



NYSBA LGBTQ+ Law Section and LGBT Bar NY's Mentoring Program

Mission Statement

Through the Mentoring Program, the New York State Bar Association's LGBTQ+ Law Section and LGBT Bar NY seek to foster the professional development of LGBTQ+ law students and young lawyers 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 LGBT Bar NY while enhancing the skills and career prospects of participants.

About the Sponsoring Organizations

The **New York State Bar Association's LGBTQ+ Law Section** seeks to promote equality in the law for LGBTQ+ people; combat the tide of anti-LGBTQ+, especially transphobic, laws and regulations; eliminate discrimination against LGBTQ+ attorneys and litigants; support equality of opportunity for, and increase the visibility of, contributions made by LGBTQ+ attorneys; and promote diversity within the judiciary by inclusion of all underrepresented groups, including LGBTQ+ people.

The **LGBT Bar Association of Greater New York (LGBT Bar NY)** is a bar association of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) legal community in the New York metropolitan area, dedicated to promoting the expertise and advancement of LGBTQ+ legal professionals while serving the larger community. The LGBT Bar NY 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, LGBT Bar NY is dedicated to serving the interests of the LGBTQ+ law student community as well as the needs of recently admitted attorneys from our community.

Roles, Responsibilities, and Expectations of Mentors & Mentees

The Mentoring Program matches practicing lawyers from a variety of legal fields and backgrounds with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) 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.***

MENTEE INFORMATION

Mentee Roles

The 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.

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 No-Show Policy below).
- Do not share any of your mentor's personal feelings or ideas with a third party without their express consent.

¹ These materials were adopted by LGBT Bar NY in a prior iteration of this guide, with permission, from the Practicing Lawyers for Law Students (PALS) mentoring guidelines.

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 always be maintained.
- 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 thank your mentor when they've helped you solve a problem or achieve a goal.

Mentee Expectations

The Sponsoring Organizations expect all mentees to be professional and committed to the program. Besides the Responsibilities mentioned above, the Sponsoring Organizations expect 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: The Sponsoring Organizations have 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 LGBT Bar NY at info@lgbtbar.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 LGBT Bar NY as soon as possible.

MENTOR INFORMATION

Mentor Roles

A Mentor should act as a professional resource to their mentee and assist the mentee in achieving their 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 their 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 they 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 they achieve a milestone.

3. Professionalism

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

Mentor Expectations

The Sponsoring Organizations expect 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 LGBT Bar NY at info@lgbtbarny.org. LGBT Bar NY 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 LGBT Bar NY as soon as possible.

Suggested Activities:

Not sure where to begin with your mentee? Here are a few possible activities to suggest to them:

- Meet for lunch, coffee, or dinner.
- Attend your mentee's moot court arguments.
- Review your mentee's resume and provide feedback.
- Help them practice their interviewing skills.
- Take them to bar association event and help them build their professional network!