

PREPARING FOR THE PRACTICE OF LAW

It is always challenging to make the transition from law school to practice, but it seems especially difficult during these changing times. New lawyers are entering perhaps the most challenging economic environment in my 30 years as a lawyer. Those who have been practicing for a few years not only face stiff competition, but also must grapple with a rapidly changing legal landscape as they navigate their life in the law.

During times like these, the benefits of mentoring are invaluable. As a profession, we need to connect with young lawyers as early in their careers as possible to ensure that they are prepared for the responsible practice of law and are committed to professionalism. Certainly we should support these lawyers by making available to them the tools they need to succeed. Yet we also need to impart to them the accumulated wisdom of experienced lawyers and help guide our profession's newest members to become better advocates for their clients and more engaged participants in the communities we serve.

I am pleased to present *Transition to Practice: A Mentoring Initiative for Local Bar Associations*. The program, based on a pilot project by the Dallas Bar Association, is intended to be easy to use, inexpensive, and readily adaptable to the needs of individual bar associations, law firms, or corporate or governmental law departments. I am grateful for the assistance of the Texas Young Lawyers Association in preparing and distributing this resource guide and indebted to the lawyers of Dallas who have proven that such a program can be successful.

Now, more than ever, we as a profession need to step up to help our young lawyers. Please join me in helping to provide a successful transition to the practice of law.

Sincerely,



Roland K. Johnson
President, State Bar of Texas (2009–2010)



BACKGROUND

In 2007, the Dallas Bar Association launched a structured yearlong mentoring program as a pilot project for a potential statewide mentoring initiative. The DBA's volunteer program was designed to assist new lawyers as they transition from the "study of law" to the "practice of law" and to perpetuate the profession's highest standards of competence, professionalism, service, and collegiality.

Newly licensed lawyers are matched with more experienced attorneys who volunteer to participate in the project, and the pairs attend CLE programs and meet in small groups or one-on-one. The program coaches new lawyers in many areas, including law practice management, effective client representation, pro bono opportunities, career development, and other aspects of successfully practicing law.

Mentors are encouraged to make themselves available to the new lawyers with whom they are paired and to serve as a sounding board on issues commonly encountered by new practitioners. The program is well-suited to lawyers in large or small firms or the law departments of corporations or governmental entities. It is designed to assist lawyers in all areas of practice, from transactional attorneys to litigators. The program is intended to complement, not replace, the mentoring projects of large law firms and legal departments.

Transition programs have proven to be successful. In Georgia, roughly 60 percent of the new lawyers who participated in pilot project reported that they were "very satisfied" with their legal careers. Further, a survey showed that the legal skills the transition program had the greatest impact on were "the handling of ethical aspects of law practice and dealing with other lawyers."

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Transition to Practice is intended to provide local bar associations (or corporate or governmental law departments) with the resources they need to adapt, develop, and implement a mentoring program. The forms, timelines, and topics included in this resource guide are mere suggestions based on the feedback and results of the Dallas Bar Association's successful pilot project.

The program is designed to last 12 months, though certainly mentors and the new lawyers they are teamed up with may choose to continue to meet and share experiences. The program is targeted to lawyers in their first several years of licensure, though each bar association can determine specific parameters for participation.

Every other month, a group meeting of all program participants will take place with programming planned around one or more specific mentoring topic. During alternate months, mentors and mentees will arrange to meet in small groups or one-on-one.



PROPOSED CALENDAR

Every other month, all of the lawyers who are participating in your bar association's Transition to Practice program will meet as a group for a CLE presentation on one or more specific mentoring topics. During alternate months, mentors and the mentees they have been matched with will arrange to meet one-on-one.

January

5:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Topic: Introduction to the Transition to Law Practice Program and Attaining Success and Maintaining Integrity for the Beginning Lawyer

March

Noon – 1 p.m.

Topics: Everything the Beginning Lawyer Needs to Know About Dealing With Clients (Selecting, Attracting, Maintaining, and Firing Them) and The Generation Gap: Communicating with Non-Gen-Xer Clients and Lawyers

May

Noon – 1 p.m.

Topic: Satisfaction, Fulfillment, Wellness, and Happiness for the Beginning Lawyer

July

Noon – 1 p.m.

Topic: Malpractice Traps for the Beginning Lawyer

September

Noon – 1 p.m.

