



WOMEN'S
LEADERSHIP
COUNCIL
**2024 MENTORING
PROGRAM**



2025 MENTORING PROGRAM

OBJECTIVE:

To provide a connection between rising women leaders across the alcohol wholesaler industry and a current women leader and member of the board of WLC to facilitate professional and personal growth and skill development. The mentor program will help foster a professional relationship between mentee and board members in which both parties are engaged and committed to reinforcing the mission of WSWA Women's Leadership Council.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The WLC Mentoring Program is a six-month program that pairs a WLC board member with an applicant based on program objectives and desired skills and experience. The program will include one-on-one meetings between mentee and mentor, group meetings and discussions, access to WSWA's leadership development webinar series, and other educational and networking opportunities throughout the six-month program. The mentors and mentees will decide on a schedule that works best for them. At a minimum, the pair should meet at least for 30 minutes

PROGRAM TIMELINE

- **Application Goes Live** – 9/20/24
- **Application Deadline** – 10/31/24
- **Mentor/Mentee Pairing** – 11/01/24 - 11/15/24
- **Notify Mentees/Mentors** – 12/16/24
- **Kick-off Meeting** – 1/20/25
- **Program Close** – 6/23/25

MENTOR PROGRAMMING

- Mentor and mentee will discuss mentee's challenges and areas of desired improvement, as well as mentor's expertise, to determine appropriate goals for the program. The goals should be few in number, specific and realistic, and measurable.
 - For example, writing a project plan and timeline, developing a professional development plan based on the immediate goals of the mentee, how to handle a difficult conversation, connecting with other women in their field, increasing their network by 2-3 individuals in their field, etc.
- WSWA shall schedule check-in meeting's every other month.
 - This call is to foster mentor support of each other throughout the program and to advance the mentors' skills and networking opportunities as well. Ideas from these calls will also improve the mentor program.
- Mentors and mentees will be encouraged to participate in two additional sessions focused on career-pathing and Networking.

PRE-PROGRAM

Survey

- Survey/application goes live 9/20/24 at WLC Conference
- Candidates will take a survey that will help the program director match meaningful pairings.

Pairings Matched

- The WLC board will review applications and provide initial guidance. Each mentor will receive a copy of the survey answers from their assigned mentee as well as an updated resume, if available. If resume is not available, mentee will be asked to provide a current bio (or some other information outlining their career path and responsibilities).

Mentoring Kick-Off Meeting (February/March)

- Mentors and mentees will separately go through an initial training session that will go over expectations, which are outlined below.
- In addition, mentors will also go through a one-hour discussion with a panel of experts who can share best practices, do's and don'ts, and real stories of the positive impact a successful mentor relationship can have on both parties.

PROGRAM CLOSE

- Both mentors and mentees will take a survey on the value and execution of the program.
- Both mentor and mentee will be requested to provide valuable feedback to each other to continue to help each other grow in the future.
- Host a closing event (virtual or in-person) with all mentors and mentees to help maintain those connections and promote networking.

Legal Concerns to Keep in Mind

1. Protect your company information!

Do *not* share – or encourage the sharing of – business-specific information such as:

- Pricing or pricing programs
- Specific information regarding suppliers, customers, or vendors
- Specific business strategies
- Company policies
- Proprietary company information (including trade secrets)

What you *can* share:

- Best practices
- General information based on your experiences
- Connections to relevant people in your company to widen mentor partner's network

2. Avoid legal issues.

- Treat your mentee equitably. Make sure you are treating your mentee like you would anyone else – regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, etc.
- If you suspect your mentoring partner is experiencing harassment or discrimination, encourage her to speak with an attorney or her HR department.
- Mentors are in a position of power even if employed by a different company. Please be mindful to avoid any intimidation or hostility.
- Avoid harming your mentee, your company, or the mentee's company
- Please alert Catherine McDaniel (catherine@wswa.org) or Jake Hegeman (jake@wswa.org) with any concerns or questions.

3. Protect their privacy.

- As a mentor and mentee, you have a duty to maintain your mentee's or mentor's privacy. Keep information shared – including personal information confidential. Do not share this information with others.
- Be clear and transparent about boundaries. You are the voice of wisdom so when you start to get uncomfortable about where your discussion is going, do not hesitate to speak up and share your discomfort.

