

# MENTORSHIP PROGRAM GUIDEBOOK

2024  
*Organizational Development*



Welcome to the Mentorship Program!

This guidebook includes information and tools to set your mentoring relationships up for success! You don’t need to read this all at once, yet you are welcome to use this as a resource throughout the course of the program.

We are also available to support you throughout this program and in the future! Contact us at [OrganizationalDevelopment@cityofmadison.com](mailto:OrganizationalDevelopment@cityofmadison.com).

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# Welcome & Program Overview

Welcome to our Mentoring Program! Our goal is to create supportive connections that promote leadership development, equity and inclusion, organizational learning, and builds capacity for citywide mentoring.

## Program Structure

**The program begins on March 17th and ends September 9th.** This is a group mentoring program where one mentor is matched with 2-3 mentees. Mentorship groups will set their own schedule for gathering. Organizational Development (OD) will provide resources and discussion guides to support the program, including kick-off, midpoint, and end of year celebration for all participants.

## Participant Time Commitments

### Meetings

- **Monthly mentor group meetings:** Each small group will be expected to meet at least four times between March and September. This is approximately one meeting every other month. Groups will determine their own schedules and location and share this information with Organizational Development. We recommend scheduling these as soon as you are matched together!
- **Gatherings for ALL participants include:**
  - Program kick-off in March
  - Midpoint check-in in April
  - End of Year Celebration in early September

### Other commitments

- **Communication between meetings:** During the program, mentors are asked to be available to their mentees during work hours for occasional questions and requests. Depending on the request, this may be an email, brief 1:1 meeting, or phone call.
- **Continuous improvement surveys:** Organizational Development will send short surveys before, during, and after the program.