Topic: Indispensable Legal Writing Instruction for the Beginning Lawyer

November

Noon – 1 p.m.

Topic: The Beginning Lawyer's Opportunities in and Responsibilities to the World Beyond the Office and Transition Wrap-up

PLANNING TIMELINE

(FOR 2010 PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION)

Week	Task
Aug. 24, 2009	Collect mailing lists for attorneys licensed since Oct. 31, 2008 and those who took the bar in July 2008 from State Bar of Texas and Texas Board of Law Examiners.
Aug. 24, 2009	Determine Transition CLE Program Dates for 2010.
Aug. 25, 2009	Determine planning committee members and committee structure.
Aug. 24, 2009	Draft 2010 budget for program (marketing, materials, reception)
Aug. 31, 2009	Draft and approve invitational letter to prospective mentor group.
Aug. 31, 2009	Draft and approve invitational letter to prospective mentors.
Sept. 7, 2009	Mail invitation letters to prospective mentor group. Deadline to commit to program is Dec. 1, 2009, although latecomers need not be turned away.
Sept. 21, 2009	Mail letters to firms requesting participation in 2010 program.
Sept. 7 – Dec. 1, 2009	Recruit mentors.
Sept. 21, 2009	Meet with 2010 planning committee to start developing CLE programs for 2010.
Nov. 9, 2009	Request newly licensed attorney list (from July 2009 bar exam).
Nov. 16, 2009	Mail invitational letters to newly licensed attorneys in local area.
Nov. 16, 2009	Meet with planning committee (if needed).

Week	Task
Dec. 1-11, 2009	Compile final mentor and mentee lists. Match mentors and mentees,
Dec. 15, 2009	Send letters to mentors and mentees regarding their matches.
Jan. 2010	Send letters to late registrants regarding their matches.
Dec. – Jan.	Collect RSVPs, draft seating chart, update website, collect materials.
30 days before CLE	Submit final agenda to staff, volunteers, or State Bar for MCLE credit.



RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

For Prospective Mentees

Young professionals hear a lot about mentoring, but identifying a mentor can be a challenge. If you are a new lawyer and looking for a mentor to guide you from the study of law to the practice of law, Transition to Practice is for you!

The Transition to Practice program:

- Matches new lawyers with experienced mentors.
- Assists with law practice management, effective client representation, and career development.
- Provides guidance for new lawyers in all types of practices.

To join our program, complete and send this form to the address below:

Name _____

Law Firm/Law Department _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Number of Years Licensed _____ Law School _____

Area of Practice _____

Yes, I already have a mentor that I would like to work with. My mentor is _____

No, I do not have a mentor. Please match me with a mentor through this program.

Comments/Special Requests:

Return to: <address>

For Prospective Mentors

Young professionals hear a lot about mentoring, but identifying a mentor can be a challenge. If you are an experienced lawyer interested in sharing your wisdom and guidance to new lawyers just joining the legal profession, Transition to Practice is for you!

The Transition to Practice program:

- Matches new lawyers with experienced mentors.
- Assists with law practice management, effective client representation, career development, and more.
- Provides guidance for new lawyers in all types of practice.
- Requires only one hour per month of your time.

To join our program, complete and send this form to the address below.

_____ Yes. I wish to participate in the program as a mentor.

Name _____

Law Firm/Law Department _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Number of Years Licensed _____ Law School _____

Area of Practice _____

I certify that I have been licensed for at least five years and have no bar disciplinary history.

Signature

Date

Comments/Special Requests:

Return to: <address>

For Law Firms (or Corporate or Governmental Law Departments)

My law firm (or corporate or governmental law department) would like to participate in the _____
Bar Association's Transition to Practice Program.

Firm Name _____

Contact Person _____

Phone _____ Email _____

_____ My law firm (or corporate or governmental law department) will match our beginning lawyer participants with mentors from the firm.

_____ Please match my law firm's beginning lawyer participants with mentors from the Transition to Practice program.

The following is a list of beginning lawyers and mentors who will participate in the program:

New Lawyers

Mentors

Return to: <address>

Email to Prospective Mentor

Dear _____:

I am writing to invite you to participate as a mentor in the 2010 _____ Bar Association Transition to Practice Program.

