



Mentoring Guide for Altrusans

BACKGROUND

When the new Strategic Plan was developed in 2016 to commence after the Convention in 2017 it included the need to develop a strong leadership mentoring program as a way that Altrusa can attract and retain members and to strengthen the leadership in our organization. This is in keeping with our tagline –“Leading to a better community”. In developing this document, the Altrusa Mentors Task Force reviewed more than ten (10) other mentoring programs primarily for service organizations and surveyed Altrusans about their interests and desires for such a program.

Altrusa Mentoring is a relationship in which an experienced Altrusan (Mentor) assists another Altrusan (Mentee) in developing specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the less-experienced Altrusan’s personal growth leading to satisfaction, fulfillment and retention. Although we do not specifically address mentoring Altrusans in their professions, the same principles would apply and Altrusans may well find other Altrusans who can serve as their professional mentors.

This document is both for new Altrusans and those who are ready to continue their journey as leaders in our wonderful, dynamic organization. It is also for those “seasoned’ Altrusans who want to help these emerging leaders on their amazing, rewarding, and challenging journey. Our organization will be stronger because of the effort from those Altrusans engaging in this mentorship program.

GOAL

The goals of the Altrusa Mentors Program are to:

- Develop to a better community through engaging new members and increasing the retention rate of current Altrusa members achieved through connections with members and the community.
- Help Altrusans develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence to pursue leadership opportunities in Altrusa.
- Create an environment that encourages Altrusans to accept leadership roles, knowing there is always someone there to discuss opportunities and challenges.
- Share experiences on how building leadership skills help in personal growth, both in the club and at work.

QUALIFICATIONS OF MENTEES

For new members:

- Be an Altrusan active member.
- Desire to acquire or increase Altrusa knowledge and their service to Altrusa.

For emerging leaders, add the desire to accept a leadership role in their club, their district, or at the International level.

QUALIFICATIONS OF MENTORS

For all mentors:

- Active member in your Club who is knowledgeable about Altrusa and how their club fits into their district and the International organization.
- Willingness to share experiences and have the capacity to listen.
- At least two leadership positions (including project or committee leadership) in Altrusa or their profession.
- Knowledgeable on how to encourage.
- Knowledgeable on how to provide constructive criticism.

For emerging leaders:

- Knowledge and experience with the position for which your mentee aspires. Your mentee may need to change mentors as she/he moves up in the organization to someone familiar with the position to which they aspire.
- For mentees who are interested in leadership beyond the club level, the best mentors are those who have regularly attended conferences (or conventions, if the mentee is interested in serving at the International level).

BENEFITS TO MENTEES

- Share experiences: Your Mentor is familiar with Altrusa and can share her/his in-depth knowledge and experiences with you, expanding your knowledge of Altrusa.
- Helps you to realize your potential: As a Mentee, you know yourself well, but often your views about what you believe you can achieve and what you cannot do are limited. Your Mentor can help you see your current strengths, particularly those you do not recognize yourself which will have a big impact on what you and your club can achieve. You may also improve your organizational skills.
- Introduce you to new people: Your Mentor will introduce you to other Altrusans who will support you and to community people who will help along the way. You may develop new lifetime friendships.
- Safe place for sharing your ideas and to expand your horizons: Your Mentor is a great person to bounce your ideas off and provide feedback and ideas. Your Mentor is objective, so you can share ideas without the worry of being judged. Your Mentor will

help you to expand your perspective. By combining your ideas with your Mentor's, your own thinking will stretch and, ultimately, so will your knowledge.

- Encouragement and support: Your Mentor believes in you and will encourage you to achieve your goals. Your Mentor will support you, cheering on your successes and providing constructive feedback at times, when outcomes worked out differed than what you expected. This should improve your communication skills.
- A Role Model and be honest with you: Your Mentor has been in similar situations as you and has dealt with those situations successfully. Your Mentor is a role model for you. Your Mentor can also be the person who tells you what you need to hear, and not just what they think you want to hear.
- Accountability: Your Mentor can help you remain steadfast by holding you accountable for your actions and what you have committed to.

BENEFITS TO MENTORS

- Enhance your skills: As a Mentor, you will strengthen your leadership and coaching skills by sharing them and providing advice to assist your Mentee, as an emerging leader, to be confident to apply their learning and information in leadership roles or other commitments. You will further develop your leadership skills, making you an even more valuable asset.
- Contribute to the success of Altrusa: As a Mentor, you will help develop Altrusans who will be more satisfied and fulfilled, thus remaining an Altrusan who leads to a better community.
- Make a Difference: Making a difference to a new Altrusan or an emerging Altrusa leader, who in turn, may gain an opportunity to advise others.
- Creating a legacy: As a Mentor, you are creating a legacy by having a positive impact on your Mentee, your Altrusa Club and the community.
- Re-energize your commitment to Altrusa: As a Mentor, you will be reminded of why you became an Altrusa seeing the excitement of being a new Altrusan.
- Increase your Confidence: Teaching, advising and sharing your knowledge and experience can increase your own confidence and satisfaction that your service can be used within Altrusa and not just within your community.
- Validity: Validating that you have acquired leadership expertise, learnings and knowledge your fellow Altrusans want to know about.
- Revitalize: Revitalizing your connection with Altrusa by engaging in a reciprocal mentoring relationship.
- Helping to ensure the future of Altrusa.

