

THE WOMEN'S ALLIANCE MENTORING PROGRAM
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Who should I contact to get access to the mentor program?

Contact any of The Women's Alliance chapter presidents or a mentoring program administrator.

Q. How to find a mentor from the mentor program?

Mentor profiles are stored in the mentor program, you may search/browse profiles and find one(s) that match your interest.

Q. Is there a matching process to match a mentor with a mentee?

No, there is no matching process, a mentee is expected to initiate (request) a mentorship from the web-based tool. A mentor also can initiate a mentorship by searching for and requesting a mentee.

Q. How often should a mentor and mentee meet?

It is up to the individuals in the mentorship. Meeting frequency should be discussed during the first meeting, and validated periodically.

Q. I need help setting goals for my mentorship.

It's important to have SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time Bound) goals for your mentorship. Your mentor can help refine the goals, but you should be prepared for your initial meeting with ideas on what areas you'd like to explore with him/her. Check out the "Goal-setting tips" from the mentoring tips page on the web-based tool for more ideas! One of the features of the web-based tool is a place to share goals for each unique mentorship. You can find this feature on the "Manage My Mentorships" page.

Q. How do I end a mentorship when my goals have been met?

If your goals have been met, communicate that to the mentor and thank them for their time and commitment to helping you. Explain that you would like to free the mentor in the mentoring program system so that someone else may have the opportunity to be mentored by them. Then contact one of the mentoring program administrators and let them know that the mentorship has ended. This will allow them to free the mentor within the web-based mentoring tool.

Q. How do I end a mentorship if it is not working?

This is always a tough conversation to have, but we recommend that both mentor and mentee be honest and open about their mentorship. If the mentor wants to end the mentorship, tell the mentee specifically what is not working and why you think someone else may be a better mentor. If the mentee wants to end the mentorship, thank the mentor for their time and explain that you would like to free them in the program so that someone more in line with their expertise can benefit from a mentorship with them. In both cases, the mentee should contact the mentoring program administrators and explain the mentorship is no longer active. This will allow them to free the mentor within the web-based mentoring tool.

Q. Can I have more than one mentor?

Yes, you may have more than one mentor but we ask that you do not have more than two at any one time to keep mentors available for other people in the program.

Q. Help! I forgot my organization code or profile ID.

If you have misplaced the organization code, please contact a program administrator.

If you have forgotten your profile ID, there is a link next to the profile ID input box. After you press the link you will be prompted for your registered e-mail address and the profile ID will be mailed to you.

Q. Who are the program administrators?

Pinyo Bhulinpongson (Asians Coming Together) and Patricia Hill (The Women's Alliance) are the 2008 caucus group Program Chairs. Other administrators' names are maintained on the website, accessible via the Help link.

Q. What should a mentor do?

A mentor is expected to create a safe environment for a mentee to set mutually acceptable goals for the relationship, provide open and honest feedback in response to the mentee's questions and progress towards their goals, and guide the context of the conversation to ensure the mentee understands the boundaries of the mentorship. A mentor is not expected to become a sponsor for the mentee's career progression, unless and until the relationship has progressed to the point where they are willing and confident in the mentee's capabilities.

More guidelines for both mentors and mentees can be found in the Mentoring Tips link on the web-based tool.

Q. What should a mentee do?

A mentee is expected to identify and drive their career objectives. They should come prepared to each session with a set of objectives and their progress toward those objectives. During the initial meeting, they should seek to gain consensus with the mentor on the goals for the relationship, and how those goals will be measured. They should agree on how to schedule the sessions (e.g. outlook invitation or schedule through an administrative assistant) the frequency, duration and location of their sessions, as well as what topics are in- and out-of-bounds.

More guidelines for both mentors and mentees can be found in the Mentoring Tips link on the web-based tool.

Q. What are the areas that are recommended for a mentor and mentee to talk about?

The web-based system has a tool called "15 Question", which is part of each profile, and becomes visible to any other person with whom you have established a mentorship. It is activated after you have established your first mentorship, and we suggest using this set of questions (with your responses) as a pre-read or discussion document at your first mentoring session.

Q. What are the areas, questions that are not recommended to talk about?

This should be discussed during your initial meeting. One of the questions in the "15 Question" tool focuses on this issue. Generally speaking, you should set some boundaries about the kinds of topics that are in- and out-of-bounds. For example, you should agree on what should be held confidential and what you would encourage your mentee/mentor to share outside of the relationship.

Q. How long do I have after I create my profile to request a mentorship?

Two months. We ask that if you are in the program that you try and find a mentor as soon as possible. If you are having trouble finding a mentor, please contact one of the mentoring program administrators so that we can work with you to resolve any issues. If you have not requested a mentor by the end of two months, your profile will be released so that someone else can take advantage of the program.

Q. How long should I wait to follow up with the mentor after I request a mentorship but have not heard from him/her?

1 week–2 weeks. If you are still having trouble getting a response from the person you requested a mentorship with, please contact one of the mentoring program administrators.

Q. How long will I have with this mentorship?

In 2008, the mentoring program would like you to complete your mentorship within 12–18 months. In 2009, all mentorships should be completed within 12 months.

Q. After the mentorship is closed (ended) in the mentor program web tool, can a mentor and mentee still meet?

Of course! The program is intended to provide an environment to find a mentor and provide guidance and tools to build a successful mentoring experience. It is up to the two of you to agree on how you will continue your relationship after the mentorship is complete.