



PALS MINORITY LAW STUDENT MENTORING PROGRAM MANUAL

None of us got where we are solely by pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps. We got here because somebody - a parent, a teacher, an Ivy League crony or a few nuns - bent down and helped us pick up our boots. - Thurgood Marshall

ABOUT PALS

PALS is the premier law school to legal practice diversity pipeline organization in the New York City metropolitan area. The organization was founded in 1984 and has been matching attorney mentors with minority law student mentees since its inception.

A primary function of PALS is to facilitate supportive mentor/mentee relationships between minority law students and practicing attorneys. As these relationships are intended to last throughout the students' three years at law school (and in many cases on a less formal basis after law school), every effort is made to match students with suitable mentors. Students and attorneys are matched largely on the basis of common interests.

Mentors are encouraged to meet with their mentees on a regular basis. Once matched, mentors and mentees are responsible for planning their activities together. The suggested list of activities and discussion topics for each mentor/mentee pairing includes the importance of first year law school grades, interviewing strategies, specific legal practice areas, and appropriate business attire. Mentors and mentees are encouraged to communicate regularly and to participate in educational and recreational activities, in addition to PALS' sponsored events.

PALS' Mission Statement: Practicing Attorneys for Law Students Program, Inc. (PALS ®) is dedicated to enhancing the skills and careers of minority law students and early career attorneys. PALS does this by offering customized mentoring, and educational and professional development opportunities. PALS provides resources to augment the training of minority law students and beginning lawyers and will continue to offer its services free of charge. For more on PALS' programming and initiatives, visit our website at www.palsprogram.org.

THE MENTOR PROGRAM

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

A. The PALS Mentor Program

- Matches lawyers (mentors) from a variety of legal fields with law students of color (mentees).
- Provides mentors who are committed, encouraging, motivating, and supportive.
- Is a program geared toward the professional and social advancement of law students of color.

B. Goals and Objectives of the Program

- Promote PALS' mission.
- Serve as a professional resource for students of color navigating the law school experience.

C. General Obligations

- One-year commitment to the program (minimum).
- Fulfillment of your mentee or mentor responsibilities, including once-a-month contact with your mentor/mentee (minimum).
- Participation in PALS' mentor/mentee programming.

II. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE MENTEE

A. Mentee Roles

The PALS Mentoring Program has three main goals for the mentee: (1) supporting the mentee; (2) providing mentors as a resource; and (3) helping a mentee achieve his/her goals. Mentees are expected to work with their mentors by taking an active role in their own career and professional development. Below are some general roles that a mentee should expect to play.

1. Team Player

- Identify and share your needs and concerns with your mentor.
- Be receptive to feedback.

2. Planner

- Set realistic goals with your mentor.
- Contribute ideas to solving problems.

*(adapted from the National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL) mentoring guidelines)

3. Communicator

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

B. Mentee Responsibilities

Below are general guidelines for students participating in the Mentoring Program.

1. Respect

- Respect your mentor's time and confidentiality as if it were your own.
- Respond to your mentor's e-mails or calls in a timely fashion. Do not miss a scheduled appointment with your mentor (PALS strict "anti-no-show" policy will be enforced.) Do not share a mentor's personal feelings or ideas with a third party unless authorized by your mentor.

2. Communication

- Be clear about your needs and limits.
- Discuss early on 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.

4. Evaluation

- Continually evaluate how well you are meeting your goals.
- Be committed to self-development.

5. Recognition

- Recognize your mentor's helpfulness when you achieve goals you have discussed.
- Send a thank you note or e-mail, or take the time to make a phone call.

C. Mentee Program Expectations

PALS expects all mentees to be committed to the program. PALS has a strict “anti-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. We understand that conflicts may arise. Please make every effort to manage your schedule accordingly and notify your mentor immediately of any changes that will affect your in-person meetings. If you cancel or reschedule an appointment with your mentor more than three times in a school year, you will not be permitted to continue participation in the program. If at any time you feel you cannot work with your mentor, please contact the PALS Executive Director. The Mentor Program Committee 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 the PALS Executive Director as soon as possible.