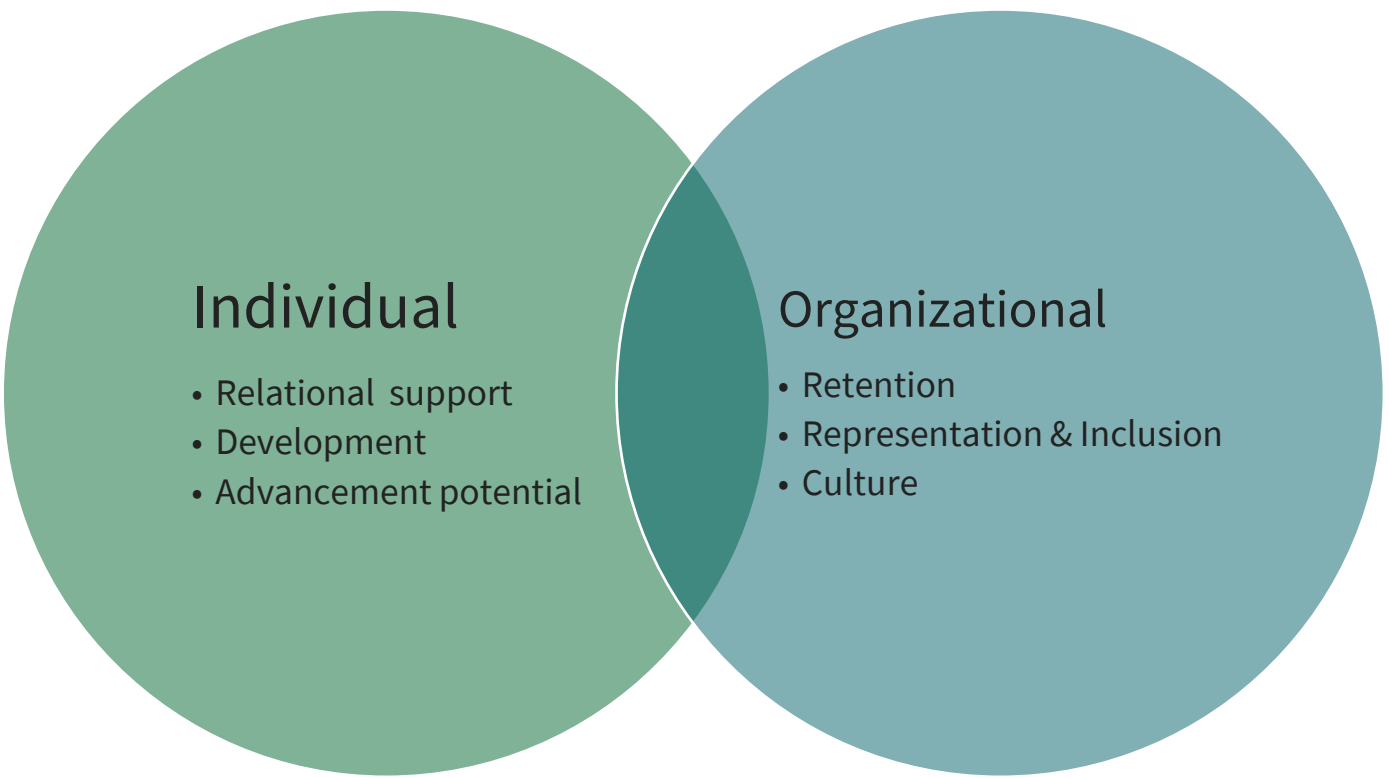
## Program Timeline

Event	2025 Dates	Time Commitment
Mentee Orientation	March 17 @ 3:00 pm	60 minutes
Mentor Orientation	March 18 @ 3:00 pm	60 minutes
Kickoff Mixer	March 19 @ 11:00 am	60 minutes
Monthly Mentorship Meetings *	March 24 – September 6	180 minutes
Mentee Development Discussion	May 20 @ 11:00 am	60 minutes
Mentor Development Discussion	May 21 @ 11:00 am	60 minutes
Midpoint Check-In	June 10 @ 11:00 am	60 minutes
Mentee Development Discussion	July 16 @ 2:00 pm	60 minutes
End of Year Celebration	September 9 @ 3:00 pm	60 minutes

Key:    Mentee = Teal    |    Mentor = Purple    |    Both = Green

# Why Mentoring?

Mentoring has both individual and organizational benefits.



**An in-depth case study at Sun Microsystems found that mentorship program participants were:**

- 5 times more likely to advance in pay grade. (Mentors made even more progress.)
- 5 times more likely to get promoted (Mentors were six times more likely).
- More likely to stay with the company. Retention rates were significantly higher for mentees (72%) and for mentors (69%) than for employees who did not participate (49%).

**Cornell University’s School of Industrial and Labor Relations found that mentoring programs:**

- Boosted representation of people of color at the management level by 9% to 24% (compared to -2% to 18% with other diversity initiatives).
- Dramatically improved promotion and retention rates for people of color and women—15% to 38% as compared to non-mentored employees.

Mentor Benefits	Mentee Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practice your coaching skills</li><li>• Grow your influence as a leader and advisor</li><li>• Gain new perspective and insights from mentees</li><li>• Networking opportunities</li><li>• Give back by developing others</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop your leadership skills</li><li>• Position yourself for advancement opportunities</li><li>• Receive feedback and coaching</li><li>• Networking opportunities</li><li>• Transfer skills and experience to other mentor relationships</li><li>• Transfer skills and experience to other mentor relationships</li></ul>

# Being a Mentor

A mentor gives guidance and support to help someone else develop.

Being a mentor doesn't mean you have all the answers. Great mentors often empower their mentees to chart their own course and connect them with others who can assist or support them.

Mentoring is a two-way relationship, with a focus on the mentee's needs and goals. Key skills for mentors include:

- Curiosity and empathy
- Authenticity
- Communication skills (Especially listening!)

