PROJECT CHARTER
Mentorship and Career Development Program

2013-14

A pilot program developed by Young Planners Group Puget Sound and professional planners with support of the Puget Sound Section of the Washington Chapter of APA.
1. Introduction

Opportunity statement

The Mentorship and Career Development Program presents an opportunity to facilitate the alignment of those planners needing career guidance with those who can provide that guidance. It will specifically target those who can use a helping hand; planners just coming out of school, early in their career, or those with experience who are either unemployed, under-employed, or simply seeking career advice.

This program will provide planning professionals the opportunity to give of themselves for the betterment of others. It will also provide those needing mentoring and career assistance with the opportunity to learn, grow professionally, make connections, and move their career forward.

The Mentorship and Career Development Program will help position our profession for future success and may be used as a model by APA sections throughout the state of Washington.

2. PROJECT DEFINITION

Project Goal

The Mentorship and Career Development Program is a new program in Washington State. In addition to making this program a success, we intend to learn and adapt this program so it can be used in the future as a model for APA Sections throughout the state of Washington. This means that the program goals and desired outcomes outlined in the charter may be modified based on what has and hasn’t worked well.

The program is designed to bring together experienced planning professionals (mentors) and those seeking to make contacts and receive career guidance (mentees). The goal will be to foster relationships that will benefit both the mentors and mentees. Goals for each include:

Mentors
- to help grow and guide those who will be the future of our profession
- to meet and build relationships with individuals who may be future employees (meeting superstars)
- to understand the professional interests of young planners and to gain perspective of how the field is changing

Mentees
- to make contacts, network, and seek advice from professional planners in both the private and public sectors.
- to learn from those who have been in their shoes to gain valuable information about:
  - job searching, including what employers are looking for in resumes and applications
  - how to network in the planning field
  - moving a career in the direction you want it to go
deciding on a planning career track (public, private, urban, rural, city, county)

- for those just coming out of school or new to the profession, the opportunity to seek advice and gain valuable information in order to be able to better compete for available jobs
- for those with professional experience, move their career forward

How it will work

The Mentorship and Career Development Program is a two-track program consisting of both informal events and gatherings and a structured nine-month mentorship program.

Informal events and gatherings

These events will take place at various times in order to facilitate networking and the sharing of information. Events may take the form of sessions at a conference on a specific topic or topic(s) or social events in coordination with the APA – YPG. The number of events will be determined by interest and will be ongoing.

Structured Program

The structured nine-month program is designed to facilitate and grow mentor/mentee relationships and accomplish the goals and expected outcomes of the program. Both mentors and mentees entering this program must understand and commit to accomplishing the project goals and outcomes.

The program will be designed as follows:

- the program is designed to match up mentors with mentees for a nine-month program
- each mentor/mentee assignment will be designed to meet the needs and objectives of each participant.
- mentors and mentees commit to meeting at least one time a month in order to accomplish program goals
- mentors and mentees commit to participating in at least three group events during the program
- each mentee will receive a certificate of completion at the end of the program

The range of options to further the mentor/mentee relationships may include some or all of the following at some point during the program period:

- Meeting informally for coffee or lunch at a location agreed to by both parties
- Participation in A Day in the Life of the mentor- this may include attending general staff meetings, specific project meetings with customers, planning commission, council or other advisory group meetings or hearings or any other activities that would provide insight for the mentee as to the demands and benefits of the job.
- Arrangement by the mentor for the mentee to job shadow department employees or co-workers from other disciplines such as permit technicians, front counter staff, inspectors, biologists, long range planners, demographers, GIS, records, transportation or engineering fields, depending on the area of interest of the mentee.
• using specific policy, code development, or permit projects as a basis for discussion to understand how policy is developed, codes are written, stakeholders are informed, and the processes and procedures for adoption and implementation.
• attending submittal appointments to understand how projects are accepted and deemed complete.
• participating and attending dry-runs of presentations by staff and providing constructive feedback and ideas.
• meeting to review resumes and discussing ways to be more competitive during the recruitment process.
• practicing interview skills by participating in a mock interview with the mentor.

**Expected Program Outcomes**

On both the mentor and mentee side, the Mentorship and Career Development Program is expected to realize several positive outcomes. These may change during the course of the program or may be adapted based on the specific mentor/mentee relationship. Following are some of the expected outcomes we wish to realize:

**Mentors**
- create avenues for an ongoing relationships with the mentee
- shared information about where to find ongoing professional resources and other network connections
- having provided mentorship that is meaningful and helped a mentee stay in/get excited about the planning field and that the mentorship aided them in their career
- having provided a well rounded “on the ground” look into daily planning life
- feedback from an employer of one of the mentees at a future date on whether or not the mentorship appeared meaningful after employment
- identifying what worked/what didn’t to pass along to future mentors
- creating ideas for program changes
- developing potential mentors for future recruitment
- identifying resources/contacts/ideas for future use

**Mentees:**
- understanding of the planning practice and duties
- improving their sense of potential job opportunities and avenues for exploration
- increasing understanding of the market for planners and the skill sets needed for success in their area of interest
- understanding the steps needed in order to move a career forward
- developing on-going connections and relationships with mentors and others within the field
- creating an action plan identifying steps to further career.

**Program Report**

At the conclusion of the nine-month program, a project report will be completed which will provide a summary of the project, including conclusions and lessons learned, and attainment of outcomes. The report may also include a modified charter which can be used as a model for other WA-APA Sections.
3. ROLES AND COMMITMENTS

Project Name
This project shall be called the *Mentorship and Career Development Program*

Project Sponsor
The sponsor for this project shall be Clay White, Snohomish County Planning and Development Services (PDS) Director. The sponsor agrees this is a high priority program and to work with the co-managers to provide ongoing guidance, communicate the purpose of the program, offer timely feedback on program issues and priorities, and contribute the time necessary to make the project successful.

Project Managers
Casey Bradfield and Stephanie Young are designated as co-managers of the *Mentorship and Career Development Program*. The project managers are responsible for overseeing the mentoring project and are empowered to make operational decisions. The project managers are responsible for the following:

- acting as point person for communication in and between the program participants,
- setting up meetings and events during the program,
- program reporting, including the development of the final report

Project Charter and Program Team
Project team members will not only participate in the program but will function as in-house consultants who will provide specialized insights into the various decision processes and give technical advice to the project sponsor and co-managers. The Project Charter and Program Development Team include:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Casey Bradfield</th>
<th>Clay White, Snohomish County</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie Young</td>
<td>Barb Mock, Snohomish County</td>
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<td>Sue Cezar, City of Sammamish</td>
<td>Richard Weinman, Weinman Consulting</td>
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<td>Becky Ableman, City of Lake Stevens</td>
<td>Corbitt Loch, City of Lynnwood</td>
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<td>Mark Hinshaw, LMN Architects</td>
<td>Richard Hart, City of Covington</td>
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<td>John Davies, RTC Transportation Consulting</td>
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