



The Guides for Equitable Practice: Chapter 6





The Guides for Equitable Practice: Mentorship & Sponsorship

Mentors and, increasingly, sponsors (who use political capital to promote a protégé) are invaluable for career advancement; when they are seen as allies as well, they can help diversify workplaces and build inclusiveness.

This guide provides background and guidance on the value and practice of mentorship and sponsorship from the standpoint of individual mentors and mentees, sponsors and protégés, and firms and organizations that develop formal and informal programs.



Definitions & roles

Mentor

Provide guidance, insight, feedback – "Give"

Sponsor

Advocate and take risks for protégés – "Invest"

Coach

Time-bound, goal-focused performance support – often contracted roles – "Support" or "Facilitate"

Ally

Uses privilege and standing to support underrepresented colleagues and push for greater equity and inclusion – "Advocate"



Equity & access



Power imbalances exist in mentoring relationships. Bias and underrepresentation can impact mentoring experiences.



Formal programs can reduce inequity via allyship and intercultural competence training.



Access to mentors and sponsors can vary by identity group.



Why mentorship & sponsorship matter

When done well, all parties benefit!



Enhance promotions, compensation, and access.



Boost confidence, skills, and satisfaction.



Aid retention and promote diversity.



Improve recruitment and firm culture.



What Good Looks Like

- Make a check mark next to practices that you can find in your firm or organization
- A question mark for those that you are not sure
- A minus for those that are missing.

GUIDE 6 * MENTORSHIP & SPONSORSHIP

WHAT DOES GOOD LOOK LIKE?

Mentoring and sponsoring are equitable and inclusive when...

ALIGNMENT

mentorship programs align with business objectives and needs

programs are implemented thoughtfully and tailored to promote equitable outcomes

formal mentoring program goals are identified and measured, and mentors are evaluated

a robust mentoring culture provides support and knowledge in a safe environment

mentorship and sponsorship relationships are understood as mutually beneficial

ENGAGEMENT

mentees and protégés receive honest, sensitive feedback

formal programs encourage relationships within and across identity and cultural boundaries

programs are inventive and flexible to involve people from different offices and fields

mentees and protégés are welcomed at important firm activities and high-profile industry events

mentors and sponsors develop the skills and perspectives of allies and coaches: advocacy, listening, empathy

SUPPORT

power dynamics and their implications are understood

underrepresented groups have equal or greater access to mentoring and sponsorship

senior leader sponsors and mentors are trained to promote allyship and reduce inequities

in formal programs, mentors and mentees are matched thoughtfully, based on skills and developmental needs

mentors and mentees receive training and opportunities to offer feedback and adjust pairings

PARAMETERS

training is provided on mentoring between different identities

goals and criteria for selection into formal mentoring programs are transparent and clearly communicated

participants acknowledge power dynamics in the relationship and work to balance them

participants maintain confidentiality

conflicts between a mentee's supervisor and mentor are addressed if or when they arise



Becoming a mentee & protégé

Reflect on your goals, career path, and identity.

Understand the different kinds of mentorship relationships and programs that exist so that you can commit appropriately.

Seek out mentors and sponsors by asking questions, engaging, and being able to articulate your aspirations and concerns.

Remember that mentorship relationships are not exclusive.



Becoming a mentor & sponsor

Reflect on your experience and identity and how those might influence the mentor or sponsor relationship.

Understand your goals and availability and seek aligned opportunities.

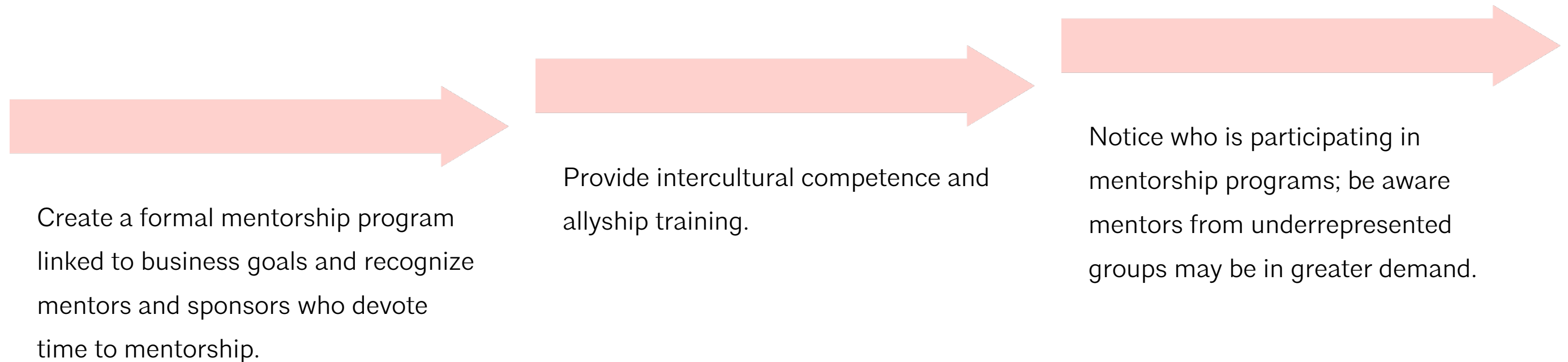
*K-12 mentorships are often shorter term and support a future architecture profession that is more diverse.

Attend training or seek professional development to increase intercultural and communication skills that can strengthen the relationship.

Embrace reciprocal learning, mentees possess a wealth of skills and knowledge.



Supporting firm-level mentorship





Consider scenarios & reflections

Read, discuss in small groups, and share insights

Consider

A MENTOR LIKE ME

I have looked for mentors. My local chapter has a mentorship program. It feels very specific in nature, in terms of who is available to mentor: they're all the same type of person doing the same type of work, from the same type of background. The program doesn't have what I'm looking for. There was one woman mentor in it when I looked into the program recently, and the type of practice she works in is far outside of what I'm interested in. I haven't found any good opportunities outside of my firm and people I know: I get most of my mentorship either from the people above me at my firm or peers I went to school with. There's a lot to be said for having a mentor who's ahead of you but not at your firm and who doesn't have oversight over you. I haven't found people with the right identity and experience—that thing I'm looking for in mentorship. I would love to be able to find someone LGBT who is doing well in the field, has more experience than me, and has that specific experience.

I'm looking for people who are like me and have experience and wisdom to pass down. I don't know where to find those people.

—Architect, White, Lesbian, Early 30s



Now what?

Name one action you'll take as a mentor, mentee, or sponsor