



AMCTO
THE MUNICIPAL EXPERTS

Mentorship Handbook

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
The Mentoring Relationship	3
Roles & Responsibilities	5
The Mentorship Agreement	6
Program Timeline	8
Program Benefits	9
Frequently Asked Questions	10
Mentorship Agreement	13
Confidentiality Agreement	14

“I cannot emphasize how great of an experience it was as I learnt from someone outside of my own organization, who was able to give me perspective and guidance while feeling support and knowing I could trust my mentor.”

– Natalie Charette, Deputy Clerk/Communications Officer,
Township of North Dundas

“If you have experiences to share, please pay it forward by investing in one another. Do not underestimate the value of your input.”

– Annette Gilchrist, CMO, AOMC, Dipl.M.M.,
Chief Administrative Office/Clerk/Treasurer, Township of Bonnechere Valley

“Sharing my knowledge and seeing it deployed in someone new was very fulfilling and created a personal renewal in my day-to-day work.”

– Shellee Fournier, CMO, Dipl.M.A.,
Chief Administrative Officer, Township of Rideau Lakes





Introduction

The AMCTO Mentorship Program provides members with opportunities for personal growth and professional development. The program facilitates meaningful connections by matching those new to the municipal sector with more experienced, senior professionals and municipal leaders who can provide professional guidance and support.

Goals of the Program

1. Leverage the value of professional local government experience.
2. Develop the mentorship capacity of local government professionals.
3. Establish meaningful relationships for members and those within the sector.

We believe that by guiding and supporting program participants throughout their mentor-mentee relationship, there is an opportunity to build and develop knowledge and practical skills within the sector – allowing for the necessary transferring of tools and expertise to empower the next generation of municipal leaders.

The Mentoring Relationship

Mentorship involves two parties: the mentor and the mentee. The relationship requires a genuine and mutual trust and respect from the parties involved – this includes a commitment to meet on a regular basis, to be open to feedback and to have a desire to improve oneself.

The focus of the relationship is on the professional development of a mentee through the counsel and guidance of a formal mentor. A successful mentoring relationship should lead to positive outcomes for both the mentee and the mentor through the expansion of knowledge, skills development, and creativity. The relationship's success is contingent upon providing a respected and safe space to discuss professional issues. It is important that this relationship is viewed as an equal partnership, where both parties can openly and freely exchange ideas, discuss challenges and explore solutions together. The value of mentorship is in this collaborative exchange where both parties have the opportunity to learn from one another.



What Mentorship is:

- An opportunity for both parties to learn and grow through mutual trust and respect and by establishing a foundation for open, honest two-way dialogue and communication.
- A commitment to making time to meet and discuss professional issues and challenges in a safe space.
- An opportunity for both parties to provide support and guidance.
- An opportunity to explore new ways of thinking.
- An opportunity to gain professional development through knowledge sharing.
- An opportunity to set and track professional goals with support to achieve them.
- An opportunity for coaching and constructive feedback.
- An opportunity to build confidence and develop new skills.
- An opportunity to expand your professional network.

What Mentorship is NOT:

- A one-sided relationship – it's important to establish clear expectations and to build mutual trust and respect.
- A quick fix for finding the answer or a solution to a specific problem.
- A quick fix for gaining new skills or enhanced career advancement – skills take time to develop and career advancement through mentorship is not a guarantee.
- An opportunity to talk over someone else – it's important to listen and to give equal time and space to discuss issues and explore solutions together.
- A one-time meeting – for the relationship to be successful, it's important to establish a regular meeting schedule to build rapport and to give time to fully discuss professional issues.
- A personal relationship – mentorship should be professional where all parties feel comfortable and respected.

Mentorship can be beneficial for both parties however; it is worth noting that the following can always occur:

- A mentee or mentor could feel that they no longer want or are no longer able to continue in the program.
- At times meeting regularly may become difficult. If such a situation occurs, the mentee and the mentor should discuss options on how to address this and if unsuccessful, they can connect with AMCTO staff.
- Misalignment between a mentor and mentee may happen. The most well-intentioned and managed programs must account for this scenario. While it is the goal to match mentees and mentors based on skills and what each party hopes to take away from the program, it is important to recognize when a relationship isn't working as intended. In this case, parties are encouraged to connect with AMCTO staff so that a new match can be made.