## What Do Mentors Do?

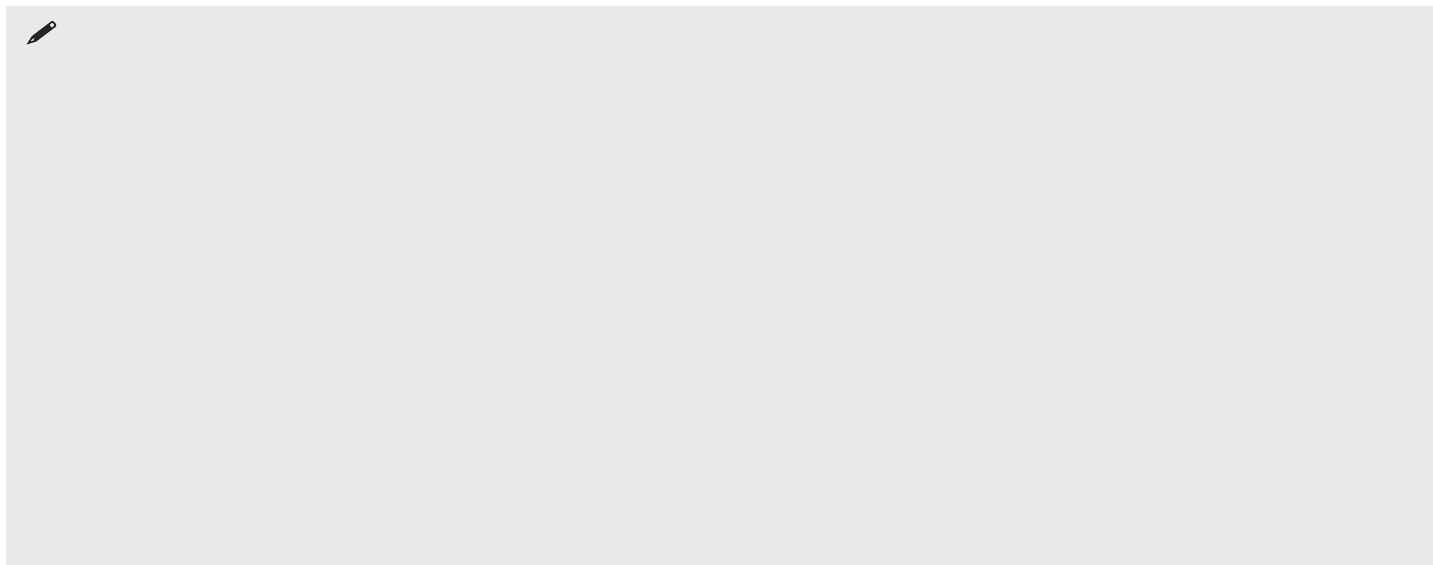
Depending on the situation and the needs of your mentee, you may take different approaches.

Approach	Sounds like:
Sharing your experiences	"What's worked for me in the past..." "I usually approach situations like this by..."
Giving feedback	"Can I give you some feedback about how you approached that conversation?"
Coaching	"What have you tried before? ...How did that go?"
Validating and giving encouragement	"I can tell how much this is bothering you." "You should be proud of this accomplishment."
Acting as a role model	<i>Everything you do or say can be influential!</i>

A mentor may (or may not) also be a **sponsor**. A sponsor is someone with influence or power who advocates for someone and creates opportunities for them. ([Read more about sponsorship further in this handbook.](#))

## Reflection:

Consider the list of things mentors typically do. Write down the names of people you may be mentoring—either formally or informally.



# Being a Mentee

Part of being a leader is building relationships and recognizing how much you can learn from others. Here are a few ways you can make the most of your experience as a mentee.

- Be clear on your goals and needs
- Own your development
- Ask questions
- Be open to feedback
- Don't be afraid to disagree

## Now That You Have a Mentor, Here's What You Can Discuss:

**Challenges or blocks:** Ask them if they've faced something similar, and how they dealt with it.

**Decisions:** If you find yourself at a crossroads, big or small, talk it through with your mentor.

**Resume-building advice:** Share and discuss your career goals and resume at a high level. What skills and experience do you need to highlight to get a job that aligns with your goals? What activities or experiences do they think you should prioritize to build your resume further?

**Preparation or practice:** Do you need to have a tough conversation with someone? Discuss the situation and role-play what you plan to say with your mentor. Big presentation coming up? Share a small part of it (5-10 minutes) and get their feedback.

Once you get to know a mentor better, it will become easier to align your asks with their expertise and interests.



# Inclusive Mentoring

## Unconscious Bias in Mentoring Relationships

Bias can influence all of our relationships, even when we share commonalities with each other. We may have stereotypes about other groups and unconsciously act on them.

For example, Black women often receive less support at work when compared to men and other women. They are also more likely to receive judgmental feedback about personal style. Men are also more likely to receive actionable skills and performance-related feedback than women.

## General Strategies for Inclusive Mentoring

The four principles of [Values-Based Leadership](#) can support you in being inclusive. They are Self-Reflection, Balance & Perspective, True Self-Confidence, and Genuine Humility. A few additional tips:

### Be aware of your own assumptions

- Remember that everyone brings their own cultural lens into the workplace—including you! Your perspective and life experiences have been shaped by your gender, race, education, social class, abilities, and many other cultural influences.
- Reflect on the ways your past and experiences influence you. This can help you avoid assumptions that others experience the world in the same way.

