

## **Wyoming Library Association Mentoring Program**

### **Purpose**

The Wyoming Library Association implemented this mentoring program in order to assist all library staff to succeed in their library careers. Mentors supplement the supervisors' efforts and provide protégés with a personal relationship that allows for acculturating, encouraging new talent, sharing expertise and connections, and promoting professional growth.

Mentoring is a relationship between two people with the goal of growing professional knowledge, skills, and confidence. Mentors, sometimes called coaches, typically have years of practical experience and professional knowledge that they share with less experienced counterparts, called mentees or protégés. Because Wyoming Libraries participate in a shared ILS consortia, even experienced library staff members new to the state will benefit from participating in a Wyoming Library Mentor Program.

### **Benefits of the Program**

The Wyoming Library Association Mentoring Program, as outlined below, should produce several benefits.

For protégés, it would:

1. Provide support during the transition into the library profession or into the Wyoming Library state-wide consortia;
2. Promote professional development;
3. Facilitate the acquiring of new skills;
4. Enhance job performance and productivity;
5. Provide a professional resource outside one's own facility; and
6. Improve personal job satisfaction.

For mentors, it would:

1. Provide an opportunity to build professional relationships;
2. Increase personal satisfaction in helping to develop new talent;
3. Continue the cycle of support within the profession, similar to what she or he may have received as a new librarian;
4. Build leadership skills;
5. Develop the ability to motivate and encourage others;
6. Improve communication skills;
7. Gain new perspectives; and
8. Expose the mentor to new ideas/trends in the profession.

For the Wyoming Libraries as a whole, it would:

1. Help integrate new Wyoming library staff members into the culture and enhance productivity;
2. Improve communication regarding policies, practices, and procedures of Wyoming Libraries;
3. Improve strategic and succession planning;
4. Reduce turnover;

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5. Provide an overall contribution to the effectiveness of the Wyoming Libraries and Wyoming Library Association as an organization.

## **Mentoring Program**

Participation of protégés and mentors is voluntary. Mentors are expected to build good working relationships with the protégé by providing information, guidance, and support. While mentoring is designed to help librarians be successful within the Wyoming Libraries, individual librarians are accountable for their own levels of performance.

## **Administration of Program**

The Wyoming Library Association's L.E.A.D. (Leadership Excellence and Development) Interest Group is responsible for the administration of the Mentoring Program. Specific responsibilities include:

- Appoint Mentoring Coordinator(s);
- Promote the program and recruit participants;
- Recruit mentors, recommend mentoring matches, and assist them to successfully develop their relationship;
- Request and receive feedback on the program;
- Coordinate with the supervisors of both the protégés and the mentors; and
- Maintain records of mentoring relationships and program documentation.

## **Participation as Mentor or Protégé**

The Mentoring Coordinator(s) will attempt to recruit a mentor for all protégé applicants within a few months of receiving a request for participation. Both the prospective mentor and the protégé will be interviewed/consulted to ensure a good fit. The mentor program is available to all levels of library staff, and includes new library staff members, new supervisors/directors, emerging library leaders, and library staff new to Wyoming.

Individuals interested in participating in the peer mentoring program as a mentor may contact the Mentoring Coordinator(s). The Mentoring Coordinator(s) should put out a call for Mentor volunteers via the listserv. The Mentoring Coordinator(s) should consult the supervisor of the Mentee before finalizing a Mentor assignment.

## **Assessment of Mentoring Relationship**

The Mentoring Coordinator(s) will assess the mentoring relationship at least twice during the 12 month mentoring period to ensure that the relationship is meeting the needs of both parties. Generally, the official mentoring relationship ends at the conclusion of 12 calendar months.

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## General Mentoring Guidelines

Both mentor and protégé must agree to maintain confidentiality regarding their discussions. Honesty, openness, and trust are important to the success of a successful mentoring relationship. Both the mentor and protégé should be able to offer feedback to each other in order to make the relationship successful. The relationship should be based on constructive dialogue in which the goals of the protégé can be met. Mentors should be sensitive to the needs of protégés, and protégés should be willing to accept constructive feedback. Mentors and protégés may meet with the Mentoring Coordinator(s) throughout the year as needed.

### Mentor Roles and Responsibilities:

- Serve as a resource and referral person.
- Share experiences and knowledge.
- Be an active listener, coach, facilitator, and confidant.
- Provide encouragement, support, and advice.
- Help protégé explore and establish career goals.
- Be open-minded and willing to serve.
- Assist with professional development.
- Commit to helping protégé succeed within his/her organization.
- Facilitate acclimation to the unique Wyoming Libraries dynamics if the protégé is new to the state.

### Protégé Roles and Responsibilities:

- Be open to working with a mentor.
- Receptive to advice and counsel.
- Willing to learn new skills.
- Committed to carrying out agreed upon goals.
- Honest and open with mentor.
- Willing to take responsibility for her or his learning.

### Criteria for Mentor Selection:

- Should be knowledgeable of Wyoming Libraries, and specifically have current or recent experience working in a Wyoming library;
- Should be aware of the needs of a new librarian, and committed to meeting the needs of protégés and the mentoring program
- Should be at the same level of responsibility or above that of the protégé;
- Should not be employed by the same employer as the protégé
- Should be willing to meet the necessary time commitment of the program

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## Participants

This opportunity is open to all members of the Wyoming Library Association. Individuals from the following groups are ideal candidates for this program:

### Protégés:

- New to Wyoming
- New to working at a library
- New library supervisors (branch managers, department heads, etc.)
- New library directors
- MLS degreed individuals
- Newly promoted library staff
- Emerging library leaders

### Mentors:

- Experienced library staff, regardless of position
- MLS librarians
- Library Directors
- Library supervisors
- WLLI Alumni
- Ideally, mentors & protégés will be partnered with library staff from a similar library type.

*Docendo discimus – “By teaching, we learn.”*

*Protégé effect: A psychological phenomenon in which*

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*teaching others strengthens one's knowledge of that topic.*

## Wyoming Library Association's Mentoring Program Application

The WLA Mentoring Program is open to any current WLA member of good standing that desires to improve their effectiveness and impact.

Applicant Information:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name Phone #

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address City WY State Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address Library Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Your current position Library Type

The applicant has secured the support of his/her direct supervisor for participation in this program. Yes No

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor Name/Position Supervisor email

Position you are applying for:

- Protégé
- Mentor

Protégés (Check all that apply):

- New to Wyoming
- New to working at a library
- New library supervisor (branch manager, department head, etc.)
- New MLS degreed individual
- Newly promoted library staff
- Emerging library leader
- New Library Director

Mentors (Check all that apply):

- Experienced library staff, regardless of position
- MLS librarian
- Library Director
- Library supervisor
- WLLI Alumni

Protégé applicants: Please write specific goals, problems, or topics you would like addressed through this program. Include any information you feel would be helpful in finding the best mentor match.

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Mentor applicants: Please write strengths, expertise, years of experience, positions held in the library, and/or anything else you feel supports your desire to be a mentor.

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Submit this form via email to:

[Set up a LEAD email, and have applications forwarded to coordinators.]