



MENTORSHIP GETTING STARTED GUIDE

Welcome and Congratulations!

Welcome to the Community Food Systems Mentorship Program! We're very excited for these next few months and have put together this "Getting Started" guide to offer some first steps, suggestions and guidelines for your mentorship. Please review before your first call.

Contact Information: For additional guidance, further information on mentorship, and general questions, contact Andrew Carberry at Andrew.Carberry@winrock.org or 501-280-3028.

Mentorship timeframe: 02/10/2020 to 06/12/2020

Please have your introductory call and first mentoring call completed by 3/15/19. Please complete your last call by 06/12/19.

Beyond these deadlines, we respect the need for flexibility. As long as you are in regular contact and are meeting each other's expectations, we are supportive of the timeline and schedule works for you.

Goal Setting

Before you begin, take some time to reflect and set goals for your mentorship using the [Goals and Scheduling Template](#)

General Guidelines

Determine Methods of Communication

We strongly encourage you to use videoconferencing software to facilitate connection and to stay present in the conversation. Try scheduling your calls when you both will have access to a computer. You can create a free account on a platform such as Zoom <https://zoom.us/>, or Skype <https://www.skype.com/en/>, to connect via video.

During your first call, decide which method of communication between calls works best for both of you. *Do you respond easier to email or phone calls?* Articulate your expectations for ongoing communication and getting back to each other between calls.

Maintain Confidentiality

Mentors, let your mentee know that you are willing to be a sounding board for projects as well as personal leadership questions, knowing that you will not share the information with anyone else unless you have explicit permission. Mentors will not be sharing personal information with The Wallace Center nor evaluating your performance. Mentees affirm that if the mentor gives you examples from their experiences where names or other specifics may be included, that you too will make sure to keep this information between the two of you.



Example Ongoing Call

Agenda:

***We strongly encourage you to take notes** for each call. Past mentees used a dedicated notebook or Google Doc. These notes will help keep you on track!

Check-ins: Check in as people before you get to business. What are you bringing to the call today?

- **Past:** Review notes from last call and update on progress towards goals.
- **Present:** Discuss the topic for the current call.
- **Future:** Summarize conclusions and commit to next steps. Share your intentions going forward.
- **Confirm next meeting time.**

Every few calls, **take the time to reflect** on your goals for the mentorship. Do any of these goals need to be adjusted? If you don't feel your time is being used well, is there a better way for you to organize your conversations?

Introductory call:

Your introductory call should take place by March 1, 2020. Below are some topics you should cover during your introductory call.

Recommendations for a Successful First Call:

- **Get to know each other!** Share with each other why you are participating in this program. What led you to seek out mentoring now? Mentees, clearly state what you hope to learn/get out of this experience. Mentors, feel free to share and reflect on your development as an emerging leader.
- Here is a [list of questions](#) to ask your mentor as you get to know them and build trust.
- **Discuss your expectations for the mentoring relationship.** What has/has not worked well for you in similar situations in the past? How do you like to receive feedback? How comfortable are you giving feedback?
- **Discuss how you would like to set goals for the program.** Review the Organizational Capacity Matrix together. Mentees, share what would you like to accomplish during your time together.
- **We highly recommend completing the scheduling template with overall goals and topics for the next 4 months.** This document could also serve to evaluate your progress.
- Discuss potential **conflicts of interest** or mutual interests. Food Systems is a relatively small community, so you and your mentor will likely have connections to some of the same people.
- **Determine the structure:** How will you set the agenda for calls? Will the mentee send the mentor an agenda for each call ahead of time?
- **Set a recurring date or time for all future calls** so you can focus on the mentoring relationship.

Overview Checklist: Are we on track?

By February 3: Introductory email initiated by mentee to set up a time to have a preliminary phone call with mentor.

By February 10: Mentee sketches out goals and topics using Goals and Scheduling Template.

By March 1: Introductory call completed. We have established how we will structure our time together, at least initially, and have set up our first regular call.

By March 15: First regular mentorship call completed. We have a good idea of what our overall goals are for the program and what the first few steps will be in our upcoming calls.

By March 15: Mentee completed the scheduling template with topics to cover and overall goals for the program.

Ongoing: Calls are happening as scheduled. We are maintaining regular contact and are accountable to the schedule set forth on our first call. If we can't keep a commitment, we have communicated that and rescheduled.





Advice from past mentees: Stepping in:

- “Don't stress about the calls. They are very fluid and supportive environments.”
- “Don't worry about the time commitment. It may feel like one more thing that you are putting on your plate, but it is so helpful. At times, my calls with my mentor felt like just one more thing on my schedule, but I always ended our calls feeling so grateful for the time and space, and like it was time very well spent.”
- “Connect with each other (other mentees)- there's a lot of experience and wisdom in the cohort.”

Overall Strategy:

- **Take notes** during each call to refer back to between calls and as you follow-up on the next call.
- “Set aside time to really participate in this program and give it your all. Spend the first couple of calls getting to know each other - there's ample time to get into the deep questions. It's also important to have time for your mentor to ask questions about your work and environment overall.”
- “Be open and honest. Disclose any concerns no matter how trivial seeming. Be genuine.”
- “Get serious about what you want out of the mentorship program. Set serious goals for yourself and a schedule of topics that will help you achieve those goals. Be prepared for your mentor to ask hard questions that will make you think. Don't be afraid to ask for connections and to continue the mentorship after the program ends!”

Overall Strategy (cont'd):

- “Setting up a framework: i.e. creating the invites, agendas and call topics sent ahead of time can be helpful for your mentor. Let your mentor know your top goals/intentions for your time together and find out how they like to structure the conversation too.”
- “There are a variety of ways to utilize this program and types of development you can get from it. Take some time to try to see the bigger picture of which you and your work is a part, and how this support can be most impactful for you in that context.”

Time Management:

- “Come to each meeting with a list of topics you would like to discuss. When mentor assigns homework or follow up, do it!”
- “Set aside dedicated time each week to create call agendas. Be prepared for calls when it comes to useful docs (ex: strategic plans, budgets, etc.)”
- “Have some concrete things you'd like to discuss before each call. Follow-up on the resources and suggestions from your mentor and talk about those in the next call.”



If you have any questions about the mentorship program, please contact Andrew Carberry at:

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