### Address differences openly

- Mentoring relationships can suffer if differences are minimized or ignored, sometimes making people feel they need to hold back from being their full selves.
- It may be uncomfortable for you to talk about certain topics like race, gender, disability, or social class—especially if you are afraid of saying something wrong. Lean into that discomfort as a growth opportunity.
- Use “I” statements and, when appropriate, name where you’re coming from. (“From my experience/perspective as [identity],”)

### Get curious

- Make a commitment to more fully recognize, understand, and appreciate differences by asking open-ended questions to understand how people have come to their point of view.
- This can also sound like “I’m curious, tell me more about [insert topic here]”.

# Sample Agenda

The agenda below is provided as an example of how you might structure your mentoring meetings. Feel free to make adjustments based on your own preferences.

## **Check-in (3 minutes/person)**

- What's new since our last meeting?

## **Goal updates (10 minutes/person)**

- Each person gives an update on their goal. The mentor and group may ask questions and offer insight. This time can also be used to make adjustments to goals based on new information or to right-size it for the next session.

## **“Hot Seat” or Discussion Topic (20-30 minutes)**

- At each session one person may request to be in the Hot Seat, which allows them to present a challenge or opportunity and go deep into discussion.
- This can also be a time to focus on specific skill-building, or discussion. Optional topics and guides will be provided each month in case you are looking for ideas for what to talk about.

## **Gratitude and Wrap-up (5-10 minutes)**

- Share an insight or takeaway with each other that came from the session. Confirm when you're meeting next.

# Creating your Group Agreements

The process of co-creating group agreements is often more important than the product. Unlike rules, group agreements are developed through consensus. They are a framework for how you aspire to show up and interact together.

Every person in the group shares what they need from each other to feel safe, supported, open and trusting. Every person also makes a commitment to each other to follow group agreements.

Here's a suggested approach to developing your group agreements:

1. **Written Reflection:**

What do you need from every person in this group in order to feel safe, supported, open, productive and trusting?

2. **Share your lists with each other:**

It may be helpful to put sticky notes on a whiteboard or in virtual meetings, take notes on a shared screen.

3. **Identify your top 3-5 agreements:**

Find commonalities and group things together. Discuss and write your agreements in a simple phrase or sentence. Don't get too caught up in word-smithing but be sure to ask clarifying questions to create shared understanding. (For example, if confidentiality is part of your group agreements what does that mean to each person?)

4. **If you have a long list...**

Ask each person to choose their top agreement and explain why it is important to them. Once this is done, ask each person if there is a second agreement that no one brought forward but is critical for them. It is ok to have a long list if it reflects what is important to your group.

5. **Post-work: Synthesize and simplify (optional)**

Your conversation may result in a list that's still fairly long and messy. That's ok. After your meeting, a volunteer could simplify the language, combine any duplicates, and group your agreements together under headings. This revised list should be brought back to the group in a later meeting for everyone to review.

Process adapted from the National Equity Project, [www.nationalequityproject.org](http://www.nationalequityproject.org)

# Using The GROW Model for Coaching

Coaching is a technique that helps guide someone to build their self-awareness and confidence. It's different from giving advice or feedback because it keeps the other person in the lead. A coach is helping them reflect and come to their own decision or course of action vs. telling someone what to do. When done correctly, it can be very empowering!

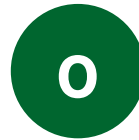
The essence of coaching is to ask open-ended questions, one at a time. It's also important to pause long enough for the other person to think and process—don't be afraid of silence. The GROW model, developed by Sir John Whitmore, is one way you can structure a coaching conversation.



Establish the **Goal**



Understand the Current  
**Reality**



Explore the **Options**



Commit to the **Way  
Forward**

## **G- Establish the Goal**

- What do you want to achieve?
- What do you want to change the most?
- How will you know when you've achieved your goal?

## **R- Understand the current Reality**

- What is happening now?
- What is the effect of this on you and your work?
- What examples or 'evidence' do you have to support this?
- What steps have you taken towards your goal?
- What have you tried to do to fix it?
- Who may be able to help you?

