YALSA Mentor Guidelines
Thank you so much for participating in YALSA’s reciprocal virtual mentoring program! We greatly appreciate your willingness to lend your time and expertise to assisting YALSA members who are new to librarianship. This guide outlines the benefits and responsibilities of serving as a YALSA reciprocal mentor, as well as answers some frequently asked questions. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to get in touch with YALSA’s Program Officer for Continuing Education, Nicole Gibby Munguia at 1.800.545.2433 x5293 or nmunguia@ala.org.

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1. What is reciprocal mentoring?
Reciprocal mentoring is a voluntary, confidential, one to one relationship in which an experienced professional is paired with a new professional. Through this relationship the mentor and protégé can share knowledge in their respective area(s) of expertise. Paired mentoring enables the protégé to grow in skills, knowledge, understanding and behavior, and enables the mentor to enhance his/her skills set and help a new professional in the field. Mentoring is not a prescriptive or directive relationship but rather one which encourages the exchange of knowledge and ideas between the mentor and protégé.

2. What does a mentor do?
As a mentor you will form a voluntary, confidential, one to one relationship with someone who is less experienced than yourself. This person will seek to use your skills, knowledge and experience as a guide and support for their professional development. A mentor also acts as a safe sounding board for his/her protégé’s ideas and concerns. Your protégé can share his/her knowledge of new concepts and technologies he/she has learned in graduate school with you. The agenda for your discussions will be primarily set by your protégé although you may need to guide him/her in clarifying goals for what he/she hopes to achieve from the relationship.

As a mentor you:
• Support
• Advise
• Guide
• Engage

3. Goals and Objectives of the YALSA reciprocal mentoring program
The YALSA reciprocal mentoring program is designed to connect experienced library professionals with new librarians and/or graduate students in library science programs. Broad goals for YALSA mentors are:
• Support new librarians
• Create a knowledge sharing relationship with a new association member
• Share your time and expertise in order to help others in the profession
• Help YALSA retain new librarians in the profession
• Encourage new librarians to become active in YALSA

4. Benefits of serving as a mentor
Serving as a mentor is a great opportunity to help a new librarian and enhance your own professional development. Through mentoring, you assist a new librarian in their growth and development, as well as expand your network of colleagues. Mentoring gives you the opportunity to enhance your own teaching and coaching skills, as well as meet YA or school librarians who are just joining the field. Reciprocal mentoring can introduce mentors to new ideas and theories in the field, and gives mentors the opportunity to see the profession from a new perspective. In addition, mentoring is an important way to give back to the profession and the association.
5. Responsibilities of a mentor
Mentoring is a great way to stay active in the profession and in YALSA, but it is a serious commitment, which requires dedicated time and energy. Before working with a protégé it is helpful to understand the expectations of a YALSA mentor.

- **Confidentiality**: All communication between the mentor and the protégé is to remain confidential unless permission to share the content of the communication is expressly given by either the mentor or protégé. If transcripts and/or files of the communication are archived, the mentor and protégé should come to a mutually agreeable decision on how to handle this content at the conclusion of the mentoring relationship.

- **Professionalism**: The YALSA mentoring program is designed to enhance the professional careers of both new and experienced librarians. Participants in the program are expected to treat one another with courtesy and respect at all times. Participants are expected to maintain the professionalism of the mentoring relationship and not become involved in an inappropriate personal relationship.

- **Integrity**: Mentors serve as role models and are expected to act with integrity at all times.

- **Communication**: YALSA mentors are strongly encouraged to arrange a regular communication schedule with their protégé. Proteges are expected to initiate contact with their mentor. Mentors and protégés should decide how to communicate and how frequently communication should occur. Participants are expected to communicate with each other at minimum on a monthly basis. Prompt response in communication is expected from all participants.

- **Support**: Mentors are expected to offer support and guidance to their protégé and to allow their protégé to come to her own solutions to issues.

6. Mentoring Skills
Mentors are able to, as appropriate, share their own experiences. The guidelines below are beneficial to use when you act as a mentor.

To provide some structure to the sessions and make sure that the outcomes set by the protégé are reached it is helpful to have a framework to work through. Your mentoring experience will be where the protégé sets the agenda and you actively listen and provide advice and counsel. Through active listening and skilful questioning, you will help them to learn and develop as librarians.

**Active listening**
Active listening is about immersing yourself in what someone is saying and truly seeking to understand their position. It's also about giving signs that you are listening, remembering what they have said and encouraging the protégé to say more. It's not
about thinking about what you can say next. In face-to-face settings, use body language to show that you are genuinely interested and paraphrase to check understanding.

**Questioning**
Use different questioning techniques:
- **Open** e.g. How do you feel about what happened?
- **Closed** e.g. Do you think that’s true?
- **Leading** e.g. So were you thinking about setting up a meeting with x?
- **Hypothetical** e.g. What might happen if you were to do that?
- **Analytical/challenging** e.g. What caused you act in that way? What do you think the effect on x was as a result of your actions?

Bear in mind that “why” is a fairly challenging question. “What caused you to” is less threatening than “why did you do that.”

**Giving feedback**
Give feedback when invited; be supportive and constructive, and whenever possible, positive. Helpful feedback is:
- Clear - everyone knows what the message is
- Owned – it’s your own perception and not objective truth
- Balanced – contains both positive and negative
- Evidence based – can be backed up

You should encourage your protégé to give feedback to you in this style in your reciprocal mentoring relationship.