Roles & Responsibilities

Mentors should have a minimum of seven (7) years professional experience (ideally within the municipal sector, however we welcome mentor applications from those with a wide variety of professional background and experience). As a mentor, your role is to listen, provide guidance and support to your mentee.

Mentor responsibilities:

- Be proactive in establishing a foundation for open, honest two-way dialogue and communication.
- Be committed to actively listen and participate in meetings. Show up on time and be prepared to fully engage in the conversation.
- Create a safe environment where the mentee can freely discuss a wide array of professional issues and challenges confidentially.
- Provide friendly and professional support by listening and enabling your mentee to explore ideas and solutions to challenges.
- Discuss and help determine learning opportunities and professional goal-setting as an advisor/coach to your mentee.
- Be a resource by providing advice on accessing local government tools, information and networks for helping your mentee accomplish their professional goals.
- Be honest with your mentee in providing constructive feedback.
- Be encouraging of your mentee to support them in building their professional confidence.
- Be open to learning from your mentee.



Mentees should be new professionals (under seven years professional experience) or should be new to working in the municipal sector. Mentees should indicate on their program application what skills they are looking to develop and what they are hoping to gain from the program.



Mentee responsibilities:

- Initiate meetings with your mentor and come prepared with questions or topics you'd like to discuss.
- Ensure your employer is aware of and supports your participation in the program.
- Identify a personal vision for what you wish to achieve from this relationship and share it with your mentor.
- Identify and share the skills and qualities you're looking to develop.
- Work jointly with your mentor on a plan of action for learning and development; how you will identify, measure and accomplish your professional goals.
- Discuss your relationship expectations with your mentor to make sure the match is a good fit.
- Ensure that you connect with AMCTO if you are having difficulty meeting or if you feel the relationship is not working or the mentorship match is not a good fit.
- Be prepared to disclose professional problems to your mentor in order to talk through or solicit advice and feedback.
- Be open to constructive feedback and questions from your mentor.
- Be appreciative of your mentor's time and willingness to share resources or access to other professional contacts.
- Ensure that you continue to pass on the gift of mentoring.



The Mentorship Agreement

Prior to participation in the program, each party will be required to review and sign-off on a mentorship agreement. This ensures that each party is aware of their responsibilities and is fully committed to the program. The agreement also includes an acknowledgement and understanding of confidentiality that comes with the conversations and ideas discussed as part of the formal mentorship.

The Mentoring Process

The AMCTO Mentorship Program is distance-based meaning that participants are responsible for driving their relationship forward. This includes setting meeting times and agreeing on a plan of action for accomplishing program outcomes.

We strongly encourage all participants to have access to video-chat services (i.e. Teams, Skype, WhatsApp, Zoom) in order to facilitate virtual meetings.

The mentorship ends when either the agreed upon time commitment has been reached or when the goals outlined have been met. If the two parties want to extend their relationship, that is an option participants can pursue beyond the length of the program. Mentors and mentees will have the opportunity to review and gauge the quality of the matches and the overall program through AMCTO staff check-ins and a formal program survey.



AMCTO will:

- Administer and manage the program, including:
 - Solicitation, selection and matching of participants;
 - Preparation of guidance materials and forms;
 - Coordination of program modifications and improvements.
- AMCTO staff will serve as ongoing support for both mentees and mentors as needed.
- Staff will monitor and evaluate the progress of the program and make any necessary adjustments to matches as needed.
- Staff will intervene, if necessary, when there has been a breach of professional conduct or confidentiality.

Requirements for participation:

- Be an active AMCTO member in good standing.
- Demonstrate a willingness to participate in a mentoring relationship for at least a nine-month period.
- Signed program agreement form.
- Signed confidentiality form.
- All participants must notify AMCTO staff immediately if:
 - They wish to discontinue participation in the program.
 - They feel a match is not successful.
 - They feel uncomfortable in any way (i.e. a breach of confidentiality or professional conduct has occurred).

