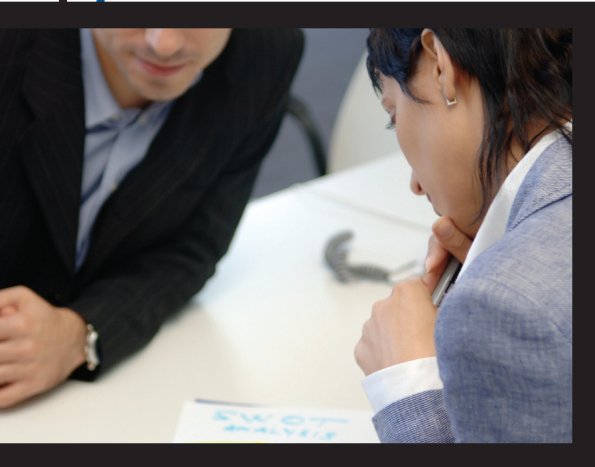


November 2016



Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities

Mentoring Program for Municipal Elected Officials



For more information contact:

Lyle Goldberg, *Manager, Member Relations*
Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities
Phone: (902) 423-8673
email: lgoldberg@unsm.ca
<http://unsm.ca/mentoring-program.html>

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1.0 Introduction

UNSM's mentoring program supports the need to pass valuable knowledge and experience from veteran councillors to those recently elected. This one-to-one relationship involves occasional face-to-face meetings, telephone conversations, texts and emails.

The purpose of the program is to provide additional opportunities for networking and personal and professional development among municipal elected officials. The program aims to advance the personal and professional development of both the mentor and mentee.

Administration for the program is handled by the UNSM office.

2.0 Program Goals

Goals of the mentoring program are to:

- Develop and foster the knowledge and skills of municipal leaders in Nova Scotia.
- Improve and enhance inter-municipal cooperation and communication.
- Expand personal networks.
- Provide the advantage of experience to councillors new to municipal government.

3.0 How it Works

Mayors, wardens and councillors who volunteer to serve as mentors register with the UNSM and complete a questionnaire about their experience and interests, as well as their preferences for the mentor relationship. Individuals interested in having a mentor (called a mentee) complete a similar questionnaire. The UNSM office provides mentees with completed questionnaires of those mentors that would be a suitable match. The mentee then contacts the person they feel is the best match based on the questionnaires they receive. The mentor must then decide if the mentee would be appropriate for them.

Once the mentoring relationship is established, the two meet, correspond and share information over the course of one year. After the initial one-year mentoring period, the participants evaluate the experience. Once the two have developed a relationship, they may continue that relationship indefinitely and continue to call on each other as a resource.

Mentees are encouraged to work with only one mentor at a time but are free to seek another mentor if the relationship is not working out.

Mentors and mentees are encouraged to meet face-to-face through the UNSM fall conference, spring workshop, as well as other times when possible. To continue to foster the relationship and provide multiple opportunities to learn from each other, different forms of communication are encouraged, including electronic communications or telephone contact.

After six months, the mentor and mentee will be contacted by the UNSM office to determine the success of the mentorship. After the one-year period, a formal evaluation of the program will be completed by both participants.

4.0 Mentor Benefits

Benefits to the mentor include:

- Investing in the future of Nova Scotia’s municipal leadership.
- Personal satisfaction of sharing your knowledge and watching someone grow in their position.
- Enhancing your managerial skills, learn new ideas from mentors and share information.
- Understanding your career in a different way and gain new perspectives on your position.

5.0 Mentee Benefits

Benefits to the mentee include:

- Learning from an experienced councillor.
- Addressing professional concerns and issues.
- Increasing your professional network and enhancing your knowledge and skills.
- Gaining a resource outside your usual environment.

6.0 Expectations of Mentor and Mentee

- Meet/communicate with your mentor/mentee by an agreed upon method (including face-to-face meetings, phone, email, text messaging, Facetime, Skype etc.) at least four times throughout the year, including at UNSM events, if possible. At least one face-to-face meeting would be beneficial.
- Follow up with additional communication as necessary or desired by either you or your mentee.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Contact the UNSM office if there is a problem with your mentoring relationship which you are unable to resolve.
- Complete an evaluation of the mentoring program after one year of your official mentoring relationship. An evaluation form will be emailed to all participants.
- Respect and understand diverse cultures.
- Be prepared to ask questions of your mentor/mentee.
- Notify the UNSM office if you are unable or unwilling to continue to be a mentor/mentee.

7.0 Mentor Guidelines

- Call your mentee. Set up a schedule if necessary. A new official may not know what questions to ask initially so recall your newly elected experiences. Your personal story may elicit questions.
- Continue to contact your mentee even if you are told that everything is going well. Talk about an issue that your municipality is currently facing. Your goal is to build a bond with your mentee by establishing a regular channel of communication.
- Consider attending one of your mentee's council meetings. Your attendance may give you some further insight about how you could help your mentee. It would also be good for you to see how others are handling some of the same issues your municipality is undoubtedly facing.
- Invite your mentee to one of your municipality's special events. This gives you another opportunity to develop a bond with your mentee and to show off some of the great things happening in your municipality.
- Offer encouragement to your mentee if he or she becomes frustrated with their role as an elected official.
- Arrange to meet your mentee at the UNSM Spring Workshop or Fall Conference. Spend some social time with them or attend a workshop together.
- Notify the UNSM office if your mentee is unresponsive.

8.0 Mentee Guidelines

- Take the initiative to call your mentor if you have not heard from them within two weeks of your initial contact. Your mentor is interested in providing you counsel, advice and information. However, this is a new experience for them too and the first contact deadline may have slipped their mind.
- Continue to communicate with your mentor even if everything is going well. Talk about an issue that your municipality is currently facing. It will be beneficial for you to build a bond with your mentor by establishing a regular channel of communication.
- Consider attending one of your mentor's council meetings. It would be good for you to see how others are handling some of the same issues your municipality is undoubtedly facing.
- Invite your mentor to one of your municipality's special events. This gives you another opportunity to develop a bond with your mentor and to show off some of the great things happening in your municipality.
- Arrange to meet your mentor at the UNSM Spring Workshop or Fall Conference. Spend some social time with her or attend a workshop together.
- Notify the UNSM office if your mentor is unresponsive. You can select another mentor if necessary.
- You and your mentor will solely determine if this is a meaningful experience. This is an excellent opportunity to make a new friend who understands the complexities of your role as municipal official.

9.0 Sample Questions to Ask Your Mentor

9.1 General Questions

- Describe your education, background, volunteer and work experience.
- What knowledge, skills or abilities do you feel are necessary to excel as a member of council?
- Describe the activities of an average workday.
- What are the greatest challenges you are experiencing or have experienced as a member of council?
- Why did you decide to run for municipal office?
- How do you balance the demands of your position with your family/personal/work life?
- How are you involved in the community and what type of involvement is generally necessary in your position?
- Describe one of your most outstanding professional accomplishments.

9.2 Municipal Operations

- What overall vision, goals and objectives do you have for your municipality?
- What are some of the major projects or concerns currently facing your community?
- What new procedures or innovations have recently been implemented in your organization?
- How do you foster teamwork and cooperation within your organization?
- What process do you use to evaluate council members?
- What type of contact do you have with municipal councils in surrounding municipalities? Are there intergovernmental agreements or relationships already in place?

9.3 Council/Staff Relationships

- What is the nature of interaction between you and other councillors?
- How do you maintain effective relationships with other members of council and senior staff?
- What groups, committees or individuals have played a major role in influencing the municipality's activities?



10.0 Tips for Successful Meetings

10.1 For the Mentor...

- Notify your mentee in advance of any questions you may have about them or their community. This may require some preparation or research.
- Be candid. Your mentee needs to know what it is really like. Mention any political considerations involved in an operation or issue. Talk about positives and negatives.
- Remember that you were once in their shoes.
- Provide your mentee with additional contacts or resources to help broaden their network and increase their knowledge.

10.2 For the Mentee...

- Familiarize yourself as much as possible with your mentor and your mentor's municipality prior to your visit.
- Know the organizational structure of your municipality and the major projects that are currently taking place so that you can provide information to your mentor.
- Develop a set of goals for the visit and keep them in mind when preparing for and contributing to the dialogue.
- Be punctual and call your mentor as soon as possible if there is an emergency that prevents you from attending a scheduled meeting.
- Review the list of sample questions or prepare your own in advance of the visit, but be willing to let the conversation flow freely.
- Be willing to ask questions and obtain clarification on those items that are not clear to you.
- Make the visit a true exchange of information. Call your mentor prior to the visit and ask if there is anything that she would like to know in advance of the visit.
- Do not be afraid to ask tough questions.
- After the visit, send a thank-you note to your host.



11.0 What Makes a Good Mentor?

MENTORS LISTEN	They maintain eye contact and give mentees their full attention.
MENTORS GUIDE	Mentors are there to help their mentees find life direction, never to push them.
MENTORS ARE PRACTICAL	They give insights about keeping on task and setting goals and priorities.
MENTORS EDUCATE	Mentors educate about life and their own careers.
MENTORS PROVIDE INSIGHT	Mentors use their personal experience to help their mentees avoid mistakes and learn from good decisions.
MENTORS ARE ACCESSIBLE	Mentors are available as a resource and a sounding board.
MENTORS CRITICIZE CONSTRUCTIVELY	When necessary, mentors point out areas that need improvement, always focusing on the mentee's behavior, never her character.
MENTORS ARE SUPPORTIVE	No matter how painful the mentee's experience, mentors continue to encourage them to learn and improve.
MENTORS ARE SPECIFIC	Mentors give specific advice on what was done well or could be corrected, what was achieved and the benefits of various actions.
MENTORS CARE	Mentors care about their mentees' progress in their professional and personal development.
MENTORS SUCCEED	Mentors not only are successful themselves, but they also foster success in others.
MENTORS ARE ADMIRABLE	Mentors are usually well respected in their organizations and in the community.

Source: *The Connecticut Mentoring Partnership and the Business and Legal Reports, Inc.* "Best Practices in HR," Issue 653, (September 30, 1999).

12.0 For More Information:

Lyle Goldberg, *Manager, Member Relations*

Phone (902) 423-8673

Email: lgoldberg@unsm.ca

Appendix A - Mentor Questionnaire

Name: _____ Date: _____

Status: Current Municipal Elected Official or Former Municipal Elected Official

Title: Mayor Warden Councillor

Municipality: _____

Cell: _____ Office Phone: _____

Email: _____

Number of years as a municipal elected official: _____

Why are you interested in becoming a mentor?

Relevant Education and/or Work Experience (may attach resumé):

Relevant Municipal/Volunteer Experience and Interests—municipal committees, non-profit organizations, etc. (may attach resumé):

Please circle the largest distance you would be willing to travel by car to meet/correspond with a mentee (if you are willing to meet at a UNSM event, this is not as important).

50 km 100 km 150 km 200 km 250 km 300 km

What method(s) would you like to communicate with your mentee? (circle all that apply)

Face to Face Meeting Phone Email Text Messaging

Other (specify): _____

Of these methods, what is your preferred method of communicating with your mentee?

Expectations of a Mentor

Meet/communicate with your mentee by an agreed-upon method at least four times in the year after your mentee has been assigned, including at UNSM events, if possible. At least one face-to-face meeting should be conducted.

1. Follow up with additional communication as necessary or desired by either you or your mentee.
2. Maintain confidentiality.
3. Contact UNSM if there is a problem with your mentoring relationship which you are unable to resolve.
4. Complete an evaluation of the mentoring program after one-year of your official mentoring relationship.
5. Respect and understand diverse cultures.
6. Be prepared to ask questions of your mentee.
7. Notify UNSM if you are unable or unwilling to continue to be a mentor.

Thank-you for agreeing to be a mentor. When you complete your application form, please mail to:

Lyle Goldberg, Manager, Member Relations
Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities,
Suite 1304, 1809 Barrington St.,
Halifax NS B3J 3K8

or email (lgoldberg@unsm.ca) or fax (902-425-5592).

Once all of the mentoring applications are completed, they will be forwarded onto the mentees for selection. If you have any other comments or questions about the UNSM Mentoring Program please contact Lyle Goldberg at the UNSM Office at 902-423-8673 or via e-mail at lgoldberg@unsm.ca.

Appendix B - Mentee Questionnaire

Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Municipality: _____

Cell: _____ Office Phone: _____

Email: _____

Number of Years as a municipal elected official: _____

Why are you interested in being mentored? _____

Relevant Education and/or Work Experience (may attach resumé):

Relevant Municipal and/or Volunteer Experience and Interests—municipal committees, non-profit organizations, etc. (may attach resumé):

Please circle the largest distance you would be willing to travel by car to meet/correspond with a mentor (if you are willing to meet at a UNSM event, this is not as important).

50 km 100 km 150 km 200 km 250 km 300 km

What method(s) would you like to communicate with your mentor? (circle all that apply)

Face to Face Meeting Phone Email Text Messaging

Other (specify): _____

Of these methods, what is your preferred method of communicating with your mentee?

Expectations of a Mentee

Meet/communicate with your mentor by an agreed-upon method at least four times in the year after your mentor has been assigned, including at UNSM events, if possible. At least one face-to-face meeting should be conducted.

1. Follow up with additional communication as necessary or desired by either you or your mentor.
2. Maintain confidentiality.
3. Contact UNSM if there is a problem with your mentoring relationship which you are unable to resolve.
4. Complete an evaluation of the mentoring program after one-year of your official mentoring relationship.
5. Respect and understand diverse cultures.
6. Be prepared to ask questions of your mentor.
7. Notify UNSM if you are unable or unwilling to continue to be a mentee.

Thank-you for agreeing to be a mentee. When you complete your application form, please mail to:

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or email (lgoldberg@unsm.ca) or fax (902-425-5592).

Once all of the mentoring applications are completed, they will be forwarded onto the mentees for selection. Upon receiving your application, the UNSM office will forward you the completed mentor questionnaires so you may select a mentor appropriate for you. If you have any other comments or questions about the UNSM Mentoring Program please contact Lyle Goldberg at the UNSM office at 902-423-8673 or via e-mail at lgoldberg@unsm.ca.