

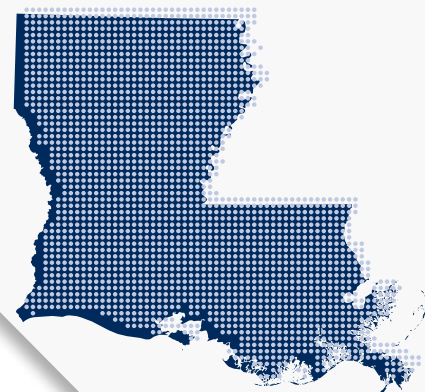


THE FUTURE
OF OUR LEGAL
PROFESSION



“TIP” MENTORING

New Website,
New Benefits for Mentees,
More Resources Offered
for Mentees and Mentors



By Brooke Theobald

The Louisiana State Bar Association’s (LSBA) statewide Transition Into Practice (TIP) Mentoring Program, which began in 2015, has recently undergone a new and exciting renovation. The revamp of the program has included new benefits for mentees (including CLE hours and TIP Bucks), a new website, more resources for mentors, mentees and members, and all-new graphics and media.

What is the TIP Program?

The TIP Mentoring Program matches one mentor with one mentee, giving newly admitted LSBA attorneys access to veteran attorneys to assist with their transition into the practice of law. During the program, mentees learn practical skills, including professionalism discussions, and what is expected of them as LSBA members. Mentors share their wisdom and experience gained through their careers. Mentees receive knowledge, advice and hands-on experience they may not have received in law school.

Participation in the TIP Program involves completing tasks in two categories. Mentees are required during the TIP period to undertake 11 specific annual activities, such as attending hearings in various courts, attending the Bridging the Gap CLE seminar and going to a Bar function. Additionally, mentees will meet with their mentors at least four times to review a myriad of discussion topics to assist with their transition into the practice of law from school.

New Aspects of the TIP Program

With the new TIP Program, mentees will now receive two years (25 hours) of CLE credit for completing the program, thanks to a Supreme Court Order (Supreme Court Rule XXX 3.22) signed on June 26, 2023. The new rule allows for participation by newly admitted attorneys during the year of their admission through the next calendar year. For example, a new attorney admitted in 2023 would have until Dec. 31, 2024, to complete the program and would not have to start completing more CLE programs until 2026.

Along with the two years of CLE hours, participants will have access to exclusive professional development workshops for trust accounting, stress management, law practice management and lawyer advertising.

Mentees who complete the TIP Program will also receive \$200 in TIP Bucks. This LSBA currency can be applied to any programming offered by the LSBA — *i.e.*, CLE seminars, Annual

Meeting/Summer School — but not mandatory fees like dues, assessments, etc.

New Website and More TIP Program Details

The new website, located at www.lsba.org/mentoring, is cleaner and more graphically appealing. Less copy and more landing pages make the site easier to navigate. Mentors and mentees now have independent sections on the site. Separating their information makes it simpler to find and makes both enrolling in TIP and keeping up with the program after enrollment easier as well.

When newly admitted attorneys, or prospective mentors, determine they want to participate and enroll in the TIP Mentoring Program, they will be asked to complete a detailed application with as much information as possible to help find the best match. With more than 700 mentors in the volunteer Mentor Pool, mentees can be paired with someone from a variety of practice areas or areas of interests. Mentees and mentors are paired based on geographic location first, and then, to the best ability of the program, using the details in the new application and profile system. Mentees and mentors can also apply for the TIP Program with specific pairing requests. Enrollment occurs on a rolling basis throughout the year online.

Both mentees and mentors now have personal homepages once they are enrolled in the TIP Program. On their homepage, mentees are able to access their Personal Mentoring Plan where they will record their TIP activities and update the LSBA on their progress. Mentees and mentors can update their profiles at any time to help facilitate better matching. Mentors also have the ability to update their mentoring availability at any time and the capacity to see their current or past mentee's activities.

Mentees and mentors are provided with extensive mentoring resources to assist in their program. All resources can be found in their own section of the new website, *TIP Program Materials*. The TIP Handbook, containing all activities and discussions needed to complete the mentoring program, has been updated

and includes new resources. Other new materials include Timelines for Mentees and Mentors. The interactive timelines show how the TIP Program works and includes details on each step of the process from enrollment to attestation. Another new addition to the materials is the TIP First Meeting Guide, a helpful guide for mentees and mentors with discussion points and tips to use at their initial meeting.

There are also universal mentoring resources available on the site for all LSBA members. Under the *Mentoring Resources* section of the new site, mentoring articles, podcasts and videos are posted for the benefit of all members. The exclusive professional development workshop videos for TIP mentees are located there as well.

