



THE HARTFORD COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION, INC.

• 100 Pearl Street • 4th floor • Hartford Connecticut 06103-4500
Tel (860) 525-8106 Fax (860) 293-1345

INVITATION TO APPLY TO SERVE AS HARTFORD COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION MENTOR

Re: **HCBA Mentoring Program**

The Hartford County Bar Association (“HCBA”) is partnering with the Connecticut Bar Association in launching on a test basis a mentoring program for new lawyers. The program will focus on new lawyers who reside or have an office in the Hartford County area. Our steering committee has identified you as a lawyer who meets all the criteria that we have established for a mentor in this program, and we very much hope you will consider applying to serve in that capacity. Ultimate appointment as a Mentor under this program is subject to confirmation by the HCBA or its designated committee.

This program is the combined product of several years work by a special Committee of the HCBA, a task force on this subject appointed by the CBA President in 2005; the CBA’s Standing Committee on Professionalism; and, most recently, a pilot program initiative between the CBA and the New Haven County Bar Association.

The program is born of the notion that, while a new admittee comes to the bar equipped with a reasonably comprehensive knowledge of the substantive law, he or she has not had an opportunity to learn the “unwritten rules” of practice, including all the customs and usages of the bar, knowledge of which is so essential to success. While those starting in a large law firm or governmental organization might typically have a mentor appointed for just that purpose (and, indeed, this program acknowledges that fact by providing for so-called “Inside Mentors” in the new lawyers’ firm or agency), many new lawyers do not have this opportunity. Particularly vulnerable will be those recent graduates who, because of the exceedingly difficult economic circumstances now prevailing, will be forced to hang out their shingle with no experience whatsoever and no one to whom they can turn to answer the difficult questions of everyday practice that we have all encountered. Under this program, a mentor will be available not only to answer those questions, but to take affirmative steps to help the mentee in his or her entry into the profession, including introduction to the legal community and bar associations, guidance in the fundamentals of law office management, and the basics of interaction with clients, judges and

other lawyers. We hasten to add that an outside mentor will *not* be expected to direct, supervise or consult with the mentee regarding any legal matters he or she is handling; indeed, any such involvement will be expressly off limits.

One of the obvious benefits of such a program, we believe, will be the expected reduction of grievances and malpractice suits against new lawyers. In addition, however, we hope and expect to see a very real enhancement of professionalism among young lawyers, because their mentors will have helped them learn how to avoid the pitfalls of overly zealous representation, incivility, and obstreperousness, which inexperienced lawyers all too often perceive as necessary essentials of success. We are confident that the participating new lawyers will also learn from their mentors the importance of continuing legal education, pro bono work and ethical conduct. In short, we believe that during this one-year mentoring period participating new lawyers will learn the great privileges and important obligations of the honorable profession they have just entered. If you accept this invitation, you will be the person helping your mentee appreciate and embrace those appropriate ideals.

We hope that as an experienced member of the Bar, you will recognize both the need and the value of a program such as this. We hope that you will find this an effort worthy of your contribution and involvement. Please know that our request that you participate as a mentor in this program is an acknowledgment of and a tribute to the excellent reputation that you have earned among your friends and colleagues in the bar. We hope to hear from you soon.

Very truly yours,

Raymond C. Bliss, Esquire
President, Hartford County Bar Association

I ACCEPT THE INVITATION TO SERVE AS A MENTOR IN THE HARTFORD COUNTY
BAR ASSOCIATION MENTORING PROGRAM.

Please Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Please indicate below your current contact information:

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail address: _____

Please return to the HCBA office at 100 Pearl Street, Hartford, CT, Attn: Mentor Program



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**HARTFORD COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION
LAWYER
MENTORING PROGRAM**

MENTORING AGREEMENT

I agree to participate in the Hartford County Bar Association Mentoring Program (the "Program") in accordance with its rules and regulations as may be amended from time to time. I understand that the Program is being offered on a voluntary basis for new lawyers who have recently been licensed to practice in the State of Connecticut and is intended to provide a one-to-one mentoring relationship in accordance with the Mentoring Program which is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

I have read the specific goals of the Program:

- To foster the development of the Mentee's familiarity with the practical aspects of lawyering and increase his or her knowledge of legal customs;
- To create a sense of pride and integrity in the legal profession;
- To promote collegial relationships among legal professionals and involvement with the organized bar;
- To improve legal ability and professional judgment;
- To encourage the use of best practices and highest ideals in the practice of law; and
- To improve my understanding of the Rules of Professional Conduct adopted by the Connecticut Bar Association.