The Transition to Practice Program will begin in January 2010. We believe this is an important program for our local bar association and for the new lawyers in our area. The focus of our program is on professionalism. Mentees are new attorneys. Most have been licensed for less than one year. We offer bimonthly CLE programs. Our first meeting with the mentors and mentees will be _____. The program will include one organized lunch CLE every other month and one meeting between the mentor and mentee during alternate months. The total time commitment should be roughly 12 hours for the entire year.

If you are interested in participating, please email me back and I will add you to our program. I have young lawyers who have not yet been matched with mentors, so your help is needed! Let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you!

<Program Chair or Local Bar President>

WELCOMING PARTICIPANTS

Letter to Mentees

RE: Transition to Practice Program

Dear _____:

Thank you for participating in the _____ Bar Association's Transition to Practice Program. We are pleased to inform you that your mentor/guide for the program is _____, whose telephone number is _____ and whose e-mail address is _____.

We ask that you contact your mentor by <date> to introduce yourself and confirm that you will be available to meet in person at our first meeting <date> from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at _____.

We have enclosed a calendar of educational events for 2010. Please note the dates and times on your calendar. We will have drinks and snacks at our January meeting. All of our other meetings will be held during lunch and information will be sent regarding time and place. The CLE program and all materials are free.

Please confirm your attendance at our first meeting with <name and email>. Please also contact _____ with any questions about the program. We look forward to meeting you and working with you and your mentor during the coming year.

Very truly yours,

<Program Chair or Local Bar President>

Letter to Mentors

RE: Transition to Practice Program

Dear _____:

Thank you for participating in the _____ Bar Association's Transition to Law Practice Program. We are pleased to inform you that your beginning lawyer/mentee for the program is _____, whose telephone number is _____ and whose e-mail address is _____.

We ask that you contact your mentee by <date> to confirm that you will be available to meet in person at our first meeting on <date> from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at _____.

We have enclosed a calendar of educational events for the coming year. Please note the dates and times on your calendar. All meetings except our January meeting will be held at noon. We will offer drinks and snacks at our first meeting. The CLE program and all materials are free.

Please confirm your attendance at our first meeting with <name and email>. Please also contact _____ with any questions about the program. We look forward to meeting you and working with you and your mentor during the coming year.

Very truly yours,

<Program Chair or Local Bar President>

MENTORING AGREEMENT

The Mentor and Beginning Lawyer have signed this agreement and will participate in the _____ Bar Association's Transition to Practice Program ("Program") under the terms and conditions set forth herein.

1. The Mentor and Beginning Lawyer agree to attend six seminars which constitute the Program and to meet at least six additional times in a business like environment to discuss the information and considerations addressed in the seminars. They agree to participate in the Program with sufficient effort to provide the Beginning Lawyer an opportunity to acquire the practical skills, judgment, and professional values to practice law with integrity and in a highly competent manner. They agree to devote the time and effort necessary to achieve these goals.
2. The Mentor will act in good faith to guide the Beginning Lawyer.
3. The Mentor and Beginning Lawyer understand that any information, advice, or other communication between them in the course of the Program is intended to provide educational guidance to the Beginning Lawyer in his or her law practice and to assist the Beginning Lawyer in acquiring practical skills and in deepening his or her understanding of ethical and professional values.
4. The Beginning Lawyer agrees that neither the local bar nor the Mentor warrants or represents that any information or advice that may be imparted to the Beginning Lawyer through the Program is to be acted on or relied upon by the Beginning Lawyer in handling a specific matter for a client.
5. The Beginning Lawyer agrees not to ask the Mentor for case specific advice, not to give the Mentor actual names of clients, and not to reveal to the Mentor any confidential communications between the Beginning Lawyer and the Beginning Lawyer's clients.
6. The Beginning Lawyer acknowledges that the information the Beginning lawyer receives in the course of the Mentorship will not be relied upon by the Beginning Lawyer as a substitute for the Beginning lawyer's own judgment or legal opinions, and the Beginning Lawyer understands that the opinions or statements of the Mentor are not a substitute for the Beginning lawyer's own opinion or independent research.
7. The Beginning Lawyer expressly agrees not to and disclaims any right to rely upon the continuing legal education by the Mentor or the local bar association with respect to any acts or omissions to act, or any other behavior, in which the Beginning Lawyer may engage, whether such future acts, omissions or other behavior is known or unknown to the Beginning Lawyer as of the date of this Agreement.

