

DLA Mentoring Program

Guidelines

1. The program is open to anyone who wishes to learn more about a career in librarianship and learn about becoming involved in the Delaware Library Association.
2. Mentors should be persons employed in libraries or have recently retired within the last three years and be an active member of DLA.
3. Mentors may, if they are willing, be assigned up to two mentees.
4. Participants are expected to stay abreast of issues and trends affecting librarianship to properly participate in the program.
5. Participants are asked to commit to meeting at least once a month for the period of October through the end of May. Meetings may be in person, by video conference, by telephone, or by written exchange (emails, SMS, surface mail, etc.).
6. Participants are asked to fill out an application form. Information from the forms will be used by the DLA Mentoring Program Planning Committee to match mentees and mentors.
7. Submitting an application does not guarantee that you will be accepted into the program.
8. If, during the year, either party feels that the relationship is not working out, they should contact the Committee to suggest that the mentee be assigned to a different mentor.
9. Participants are encouraged to read the appropriate “tip sheets” to make the most of their experience. Mentors should keep in mind the “Roles and Responsibilities” outlined on the attached sheet.
10. Participants may discuss any topics, but the committee provides a list of potential topics for discussion as the year progresses.
11. Mentees will be expected to attend three cohort meetings with DLA leadership (held at the beginning, middle and end of the program) to discuss the program and network with other participants. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, these meetings are mandatory.
12. Mentors are expected to attend one onboarding meeting in the beginning of October and a program wrapup meeting along with mentees in April.
13. At the end of the year, all participants will be asked to submit an evaluation form about their experiences to help assess the usefulness of the program. If interested, participants are also encouraged to share their experience in the program in some form at the MLA/DLA Annual Conference (presentation, panel, poster etc.) or through other DLA communication channels such as The Bulletin.
14. This is a volunteer position.

DLA Mentoring Program

Mentee Role and Responsibilities – adapted from ACRL

1. Keep communications open. Your mentor will make first contact with you, but you should feel free to send messages back as topics or questions arise. Tell the mentor a bit about yourself, professionally and personally. Listen carefully and ask questions for clarification when needed. Reply promptly to messages sent to you. Consider setting goals for frequency of communication with your mentor. If email communication seems to be breaking down, try a phone call to check in and keep communication open.
2. Define expectations. Establish clear expectations and ground rules at the onset of the mentoring relationship. Consider writing down a list of realistic goals for the mentoring relationship together with the mentor. To develop these goals, assess your needs and what you hope to accomplish with the mentor, as well as how the mentor believes he or she can help you. Revisit and revise these goals together, and use them to evaluate progress over the course of the year.
3. Take initiative and be an active mentee. Be proactive in all aspects of the mentoring relationship. Listen carefully and respectfully to your mentor's advice, and ask questions to help your mentor share experiences. Remember that the most effective mentor-mentee relationships are built on mutual learning, so also think about ways you can introduce new ideas.
4. Think of yourself as a professional. Your mentor is here to help you take part in the professional community of librarians. Take this opportunity to become more familiar with professional organizations and look for ways to participate and volunteer.
5. Be available. Look ahead and let your mentor know if you will be unavailable for extended periods of time. Be flexible in meeting on your mentor's schedule. Be punctual and respectful of your mentor's time. Whenever possible, plan on meeting face to face at conferences or other professional venues.
6. Be reliable and consistent. Be careful and realistic about the commitments you make to your mentor, but always follow through on those commitments. Gain your mentor's trust while giving yours.
7. Be prepared to accept honest feedback. Feedback should be the starting point of further conversation. Ask questions to fully understand your mentor's evaluations and advice. Do not feel like you must impress your mentor, but do communicate your strengths, interests and skills. Give your mentor feedback and recognition for the help he or she provides.
8. Be innovative and creative. Be a resource for new ideas. Your mentor probably hopes to learn as much from the relationship as you do.

DLA Mentoring Program

9. Respect confidentiality. Keep conversations between you and your mentor private and confidential. Make sure this expectation for confidentiality is clear and reciprocal: your mentor must also feel confident in you maintaining confidentiality.
10. Address misunderstandings as they arise. Communicate problems, issues, and misunderstandings within the relationship directly with your mentor in a timely fashion.
11. Contact the DLA Mentor/Mentee Program Planning Committee for assistance with issues regarding communication with your mentor.