I acknowledge and will abide by the following Program rules:

- Any communication between Mentor and Mentee arising out of my participation in the Program is for the sole purpose of guiding and teaching the Mentee about the practice of law and the issues that the Mentee is likely to face in the practice of law.
- Any communication between Mentor and Mentee is not intended to be the rendering of legal or professional advice to the Mentee or his or her clients, and the Mentee will not rely upon such communications for that purpose or cause any client to rely upon them. The Mentee will rely solely upon his or her own judgment, legal opinions, or independent research.



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HARTFORD COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION VOLUNTARY MENTORING PROGRAM

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

1.0

PURPOSE / OBJECTIVE

A voluntary mentoring program is hereby established by the Hartford County Bar Association (“HCBA”), to provide every lawyer newly admitted to the State Bar of Connecticut practicing within Hartford County with meaningful access to an experienced member of the bar, who will provide the guidance, direction and advice the new attorney will require during his or her first year of practice, including the practical skills and judgment essential to the practice of law; the customs, usages and unwritten rules of practice; and the ethical and professional values that represent the best traditions and highest aspirations of the legal profession.

2.0 APPLICABILITY / REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Every lawyer admitted to practice in the State of Connecticut and practicing in Hartford County shall be eligible to access this mentoring program during the first five years after said admission

3.0 MENTORS

3.1 Mentors shall be approved by the HCBA, or such Committee established by the HCBA for this purpose. To qualify for consideration by the Committee, a prospective Mentor shall have no less than seven (7) years of experience at the Connecticut bar; shall be in active practice in this state; shall be in good standing; shall never have been disciplined by any disciplinary authority in any state; shall be competent, ethical and professional in the practice of law; and shall submit at least three (3) letters of recommendation from members of the bench or bar.

3.2 Before undertaking their duties, all mentors shall be required to complete a training and orientation program either live or on-line, such training and program to be offered by or approved by the HCBA.

3.3 A mentor may be a lawyer in the law firm, government agency, legal services provider or other organization that employs the new admittee, to be known herein as an Inside Mentor, or a lawyer unrelated to and unaffiliated with the new admittee's employer, known herein as an Outside Mentor.

3.4 A mentor shall preferably have only one (1) mentee at a time, and in no event shall a mentor have more than three (3) mentees at any one time.

3.5 Mentors shall serve for a three year period, and may upon request and approval of the HCBA or its Committee, be approved to serve for subsequent three year terms.

4.0 MENTORING PLAN

4.1 Within thirty (30) days of the assignment of a mentor to a mentee, the two shall meet to develop a mutually acceptable written Mentoring Plan.

4.2 The Mentoring Plan shall establish a schedule of face-to-face meetings and other regular and periodic communications over the ensuing year, but shall in no event provide for less than one (1) face-to-face meeting per month.

4.3 The Mentoring Plan shall also establish the aspects of the practice of law to be addressed in the mentoring relationship over the ensuing twelve months, including, but not limited to:

- the court structure in Connecticut;
- the duties and obligations assumed as an officer of the court;
- proper and appropriate courtroom behavior;
- the Rules of Professional Conduct and their enforcement procedures in Connecticut, including the role and jurisdiction of the Chief Disciplinary Counsel and the Statewide Grievance Committee;
- the benefits of participation in Continuing Legal Education Programs (“CLE”);
- the various local, state and special interest bar associations and the value and importance of active participation in them;
- acceptable standards of behavior in dealing with opposing counsel in litigation, transactional work and otherwise;

- the importance of pro bono work and the various opportunities existing to satisfy that obligation;
- proper client development, intake and management;
- clients' funds account management;
- the maintenance of balance and perspective under the pressures of practice; and
- the duty to maintain high standards of professionalism in the practice of law.

4.4 The Mentoring Plan may, and ideally should, include opportunities for the mentee to accompany the mentor to court appearances, depositions, real estate closings, trials, appellate assignments, negotiating sessions, arbitrations and other such activities, all with due recognition and satisfaction of the requirements of the attorney-client privilege and client confidentiality.

4.5 The Mentoring Plan shall provide for no less than 6 hours of personal contact and interaction between the mentor and the mentee over the course of twelve (12) months, including participation in the aforescribed practice activities.

4.6 The Mentoring Plan shall not include any participation by an Outside Mentor in any client matters, specific case, or legal work for which the mentee is responsible, and an Outside Mentor shall not at any time provide any advice, direction, guidance, or support to the mentee in any such matter. A mentee shall at all times in dealings with his or her Outside Mentor preserve the attorney-client privilege and client

confidentialities. The involvement of an Inside Mentor in a mentee's legal work shall be controlled by the policies, practices and guidelines of the mentee's employer.

4.7 An Outside Mentor acting in accordance with these rules shall enjoy absolute immunity from liability for legal malpractice arising out of any legal services provided by his or her mentee.