8. The Beginning Lawyer and the Mentor agree that no client of the Beginning Lawyer nor any other third person, firm, or corporation shall be a beneficiary of this Agreement and that this Agreement shall not confer any rights upon any person, firm, or corporation other than the rights of the parties hereto as herein specified.
9. This agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the law of the State of Texas.
10. This Agreement and the representations and promises herein constitute the full and complete agreement between the Mentor and the Beginning Lawyer and shall not be altered or amended except by an agreement in writing duly executed by both the Mentor and the Beginning Lawyer. The Mentor and the Beginning Lawyer each warrant that such party has read, understands, and accepts the provisions hereof.

Printed Name of Mentor

Date

Signature

Printed Name of Beginning Lawyer

Date

Signature

PROGRAM CURRICULUM

1. First Presentation (January) — *Introduction to Transition to Practice and Attaining Success and Maintaining Integrity for the Beginning Lawyer*

- a. Orientation to the Transition to Practice Program
 - i. Discussion of its goals and purposes
 - ii. Review the program's schedule and six presentations
 - iii. Discuss the crucial mentoring component and its importance
 - iv. Discuss commitment expected from all Transition to Practice participants
 - v. Matching of mentors with participants (the individuals will meet one another at the end of the presentation)
- b. 10 Tips for Being a Great Mentor
- c. Breakout discussion

Resources:

Dallas Bar Association, Transition to Law Practice
www.dallasbar.org/tlpp (click on "Training Materials")

ABA Young Lawyers Division/StoryCorps Mentorship Project
www.abanet.org/mentoring

Texas Young Lawyers Association, *Ten Minute Mentor*
www.tenminutementor.com

2. Second Presentation (March) — *Everything the Beginning Lawyer Needs to Know About Dealing with Clients (Selecting, Attracting, Maintaining, and Firing Them) and The Generation Gap: Communicating with Non-Gener Xer Client and Lawyers*

- a. Generation Gap speaker
- b. Critical basics of the attorney/client relationship
 - i. How is it formed, how long does it last, and what ends it?
 - ii. How do you determine if it exists?
 - iii. What are its consequences?

1. The attorney/client privilege
2. An attorney's duty to the client and to others
3. Treatment of client information, assets, and funds
- iv. What to look for in a potential client
- v. Warning signs in a potential client
- vi. How to develop business effectively and ethically
- viii. Seek work within your capabilities
- ix. From the client's perspective, what builds solid attorney/client relationships?
- x. Tips from successful lawyers for developing and maintaining business
- ii. How to know when to disassociate from a client and how to do it
- xi. No amount of business will compensate you for the loss of your integrity

Resources:

TexasBarCLE, "Effective Advocacy for the New Generations: Communication with Generation X and the Millennial" (online class)

www.texasbarcle.com/CLE/AABuy0.asp?sProductType=EV&IID=7838

TexasBarCLE, "Judicial Panel on Success for New Lawyers // Working with Others in Practice // Starting/Building a Practice // How to Succeed in First Trial or Transaction: Keys to Victory in Court or Boardroom" (online class)

www.texasbarcle.com/CLE/AABuy0.asp?sProductType=EV&IID=8467

TexasBarCLE, "Management Lessons Learned from the Texas Lawyers Creed" (online class)

www.texasbarcle.com/CLE/AABuy0.asp?sProductType=EV&IID=7997

** For custom CLE packages, contact Laura Angle with TexasBarSolutions at (512)250-5575 or langle@texasbar.com.*

- 3. Third Presentation (May) — *Satisfaction, Fulfillment, Wellness, and Happiness for the Beginning Lawyer***
- a. Panel discussion
 - b. How to thrive and find satisfaction in your practice
 - i. From the perspective of an established lawyer and a lawyer who recently completed the "beginning" stage of his or her career
 - ii. Benefits of bar experience in achieving a satisfying career
 - iii. Why people stay at (and why people leave) their firms or other offices
 - iv. From the perspective of a legal placement professional or other consultant
 - v. From the perspective of attorneys who wrestled with these issues
 - c. The health risks every lawyer faces and how to address them

- i. Depression, substance abuse, and stress
- ii. Maintaining relationships with those who matter to you
- iii. Warning signs, avoidance strategies, and keys to a healthy life as an attorney
- d. Professionalism implications of the wellness issue

Resources:

Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program

www.texasbar.com/tlap

State Bar of Texas, *Practicing from the Shadows: Depression and the Legal Profession*

For copies of DVD, call TLAP at (800) 343-8527 or stream at:

