attempt to accompany his or her mentee to NYSBA and EASL Section activities and to seek out bar and other professional activities that can be pursued jointly.
4. The mentor **cannot** serve as in a role tantamount to being a law partner, research resource, placement officer, or surrogate employer to the mentee nor can he or she regard the mentor relationship as an opportunity for recruitment or employment for the mentor or mentee. However, the mentor should be prepared to discuss career options with the mentee, including lessons learned in the course of the mentor's career, and to introduce the mentee to colleagues, judges, bar leaders and other professionals, as appropriate. Likewise, the mentee should not expect employment opportunities by virtue of the relationship.
5. Social activities like lunches, cocktail parties, sporting, and other such events, where appropriate, also may be pursued at the option of both parties. The Section greatly appreciates your time and participation in the program. Please do not feel obligated to spend money on the mentor-mentee relationship. Any monies the mentor or mentee choose to spend is their personal expense and at their discretion. Please also keep in mind that law students and new attorneys may not have excess income as they are students and beginning their legal career.
6. Examples of possible topics of discussion include: the importance of ethical and professional behavior in the practice of law; tips on developing and promoting client relationships; successful business development techniques; practice management and effective work habits; the importance, and value, of pro bono and community service; and developing a successful practice in the areas of entertainment, arts and sports.
7. The mentor and mentee should recognize that no question is a "stupid" question in a healthy mentor relationship. Something that may be obvious to the experienced attorney (due to their experience in the practice area) may not be the case for the law student or young lawyer.
8. Both mentor and mentee should make it a point to provide feedback to each other, positive reactions and constructive criticism (respectfully delivered), so that each can get the most out of the relationship. Indeed, the parties should agree on a plan for evaluating the relationship, periodically during the mentor-mentee relationship and at its conclusion. Separate feedback should be provided to the EASL Mentorship Program leaders so that they can learn from the experiences of existing mentors and mentees.

Tips for creating a successful mentoring relationship:

- **Schedule set times to speak/meet.** Having a regularly scheduled time to discuss matters (e.g. 10am the first Wednesday of each month ensures ongoing availability and communication with your mentee. We encourage the mentor to set guidelines at the outset of the pairing regarding the frequency and way future communications should take

place. Both parties should understand that due to work and personal events this time may change and that these commitments may take precedence over mentor-mentee meetings and events.

- **Set goals.** The mentor and mentee pairs are encouraged to discuss individual expectations and goals at the outset and should work to develop action steps toward achieving any identified goals. Possible topics may include brainstorming about planning options for fact patterns presented by the mentee, work/home balance, networking opportunities, assistance with time management, and discussion of ethical issues.
- **Be considerate of each other's time.** Like most attorneys, the mentors involved in this program have significant demands on their time. Mentees can expect quality time from them, but, in return, mentees need to be considerate of their time. Return phone calls and emails promptly and be on time. Be sure to ask how much time your mentor has to spend with a mentee and abide by that request. Let your mentor suggest taking extra time if needed. We hope that there will be at least one communication per month, whether in person, by telephone or email, to keep continuity and maximize the value to the participants.

A Few Cautionary Notes

- **The mentor-mentee relationship is not intended to procure employment for mentor or mentee.** Though the mentor or mentee may have a “connection,” or “introduction” or hear of an employment opportunity they choose to share with the mentor or mentee this is not the primary purpose of the mentor-mentee program. The mentor or mentee should not promote the idea or anticipate that the relationship will lead to a future professional or employment relationship between the two or any other employment such as referral of clients. In the event, that a mentor or mentee chooses to share their “connections,” or “introductions” or hear of employment opportunities with the mentor or mentee the extent of mentor's or mentee's involvement is up to them as an individual. For example, a mentor or mentee may know of an opportunity and simply share the information with the other or they may choose to do an email/phone call introduction to the opportunity, or they may choose to write a letter of recommendation for the other, etc. NYSBA and EASL are not responsible for any employment related actions on the part of the mentor or mentee.
- **The mentor-mentee relationship is not intended to create, and does not create, an attorney-client relationship.** Care must therefore be taken to protect client confidences on both sides of the mentor relationship. Client names and confidential information must not be disclosed by and between the mentor and mentee in the context of the mentee-mentor relationship. The applicable ethical rules, rules of professional responsibility or rules of professional conduct must be observed by all individuals.
- **The mentor relationship is also not intended to create, expressly or implicitly, a co-counsel relationship.** Consequently, legal advice related to pending or potential client relationships should not be offered or solicited, and client identities and confidences should not be disclosed. For learning purposes following attorney-client privilege, ethical rules, rules of professional responsibility or rules of professional conduct, a mentor may share with the mentee general information on cases for teaching/educating purposes.

- **Where applicable, the mentor or mentee must obtain their employers express approval to participate in the program.** A conflict of interest may exist in the mentor/mentee relationship when the employer or an employer's client or the client of the mentor or mentee would create a conflict in a legal representation or not be in the mentor or mentee's client(s) best interests.
- **The mentor relationship is one built on respect and courtesy.** Neither the mentor nor the mentee should expect more from the relationship than the program is intended to provide, and each must be sensitive both to the demands on time and resources of the other.
- **Independent Opinions.** Information received by the mentee from the mentor should not be relied upon by the mentee as a substitute for his or her own judgment or opinion as to any legal, professional, educational, personal or other matter. In addition, the mentor's or mentee's opinions and statements are not a substitute for the mentor's or mentee's independent research. Furthermore, the mentor is not expected to furnish the mentee with sample documents or any other work product.

We hope this program is mutually beneficial to the mentors and mentees. If any participants have issues or questions along feel free to contact the current EASL Chair.