5.0 **CERTIFICATE OF SATISFACTION**

5.1 If, at the end of the twelve month mandatory mentoring period, the mentee has satisfactorily participated in and completed his or her Mentoring Plan, the mentor shall so certify that fact to the Hartford County Bar Association.



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**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
CONCERNING THE HCBA MENTORING PROGRAM**

- Q. What is the goal of the Program?**
- A. The goal is to provide lawyers newly admitted to the state bar of Connecticut with meaningful access to an experienced member of the bar, who will provide guidance, direction and advice to the new attorney during his/her first year of practice. Areas in which mentors will provide mentoring will include the attitudes and judgment essential to the practice of law; the customs, usages and unwritten rules of practice; and the ethical and professional values that represent the best traditions and the highest aspirations of the legal profession.
- Q. Why is genesis of this mentoring program?**
- A. Historically, the HCBA has recognized the need and potential value of a mentoring program. Years ago, leaders of the HCBA began work to create a mentoring program. Most recently, a committee appointed by the HCBA leadership took charge of creating such a program. At the same time, a CBA Task Force appointed to study this issue filed a report with the CBA House of Delegates in January 2007 recommending to the Connecticut Bar Association that “the Association support and actively work toward the implementation of [a mandatory mentoring] plan.” Since that time, the Task Force, supported by the CBA Standing Committee on Professionalism, has worked to implement that recommendation and has solicited and obtained the support of most county and other bar associations, as well as the Judicial Branch. The New Haven County Bar Association agreed to partner with the CBA (the “Committee”) to implement an initial pilot program, which will be available to new lawyers in the Greater New Haven. In furtherance of the independent efforts of the HCBA to create a mentoring program, the officers and Board of Directors of the HCBA elected to implement its own program, fully compatible with the pilot program created by the CBA and NHCBA.
- Q. How are mentors selected?**
- A. Mentors are selected after application by a potential mentor candidate and a review process by the HCBA or its delegated committee. Mentors shall have no less than seven (7) years of experience at the Connecticut Bar; shall be in active

practice in this state; shall be in good standing; shall never have been disciplined by any disciplinary authority in any state; shall be competent, ethical and professional in the practice of law; and shall submit at least three letters of recommendation from members of the bench or bar.

Q. What about lawyers who enter law firms or government agencies where an established mentoring program is already in place?

A. The program anticipates that situation by providing for both “Inside Mentors” and “Outside Mentors.” The former would be a senior attorney in the law firm or agency employing the new lawyer and be someone other than a lawyer assigned by that firm to mentor with respect to substantive law issues; the latter will be assigned by the Committee to those new lawyers who do not have the benefit of being employed where an established mentoring program already exists. Both Inside and Outside Mentors would be assigned from a list of mentors compiled by the committee.

Q. Just what are the responsibilities of the mentor?

A. The mentor has the responsibility to guide and help the new lawyer in developing familiarity with customs and standards of the bar and the seasoned judgment and sensitivity to ethical and professionalism values necessary to the successful practice of law. The mentor will work with the assigned mentee to develop a Mentoring Plan, which will be submitted to and approved by the Committee. The mentor will then be expected to devote the time necessary to implement that plan, which may include such activities as taking the mentee to a bar association meeting; providing the mentee with a tour of the mentor’s law office to expose him/her to all aspects of its management and administration; advising the mentee on necessary and appropriate client management skills and practices; and, subject to appropriate preservation of client confidences, arranging the mentee’s observation at a deposition, arbitration hearing or court proceeding. The mentor’s duties will *not* include advice, consultation, direction, or supervision of any substantive legal matters for which the mentee is responsible (except, of course, in the case of Inside Mentor-Mentee relationships).

Q. What about liability?

A. The mentor and mentee will execute an agreement at the beginning of the relationship which will, *inter alia*, provide release and waiver of any and all claims arising out of that relationship.

Q. How much time is a mentor expected to spend with the beginning lawyer?

A. There is no minimum time established, except that the commitment must be

sufficient to carry out the mutually agreed-upon Mentoring Plan. The mentor should plan to meet regularly with the mentee and, in any event, should have at least one face-to-face meeting a month in the case of the Outside Mentor.

Q. Is any training required for the mentor?

A. An orientation and training session will be provided by the HCBA and will be scheduled to take place before the mentee is assigned.

Q. How is the program administered?

A. The HCBA program is administered by the HCBA, its officers and directors, and such committee as is appointed by the HCBA for this purpose. It is the intention of the HCBA to work closely with the CBA and NHCBA who have established the New Haven County Pilot Program

Q. What happens if, for some reason, the mentor is unable to continue the relationship for the entire year?

A. We hope this will happen only rarely, since the nature and extent of the required commitment will be understood at the outset. If that happens, however, the mentor should immediately notify the program director, who will arrange for a substitute mentor.