Confidentiality

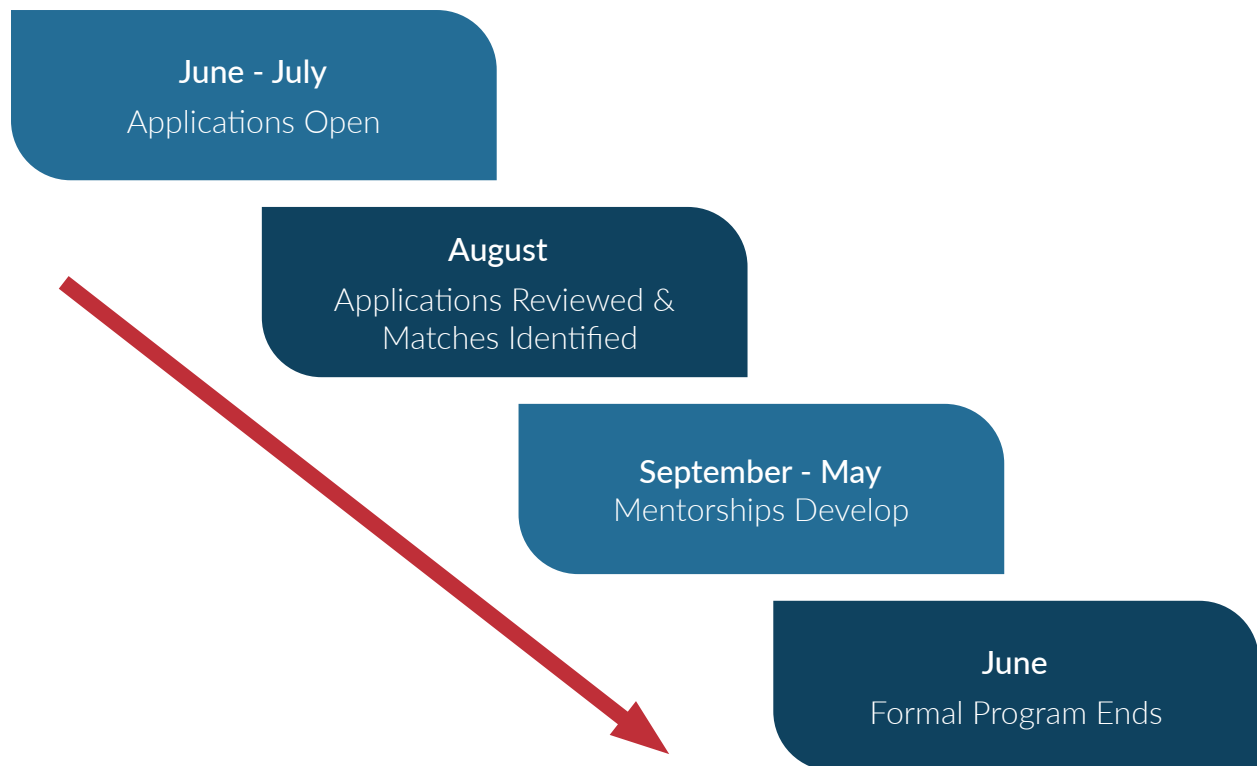
Mentorship is successful when both parties are realistic and clarify all expectations upfront in order to establish a firm foundation from which to build. A critical element to the success of a mentoring relationship is to ensure both parties understand that confidentiality is to be maintained. This includes a mutual agreement whereby both parties make the pledge that discussions will remain confidential. With this understanding, if at any time participants have concerns regarding inappropriate behavior or a breach of confidentiality, AMCTO staff should be advised immediately. From there, we will do our best to determine the most appropriate course of action to be taken (which may or may not include participants discontinuation in the program).





Program Timeline

Interested AMCTO members can apply to the program each year during the summer months. Following the application deadline, AMCTO staff will review and match individuals based on shared interests and goals. **Please note that due to the high volume of applications we receive, we cannot guarantee that every applicant will be accepted into the program.** We will do our best to match each eligible individual, however, those who are not accepted are encouraged to re-apply the following year. Following the formal program end date, all participants will be asked to complete a survey to help support AMCTO staff in continued program improvements and delivery. Participants are encouraged to continue their mentormentee relationship outside of the program if they wish to do so on their own time.