Why New Admittees Should Enroll

Newly admitted LSBA attorneys in any type of practice or interested in any areas of the law can sign up for the TIP Mentoring Program. The program can be particularly helpful for attorneys who are individually or collectively hanging out their own shingle. Without the assistance of more experienced attorneys at their side, young lawyers may not gain the understanding of the practicalities of the everyday practice of law. Newly admitted attorneys in law firms with no mentoring programs, as well as others in firms with loosely organized mentoring programs, could pair with a mentor from the TIP Program and gain a multitude of benefits. By formalizing a mentoring program, they will gain more practical experience than they would have otherwise, not to mention the additional benefits TIP provides — two years of CLE hours, TIP Bucks, exclusive workshops and resources. New admittees planning on practicing in other areas of the law, or non-traditional career paths, may be unsure of their future careers. By pairing with a TIP mentor in a similar position — who has been where they are now — it can help guide them to where they need to be.

Through the TIP Program, mentees will learn practical skills, knowledge, professionalism and expectations for their

future as a barred attorney. For all newly admitted attorneys, there is a significant knowledge gap from what is learned in law school to the realities of the practice of law. Law school prepares you to think, read, write and research, but not to practice. New attorneys will find, without help, that they may struggle with many aspects of law practice which veteran attorneys take for granted. Seemingly routine tasks that new attorneys have never experienced, like preparing an engagement letter, hiring a paralegal or opening a trust account, become overwhelming. The TIP Program has discussion activities aimed at addressing such needs.

By being paired with TIP mentors at the start of their careers, mentees have someone to lean on, ask questions and seek advice on a one-on-one basis. As they complete the program, mentors and mentees will talk about the fundamental issues that come up for lawyers throughout their careers, during designated discussion activities and as they complete the mentees' annual activities. Mentors are encouraged to include their own knowledge, wisdom and anecdotes throughout the program. In evaluations of the program, 100% of mentees agreed their mentors were able to incorporate their personal wisdom and experiences into their program. The very first discussion activity requires the pair to have their initial meeting to review the mentee's Personal Mentoring Plan. They are also required to thoroughly discuss the Code of Professionalism and how it is incorporated into everyday law practice. Professionalism is included in a number of activities to stress its importance as a fundamental building block of a strong legal profession. Also, 92% of mentees assessed agreed they learned enough about professionalism and how to incorporate it into their work through the TIP Program.

Great for Mentors, Too!

The TIP Program is an incredibly positive experience for the mentor as well and eligible attorneys are encouraged to volunteer. Prospective mentors for the TIP Program must have been admitted

What Do Former Mentees Think About the TIP Program?

Both mentors and mentees have always given great feedback about the TIP Program. Here are a few thoughts:

"The mentorship provided a wealth of knowledge I was not expecting and also opened doors to great networking opportunities and more."

"I liked being able to observe practical elements of the legal practice (e.g., depositions, hearings, trials). Also, the assignment of a mentor enabled me to ask questions more easily."

"I appreciated the opportunity to connect with an older lawyer who was willing to help me."

"The program incorporated hands-on training and experience with a professional of your choice. I equated the program to post-secondary law school . . . which acts as a great segue between law school and the practice."

"I enjoyed having someone to bounce ideas off of and learn from their experiences."

into the practice of law for a period of at least 10 years. They must have no record of suspension or disbarment from practice and must have a professional liability insurance policy with minimum limits of \$100,000 per occurrence and \$300,000 in the aggregate. They also need to be of good moral character, willing to voluntarily participate in the program, and commit throughout the program term to the obligations and duties of being a mentor. (The insurance policy requirement is not applicable to mentors who are employed as in-house attorneys or those employed by a governmental unit or "not-for-profit" entity.) Mentors who successfully mentor a new admittee will receive 6.0 hours of free CLE credit the first year and 4.0 hours of CLE credit for subsequent pairings.

Mentors routinely relate that they receive an equally positive experience as the mentee. Both attorneys learn from each other and ultimately become better lawyers because of it.

Just Do It!

Even though the TIP Program is voluntary, newly admitted LSBA attorneys should strongly consider participating in it. There is so much to learn about the practice of law outside of school. Trying to start a career without as much support as possible will make the road much more difficult. Having a mentor by your

side, who you can lean on for knowledge and advice, will ease the burden of first-year difficulties and stress. Mentees and mentors will also, hopefully, by the time their program has concluded, have gained a lifelong relationship they can count on throughout their careers.

The time investment a new lawyer makes with the TIP Program will pay great dividends as they move from law school into the practice of law. The LSBA and the Louisiana Supreme Court want to make that transition as smooth as possible.

More information, including how to sign up to be a mentee or mentor, can be found on the main mentoring web page at: www.lsba.org/mentoring. Also included on that web page are a new brochure, a TIP FAQ article and videos presented by Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice John L. Weimer, Associate Justice Scott J. Crichton, Associate Justice James T. Genovese and Associate Justice Piper D. Griffin.

Need answers to more questions? Email TIP@lsba.org.

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