



Vermont Bar Association Mentor Advice Program

FAQs

1. What is the goal of the VMAP?

The principal goal of the Vermont Mentor Advice Program (“VMAP”) is to assist new attorneys in Vermont with their transition to the Vermont legal community by providing guidance from experienced mentors regarding practical, ethical and professional issues. VMAP also seeks to promote positive relationships among members of the Vermont Bar Association.

2. How do I apply?

Applications for prospective Mentors and Advisees are available [HERE](#).

3. Who may participate as an Advisee?

- Newly admitted attorney practicing in Vermont for less than 3 years
- Attorney licensed elsewhere before but newly located in Vermont

4. Is this program the same mentorship program required for First-Year Admittees and administered through Attorney Licensing?

The VMAP is separate from the Attorney Licensing Mentorship Requirements for First-Year Admittees, although a VMAP Mentor may concurrently serve as a supervising mentor for the First-Year Admittees if the VMAP mentor wishes. Here is a [LINK](#) to more information about the First-Year Requirements for Newly Admitted Attorneys on the Attorney Licensing webpage.

5. What qualifications are required of Mentors?

Potential Mentors must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- Attorney in good standing in Vermont.
- Practiced in Vermont for at least 10 years.
- Not subject to any disciplinary sanctions in Vermont.
- No suspensions or disbarments from the practice of law in any state.
- A reputation in the local legal community for professional competence and ethical conduct.

6. How many Advisees will be assigned to a Mentor?

The Mentor is agreeing to mentor only one individual at a time. However, Mentors who are willing to mentor more than one individual at a time may so indicate on the application.

7. Is additional training required for Mentors?

No additional training is required of potential Mentors, although we refer Mentors to various resources for guidance, linked [HERE](#).

8. What criteria are used to match an Advisee with a Mentor?

Pairings will be made based upon a variety of factors, including areas of practice, size and type of firm or other legal employer, specific preferences/interests, and geographic location, keeping in mind that geographic location will not be a barrier for an otherwise excellent match.

9. What happens after a match is made?

Once a match has been made, both parties will be notified. Mentors are responsible for contacting the Advisee within two weeks of the notification for purposes of setting up the initial meeting.

10. What should I expect at the initial meeting?

Topics to review at the initial meeting include:

1. Participation Agreement
2. Boundaries of the relationship
3. Avoiding potential conflicts of interest
4. Preferred means of communication
5. Expectations of the relationship
6. Advisee's goals
7. Ethical guidelines
8. Plans for next meeting

11. How often should Mentor and Advisee meet?

Mentors are encouraged to meet (in person or by telephone/ZOOM/etc.) once a month with Advisees and to be available as needed for email contact.

12. Are communications confidential?

Discussions between the Mentor and Advisee are to be treated as confidential to the fullest extent permitted by law.

13. What are the responsibilities of the Mentor?

The mentoring relationship is solely for educational purposes and professional guidance. Information provided by the Mentor does not constitute legal advice to the Advisee and/or the Advisee's clients. Mentors are expected to make initial contact with Advisee within two weeks of being notified, and to set up an initial meeting within four weeks of being notified. Mentors are encouraged to meet once a month with Advisee (in person or by telephone/ZOOM/etc.) and to be available as needed for email contact. Mentors are also expected to complete a brief confidential evaluation at the conclusion of the mentorship period.

14. What are the responsibilities of the Advisee?

Advisees are expected to be respectful of the Mentor's time and professional boundaries. Advisees shall not request case specific advice or employment assistance. Advisees should frame questions in the form of a hypothetical and give anonymous fact patterns in order to maintain client confidentiality and to avoid creating a conflict of interest. Advisees are also expected to complete a brief confidential evaluation at the conclusion of the mentorship period.

15. How long is my commitment to the program?

Mentor and Advisee agree to commit to a mentoring period of six months with the option to renew by mutual agreement for up to three additional six-month terms. After each six-month term, Advisee shall fill out a brief, confidential evaluation and indicate whether or not they wish to continue participating in the VMAP. Mentor and Advisee will also be contacted by a VMAP representative at least once during each mentoring period, to monitor progress.

16. What do I do if a problem arises?

Communication is key to a good relationship, so parties are encouraged to try to resolve issues by communicating directly with each other. However, in the event that they cannot work things out, parties should notify the VBA Executive Director.