

DOD Mentoring Resource Portal

HOW TO FIND A MENTOR

Information for Mentees Portfolio

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Purpose:

To provide guidance to Mentees on how to find a Mentor

Audience:

Mentees

Context:

When looking for a Mentor, a Mentee should spend a lot of time thinking about mentoring needs and investigating possible Mentors. This resource contains information to guide Mentees through the process of finding a Mentor.

How to Use:

- **Step 1:** Customize the guide and make any adjustments to fit specific DOD Component/Agency mentoring needs.
- **Step 2:** Add additional information specific to your DOD Component/Agency, such as additional guidelines for successful mentoring relationships.
- **Step 3:** Share the guide with the Mentees.

Common Terms

The following are common terms associated with the DOD Mentoring Resource Portal:

Mentor, also known as Advisor, is a trusted counselor or guide who is involved in the development and support of one who is less experienced.

Mentee, also known as Mentee or Learner, is the more junior person being mentored.

Mentoring Program Coordinator, also known as Mentoring Program Manager, is responsible for the overall management of the Mentoring Program.

Information Source Disclaimer

Most of the information on this mentoring resource was obtained from the following sources: [Headquarters, Department of Army, DCS, G-1 ARMY MENTORSHIP HANDBOOK](#). All content is provided for informational purposes only.

1.0 HOW TO FIND A MENTOR

First and foremost, Mentors and Mentees should “**self-select**” each other. When looking for a Mentor, a person should spend a lot of time thinking about his or her mentoring needs and investigating possible Mentors. A good way to do this is by asking around to get feedback who might be an appropriate Mentor for the individual. Good sources of information are first and second level supervisors, peers and others who know the individual and/or prospective Mentors.

It is recommended that a Mentor be:

- Someone from beyond the chain of command;
- About two grade levels above the individual;
- Someone in your Branch/Career Field/ Career Program.

The Mentee already has access to his or her chain of command on a routine basis and is encouraged to discuss personal, professional, and career goals and developmental needs with them on a regular basis. Because of this already existing access, the Mentee should look for someone else beyond the chain of command to serve as a Mentor. Also, there may be, at times, reluctance on the part of the Mentee, to discuss some work related problems/challenges in a candid manner with those in the immediate chain of command. Additionally, sometimes direct mentoring relationships within the chain of command can easily and unintentionally create perceptions of favoritism, which should be avoided.

It is generally recommended that a Mentor not be more than two or three grades above a Mentee. A Mentor who is very senior to the Mentee may be too far removed to be able to provide practical guidance on how to get to the next step. Also, while many people would like to select senior leaders as Mentors, there usually just aren't enough to go around. Individuals looking for Mentors should be mindful of this, and individuals asked to be Mentors should consider their own time limitations before committing to serve as a Mentor for more than one Mentee.

In looking for a Mentor, consider personality types, communication styles and methods of communication, backgrounds (personal and professional), values, ethos, and experience. Know what you want from the relationship, based on your current situation, and think about the skills you'd like to develop and your career plans. Have realistic expectations: relationships may not last a lifetime, and most cannot fill every need because mentoring styles vary. Some important things to consider include (in no particular order):

- What are your career goals and needs?
- Does the Mentor have knowledge and experience in related areas, or even better, in many of these areas?
- Is the Mentor at the right grade level (i.e., two or three grade levels above, not too far up)?
- Is the Mentor good at what he/she does?
- Is the Mentor an achiever?
- Is the Mentor a good role model?
- Is the Mentor well respected?
- Is the Mentor supportive and respectful of others?

- Does the Mentor value the organization, enjoy the challenges, and understand its vision, mission, and values?
- Will the Mentor be available for uninterrupted, quality meetings?
- Will you feel comfortable talking with the Mentor honestly and do you trust him or her to keep your conversations between the two of you?
- Will the Mentor take a genuine interest in your development? Is he or she enthusiastic about mentoring?
- Will the Mentor give you honest feedback about yourself and your developmental needs?
- Can the Mentor help you look for opportunities to gain visibility/demonstrate your capabilities?
- Will the Mentor give you candid information about the organization and be willing to share knowledge, experience, insights?
- Is the Mentor a good teacher/coach/motivator?
- What do other peers or Mentees say about the Mentor, as a Mentor?
- What are the Mentor's expectations?
- How well does the Mentor emulate the organization Values and Ethos?