Participant Guide
American Planning Association, San Diego Section
Young Planners Group, Mentorship & Education Subcommittee

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SDAPA Mentorship Program
Participant Guide
A Career Development Program
Created for the Young Planners Group of the San Diego Section

Developed by: The SDAPA Young Planners Group Mentorship & Education Subcommittee
Program Overview

Mission Statement
Foster an exchange of professional expertise and innovative planning practice in an effort to enhance both personal and professional skills while creating mutually beneficial relationships and friendships between students, young planning professionals and experienced planning professionals in the industry.

Program Goal
The goal of the Mentorship & Education Program is to successfully match YPG members and students (Mentees) with experienced planning professionals (Mentors) for guidance and support, while offering mentors an opportunity to strengthen ties with our future leaders of the planning community and APA.

Objectives
- Recognize APAs commitment to professional and technical development;
- Accelerate and enhance career and professional development;
- Increase knowledge of the technical organizational aspects of planning;
- Make friends and develop long-lasting relationships

Program Participants

Who We Are
Program participants are comprised of Mentorship Teams.

Mentorship Teams
Mentorship teams are intended to foster professional development with a personalized experience for Mentors and Mentees. Each Mentorship Team is generally intended to be comprised of: one (1) Senior-level Mentor; one (1) Mid-level Mentor; and 1-2 Mentees.

MENTEES
Mentees are planning students and YPG members who are less experienced in the profession or who are interested in learning more about the profession from more senior-level planners in the field. There are no restrictions on who can be a mentee.

MENTORS
Mentors are practicing planners with significant experience and first hand knowledge of planning issues and the profession. Mentors have a range of experience and can provide technical assistance, direction, guidance, support and feedback, and serve as an advocate for the Mentees.

MENTOR
Senior Planners
Associate/Assistant Planners
Entry Level Professionals
Graduate & Undergraduate Students
Program Benefits

Benefits to Mentors
- Gain fresh perspectives and new experiences
- Obtain valuable networking and recruiting opportunities
- Increase self-awareness of personal and professional capabilities
- Further refine professional and personal goals
- Enhance planning skills and improve job performance
- Diversify understanding of the discipline
- Strengthen ties with the planning community and APA

Benefits to Mentees
- Recruit volunteers for personal/organizational projects and events (Mentees are asked to volunteer for at least two planning related events per year)
- Make a difference in the lives of young professionals by contributing to the success and growth of mentees
- Provide AICP mentors the opportunity to fulfill the AICP Code of Ethics to “contribute time and resources to the professional development of students, interns beginning professionals, and other colleagues.”

Benefits to SDAPA
- AICP CM Credits—Eligible to claim self-reported CM credits for Pro BONO Planning Services through mentoring activities
- Enhance coaching and mentoring skills
- Obtain satisfaction of contributing back to the profession
- Gain new perspectives on emerging trends and technological advancements in various fields
- Expand professional network and professional contacts

“I have been able to develop meaningful relationships with my mentors and the other mentees in my groups. This is a unique opportunity to get to know well-established planners and other young professionals in a small group setting that I would not have had otherwise.”
- Mentee, 2013-2015 Program Years

“As a result of the Program, I feel more prepared to apply to full-time positions in the planning field.”
- Mentee, 2016 Program Year

“I learned something new at every meeting and our mentor was devoted to our interests.”
- Mentee, 2015 Program Year
Program Structure

Professional Growth Plan

Through the duration of the Program, Mentors and Mentees work collaboratively to strengthen the skill sets, knowledge base, and professional abilities to meet the goals set forth in each Mentee’s Professional Growth Plan (PGP).

At the time of application, Mentees are asked to document their goals and objectives of entering into the Program to establish a baseline for personal and professional growth. The PGP is intended to provide a structure for effective dialogue and goal setting between Mentee and Mentor to enhance each participant’s professional development. Participants may collaboratively utilize variations of this suggested format to achieve similar or greater levels of communication and collaboration amongst team participants and sharing of personalized professional experiences.

Mentor Contributions

Mentors can contribute to the Program in a variety of ways, including but not limited to the following:
- Be a Mentor and/or lead a Mentorship Pod
- Career Development Sessions or Plantivities
- Resume Workshops
- Mock Interviews
- Career Advice
- Case Study Presentation or Site Visit
- 2-hour job shadow
- One-time interview for SDAPA newsletter

“Getting to know young professionals who are energetic about the future and their careers [is what I enjoyed the most from the Program].”
- Mentor, 2015 Program Years

“I enjoyed sharing my experiences and insight, while gaining an understanding of [my mentees] interests and concerns surrounding the planning profession.”
- Mentor, 2016 Program Year

“[My Pods] still meets regularly as a mentorship team to casually chat about and share career advice on our careers…”
- Mentor, 2016 Program Year
Mentor/Mentee Agreement

Commitment

Mentees and Mentors in a Mentorship Team must commit to a minimum of four (4) one-to-one or team meetings of at least one hour each over the course of the program year, in addition to participation in the Program’s organized events. The program year will typically last six months, from January through June, in a given year. Mentorship Teams may, upon mutual agreement, exceed the required meetings, as well as meet beyond the program completion date.

Communication

The Mentees may need to take the initiative to schedule the first meeting. Your team may find it helpful to designate a scheduling coordinator to take the initiative in scheduling meetings. Tools, such as Doodle, may assist in finding times that work for most team members. All participants should establish and maintain open lines of communication. You are expected to return phone calls and emails promptly. Mentors are encouraged to invite Mentees to APA activities.

Program Elements

The Mentor is committed to providing professional exposure and experience. The Mentee is committed to honoring meeting dates and times.

Issue Resolution

Mentors and Mentees are encouraged to contact their Mentorship Coordinator if an issue or question arises that they are unsure of how to handle.

Program Sessions are intended to be a formal 1-hour lesson activity on a specified topic to provide an educational component to the Program. These sessions are also referred to as ‘Plantivity’ which consist of a set agenda and a specific learning objective, taking place at a relevant host location. Specified agendas are developed appropriate to the event’s educational purpose or objectives. Program Sessions may cover more than one related topic or theme, bringing new information to our participants.

Examples of lesson activities and subjects may include:
- Planning case law
- Planning theory
- Planning processes
- Public participation techniques
- Zoning
- Subdivision/land development ordinances
- Conflict resolution
- Transportation planning
- Sustainability planning
- Economic development
- Transit oriented development
- Environmental planning (CEQA)

These types of sessions can also be replicated at the Mentorship Pod level, in which the session should be relevant and oriented to the expertise of the Mentor(s), or the interests of the Mentees.

By offering a learning experience in a small group setting, mentors will benefit professionally by offering first-hand knowledge and relevant planning experience of the topic; while benefit from gaining a real world perspective on the issue that face planners every day.
Upcoming Events

2019

**JANUARY**
Mentorship Match!
Kick-off Orientation/Matching Event 1/22, 5:30pm

**FEBRUARY**
Meet Your Team!
Set goals with PGP at Mentorship Team Meeting

**MARCH**
Plantivity! TBA
Check In!
Discuss your PGPs at a Mentorship Team Meeting

**APRIL**
Mid-Cycle Social!
Networking Event, 4/18
Mix It Up!
Hold a joint Mentorship Team meeting/event with another team

**MAY**
Plantivity! TBA
Team Meeting!
Mentorship Team Meeting

**JUNE**
Reflect!
Milestone Celebration, 6/20