



# PRPS Mentor Program Guidelines

*January 2025*

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

- Future Professionals - students of parks and recreation or related fields enrolled full-time at a PA university.
- Young Professionals - professionals working or volunteering in the field under the age of 35.
- New Professionals - professionals new to the parks and recreation field 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. 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 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 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 as a professional in parks and recreation or related field and have a 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 2025-2026:**

**February 1, 2025** PRPS Mentor Program Applications Open

**February 23, 2025:** Applications Due

**February 28, 2025:** Mentors and mentees paired and notified.

**March 16-19, 2025:** Meet your partner at PRPS Annual Conference & Expo

**April - November 2025:** Joint trainings, monthly check-ins, and site visits

**November 19, 2024:** PRPS Fall Membership Meeting

**December 2025 - March 2026:** Joint trainings, monthly check-ins, Wrap up and evaluations.

**March 24-27, 2026:** PRPS Annual Conference at Spooky Nook; Year 1 Report Out/evaluations & Year 2 Introductions; Network event for all participants

During this time, PRPS will host several events, including in-person and virtual trainings, related readings and resources, and a wrap-up event for program participants. Mentors and mentees will also be eligible for a reduced rates at select PRPS professional development opportunities.

To ensure a successful program, PRPS recommends that the mentor/mentee agree to:

1. Have monthly check-ins with the mentor and mentee on a one-on-one basis.
2. Participate in periodic group meetings (in-person or via Zoom) throughout the program to include information sharing program feedback.
3. Attend program-specific events and opportunities for training and networking.
4. Visit and tour of the mentor/mentee's work site (when possible)
5. 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 one (1) hour each month to the program. Mentors and mentees are asked to attend at least one (1) in-person event together; 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.