

Proposal to Expand the OLA Mentoring Program to all Early-Career OLA Members

The OLA Membership Committee would like to expand the OLA Mentoring Program to all early-career OLA members. In its pilot phase, eligibility for mentors and mentees was limited to professionals and those working in professional librarian positions. We had hoped to expand the program last year through a partnership with SSD, but we discovered this would not be a viable option. However, we would still like to see the program expanded so that all early-career OLA members working in libraries (and related institutions) can be mentored by mid-to-late-career OLA members.

Changes to the mentoring program information are outlined in the attached screenshot, but these are the proposed requirements for mentors and mentees:

Requirements for becoming a mentor:

1. Have been working in a library (or related organization) for five or more years.
2. Be an OLA member.
3. Commit to at least one year (or nine months for librarians on nine-month contracts) with the program. Mentors and mentees can continue their relationship beyond the required time period if they choose.
4. Have good listening skills.
5. Have a desire to support, encourage and guide those new to the profession.
6. Be open to other viewpoints and professional goals.

Requirements for becoming a mentee:

1. Have been working in a library (or related organization) for fewer than five years.
2. Be an OLA Member.
3. Currently be working in a library in some capacity (volunteer, paraprofessional, professional).
4. Commit to at least one year (or nine months for librarians on nine-month contracts) with the program. Mentors and mentees can continue their relationship beyond the required time period if they choose.
5. Have a strong interest in professional development.
6. Be willing to share goals and challenges.
7. Be open to feedback and advice.

We do not know what the demand will look like from early-career support staff and how many support staff will be willing to be mentors. We would like to first advertise opening up the program generally and then seek our specific additional mentors who are good matches for the mentees who apply.

What we will need: One or two other individuals (ideally people who are working as support staff) to help administer the program with our current administrators, Meredith Farkas and Lisa Molinelli. Since we can't predict the interest from support staff, we can't predict what our workload will look like. Therefore, having backup help is essential.

The goal of the OLA Career Mentoring Program is to provide encouragement, support and guidance to ~~early-career librarians (with less than five years of professional experience)~~ to promote their professional development and growth.

A mentor is a mid-to-late career (with five or more years of ~~professional~~ experience) ~~librarian~~ who listens and provides guidance to ~~mentees~~ at the start of their careers. Mentors and mentees must commit to one year in the program (with the option of nine months for librarians on nine-month contracts) and have contact 5-6 times during that period. The mentoring relationship can last beyond one year if the mentor and mentee choose.

Benefits of mentoring programs

- Early-career ~~librarians~~ have the opportunity to develop professional skills and a sense of direction.
- Experienced ~~librarians~~ can contribute to the profession by helping to develop future leaders.
- Both early-career and experienced ~~librarians~~ can learn from each other's perspectives and experiences.
- Both early-career and experienced ~~librarians~~ can develop enhanced listening skills and the ability to communicate with respect.
- The profession as a whole can benefit from the opportunity to capture knowledge from senior library leaders.

For mentors

To become a mentor, you must:

1. Have been ~~in a professional library position(s)~~ for five or more years.
2. Be an OLA member.
3. ~~Hold an MLIS or equivalent (MCLIS, MLC, school library teaching license, etc.)~~
4. Commit to at least one year (or nine months for librarians on nine-month contracts) with the program. Mentors and mentees can continue their relationship beyond the required time period if they choose.
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 being a mentor entail?

1. Completing the [mentor application](#).
2. Initiating contact with your mentee.
3. Keeping in contact with your mentee 5-6 times per year by phone, email, web conferencing, or in-person meetings for the course of the year (or nine months).
4. Providing feedback and suggestions for your mentee's professional development related to their stated goals.
5. Providing feedback to OLA at the completion of the year via a survey.
6. [OLA Mentoring Guidelines](#)

For Mentees:

To become a mentee, you must meet **ALL** of the following requirements:

1. Be an OLA Member.
2. ~~Hold an MLIS or equivalent (MCLIS, MLC, school library teaching license, etc.) AND/OR have been in a professional library position(s) for fewer than five years.~~ **Have worked in libraries (or related institutions) for fewer than five years.**
3. Currently be working in a library in some capacity (volunteer, paraprofessional, professional).