[mms://media01.manexa.com/txbar/PracShadowsBroadband.asf](https://media01.manexa.com/txbar/PracShadowsBroadband.asf)

American Bar Association, *What Lawyers Need to Know About Suicide During a Recession: Prevention, Identity, and Law Firm Responsibility*

To download ethics CLE from American Bar Association, go to:

www.abanet.org/legalservices/colap

4. Fourth Presentation (July) — *Malpractice Traps for the Beginning Lawyer*

- a. Types of mistakes to which beginning lawyers fall victim (particularly those that are not obvious or intuitive)
- b. Presentation by an representative of a malpractice carrier, a firm's ethics/risk management partner, or law school professor
- c. Panel discussion, "Close calls I had as a beginning lawyer (and those I now see beginning lawyers have)"

Resources:

Texas Center for Legal Ethics and Professionalism, "Common complaints clients have about attorneys"

www.txethics.org/EthicsResources.aspx

State Bar of Texas, Information on attorney discipline system

www.texasbar.com (Click on "Client Assistance and Grievance")

TexasBarCLE, "Common Disciplinary Rule Violations // Imposing Sanctions" (online class)

www.texasbarcle.com/CLE/AABuy0.asp?sProductType=EV&IID=8884

- 5. Fifth Presentation** (September) — *Indispensable Legal Writing Instruction for the Beginning Lawyer*
- a. Effective writing principles (mistakes beginning lawyers commonly make)
 - i. A legal writing speaker or a legal writing faculty member
 - b. Panel discussion: “What works, what doesn’t work” in transactional and litigation drafting
 - ii. The panel will emphasize the professionalism issues that are implicated by clear, straightforward, and non-deceptive drafting

Resources:

Texas Bar Journal, Advice on Legal Writing by Prof. Terri LeClercq

www.texasbar.com/Template.cfm?Section=Texas_Bar_Journal1&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=6556

TexasBarCLE, “Drafting Contracts: Top 10 Things NOT to Put In Contracts” (online class)

www.texasbarcle.com/CLE/AABuy0.asp?sProductType=EV&IID=8437

TexasBarCLE, “State Bar Resources That Help You Practice and Manage Your Practice // What I Wish I Knew When I First Got Licensed // Negotiation Techniques for the New Attorney // Legal Writing in the Real World” (online class)

<http://www.texasbarcle.com/CLE/AABuy0.asp?sProductType=EV&IID=8466>

- 6. Sixth Presentation** (November) — *The Beginning Lawyer’s Opportunities in, and Responsibilities to, the World Beyond the Office and Program Wrap-up*
- a. Panel discussion
 - i. Pro bono and legal services to the poor
 1. Local pro bono program
 2. Texas Access to Justice Commission
 3. Legal services providers in Texas
 - b. Organizations within the community to which lawyers contribute their time and talents
 - c. Public/governmental service
 - d. Your obligations to the community as a member of the legal profession
 - i. How to find the right opportunity for you
 - ii. How service (to others) leads to satisfaction (for you)
 - e. Introduction to local bar association
 - i. Discussion of its sections and committees
 - ii. Overview of its calendar

- e. Resources and benefits available to the beginning lawyer
 - i. CLE and skills seminars
 - ii. Networking/business development
 - iii. Pro bono and legal services to the poor
 - iv. “Member benefit” agreements with vendors
 - v. Collegiality and friendship
 - vi. Heightened satisfaction as a lawyer
 - vii. Introduction to local specialty bar associations
- g. Transition to Practice wrap-up
- h. Closing reception

Resources:

Texas Access to Justice Foundation, *Justice for All Texans* (video narrated by Bill Moyers)

www.teajf.org/news/video/JFAT_Rev_2005.wmv

Texas Access to Justice Foundation, *Pro Bono: The Difference Is You* (video narrated by Dan Rather)

www.teajf.org/news/video/ProBono-short_web2.WMV

Texas Lawyers Help

www.texaslawyershelp.org

Texas Young Lawyers Association, *Survival Guide for New Lawyers*

www.TYLA.org/pdfs/TYLASurvival%20Guide.pdf

TexasBarCLE, “Dealing with Difficult Opposing Counsel // Effective Client Communication // Noble Lawyer and Rehabilitation of Profession // Striking Balance: How to Salvage Life and Sanity as You Strive to Get Ahead” (online class)

www.texasbarcle.com/CLE/AABuy0.asp?sProductType=EV&IID=8465

EVALUATION FORM

All responses are confidential.