## **O- Explore the Options**

Here you ask questions to help brainstorm options and evaluate them.

- What has worked in the past?
- What are some alternatives?
- Would you like a suggestion? (You may offer a suggestion, but be sure it is one of multiple options being considered)
- What obstacles stand in your way?

## **W- Commit to the Way Forward**

- What actions do you need to take?
- What will your first step be?
- What does support look like for you?

# Beautiful Questions

"Always the beautiful answer who asks a more beautiful question." –E.E. Cummings

Beautiful questions are open-ended and empowering with no “right” or “wrong” answer. They go a little deeper than your typical icebreaker, so, you want to allow time for everyone to reflect and elaborate on their answers. Try asking some beautiful questions in your meetings.

- What 3-5 adjectives or phrases do you want people to use to describe you?
- What are the things (people, places, activities) that make you feel truly happy?
- What did you learn about yourself this past year that you didn't know before?
- Who is someone you're grateful for? Why?
- What is something about life that puzzles you?
- What is something you could teach another person?
- What is something you would like to learn?
- What is a song with meaning for you?
- What is something you are proud of in your life?

# The Role of Sponsors

A *sponsor* is an advocate in a position of power who helps create opportunities for another person and champions their potential. This includes in off-the-record or closed-door meetings with other managers or executives.

Your mentor may—or may not—be a great sponsor for you. It depends on your relationship and whether they have the influence or power to advocate for you. Sponsorship requires a bit of risk in spending your social and positional capital on behalf of someone else.

There is some research indicating that disparities in who is sponsored are even worse than disparities in who is mentored.

## Ways To Sponsor Someone

You may be positioned to play the role of sponsor for someone you're mentoring, either formally or informally. A few specific actions to consider:

- **Job shadowing.** Bring your mentee with you to meetings. They may learn through observation, or you may be able to identify a specific way for them to contribute.
- **Put their name out there to others.** Recommend them for a task force or team, committee, interim position, or job opening. This could be within your department or across to other groups.
- **Make introductions and expand their network.** Who would benefit from knowing your mentee? Set up a coffee or introductory meeting. And be conscious of introducing them in a way that supports them. Talk them up, rather than just introducing them with their job title and department.
- **Provide them with opportunities and exposure** as your role allows. Don't throw them into opportunities without any support, but also be mindful of letting them take ownership of complex projects or roles.

# Additional Resources

## Mentorship

- Article: How to be a Mentor  
<https://www.betterup.com/blog/how-to-be-a-mentor>
- Article: Are you mentorable?  
<https://ideas.ted.com/are-you-mentorable/>
- Article: How do you identify and challenge your own unconscious bias and microaggressions as a mentor? <https://www.linkedin.com/advice/0/how-do-you-identify-challenge-your-own-unconscious-bias>
- Article: How can you avoid unconscious bias in mentoring?  
<https://www.linkedin.com/advice/3/how-can-you-avoid-unconscious-bias-mentoring-css1f#:~:text=Unconscious%20bias%20can%20influence%20who,and%20growth%20as%20a%20mentor.>
- Blog post: 10 quick ideas for becoming a more effective mentee  
<https://er.educause.edu/blogs/2020/8/10-quick-ideas-for-becoming-a-more-effective-mentee>
- Podcast: Finding—and becoming—great mentors and sponsors with Carla Harris  
<https://link.chtbl.com/xK9zzNDO>  
Transcript: <https://www.ted.com/podcasts/great-mentors-and-sponsors-carla-harris-transcript>

## Sponsorship

- Article: How to do sponsorship right  
<https://hbr.org/2022/11/how-to-do-sponsorship-right>

## Coaching Conversations

- Article: The GROW model of coaching and mentoring  
<https://www.mindtools.com/an0fzpz/the-grow-model-of-coaching-and-mentoring>
- Video: : GROW model in action  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnm3VwfX7Gs>
- Book: Coaching for Performance by Sir John Whitmore

## Beautiful Questions

- Podcast: On Being with Krista Tippett, David Whyte: Seeking Language Large Enough  
<https://onbeing.org/programs/david-whyte-seeking-language-large-enough/>
- Blog Post: Bringing up the Boss  
<https://www.bringinguptheboss.com/post/beautiful-questions>
- Book: *A More Beautiful Question* by Warren Berger