

Kansas Library Association Mentor Guidelines

The goal of a KLA mentor is to provide encouragement, support and guidance to early-career library staff (with less than five years of experience) to promote their professional development and growth.

A mentor is a mid-to-late career (with five or more years of professional experience) library staff-person who listens and provides guidance to library staff at the start of their careers.

For mentors

To become a mentor, you must:

1. Be willing to have your name on the KLA mentor list
2. Have worked in a library (or related organization) for five or more years.
3. Be a Kansas Library Association member.
4. Complete the mentor application (an online fillable form)
5. Have good listening skills.
6. Have a desire to support, encourage and guide those new to the profession.
7. Be open to other viewpoints and professional goals.

What does a mentor do in the mentoring relationship?

A mentor listens carefully to his or her mentee's goals, strengths, and struggles. Based on those goals, the mentor supports the mentee in meeting his or her goals through questioning, providing guidance and feedback, sharing his or her own experiences, and possibly connecting the mentee with other individuals or groups who could help. Every mentoring relationship will unfold differently based on the individuals involved, but the purpose of mentoring is not to tell the mentee what to do, but to help the mentee make his or her own informed decisions. The mentor should be supportive, not critical or negative, and should remember that everyone's experiences and priorities are different.

Setting goals and expectations

Both the mentor and the mentee should start by discussing their expectations for the mentoring relationship. This should be clarified as soon as possible, because not understanding each other's expectations for the relationship could lead to disappointment. A mentor should ask his or her mentee about what the mentee's goals are and what he or she is looking for from the relationship.

Mentees should be clear about what they hope to get out of the mentoring relationship, particularly with respect to goals, which will form the foundation of their work with the mentor. Issues like frequency of meetings, availability, and modes of contact should be agreed upon from the start.

The mentor and mentee should establish together which mode(s) they prefer to use to keep in contact:

- In-person
- Phone
- Email
- Web conferencing (through tools like Skype or Google Hangouts)

The KLA Annual Conference may provide a convenient venue to meet in person, though mentors and mentees are under no obligation to attend the conference.

Confidentiality

Given that the mentoring relationship requires trust, communications between the mentee and mentor should be kept confidential.

What if I have questions?

You can contact any of the members of the KLA Mentoring Committee:

Savannah Ball, Southwest Kansas Library System

Lauren Hays, MidAmerica Nazarene University

Sandy Moore, Allen County Community College

Robin Newell, Emporia Public Library

Kate Wise, Kansas Wesleyan University

Or e-mail the full committee at klamentoring@gmail.com