Please rate how well you have benefited from the Transition to Practice Program.

5	4	3	2	1
Excellent	Very Good	Average	Below Average	Poor

Please tell us how you have benefited from the Transition to Practice Program. Check as many as you wish

- I developed a positive working relationship with my mentor.
- I developed positive working relationships with other attorneys in the program.
- I hope to maintain my relationship with my mentor.
- The materials were helpful to my professional development.
- The program provided information not taught in law school.
- The CLE programs were practical and/or useful to my practice.
- I would recommend the program to other new lawyers.
- The experience was positive.
- The program will help me be a better lawyer.
- The program increased my knowledge of local practices and legal customs.
- The program increased my knowledge of where to turn when I need help.
- The program increased my level of satisfaction with having chosen to be a lawyer.
- Other (Please provide as much feedback as you wish.)

What were the biggest challenges to your participating in the program?

- Finding time to fit it into my busy work schedule.
- Coordinating schedules with my mentor.
- Developing a relationship with my mentor.
- Availability of my mentor.
- My employer did not support my participation in the program.
- Other (Please provide as much feedback as you wish.)

Please provide us with useful information about your mentor match.

- I wish my mentor had been from my law firm/company.
- I wish my mentor had not been from my law firm/company.
- The mentor matching system worked well for me.

The mentor matching system did not work well for me.

Other (Please provide as much feedback as you wish.)

Did you and your mentor meet outside the bimonthly CLE programs?

Yes No

Did the program have the correct balance of individual, one-on-one opportunities and group seminars?

Yes No

Please explain your answer.

Do you have a mentor outside this program?

Yes No

If yes, how did you obtain your mentor?

The mentor was assigned through my current or former employer.

The mentor was a former professor.

The mentor is a family friend.

I was matched with my mentor through a bar association program

I met my mentor on my own.

Other. Please explain. _____

If yes, how well does your mentoring relationship work with your outside mentor?

5	4	3	2	1
Excellent	Very Good	Average	Below Average	Poor

Please provide us with ideas for improving the program.

[Optional]

Please contact me if you would like more information about my experience with the Transition to Practice Program.

Name

E-mail

Phone

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

General

1. What is the goal of the Program?

The goal is to provide professional guidance to beginning lawyers who are newly admitted to the practice of law. This will be accomplished by matching beginning lawyers with experienced “guide”/mentors. The “guide”/mentors and beginning lawyers will participate in six CLE seminars that focus on practical skills and ethical values and professionalism and meet six additional times to discuss those matters addressed during the seminars.

2. How are “guides”/mentors selected?

They “guide”/mentor will be screened by the Program Committee, which will recommend mentors for appointment. Mentors must agree in writing to serve as a mentor.

Mentors must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- Be an active member of the State Bar of Texas, in good standing;
- Be admitted to practice for not less than five (5) years;
- Have a reputation among judges and peers in the local legal community for competence and ethical and professional conduct; and
- No sanctions, suspensions, or disbarments in any state from the practice of law.

3. Is a beginning lawyer allowed to choose his or her “guide”/mentor?

The assignment of mentors within a firm, office, or practice group will be based on the recommendation of the firm or other employer, subject to the stated qualifications for appointment as a mentor and compliance with the other requirements of the Program. If a beginning lawyer does not practice with an eligible “guide”/mentor, he or she will be asked to nominate his or her own mentor. The nomination must be approved by the committee. The committee will match a beginning lawyer with a “guide”/mentor if he or she is unable to nominate an eligible “guide”/mentor.

4. How are a “guide”/mentor and a beginning lawyer in the same firm matched?

The assignment of a mentor to a beginning lawyer within a firm, office or practice group will be based on the recommendation of the firm or other employer itself, subject to the qualifications for appointment as a mentor and compliance with the other requirements of the Program.

5. What criteria are used in matching a mentor and a beginning lawyer who are not in the same firm?

The committee will draw upon its own knowledge of potential mentors to make a match with a beginning lawyer.

The Program will attempt to match beginning lawyers and mentors based on other criteria, such as similarities of practice area.

