

Mentor Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Why have an MLA mentor?

Mentors play a significant role in the lives of developing professionals by serving as a teacher, coach, counselor and role model. They provide feedback and encouragement, offer professional advice and help others make connections between their present performance and their future. A mentor is not just a resume proofreader.

Who can be an MLA Mentor?

Any library professional with more than five years of experience and is a member of MLA in good standing.

Who can be an MLA Mentee?

Any MLA member working as library professional or enrolled in a library science program.

Is there a fee to participate?

The Mentor Program is free for all MLA members as a benefit of joining MLA.

Who do I contact for more information on the MLA Mentor Program?

Amber Sheerin, Program and Event Director
asheerin@milibraries.org or (517) 881-3194

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How do I apply for the MLA Mentor Program?

Applications for the mentorship program are accepted in the Winter and Summer for Spring and Autumn matches respectively. Once the application deadline has passed all applications will be carefully reviewed by MLA staff in order to make the best possible mentor/mentee partnerships. Participants will be notified of their match approximately 2 weeks before the official start date so they can learn about their match and initiate the first introduction.

After I apply for the MLA Mentor Program, who will contact me?

Once a potential match is identified based on areas of librarianship and interests as described on the applications, you will receive a Welcome Kit that includes your match's contact information. It is the responsibility of the mentee to initiate contact with the mentor.

What if I'm not comfortable with my proposed mentor or mentee?

Please tell us! Talk to us frankly if things aren't working the way you had hoped. If you haven't talked directly with your mentor or mentee about issues that are causing disagreement, do so. Often it will be a question of miscommunication that can be cleared up through open conversation.

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What if I cannot answer the mentee's questions?

Some questions posed to you by your mentee might not be in your field of interest or within your scope of knowledge. When this situation arises, we encourage you to share this with the mentee and forward their question to MLA. Notify the mentee that their question has been forwarded and that they will be contacted by MLA soon.

What will my mentor do for me?

It is up to the mentee to take the initiative to make the MLA Mentor Program a successful experience. Mentors offer information, support, feedback, contacts and ideas – but the mentee must take it from there.

What types of things should I ask my mentor?

The types of questions asked vary and there are no right or wrong questions to ask. When you first meet your mentor, ground rules should be set so that everyone in the relationship is comfortable sharing information. As a rule of thumb, if you are not comfortable asking a question or sharing certain information, don't!

Are there certain things I should or should not do as a mentor or mentee?

Always be open, honest and respectful with your mentor or mentee and the relationship and work you are doing together.