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| http://www.fedbar.org/Image-Library/Site-Image/logo_1.aspx?FT=.pjpeg | **Masthead**  **Mentoring Program** |

The Federal Bar Association is the premier bar association serving the federal practitioner and the federal judiciary and is the catalyst for communication between the bar and the bench as well as the private and public sectors. The Tampa Bay Chapter of the Federal Bar Association (“FBA”) is dedicated to promoting the professional development of attorneys involved in federal law and those who litigate in federal court.

In an effort to provide a service to our members and further professional development of new federal court practitioners, the FBA is proud to initiate its Mentoring Program. One of the most significant factors contributing to an attorney’s professional success is the presence of an effective mentor. This program provides participants with an opportunity to form mutually beneficial relationships that foster professional growth and career development.

**Mentees Eligible for the Mentoring Program**

The FBA invites you to participate as a mentor in its Mentoring Program. This program is open to members of the FBA only. FBA members are eligible to participate as mentees if the member: (1) is a law student or has been admitted to the Florida Bar for less than six (6) years or (2) has practiced in federal court for less than two (2) years.

**Mentors**

The mentors participating in the FBA’s Mentoring Program include members of the FBA that have been in practice for six (6) or more years and have experience handling federal litigation.

**Mentoring Program Objectives**

The purpose of the mentoring program is to elevate the competence, professionalism and success of federal practitioners through positive mentoring relationships.

Specifically, the mentoring relationship should accomplish the following:

1. Promote collegial relationships among legal professionals and involvement in the organized bar;
2. Contribute to a sense of integrity in the legal profession;
3. Encourage the use of best practices and highest ideals in the practice of law; and
4. Improve the mentee’s legal ability and professional judgment.

**Mentoring Program Administration and Topics**

Mentors are expected to meet with their mentees at least once a month in an informal setting (over lunch, for example) but with a formal purpose in mind: to explore in depth aspects of the mentee’s professional development.

During the mentoring meetings, potential discussion topics may include the following:

* Effective attorney/client communications
* Professionalism and legal ethics
* Law office management
* Practice and career enhancement
* Balancing careers with family
* Personal pursuits
* Law practice transitions and alternatives
* Bring mentee to Federal Bar Association events
* Discuss Middle District of Florida local rules
* Discuss Middle District Discovery Handbook: a Handbook on Civil Discovery Practice in the United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida
* Discuss common malpractice and grievance traps
* Discuss how to screen for, recognize, and avoid conflicts
* Discuss client development
* Discuss best practices in federal court litigation

**Programs**

The FBA Mentoring Program will provide virtual and/or in-person programming for the mentors and mentees throughout the upcoming year. Mentors and mentees are encouraged to attend these programs and other programs sponsored by the FBA throughout the year.

**Procedures**

1. Duration: Mentoring Program Duration. The duration of the Mentoring Program is one calendar year.
2. Expenses Associated with Mentoring: The mentor and mentee are each expected to absorb any cost or expenses they incur in association with the mentoring relationship. We recommend that the mentor and mentee utilize a “Dutch Treat” practice as a rule.

**Confidentiality**

The mentoring relationship does not create a confidential or privileged relationship between the mentor and mentee. Both the mentor and mentee should be discreet and respectful when confiding in each other. However, there is ultimately no confidential relationship formed by mentoring. The mentor and mentee should discuss their expectations about confidentiality during their first meeting.

**A Final Thought**

This program will only be as valuable as the mentor and mentee make it. Its success depends on the time contributed to the mentoring relationship and your genuine interest in the discussions with your mentor or mentee.

If you have any questions or would like additional information about the Tampa Bay Chapter of the Federal Bar Association’s Mentoring Program, please contact Jon Philipson at jphilipson@tlolawfirm.com.