Program Benefits

There are many benefits to getting involved in a formal mentorship program – the biggest being the opportunity for both parties to learn from each other and expand their professional knowledge, skills and network.

This program is ideal for:

- Experienced municipal professionals looking to give back to the sector by supporting others as a mentor.
- Those looking to gain new knowledge, professional skills and experience.
- Those looking to set focused goals as a mentee and work collaboratively with a mentor on a professional development plan.
- Those looking to expand their network and explore new ideas.

By participating in the program, you will also have the opportunity to attain PDU credits towards the maintenance of [AMCTO designations](#) (this applies to both mentors and mentees).

“Being an active member of AMCTO has helped shape me. Without my peer network through mentorship or the professional development opportunities I have participated in, I don’t know that I would be where I am today...”

*– Danielle Manton, AOMC, Dipl. M.M.,
City Clerk, City of Cambridge*

For more information about the program or for details on AMCTO membership, please contact us at membershipservices@amcto.com.





Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to be a member of AMCTO to participate in this program?

Yes, the mentorship program is only available to AMCTO members in good standing.

How long does the program run?

The official 'start' of the program is in September and will conclude in June of the following year. When you apply, you are committing to participate in the program for the full nine months.

Can I continue my mentorship after the nine months?

Yes, and we encourage it. If both parties agree, you can continue as long as you like. Be aware however, that the formal program support is only in place for the nine months that the official program runs.

When do applications open?

Specific application dates vary from year to year but typically open around the beginning of June/early July with selection and matching occurring in August. Please check our website for more information.

Is there a cost to participate in this program?

No – this program is offered for free as a benefit to all AMCTO members.

I have already self-identified someone to be my mentor/mentee, can I apply to the program and ask for that person specifically?

Yes, however we will only consider matching people together if both parties have agreed to this. Each party should specifically request to be matched with each other.

Does everyone get accepted into the program and matched?

While every effort is made to provide all applicants with a match, we cannot guarantee that you will be placed in the program due to the high volume of applications we receive and limited program spots available. This process and decision-making is determined by a small team of volunteers and staff that work to establish appropriate matches in any given year. Those who do not get accepted into the program are encouraged to re-apply again the following year.

I was matched with someone who is not a good fit for me. Why did this happen?

While we do our best to find you the most appropriate match based on the goals and other information you provide in your program application, it doesn't always work out to be the right fit. Unfortunately, we can't ensure there will be a mentor who meets all of your specific requirements; however, we ask that all participants remain open and flexible. We encourage you to try to meet at least twice before deciding to either request a new match or withdraw from the program. If after a couple meetings you still feel that it is not a good fit or if you feel uncomfortable in any way, we ask that you please contact us. Our team will work with you to address any concerns and to determine the next appropriate course of action to be taken.

Why am I not able to be matched in my region?

Matches are determined by the information you provide in your program application (this includes your goals, background and experience, and what you're ultimately hoping to achieve from the program). Based on this, our team will do our best to find you an appropriate mentor who can guide and support you. This may include someone who is not necessarily from your region. All mentorship meetings are encouraged to take place virtually (either through Zoom/Teams/Skype or via phone).

Can I mentor more than one mentee?

While we are looking to explore this option in the future, we are currently only matching individuals on a one-on-one basis.

If I have a question about my match, who do I contact?

For questions about your match or the program in general, please contact us at membershipservices@amcto.com.

How often should I meet with my match?

You can meet with your match as often as you like, but it is important to meet at least once a month or every 4-6 weeks in order to develop a valuable mentorship relationship. Accessibility and maintaining contact are essential for the relationship to develop. We also recommend a minimum commitment of 1-3 hours per month to working through your program goals.

How and what are we going to talk about during our first meeting?

Once you have been connected to your match via e-mail, it is recommended that the mentee take an active approach to connecting regularly to the mentor through a schedule of touch points and set meetings. Mentors are expected to be responsive, open and engaged for all meetings set by their mentees.

What do I tell my match about myself?