Mentor Role and Responsibilities – adapted from ACRL

1. Keep communications open. Contact your mentee as soon as you receive his, her, or their name. Tell the mentee a bit about yourself, professionally and personally. Listen carefully and ask questions for clarification when needed. Reply promptly to messages sent to you. Consider setting goals for frequency of communication with your mentee. If email communication seems to be breaking down, try a phone call to check in and keep communication open.
2. Define expectations. Establish clear expectations and ground rules at the onset of the mentoring relationship. Consider writing down a list of realistic goals for the mentoring relationship together with the mentee. Revisit and revise these goals together, and use them to evaluate progress over the course of the year. Goals should be based on the mentee's assessment of his, her, or their ambitions and needs, as well as your assessment of the help you can provide. You should also assess what you hope to gain from the mentoring experience.
3. Take initiative and be an active participant. Be proactive in all aspects of the mentoring relationship. Offer feedback and advice when asked, but also feel free to introduce new ideas and opportunities to the mentee. The most effective mentor-mentee relationships are built on mutual learning, so be open and alert to what you can learn from the mentee. Ask questions, collaborate, experiment, have fun.
4. Foster a sense of belonging. Through your relationship, help your mentee feel more included and valued in the library profession. Emphasize commonalities with other librarians and encourage involvement with professional organizations.
5. Be available / accessible. Be available to talk with the mentee, answer questions, and provide advice. Look ahead and let your mentee know if you will be unavailable for extended periods of time. Whenever possible, plan on meeting face to face at conferences or other professional venues.

DLA Mentoring Program

6. Be reliable and consistent. Be careful and realistic about the commitments you make to your mentee, but always follow through on those commitments. To be an effective mentor, you must keep your mentee's trust.

7. Offer honest feedback. Balance truth with tact in your evaluations, and always emphasize the positive. Remember that your goal is to support and recognize your mentee's progress and development in the profession.

8. Be innovative and creative. Be a resource for new ideas for the mentee. Use your experience, but also ask for your mentee's help to research, brainstorm, and innovate.

9. Be aware of cultural diversity. Value your mentee's unique social, economic, and cultural traits and perspectives.

10. Be ethical. Consistently act in ways that are ethical; uphold the law and professional codes of conduct.

11. Respect confidentiality. Keep conversations between you and your mentee private and confidential.

12. Model self-reliance. Remember that you will not always be available to the mentee. Demonstrate to the mentee how to independently find solutions and work to impart self-management skills.

13. Contact the DLA Mentor/Mentee Program Planning Committee for assistance with issues regarding communication with your mentee or fulfilling the role and responsibilities of mentor.

Possible Topics of Conversation between Mentors and Mentees

Please note this list is not exhaustive and is instead intended to provide an idea of what support mentors may be able to provide through this program.

Public Library Topic List:

- Management/Supervisory Experience
- Technical Services and Web Tools
 - Canva
- Interactions/Communication:
 - Donors
 - Colleagues
 - Patrons
 - Outside Organizations
- Reference
- Programming

DLA Mentoring Program

- In-house
 - Contract
- Outreach
- Fiscal/Budget
- Collection Development
- Professional Involvement/Organizations
 - Getting involved, staying active
 - Presenting at conferences
 - Facilitating Groups/Meetings
- How do you stay up-to-date on library trends:
 - Higher/Continuing Education
 - Listservs
- Delaware Specific Initiatives:
 - Summer Reading
- Time Management
 - Prioritization
 - Delegation
 - Organizational Skills
- Work/Life Balance
 - Burnout
 - Emotional Wellbeing
 - Balancing acts
- Intellectual Freedom
- Advocacy
 - Yourself
 - Programs
 - Library
 - State
- Grant Writing

Youth Services Topic List:

- Management/Supervisory Experience
- Technical Services
- Interactions/Communication:
 - Donors
 - Colleagues
 - Patrons
 - Outside Organizations
- Reference
- Programming
 - In-house
 - Contract
 - Cost negotiations
 - Partnerships with other libraries/organizations

DLA Mentoring Program

- Outreach
- Fiscal/Budget
- Collection Development
- Professional Involvement/Organizations
- How do you stay up-to-date on library trends:
 - Higher/Continuing Education
 - Listservs
- Delaware Specific Initiatives
 - Summer Reading
- Time Management
- Work/Life Balance
- Intellectual Freedom
- Advocacy
 - Yourself
 - Programs
 - Library
 - State
- Grant Writing
- Imazine/Pages
- Marketing Yourself - (applying to jobs, getting involved in the field, etc.)

Academic/Special Libraries:

- Collection Development
- Getting involved in professional organizations
- Publishing/presenting
- Archival work
- Planning exhibitions
- Project management
- Grant writing
- IDEAS (inclusivity, diversity, equity, accessibility, anti-racism, social justice)
- Technology and Web Tools

School Library:

- Collection Development
 - Children's Literature
 - YA Literature
- Reference
- Outreach
 - Administration
 - Parents
 - Teachers
 - Superintendents
 - Public Libraries - building partnerships with local libraries
 - UDLib/SEARCH

DLA Mentoring Program

- Marketing
 - Book Displays
- Cataloging and Classification
- Advocacy
- Programming
- Professional development
- Work/Life Balance
- Technology and Web Tools
 - Canva