MENTEE GUIDELINES E-MAIL

The email below is sent to each law student participant after he/she has been matched.

Dear Mentee,

Thank you for registering as a mentee with the Practicing Attorneys for Law Students Program, Inc. (PALS). We are happy to have you as a part of our community. We applaud your initiative and hope that your experience with PALS will serve to enhance your knowledge and assist you in building lasting relationships and a successful legal career.

MENTEE GUIDELINES

Practicing Attorneys for Law Students Program, Inc. (PALS) is designed to provide lawyers and students with an opportunity to get to know each other within the context of the legal profession. You will be assigned to a mentor based upon your stated interests and those of the lawyers who are participating in the Program.

You are encouraged to attend the Program's panel discussions, informal gatherings, and workshops. The topics covered will be relevant to minority law students and will offer you an opportunity to meet other lawyers and students. The quality of the experience you have with your mentor and the Program in general will depend partially upon your efforts. Listed below are a few guidelines to be considered.

You should make the initial call to your assigned mentor to arrange an introductory meeting in person. If you do not get a response from your mentor within two weeks after initial contact, please contact the Executive Director.

1. Do not assume your mentor knows how often you would like to meet or talk. Therefore, feel free to make periodic phone calls to seek advice or to simply talk with your mentor and share any concerns.
2. You should share the responsibility for arranging periodic meetings, at least once every two months. These meetings will help you get to know each other and enable your mentor to help you more effectively. Manage your schedule accordingly, in order to avoid PALS' strict "anti-no-show" policy.
3. Take the initiative to contact your mentor and return calls or e-mails in a timely fashion.

Below are some suggestions for activities to do together:

- Meet for lunch, dinner, drinks, or entertainment such as movies, concerts or plays.
- Ask your mentor to attend your moot court arguments.
- Ask your mentor to help you write your resume.
- Meet to discuss or practice interviewing.
- Shop together for your "interview suit."
- Ask your mentor for help with your job search.
- Ask your mentor to take you to a Bar Association event or CLE course.

III. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE MENTOR

A. Mentor Roles

The PALS Mentoring Program has three main goals for the mentor: (1) supporting the mentee; (2) acting as a resource; and (3) helping your mentee achieve his/her goals. The roles a mentor adopts will differ depending on the needs of your mentee. Below are general roles that a mentor may assume.

1. Guide

- Assist minority law students with navigating through the transition from undergraduate student or working professional to the role of law student.
- 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. Motivator

- Encourage and support.
- Motivate your mentee to identify and take concrete steps towards his/her goals.
- Focus on what your mentee is doing successfully.

3. Coach

- Provide constructive feedback to promote professional growth.
- Encourage positive behavior with positive feedback.
- Discourage negative behavior with constructive feedback.

4. Advisor

- Help your mentee develop his/her professional interests.
- Set goals that are reachable, specific, clear, and have a reasonable time frame for being achieved.
- Goals with law students may change throughout law school. Keep goals flexible and modify when necessary.
- Direct your mentee to career resources that he/she may require.

5. Role Model

- Always 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 the positive attributes of an experienced lawyer.

B. Mentor Responsibilities

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

1. Respect

- Do not share a mentee's personal feelings or ideas with a third party unless authorized by your mentee.
- Respect your mentee's time as if it were your own.

2. Communicate

- Be clear about your needs and limits.
- Discuss early on your preferred method of communication, the best days to be reached, and your time constraints.
- .Set boundaries from the beginning.

3. Professionalism

- Conduct a professional relationship at all times.
- Carefully consider whether to encourage a friendship.
- Work through a conflict with care and respect.
- Contact the Mentor Program Committee for assistance if necessary.

4. Evaluate

- Continually evaluate how well you are meeting the goals of the program.
- Invite your mentee to discuss any concerns.
- Encourage your mentee to meet his/her goals.

