



# PRPS Mentor Program Guidelines

*December 2019*

The PRPS Mentor Program is designed to enhance the skills and abilities of park and recreation professionals through engaging relationships with experienced professionals, increased opportunities to network, and educational opportunities designed especially for program participants. The PRPS Mentor Program serves individuals who fall within the following categories:

- Future Professionals - students of parks and recreation or related fields enrolled fulltime at a PA university.
- Young Professionals - professionals working or volunteering in the field, under the age of 35.
- New Professionals - professionals new to the field of parks and recreation, who have transitioned from other occupations.

Mentors are park and recreation professionals, with extensive experience and/or knowledge of parks and recreation or related specialties utilized in the field of parks and recreation, who have been recruited or have applied to be mentors. Mentors and Mentees will be matched based on a variety of criteria after a thorough review of all applications.

This program is designed to complement workplace orientations as well as other trainings and continuing education. The benefits of the PRPS Mentor Program include:

- The opportunity to cultivate a substantial mentor/mentee relationship and to learn from their experiences, both positive and negative.
- Educational and networking opportunities designed for those participating in the program.
- Assistance in short and long-term professional goal setting and career tracking.
- Separate networks for both mentors and mentees to use as sounding boards for assistance navigating the PRPS Mentor Program.

The Mentor Program is managed by PRPS staff and the Leadership Training Corps (LTC). The LTC is comprised of PRPS members serving in various roles throughout the state. The LTC and staff have developed the following PRPS Mentor Guidelines.

## **Eligibility**

Mentees must:

1. Be current PRPS Members.
2. Be employed in the field of parks and recreation or related field (part-time or fulltime) or be enrolled in a Pennsylvania state university in a parks and recreation field or related field of study.
3. Complete the PRPS Mentee Application and Commitment Form.

Mentors must:

1. Be current PRPS Members.
2. Currently or recently worked in parks and recreation or related field and have shown proven dedication to the field and willingness to share their experience for the duration of the program.
3. Complete the PRPS Mentor Application and Commitment Form.

### **Content & Timeline**

The PRPS Mentor Program will combine in-person and online networking and training opportunities, recommended readings, videos, podcasts, and monthly Mentor/Mentee engagement. We believe this combination of opportunities and resources will create a path toward further developing program participants.

The PRPS Mentor Program Timeline for 2019-2020:

**December 2019:** 2020 PRPS Mentor Program Applications Open

**January 31, 2020:** Applications Due

**February 15, 2020:** Mentors & Mentees notified of status and pairing

**March 17-20, 2020:** Meet Your Mentor at PRPS/PAEE Conference & Expo

**April - November, 2020:** Webinars, trainings, monthly check-ins, and Mentoring Network opportunities

**November 18, 2020:** PRPS Fall Membership Meeting

**December 2020 - March 2021:** Year 1 Wrap up and evaluations. Year 2 Application period opens and cycle begins again.

**March 9-12, 2021:** Year 1 Report Out & Year 2 Introductions; Network event for all participants

During this time, PRPS will host a kick-off event, 1 in-person training, 2 webinars, and a wrap-up event for program participants. Mentors and mentees will also be eligible for a reduced rate at select PRPS professional development opportunities.

To ensure a successful program, PRPS and the LTC will institute these key components:

1. Monthly check-ins with the mentor and mentee on a one-on-one basis.
2. Periodic group meetings (in-person or via Zoom) throughout the program to include sharing on information and ways to improve the program.
3. Program-specific events and opportunities for training and networking.
4. End of program wrap-up celebration and evaluations.

### **Commitment & Application Process**

The PRPS Mentor Program requires a one-year time commitment as detailed in the timeline above. During this time, Mentors and Mentees are asked to commit a minimum of 2 hours each month to the program. Mentors are asked to attend at least two in-person events with their Mentee; these can be

either PRPS-led Events or other career advancement opportunities that the pair feel are essential to the Mentee's professional development goals.

Mentors and Mentees will be asked to complete an online application and commitment form. Upon completion of the application period, matching will be based on the following criteria:

- Areas of interest, experience, preferences, and careers goals.
- Location in the state, background, and organizational capacity.
- Work schedules, commitment level, and type of Mentee.

Prior to finalizing Mentor/Mentee matches, additional questions may be asked to determine the best fit. It is possible that PRPS will not be able to provide a match for all Mentor or Mentees.

Once selected, Mentors and Mentees will receive a packet of information including roles and responsibilities, helpful tips and preparation advice, schedule of events, and discussion questions for your initial meeting. This packet is geared toward creating a positive start to your Mentor/Mentee relationship. Additional resources will be available at [prps.org/Mentor](http://prps.org/Mentor).

Mentor/Mentee reassignments will be made if necessary and if match has proven to be unsuccessful. If either party no longer feels comfortable, they should report directly to the PRPS Director of Training. The Director of Training, with the LTC, will review and discuss with each party and try to resolve any issues, if unsuccessful PRPS will work to find a new match for each party.