Your match will likely be very interested in getting to know you and your professional experience/goals/concerns. We encourage both parties to share information such as how you got to where you are, your experience working within your current role/team and/or any involvement with AMCTO or other community initiatives. You may share personal information at your discretion. Some people may wish to connect with you personally as a general point of reference. If you are uncomfortable with this, however, it is imperative that you share this at the outset and that both parties set clear expectations for the relationship.



What kinds of activities can I do with my match?

There are many possibilities but the activities will depend on both parties' availability and expectations of the mentoree relationship. We encourage you to share in open dialogues or virtual 'coffee chats' or to attend other AMCTO programs and events together.

What do I do if my match shares very serious problems or confidential matters with me?

It is important for both parties to acknowledge and sign-off on the program confidentiality agreement and to have open and honest discussions. However, if you believe a professional boundary has been crossed, we ask that you please contact us. Our team will work with you to address any concerns and to determine the next appropriate course of action to be taken.

What do I do if the relationship with my match is not working (i.e. lack of interest)?

If after a few interactions, it is clear that the relationship will not work, please contact us and we will work with you to explore solutions and determine the appropriate next steps (either finding a different match or recommending a deferral of your participation in the program if other matches are not available).

What is the Mentor/Mentee Agreement and why is it so important?

The agreement serves as the backbone for the mentoring relationship. It provides the framework for the scope of the relationship and acts as a contract between the mentor and mentee. You will need to discuss this agreement during your initial conversation or meeting. It serves to determine the confidentiality standards, establish the boundaries for the relationship, help you set your meeting schedule, and set out ways to monitor progress.

Can I accrue PDUs for participation in the program?

For any AMCTO members who hold a professional designation with the association, mentors and mentees can account for PDU hours related to their involvement in this program.

How do I account for the time I have spent in the mentoring program?

PDUs can be claimed after verification of the fact that you are a participant in the program for any given year. However, you must maintain your own log of the actual time spent with your mentee/mentor. You must also ensure that you and your mentee/mentor are in agreement as to the time that you have spent together.

Where can I find out more about AMCTO accreditation?

We encourage you to visit our website to learn more about our different [accreditation programs](#). For specific application or accreditation questions, please contact us at membershipservices@amcto.com.





Mentorship Agreement

AMCTO mentors and mentees voluntarily enter into this partnership. The ultimate goal of participation in this program is to develop a mentorship that is a mutually rewarding experience where participants are dedicated to make time to focus on their career development and professional growth.

As participants, we agree that:

- The relationship will last for at least nine months. Informal assessment of the relationship should occur every two-three months between mentor and mentee.
- Mentor and mentee should seek regular meetings without ever going more than six weeks between meetings.
- Meeting times will be respected unless this is unavoidable. At the end of each meeting, participants should determine the date for the next meeting.
- Each meeting will last a minimum of 30 minutes and a maximum of 90 minutes.
- Mentor and mentees must agree that the general content of these meetings are to remain professional and confidential.
- Both parties recognize the importance of being open, honest and sharing constructive feedback.
- Both parties agree to a no-fault conclusion of this relationship if, for any reason, it seems appropriate.

MENTOR

Signature

Full Name

Date

MENTEE

Signature

Full Name

Date





Confidentiality Agreement

A critical element to the success of a mentoring relationship is to ensure both parties understand that confidentiality is to be maintained. This includes a mutual agreement whereby both parties make the pledge that discussions will remain confidential.

As participants, we agree that:

The content of our discussions will remain professional and confidential during and after completion of the program. We acknowledge, understand and agree that should there be concerns that develop regarding inappropriate behaviours that may place either party at risk, an AMCTO staff member will be advised immediately.

MENTOR

MENTEE

Signature

Signature

Full Name

Full Name

Date

Date





The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) represents excellence in local government, management and leadership. Over the past 85 years, AMCTO has provided education, accreditation, leadership, and management expertise for Ontario municipal professionals. With 2,200+ members working in municipalities across the province, AMCTO is Ontario's largest association of local government professionals, and the leading professional development organization for municipal professionals.

Our mission is to deliver professional growth, networks, advocacy, and leadership to support and strengthen the knowledge, skills, and capabilities of municipal professionals now and into the future.

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