5. Recognition

- Recognize your mentee's success when he/she achieves goals you have discussed.
- Send a congratulatory e-mail or note, or take the time to make a phone call.

C. Mentor Program Expectations

PALS expects all mentors to be committed to the program. However, we understand that conflicts may arise. If at any time you feel you cannot work with your mentee, please contact the Executive Director. The Mentor Program Committee 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 the Executive Director as soon as possible.

MENTOR GUIDELINES E-MAIL

The email below is sent to attorney participants after they have been matched with a mentee.

Dear Mentor,

Thank you for registering as a mentor with the Practicing Attorneys for Law Students (PALS). We are happy to have you as a part of our community and we applaud your commitment to diversity in the legal profession.

MENTOR GUIDELINES

PALS is designed to provide lawyers and students with an opportunity to get to know each other within the context of the legal profession.

As a mentor, you play an important role in the development of your mentee as an attorney. You should be willing to commit yourself to a relationship that will be ongoing during your mentee's enrollment in law school.

You are encouraged to attend the Program's panel discussions, informal gatherings, and workshops. The topics will be relevant to minority law students and attorneys and will offer you an opportunity to meet other Program participants.

Below are a few guidelines and suggestions to help you establish a rapport with your mentee.

1. If you have an assistant, inform him or her about the Program and give him or her the name of your mentee.
2. After your first meeting, it would be helpful if you made periodic phone calls, at least once a month, to offer encouragement and advice, as well as to maintain the relationship.
3. Meet at least once every two months to learn more about the needs of your mentee.
4. Communicate any "no-shows" or consistent rescheduling on the part of your mentee to the Executive Director. PALS has a strict "anti-no-show" policy for its mentees. If a mentee misses or attempts to reschedule a previously scheduled appointment with you more than three times, that mentee is not permitted to continue participation in the program. You will be reassigned another mentee by PALS.

You might consider arranging some of the following activities:

- Meet for lunch, dinner, drinks, or entertainment such as movies, concerts or plays.
- Attend your mentee's moot court arguments.
- Assist your mentee with writing his/her resume.
- Meet to discuss or practice interviewing.
- Assist your mentee with the selection of his/her "interview suit."
- Help your mentee with his/her job search.

PALS MINORITY LAW STUDENT MENTORING PROGRAM

Attorney Fact Sheet

Program Overview

If you are considering becoming a mentor you may have asked yourself the following types of questions: How can I have an impact on a law student's life through mentoring? Do I have the time? The PALS Mentoring program provides you with the opportunity to make a significant difference in a law student's career with a minimum time commitment!

PALS Mentors provide support and advice on how to handle the unique challenges confronting minority law students during law school and early career development. One of the many benefits of the PALS mentor program is its flexibility. Once matched, mentors and mentees tailor the mentoring relationship to their individual needs and interests.

Who is Eligible?

Any licensed NYC area attorney practicing in any legal area may serve as a PALS mentor. PALS matches law students of color from the 13 New York City area law schools with volunteer attorneys.

What do PALS Mentors and Mentees do?

Because of the busy lives of attorneys and law students, most contact is done via telephone and e-mail. Some mentor/mentee in-person activities include: attending PALS events, bar association events, attending court activities, and meeting for lunch, dinner, drinks, or entertainment such as movies, concerts or plays.

Benefits of PALS mentoring to the mentee:

- Students experience greater academic success, self-confidence, self-esteem and motivation.
- Mentoring provides a sounding board for issues or dilemmas that arise.
- Students receive advice and ideas on career development and advancement.
- Students gain networking opportunities, improve communication skills and enhanced diversity awareness.

Benefits of Being a PALS Mentor:

- Increased involvement in the community, as well as participation in efforts to increase diversity in the legal field.
- The ability to foster insight, identify needed knowledge, and support academic and career endeavors for your assigned student.
- Helping to expand growth opportunities for a law student.
- The satisfaction of helping a law student reach milestones and achieve success by becoming a practicing attorney.

PALS CONTACT INFORMATION

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