6. What are the responsibilities of a “guide”/mentor in the Program?

The “guide”/mentor is responsible for counseling the beginning lawyer about practical skills discussed in the seminars, seasoned judgment, and sensitivity to ethical and professionalism values; devoting the time required for this assignment; and attending six Program seminars and meeting with the beginning lawyer at least six additional times for approximately one hour. At the end of the twelve month program, the “guide”/mentor will be asked to sign a certificate evidencing whether or not the beginning lawyer has attended the required seminars and other meetings.

7. What are responsibilities of a beginning lawyer in the Program?

A beginning lawyer is responsible for attending six seminars and making him- or herself available for the guidance and teaching of their mentors as described herein.

8. Are communications between the mentor and the beginning lawyer confidential?

For an inside the firm or office mentorship, the confidentiality of communications between the mentor and beginning lawyer will depend on the firm’s or office’s policies. For an outside mentorship, the beginning lawyer shall not reveal to the mentor any confidential communications between the beginning lawyer and the beginning lawyer’s client.

9. Will the “guide”/mentor supervise the beginning lawyer’s work?

For an inside firm or office mentorship, supervision of the beginning lawyer’s work is a matter to be determined by the firm’s or office’s policy. For an outside mentorship, the mentor is not expected to supervise the practice of law by the beginning lawyer.

10. What is the mentor’s role in evaluating the beginning lawyer within the firm or office?

The role of the mentor in evaluating the work and professional development of the beginning lawyer within the firm or office is a matter to be determined by the firm’s or office’s policy. The mentor and the beginning lawyer both have responsibility for evaluating the mentoring relationship. The mentor is responsible for assessing whether the beginning lawyer has satisfactorily completed the Program.

11. What is the “guide”/mentor’s role in evaluation of the beginning lawyer who does not work in the same firm?

The outside mentor assumes no responsibility for evaluating the work of the beginning lawyer. The outside mentor and the beginning lawyer both have responsibility for evaluating the mentoring relationship. The mentor is responsible for assessing whether the beginning lawyer has satisfactorily completed the Program.

12. What happens if the “guide”/mentor resigns from the firm or office or otherwise becomes unavailable to serve as mentor?

The mentor shall notify the Program of the situation. In the event the mentor is unable to do so, the beginning lawyer shall notify the Program of the situation. Decisions regarding how and whether to assign a new mentor will be made on a case-by-case basis. The committee will have the ultimate authority and responsibility for policies and procedures for situations where a mentorship ends prematurely.

13. What happens if the beginning lawyer resigns from the firm or office or otherwise becomes unavailable to continue to be mentored by the originally assigned mentor?

The beginning lawyer shall notify the Program of the situation. In the event the beginning lawyer is unable to do so, the original mentor shall notify the Program. Decisions regarding how and whether to assign a new mentor will be made on a case-by-case basis. The committee will have the ultimate authority and responsibility for policies and procedures for situations where a mentorship ends prematurely.

14. How will the Program deal with problems that arise in the relationship?

A mentor or beginning lawyer with a concern about the Program should convey it to the Chair of the committee.

New Lawyers

1. How do I enter the Transition to Practice Program?

Complete and return the application to _____. There is no cost to participate and the mentee need not be a member of the _____ Bar Association.

2. If I am a judicial clerk, does the Program apply to me?

Judicial law clerks are eligible on the same basis as other new lawyers.

3. If I am not employed as a lawyer, does the Program apply to me?

Yes.

4. If I am employed as a lawyer by a government agency, in a public interest law setting, or as in-house counsel, does the Program apply to me?

Yes. A lawyer who enters the practice of law as federal, state, local, or other governmental employee or in-house counsel may participate on the same basis as other new lawyers.

5. How do I obtain a “guide”/mentor?

If you are employed, you should attempt to secure as a “guide”/mentor, one of the qualified lawyers employed by your firm or law department or you may select another qualified mentor. If you are not able to select a “guide”/mentor, please note that you need a mentor on your application.

Law Firms (or Corporate or governmental law departments)

1. Is a mentor orientation required?

No. Mentor orientation is not required. However, at the first seminar, mentors and mentee will be advised of the expectations of the program and instructed on how to achieve the best results from a mentor relationship.

2. How does a firm or law department integrate an in-firm training program with the Transition to Practice Program?

The Program has been crafted to avoid duplication of law firm and law department in-house training programs.

