

TCN Mentoring Program Guidebook

A. About the Mentoring Program

The Tobacco Control Network Mentoring Program is designed to foster a coaching relationship between more experienced tobacco control program managers (i.e., the mentor) and a new program manager (i.e., the mentee). Mentors provide support, content sharing, and feedback to their mentees.

Members of the Tobacco Control Network's (TCN) Executive Committee updated the Mentoring Program in 2020 to:

- Foster understanding of the Tobacco Control Network, benefits and resources
- Orient new program managers to tobacco control and/or a new manager position
- Facilitate learning for both mentors and mentees
- Encourage new program managers to become engaged in TCN
- Enhance leadership skills

The program benefits both mentees and mentors, and thus state tobacco control efforts as a whole. Benefits may include:

- Broader understanding of tobacco control, including cessation and the policy landscape
- Access to an overview of Tobacco 101 (tobacco control history and tobacco industry influences)
- Tips on leveraging your role with state and department leadership
- Suggestions on how to build a relationship with your CDC Project Officer and state Program Managers in your region
- Understanding of budget planning, CDC funding, the grant process and timelines
- Opportunities to share CDC required state plans (Strategic, Communications and Evaluation)
- Improved managerial development, enhanced productivity and job performance
- Enhanced understanding of benefits of and participation in the TCN
- Opportunities to develop staff skills with project management, strategic planning, and communication/media planning
- Identifying networking opportunities

B. The Selection and Matching Process

On a regular basis, TCN will solicit mentors and mentees into the Mentoring Program via the [online application](#) through announcements in TCN News and other TCN email communications. Additionally, new program managers can request to participate in the program at any time by completing the [online application](#).

Mentees will be assigned a mentor taking the following criteria into account: tobacco control

experience, region of country (including time zone), population size and demographics, types of issues faced/political climate, and funding level. Attempts will be made to create a match based on these criteria, but matches will depend on the available pool of mentors at the time of the match.

C. The Mentoring Program Experience

Each mentee and mentor will determine the goals and pattern of contact. Contact will occur by phone, e-mail, or video call (i.e. Skype, Facetime, etc.). Pairs should set goals for the mentoring relationship within 30 days of being matched.

After being paired, mentors will be responsible for initiating contact with mentees via phone. During the call, mentors will provide mentees with an overview of the TCN (website, Forum, 2016 Policy Recommendations, Executive Committee, Regional Representatives, etc.) and of tobacco control as a whole. Topics that may be discussed include tips for program management, leadership skills, coping effectively with challenges unique to the role, and how to share information with peers in tobacco control.

D. The Role of the Mentor

Mentor Eligibility

- Any TCN program manager with over two years of program management experience may apply to become a mentor.
- Mentors must commit to participating in the program for a minimum of 12 months.

Why Be a Mentor?

- Build and strengthen leadership skills while helping out a new Program Manager
- Create long-term sustainability in tobacco control
- Gain ideas from someone new to the role

The Mentor Role and Responsibilities

- Ensure regular communication
- Meet a minimum of one hour per month

Work with your Mentee

- Arrange an introductory phone call
- Share conference calls, symposiums or other types of professional development events that may be of interest
- Share your career history and your work responsibilities for past, present and future
- Contact your mentee and the TCN if circumstances require you to discontinue your

- participation or if your mentee has not maintained contact
- Complete your program evaluation to provide feedback to the program

Other Suggested Interactions with your Mentee

- Teach and/or introduce her/him to tobacco control contacts and networking opportunities
- Emphasize the benefits of establishing relationships with national partners (American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Lung Association, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, etc.)
- Share and encourage use of TCN resources
- Suggest reading materials, webinars, podcasts, etc.
- Talk about your management experiences
- Provide support during times of transition (i.e. leadership changes as a result of a change in Governor, Executive Office staff)
- Meet in-person at mutual meetings, conferences, trainings, etc.

E. The Role of the Mentee

Who Can be a Mentee?

Any program manager who has less than three years of program management experience may apply to become a mentee.

Possible benefits to mentees:

- Opportunity to learn from someone more experienced
- Exposure to new ideas, theories, practices, and/or people that might not be pursued without a mentor's guidance and/or encouragement
- Increased understanding of your state's contribution to the broader tobacco control movement
- Improved communication skills
- Professional support and encouragement from mentor
- Increased professional confidence
- Increased networking opportunities
- Increased awareness of professional issues
- Career growth

The Mentee Role Description

In addition to what is outlined in the mentor's role description, mentees are encouraged to adhere to the following goals/responsibilities of the mentoring program:

- Maintain contact with your mentor who has volunteered because of genuine interest in your progress and well-being

- Apply what is learned; put patterns of professional behavior into practice
- Be willing to consider the advice and follow through with it
- Take full advantage of the assistance offered
- Bring issues/concerns to your mentor
- Share experiences and ask for help
- Contact the [TCN staff](#) if you run into any difficulties with this program (e.g., getting in touch with your mentor) or with any other questions/comments you may have

F. Program Evaluation

Both mentors and mentees will be sent a 6-month and 12-month evaluation survey so that the TCN can obtain feedback on the program and the progress of the mentoring relationship.

G. What if the Mentoring Relationship Doesn't Work

Mentors and mentees are encouraged to contact the TCN at tcn@astho.org with questions in the event that the relationship is not meeting mentee needs. Please note that the mentoring relationship is not a legally binding relationship and the TCN is not responsible for any outcomes of the relationships.

