



American Planning Association  
**New York Metro Chapter**

*Making Great Communities Happen*

## **APA NY METRO CHAPTER YOUNG PLANNERS GROUP MENTORSHIP PROGRAM GUIDE BOOK**

Compiled by:

APA NY Metro Chapter Young Planners Group Mentorship Subcommittee

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## I. INTRODUCTION TO THE YPG MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The Young Planners Group (YPG) Mentorship Subcommittee, working with the New York Metro Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA), has developed and continues to develop an annual Mentorship Program. This program enables experienced practitioners to share their professional experience with new planners, creating partnerships that allow participants to discuss the planning profession on an informal, ongoing basis. Overall, the program aims to benefit participants, the YPG, and the APA by:

1. Assisting new planners transition into the profession through the creation of a professional network; and
2. Providing a professional development opportunity for practicing planners via the mentoring process and other related opportunities.

In addition to these two objectives, the YPG Mentorship Program will also address other general APA goals, such as:

- Encouraging the growth of the profession and advancing the principles of APA;
- Creating and enhancing a network of contacts in the planning profession;
- Sharing of knowledge and ideas among professional planners;
- Increasing the awareness of APA and recruiting opportunities; and
- Facilitating the dissemination of information on emerging trends and issues.

## II. HOW THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM WORKS

To keep the program informal yet structured, the YPG Mentorship Subcommittee has developed the following system:

1. A “pool” of available mentors is updated annually

Practitioners are contacted on an annual basis through the APA New York Metro Chapter’s various listservs and mailings to recruit interested mentors. Potential mentors are asked to complete an online *Mentor Survey* and submit a current resume so that they can be matched with a suitable mentee.

2. Mentees apply to participate

Potential mentees new to the urban planning field are notified through various methods, including announcements at APA New York Metro Chapter events and email notices to Metro Chapter listservs and local graduate planning programs. Mentee candidates are required to complete the online *Mentee Survey* and submit a current resume so the YPG Mentorship Subcommittee can assess their suitability for participation in the program and place them with an appropriate mentor.

### 3. Ongoing Mentorship Program Recruitment

In addition to the targeted recruitment noted above, the Mentorship Subcommittee periodically provides an overview of the program at APA and/or YPG events. At this time, potential candidates for upcoming programs can give their contact information to a Subcommittee member so they can be informed of the next opportunity to participate in the Mentorship Program.

### 4. Mentor/Mentee Matching Process and Kick-Off Event

The YPG Mentorship Subcommittee places great importance on thoughtfully matching mentors and mentees. The key to the Mentorship Program's success is ensuring the mentors and mentees are matched using more than one criterion. Subcommittee members create pairings based on a variety of elements, including—but not limited to—specific interests in the planning field, as well as preferred format and frequency of communication.

- Prior to a kick-off event at which the mentor and mentee pairs will formally meet, the Subcommittee provides notification of the match via email.
- After the email introductions, mentors and/or mentees may contact each other to establish communication prior to the kick-off event. The kick-off is hosted by the Subcommittee to provide an informal opportunity for an initial face-to-face meeting, but attendance is not mandatory.
- The Subcommittee appreciates the fact that mentors are generously donating their time and experience to participate in the Mentorship Program, and we try to respect the requests of mentors with regard to frequency of communication when establishing partnerships.

### 5. Mentorship Plans

After the initial introduction by the YPG Mentorship Subcommittee, it is up to the mentor/mentee pairs to establish the parameters of their mentorship arrangement, including frequency and means of communication, although we expect the pairs to meet at least once each month for the six-month program.

Following the kick-off event, all mentor/mentee pairs are asked to submit a Mentorship Plan to the Subcommittee in order to outline their specific goals and quantifiable action items for the duration of the program. A sample Mentorship Plan is included below as a template.

### Sample Mentorship Plan

	Goals	Action Items
Mentee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pursue new job opportunities</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Apply to X job postings; request Y informational interviews</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>
Mentor	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meet and learn from emerging professionals in the planning field</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attend X events hosted by the Young Planners Group</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>

**Notes:**

- Each mentee and mentor should develop three goals that they aim to realistically achieve in the six-month Mentorship Program.
- Each goal should be linked to (at least) one quantified action item in order to track progress in achieving the goal.

A few reminders for mentees and mentors, respectively:

- **Mentees:** Remember that your mentor is a professional contact who can provide advice and discuss relevant urban planning topics. This program is not designed to match a potential job candidate with a potential employer.
- **Mentors:** Your mentee should feel free to discuss questions and issues with you. Try to make yourself available to your mentee as a resource; if your mentee asks for help, it is because she/he feels it is needed.

#### 6. Midpoint Check-In

In order to support the mentoring partnerships, the Subcommittee checks in with each of the mentor/mentee pairs via email midway through the six-month program. All mentors and mentees are asked to complete a brief questionnaire to reflect on the experience to date and think about ways to enhance the partnership in the program's second half. At that time, the Subcommittee also coordinates a second group activity for participants in the program, in which all of the mentor/mentee pairs reconvene to revisit the goals and action items that they each outline in the Mentorship Plan.

#### 7. End-of-Program Evaluation

At the conclusion of the program, all mentors and mentees are asked to complete an *Evaluation Survey*. This helps the Subcommittee to maintain and improve the Mentorship Program in subsequent years, and your feedback is greatly appreciated.

### **III. SUGGESTED MENTOR/MENTEE ACTIVITIES**

Mentors and mentees can do any number of activities together, and we encourage participants to be creative and flexible. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- To begin the relationship, go for coffee, breakfast, or lunch. Set another time to get together soon after the kick-off event to keep the momentum going.
- Attend conferences, public meetings, or lectures together. Discuss shared interests that emerge from the experience, and evaluate the strengths (and any possibilities for improvement) of the various speakers.
- Loan materials to each other (i.e., reports, books, articles, etc.) that have impressed you. If time does not permit an in-person meeting to discuss the materials, follow-up via email or phone.
- Introduce each other to your respective colleagues. Invite your mentee or mentor to your office for a day. Point out specific ways in which your professional contacts can potentially help each other.
- Offer to listen to and evaluate an upcoming oral presentation to be made by your mentor/mentee. Review and provide feedback.
- Seek each others' opinions on various problems, ideas, proposals and tasks.

In addition to these generic ideas, the Mentorship Subcommittee will circulate via email a list of upcoming events, lectures, walking tours, museum exhibits, etc., that could be of interest to mentor/mentee pairs. The Subcommittee will update the list periodically as new events are publicized, and mentor/mentee pairs are encouraged to submit ideas to the Subcommittee for inclusion in the activity list.

### **IV. MENTORSHIP PROGRAM POINTS OF CONTACT**

You may contact the YPG Mentorship Subcommittee via email at:  
[ypgmentorship@gmail.com](mailto:ypgmentorship@gmail.com)

We thank you again for your participation and hope your experience is personally and professionally rewarding and, above all, enjoyable!

YPG Mentorship Subcommittee Members:  
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*Note: This guide was adapted from the MPPI Mentoring Program.*