Mentorship Expectation Guidelines

- 1. Focus conversations on specific, practical topics.** Avoid spending time discussing general or vague issues. Focus on the mentee's challenges or desired skills and potential solutions/training to try.
- 2. Align expectations between mentor and mentee – and establish specific goals.** By the end of the program, what would the mentee like to achieve?
 - o Examples include: How often should you meet? Are there key skills the mentee is trying to develop like writing a project plan. Adding to their network by 2-3 people in the industry or in the mentee's own company, etc.
- 3. Confidentiality and privacy are important.** Both parties need to feel confident that discussions remain between them are kept confidential.
- 4. Respect each other's time.** BE PRESENT! Be on time and try to avoid distractions such as phones and knocks at the door when meeting with your mentee. Decide how you will communicate. Will you have regularly scheduled meetings, or will you schedule a meeting 1 or 2 weeks before? Will discussions be face-to-face or over the telephone? We recommend face-to-face on a video chat. Would it be OK to email if something comes up? Both parties need to make their preferences known at the beginning and reach an acceptable compromise if they are different.
- 5. Focus on career development.** This program is meant to help mentees gain feedback on how to improve skills needed to be successful in our industry and guidance on general challenges that growing leaders face. The focus is not to solve business-specific problems.
- 6. Listen.** As a mentor or mentee, it is important to ask questions and listen to the responses of your mentoring partner. Be open and curious to explore ideas, advice, and suggestions.
- 7. Speak up** if you feel that the conversation is moving into uncomfortable or inappropriate territory. Some topics may wander into information that is proprietary to a company or be more appropriately handled by a company's HR or legal department. (See Legal Concerns to Keep in Mind)
- 8. If the mentoring partnership isn't working, please call Catherine McDaniel** about any concerns, however minor, regarding the mentoring relationship. Some pairings simply don't have chemistry, and it's neither person's fault. In these cases, contact Catherine, and we'll find another pairing for both the mentor and mentee the next go around.
- 9. Have fun!** This is meant to be a positive experience that helps both the mentee and mentor. Enjoy getting to know each other because that will improve communication and may even give you more or different ideas on how you can collaborate.

What makes a good mentor?

What a Mentor Does	What Mentors Don't Do
Listen from a place of curiosity. Be a sounding board for challenges and desired skills. Don't rush to add your experience or commentary to the conversation.	Protect from experience. Do not take on the role of problems solvers for the mentee.
Discover your mentee's talents, passions, and interests. Support them where they are.	Force. Do not force a mentee in one direction.
Provide constructive guidance. Identify areas of improvement in specific behavior/action. Promote seeking knowledge and diverse thought to improve their skills.	Use undue influence. Do not use their or your position to intimidate or worry the mentee.
Industry support and facilitation. Provide networking experience, share knowledge of the industry, offer relevant assistance/connections.	Catastrophize. Do not convey to the mentee that honest mistakes are career-altering decisions.
Motivate to stretch further. Help mentees to move beyond their comfort zone consistently and thoughtfully.	Do not take things personally. Respect that your mentee might not follow your advice. Perhaps it's not the right time and remember that your advice may lead to another solution.
Promote independence. Encourage mentees to take the initiative, be proactive, and find solutions to build their capabilities and advance professionally.	
Promote balance. Serve as a model for balance between professional and personal needs and obligations.	
Give feedback or advice tentatively, and only if asked directly. Suggest a second or third person's opinion, which also helps your mentee expand her network.	

What makes a good mentee?

What a Good Mentee Does	What a Good Mentee Doesn't Do
Take the initiative. The program is limited in time so assert your desired goals, suggest topics to discuss, and ask for what you need. Help your mentor help you.	Avoid difficulties. Do not expect mentors to solve all your problems for you.
Avoid perfectionism. Accept that you will make mistakes and learn from them. Be realistic in what can be accomplished.	Stay in their comfort zone. Do not shy away from new learning experiences.
Welcome new ideas. Explore new ideas even if your first reaction is that the idea won't work. Be open to discussions and constructive feedback on ways to handle and develop professional responsibilities/skills.	Let their egos get in the way. Recognize that everyone has something to teach you.
Brainstorm solutions and discuss them. Come up with solutions and ideas. Ask your mentor for their feedback.	Keep unrealistic expectations. No one person will know everything or be able to help in every situation. Explore where your mentor's skills and experience best match your needs.
Weigh advice thoughtfully. Advice given is intended to be helpful but trust yourself to know if it's applicable to your current situation.	