QUICK TIPS *FOR SEEKING MENTORS AND ADVISORS*

MAKE A PLAN

Before you start researching or contacting potential mentors and advisors, assess your goals and most critical needs. Ask yourself:

1. What are my three most pressing questions or concerns? For example:
   - *Communicating with clients and opposing counsel?*
   - *Managing a solo practice?*
   - *Understanding court rules & procedures?*
   - *Questions about a specific area of law?*
2. What would be most helpful to discuss with a more experienced attorney vs. doing research to find some answers?
3. What am I going to ask for? For example:
   - *Ongoing email contact?*
   - *Coffee date(s)?*
   - *Skype phone call to bridge the miles?*
   - *One day of shadowing at office or court?*
4. Is my resume and short bio updated and ready to send?

FIND A MENTOR

Once you have a clear idea of your goals, you can take the next step to researching potential mentors based on such criteria such as: geography, practice setting and area of law. In addition to reviewing the **WSBA Legal Directory** for updated information, strategies for locating potential mentors and advisors might include:

- Asking around! Someone in your current network might know someone and be able to make an introduction.
- Attending events put on by sections, minority bar associations, local bar associations, specialty bar associations, and/or law school alumni programs.
- Reviewing legal publications for article authors or references to specific individuals in your practice area.
- Attend a **MentorLink Mixer**.
- Sign up and create a profile on **ALPS Attorney Match**.

TAKE ACTION

Many potential mentors and advisors are happy to help, and just need to be asked! However, it's important that the mentee take the lead in reaching out and following-up, while being respectful of the mentor's time and schedule. Strategies might include:

- *Sending an initial letter or email:* who you are, what you want, why you're asking them, and how soon you're hoping to meet.
- *During meeting:* be specific on how they can help and find out what works for them.
- Clarify expectations about ongoing contact.
- Send thank you notes and stay in touch!

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES TO REMEMBER

Mentoring sessions may involve only generalized questions that do not involve the disclosure of details from a specific case or client. A mentor-mentee relationship does not create an attorney client relationship, and the discussions are not privileged or confidential. In other words, assume your conversations are completely public.

Consistent with R.P.C. 1.6, the mentee will not identify any client to the mentor or reveal to the mentor any information related to the representation of the client, nor will the mentee seek professional or legal advice from the mentor about specific legal matters or clients such that protected communications are revealed. Subject to the limits of the previous paragraph and pursuant to R.P.C. 1.6 (b)(4), a lawyer may reveal information relating to the representation of a client to the extent the lawyer reasonably believes necessary to secure legal advice about the lawyer's compliance with the Rules of Professional Conduct. Discussions, if any, about substantive legal matters between the mentee and mentor will be limited to hypothetical situations.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- **WSBA Mentorship Resources**
  Information on mentoring opportunities that currently exist across our state's legal community, in addition to other mentoring resources to support WSBA members at **www.wsba.org/connect-serve/mentorship**
- **WSBA Ethics Line 800-945-WSBA, ext. 8284**
  Informal guidance as to an attorney's own prospective ethical conduct. Common ethical issues are: conflicts of interest, client communication, handling client money, fee arrangements, confidential information, and how to withdraw from a matter in an ethical manner. For more ethics-related resources visit the WSBA website at **www.wsba.org/for-legal-professionals/ethics**
- **WSBA Practice Management Assistance Program**
  Low-cost and confidential professional assistance with office administration, as well as print and web resources to assist with opening, closing, and managing your practice. For more practice management resources visit the WSBA website at **www.wsba.org/resources-and-services/lomap**

Questions? mentorlink@wsba.org | 1-800-945-9722

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION