



LGBT Bar NY's Mentoring Program

Co-sponsored by the New York City Bar LGBTQ Rights Committee and HNBA's LGBT Division; in partnership with the Dominican Bar Association and the New York State Bar Association LGBTQ Law Section.

Mission Statement

Through the **Mentoring Program**, **LGBT Bar NY** seeks to foster the **professional development** of LGBTQ law students and assist them in **navigating the unique issues** they might encounter during Law School and the beginning of their legal careers. The Mentoring Program aims to reinforce a **sense of community** among members of LGBT Bar NY while **enhancing the skills and career prospects** of participants.

About the Sponsoring and Partner Organizations

The **LGBT Bar Association of Greater New York (LGBT Bar NY)** is a bar association of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) legal community in the New York metropolitan area, dedicated to promoting the expertise and advancement of LGBTQ legal professionals while serving the larger community. The LGBT Bar NY Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, oversees related charitable and educational activities by and for our membership and the public. As part of its mission, LGBT Bar NY is dedicated to serving the interests of the LGBTQ law student community as well as the needs of recently admitted attorneys from our community.

The **Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA)** is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, national membership organization that represents the interests of Hispanic legal professionals in the United States and its territories. They are committed to advocacy on issues of importance to people of Hispanic heritage living in the U.S. today. HNBA's LGBT Division serves the HNBA members and the profession by monitoring and advocating on the legal issues affecting the Hispanic LGBT community and by promoting the expertise, advancement, and empowerment of Hispanic LGBT legal professionals.

The **New York City Bar LGBTQ Rights Committee** addresses legal and policy issues as well as employment rules and procedures in legal institutions and in the court system affecting lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender individuals. The Committee is comprised of a diverse group of attorneys from private practice, the corporate sector, public interest, government, and academia.

The **Dominican Bar Association** is an organization of legal professionals and law students, which supports Latino members of the legal profession, particularly attorneys and law students of Dominican ancestry, in their pursuit of higher posts in the legal profession and other facets of influence in the United States.

The **New York State Bar Association LGBTQ Law Section** promotes equality in the law for LGBTQ people; eliminate discrimination against LGBTQ attorneys and litigants; promote equality of opportunity for, and increase the visibility of, contributions made by LGBTQ attorneys; and promote diversity in the bench by inclusion of all minorities, including LGBTQ people.

Roles, Responsibilities, and Expectations of Mentors & Mentees

The LGBT Bar NY Mentoring Program matches practicing lawyers from a variety of legal fields and backgrounds with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) law students to promote their academic, professional, and personal advancement.¹

**Please read the discussion of mentee and mentor roles contained herein as well as the Mentor/Mentee Standards of Conduct & Agreement at the end of this document.*

MENTEE INFORMATION

Mentee Roles

The LGBT Bar NY Mentoring Program will provide a mentor for support and to assist in achieving academic, professional, and personal goals. Mentees should expect to play one or more of the following roles:

- 1. Team Player**
 - Identify and share your needs/concerns with your mentor.
 - Be receptive to feedback.

- 2. Planner**
 - Set realistic goals with your mentor.
 - Contribute to solving problems.

- 3. Communicator**
 - Communicate clearly and effectively.
 - Don't be afraid to ask questions!
 - Listen and be respectful.

¹ *LGBT Bar NY Mentoring Program materials were adopted, with permission, from the Practicing Lawyers for Law Students (PALS) mentoring guidelines.*

Mentee Responsibilities

Below are general guidelines for students/newly admitted attorneys participating in the Mentoring Program as a mentee:

1. Respect

- Respect your mentor's time as if it were your own.
- Respond to your mentor's emails or calls in a timely fashion.
- Do not miss a scheduled appointment with your mentor (see LGBT Bar NY's "no-show" policy).
- Do not share any of your mentor's personal feelings or ideas with a third party without their express consent.

2. Communicate

- Communicate your needs and limits early.
- Discuss your preferred method of communication, the best days to be reached and your time constraints.

3. Professionalism

- A professional relationship should be maintained at all times.
- Abide by the Standards of Conduct & Agreement (located at the end of this document).

4. Self-Evaluate

- Be committed to self-development and growth.

5. Feedback

- Take the time to call and thank your mentor. If you cannot, at least send a thank you note or e-mail.

Mentee Expectations

LGBT Bar NY expects all mentees to be professional and committed to the program. Besides the Responsibilities mentioned above, LGBT Bar NY expects that you will make every effort to manage your schedule accordingly and notify your mentor immediately of any changes that will affect your in-person meetings or other expectations that you have set with your mentor.

No-Show Policy: LGBT Bar NY has a strict "no-show" policy which does not permit mentees to cancel or reschedule a previously scheduled appointment with mentors more than three times in one school year. If you cancel or reschedule an appointment with your mentor more than three times, you will not be permitted to participate in the program.

Terminating Mentor Relationship: If at any time you feel you cannot work with your mentor, please contact LGBT Bar NY at info@lgbtbarny.org. You will receive help to resolve the issue or to be reassigned if necessary. If at any time you no longer wish to participate in the mentoring program, please contact LGBT Bar NY as soon as possible.

MENTOR INFORMATION

Mentor Roles

A LGBT Bar NY mentor should act as a professional resource to their mentee and assist the mentee in achieving their communicated goals. Your role will differ depending on the needs of your mentee. Sometimes you will be performing one role; other times, you may be performing several. Below are general roles that a mentor may assume.

1. A Guide

- Help your mentee navigate the transition from undergraduate student or working professional to role of law student/new attorney.
- Provide information on the dynamics of a law firm, in-house law department, public interest organization, government agency or judicial clerkship experience.
- Feel free to share any tips for developing and maintaining a professional demeanor and reputation.
- Everybody makes mistakes, share yours!

2. A Motivator

- Encourage your mentee to identify and take concrete steps toward achieving their goals.
- Focus on what your mentee is doing successfully and relate this positive feedback to your mentee.

3. A Coach

- Encourage positive behavior with positive feedback.
- Discourage negative behavior with constructive feedback.

4. An Advisor

- Set goals that are reachable, specific, clear and have a reasonable time frame for being achieved.
- Keep goals flexible and modify when necessary.
- Direct your mentee to career resources that he/she may require.

5. A Role Model

- Project high standards of professionalism and a positive attitude. (Remember, mentees are likely to imitate their mentors.)
- Provide an opportunity for your mentee to learn positive attributes of an experienced lawyer.

Mentor Responsibilities

A mentor's responsibilities, like their roles, will vary depending on your mentee, however, the following guidelines are universal:

1. Respect

- Don't share a mentee's personal feelings or ideas with a third party without express consent from your mentee.
- Respect your mentee's time as if it were your own.

2. Communicate

- Discuss, early on, your preferred method of communication, the best days/times to be contacted, and your time constraints.
- Set boundaries from the beginning.
- Invite your mentee to discuss any concerns.
- Recognize your mentee when he/she achieves a milestone.

3. Professionalism

- Carefully consider whether to encourage a friendship.
- Work through a conflict with care and respect. Contact LGBT Bar NY immediately if a perceived problem arises.
- Abide by the Standards of Conduct & Agreement (located at the end of this document).

Mentor Expectations

LGBT Bar NY expects that all mentors will be committed to the program. We understand, however, that conflicts may arise. If at any time you feel that you cannot work with your mentee, please contact LGBT Bar NY at info@lgbtbarny.org. LGBT Bar NY will work to resolve the issue or reassign mentees if necessary. If at any time you no longer wish to participate in the program, please contact LGBT Bar NY as soon as possible.

LGBT Bar NY Mentor/Mentee Standards of Conduct Agreement

Professionalism & Ethical Conduct: All mentors & mentees shall conduct themselves with the utmost professionalism and maintain high ethical standards in dealing with their mentors or mentees. This includes refraining from the pursuit, in any way, of a sexual/romantic relationship or encounter.

The following is intended to provide a framework for building a professional working relationship.

The Mentor Will:

- Commit to a period of between one to three years of time and support to my mentee during the pursuit of their juris doctor degree or in the early years of their career.
- Maintain confidential personal information shared.
- Introduce my mentee to legal practice options and make suggestions as to ways to achieve their goals.
- Guide, encourage, and motivate my mentee in selecting extracurricular options such as moot court, law journals, and participation in specialized law student groups.
- Acquaint my mentee with the complexity of the law school journey (intellectual and social).
- Maintain contact (in-person, email, telephone) at least three times throughout a semester.
- Acquaint my mentee with my legal practice area and discuss various curricular options whereby he/she can gain expertise in this area if desired. As the opportunities arise, introduce my mentee to others in the field.
- Make efforts to participate in various LGBT Bar NY mentor/mentee functions and activities.

The Mentee Will:

- Commit to a period of between one to three years of cooperation in working with my mentor.
- Maintain personal confidential info shared.
- Be receptive to the advice and counsel of my mentor.
- Inform my mentor of my areas of legal practice interest.
- Discuss areas of career interest and career options, such as internships and job offers with my mentor.
- Respond in a timely fashion to my mentor's communications or messages, as well as initiate contact (via phone or e-mail).
- Send my resume and cover letter to my mentor for feedback.
- Keep my mentor informed of my academic schedule and discuss course-related issues, as needed.
- Make efforts to participate in various LGBT Bar NY mentor/mentee functions and activities.