7. **General topics for discussions**
As your protégé enters the field of young adult librarianship he/she may have questions on a wide variety of topics. Below are suggestions for topics of discussion:
- Selection and ordering
- Vendor relations
- Weeding and inventory
- Processing new materials
- Handling book challenges
- Meeting patron needs
- Supervision of volunteers
- Annual reports and statistics
- Policies, such as computer use & collection development
- Handling current budget and preparing future budgets
- Grant writing
- Professional development materials
- Teen Advisory Boards
- Building & maintaining professional relationships with coworkers and supervisors
8. The ‘reciprocal’ part of mentoring
Depending on your job and areas of expertise, your protégé may be a resource to help you expand your knowledge and/or incorporate new skills into your work. If your protégé is skilled and confident in an area of young adult librarianship that you’d like to know more about, you’re encouraged to initiate that conversation with your protégé.

9. Where to find help
Inevitably as a mentor you will find yourself in need of some support. If the relationship is deteriorating you might need to talk to someone about why this might be and what you could do about it. You might find yourself being asked questions which you are unsure how to answer or are unclear where to signpost your protégé.

To help support the work of the mentor, YALSA has established a space in ALA Connect through which mentors can communicate and support one another. This resource can be found here in ALA Connect by searching for “YALSA Mentors” or by following this hyperlink [http://connect.ala.org/node/98548](http://connect.ala.org/node/98548).

Please be sure to alert Nicole Gibby Munguia, YALSA’s Program Officer for Continuing Education, if a problem arises in your mentoring relationship, and feel free to direct any questions you may have to her. She can be reached at nmunguia@ala.org or 1.800.545.2433 x5293.

10. What is YALSA’s role in the mentoring program?
YALSA will provide participants with monthly discussion topics as well as a suggested list of resources that mentors and protégés can use to develop their mentoring goals or jump start their mentoring conversations and activities. In addition, YALSA will provide a space on ALA Connect for mentors and another for protégés. The space can be used for sharing resources, networking, exchanging ideas and more. YALSA will also host quarterly chat sessions for mentors and protégés. If enough participants indicate an interest, YALSA will host a get together for mentors and protégés at ALA’s 2014 Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference. At the conclusion of the program, mentors and protégés will be asked to complete a program evaluation. YALSA does not become involved in individual mentoring relationships unless a mentor or protégé asks for assistance.

11. Reports and Evaluations
During the course of the year, both mentor and protégé will be asked to complete two evaluations, a mid-term progress report and a final evaluation. Through the progress report and final evaluation YALSA will be able to revise the mentoring program so as to best serve its members. If a problem arises throughout the course of the mentoring relationship that needs immediate attention, please contact Nicole Gibby Munguia, YALSA’s Program Officer for Continuing Education. She can be reached at nmunguia@ala.org or 1.800.545.2433 x5293.

12. Guidance for protégés
YALSA has created a guide for protégés outlining their role and responsibilities as a protégé. YALSA has also created a space in ALA Connect where protégés can connect with one another and where YALSA can share important news and info with the group.
13. **The Mentoring Contract between mentors and protégés**
These issues (Appendix A) should be discussed at the beginning of the relationship and both parties should agree to abide by the resulting decisions. YALSA will share the contents of Appendix B with protégés.

14. **Code of Practice for Mentors**
Before undertaking work with a protégé, the mentor will agree to act within a code of practice (attached at Appendix B). It is essential that mentors abide by this code. This guarantees a high quality of support for the protégé provided by a mentor who works within an appropriate professional framework guaranteeing confidentiality and engendering the trust necessary for the relationship to work. Please sign and return this form to Nicole Gibby Munguia, YALSA's Program Officer for Continuing Education, at YALSA, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.

15. **Selected resources for mentors**
Appendix A

The Mentoring Contract between Mentor and Protégé

These issues should be discussed at the beginning of the relationship and both parties should agree to abide by the resulting decisions.

1. Time and place
   - Both parties agree how much time they are able to give including face to face meetings, if applicable
   - Frequency of contact
   - Duration of relationship (in this case, one year)
   - Format – what ways are mutually agreeable for communicating: email, phone, chat, face-to-face, something else?

2. Scope/context
   - What will be covered?
   - What might some of the learning goals, short and long term be?
   - The protégé sets the agenda, i.e. reaches out to the mentor w/ specific concerns, topics, questions, etc.

3. Relationships and Responsibilities
   - The Mentor has a responsibility to act within a code of practice (see Appendix B)
   - Communication is a priority
   - The protégé is responsible for their learning and actions
   - There is a responsibility on both sides for honesty and trust

4. Confidentiality
   - Agreement on confidentiality or where any information goes
   - Should notes be made? What happens to any notes during and after the arrangement?
   - Will there be any discussions with the mentors mentor/sponsors/peers?
Appendix B

Code of Practice for Member Mentors

Before undertaking work with a protégé, the mentor will agree to act within this code of practice.

Throughout the relationship and after it has been concluded, the mentor will:

1. Competence
   • agree to work only within their level of competence
   • understand and agree to work within this code of practice
   • seek personal support when necessary from an appropriate YALSA leader or staff person

2. Context
   • agree to understand and operate within the organizational context where the relationship is taking place
   • seek to meet the learning and development needs of the protégé

3. Boundaries
   • agree to work within the boundaries of the mentoring relationship, i.e. work/professional development/performance, not straying into areas where they are not qualified/experienced or into an inappropriate personal relationship
   • be prepared to refer the protégé to other sources of information/expertise or professional assistance as appropriate

4. Confidentiality
   • maintain a level of confidentiality agreed with the protégé both during and after the relationship has ended
   • disclose information only when agreed with the protégé unless the mentor believes that there is convincing evidence of serious danger to the protégé or others if the information is withheld

5. Integrity and professionalism
   • act within appropriate policies and values of the association
   • consider the learning and development needs of the protégé as brought to the relationship as paramount
   • seek to understand the needs and point of view of the protégé maintaining respect for the protégé throughout the relationship
   • not exploit the protégé in any way or put their own interests before that of the protégé