Mentors

1. How is an outside “guide”/mentor selected?

A beginning lawyer who does not practice in association with a lawyer eligible to be appointed as a mentor will be asked to nominate his or her own mentor. The nomination must be approved by the committee. A beginning lawyer who is unable to identify a mentor shall note this on his or her application form. The committee will draw upon its own knowledge of potential mentors in proximity to the beginning lawyer. If a mentor cannot be found for a beginning lawyer, the committee will assign the beginning lawyer to a Mentoring Group. A Mentoring Group will consist of an approved mentor or group of approved mentors who work with a small group of beginning lawyers through periodic group mentoring meetings.

2. What criteria are used in matching a “guide”/mentor and a beginning lawyer who are not in the same firm?

The committee will draw upon its own knowledge of potential mentors in proximity to the beginning lawyer. The Program will attempt to match beginning lawyers and mentors based on other criteria, such as similarities of practice area.

3. If I agree to serve as “guide”/mentor to a beginning lawyer not in an employment relationship with me, what kind of advice am I allowed to offer?

All outside “guide”/mentors and beginning lawyers are required to sign the Transition to Practice Program Agreement (Agreement). According to the terms of the Agreement, the mentor is an educational resource for the beginning lawyer, and the purpose of the Mentoring component of the Program is to provide opportunities for the discussion of general issues confronted by the beginning lawyer in the practice of law. The beginning lawyer agrees not to ask the mentor for case specific advice or to give to the mentor actual names of clients. The mentor and beginning lawyer further agree to deal with any problems the beginning lawyer has in only a general, hypothetical manner.

4. How much time is a “guide”/mentor expected to spend with the beginning lawyer?

The mentor and beginning lawyer are expected attend each of the six seminars and to spend sufficient time to meet for a minimum of one hour at least once after each of the six seminars

5. Is the “guide”/mentor orientation required?

Mentor orientation is not required. The first seminar will address how the mentor and mentee should work together.

6. Are communications between the outside “guide”/mentor and the beginning lawyer confidential?

No. The beginning lawyer shall not reveal to the outside mentor any confidential communications between the beginning lawyer and the beginning lawyer’s client, according to the terms of the Agreement that outside mentors and beginning lawyers are required to sign.

7. What is the outside “guide”/mentor’s role in supervision of the beginning lawyer?

The mentor is not expected to supervise the practice of law by the beginning lawyer. The outside mentor shall offer the beginning lawyer extended education in the practice of law practice and provide insight about practical skills and ethical and professional issues frequently encountered by lawyers in practice. Neither the Program nor the outside mentor assumes any responsibility to the beginning lawyer’s clients for legal services performed by the beginning lawyer.

8. What is the outside “guide”/mentor’s role in evaluation of the beginning lawyer?

The outside “guide”/mentor assumes no responsibility for evaluating the work of the beginning lawyer. The outside mentor and the beginning lawyer both have responsibility for evaluating the mentoring relationship. The mentor is responsible for assessing whether the beginning lawyer has satisfactorily completed the Program.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Texas Young Lawyers Association

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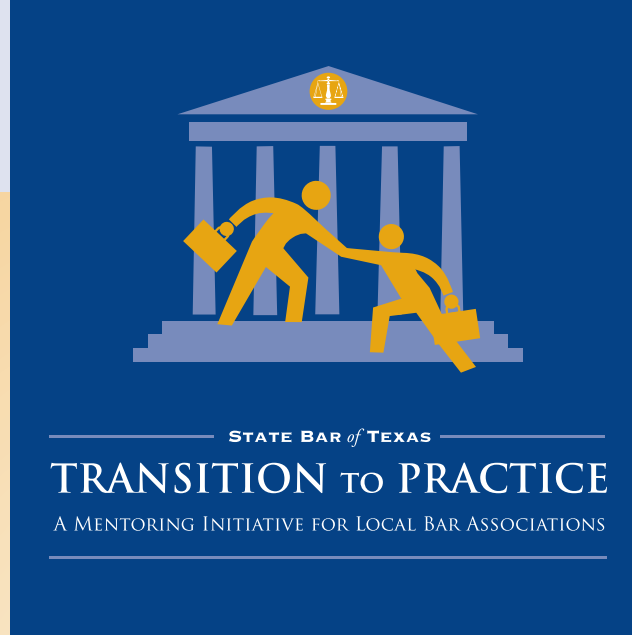
Dallas Bar Association

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Texas Board of Law Examiners

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< *Name* >

has successfully completed the _____
Bar Association's Transition to Practice Program.

< Date >

< Local Bar President >