HOW TO PAIR MENTORS AND MENTEES

It is the choice of the Mentee, but the Mentor must agree to the match.

FOR ALL MEMBERS

- Take the time you need to make your decision.
- You should seek a connection and feeling of trust, respect and confidentiality for this relationship to be effective and satisfying for you both.
- Think about what you want from this mentoring relationship. This will assist in your choice of Mentor.
- It is essential that Mentors and Mentees are compatible, so that each will have a positive experience, the best's experience that will benefit Altrusa and the community.

FOR NEW MEMBERS

- A suggested target for matching Mentors and new Mentees would be by the 4th meeting that the Mentee has attended.
- Mentors would be active members of the Altrusa club that the new Mentee has joined, and who know well how their club functions and fits into the Altrusa International framework.

ASSISTING A MENTEE TO CHOOSE

FOR NEW MEMBERS AND EMERGING LEADERS AT THE CLUB LEVEL

- If your sponsor meets the above qualifications, you may choose your sponsor as your mentor. You are not required to choose your sponsor, especially if she/he is new to the club or hasn't held any leadership positions.
- Your club president or any past presidents can assist you in making your choice.

FOR EMERGING LEADERS INTERESTED IN DISTRICT OR INTERNATIONAL POSITIONS

- Consider a mentor from outside your club or district: Your club may not have a current member who has served in a district or International position for which you have interest, so you may need to make contacts outside your club. For a district position, your district visitor is a good place to ask for ideas. For an International position, International visitor at your conference can help you with this.
- Consider list of mentors (a file prepared for available mentors with specific strength and weakness) if your district provides one.
- Biographies of Mentors: Their biographies will provide some personal and professional information about themselves including their leadership experiences both within and external to Altrusa. These may also be collected by your district.
- By Professional Network information: There will be listed providing further information about your prospective mentor and their leadership and work/service experiences. You may more easily create a connection with some in a similar professional field. Those interested in District position should select a mentor who is

current in or has been a member of your District because each District does things differently.

- Speed dating style interviews: Incorporate this into a mix & mingle event or another gathering where Mentors and Mentees have a set time period to have a conversation with each other. Interviews based upon common interest, about compatibility, personal development and growth. Time to keep talking over refreshments in an informal environment. Mentors can share more information in 5-10-minute sessions with Mentees that build on their biographies and share a little information about themselves that could include: hobbies; holidays; sports, etc. This would be done as a conference workshop.
- Where there is an opportunity your District Board may provide an opportunity for Mentors and Mentees in a District Area to meet and greet.
- Mentees will make their choice in preference order, but both parties must agree that you are a match.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MENTORS & MENTEES

Define expectations.

- Mentee: Be up front. Let your mentor know what you want to accomplish and what you hope to take away from Altrusa. Set your goal and objectives at the beginning. It is impossible for your Mentor to assist if they do not know your experience or expectations.
- Mentor: Help your mentee set realistic expectations and any gaps between what was expected and what occurred. Encourage your mentee to break down these goals in to a manageable steps and action time.

Share your story and expertise

- Mentee: Let your mentor know what your experience and interests are.
- Mentor: Share your story with your mentee. Give information and guidance and any tools, resources and networks that will contribute to the goals and development of your Mentee.

Be Clear

- Mentee: Schedule the frequency of your meetings and your exit plan, if it's necessary.
- Mentor: Set a schedule that works for both of you, considering your personal and professional responsibilities. Have an exit plan if goals are achieved early or other issues cause you end the relationship.

Offer support.

- Mentee: Remember that your mentor is there for you but is only a guide.

- Mentor: Be a role model, freely sharing, and committing to this mentoring relationship. Communicate.

Communicate.

- Mentee: Be polite and courteous. Keep up with your e-mails and ask questions. If you cannot keep a commitment (it is ok!), communicate.
- Mentor: Listen to the concerns of your Mentee which to enable you to develop a better understanding of their situation, needs, frustrations, goals and achievements. Encourage communication and participation, touching base 1-2 times per month. Respond to your e-mails. Answer questions and provide advice, resources and guidance when appropriate.

Be honest.

- Mentee: Let your mentor know if you do not understand something or have a differing opinion.
- Mentor: Be truthful and constructive with a positive intent, but also be tactful.

Actively participate.

- New Member Mentee: Attend meetings, events and community service projects. As a Mentee, if you cannot attend a meeting, event or community service project – please communicate that you cannot. Your Mentor and Altrusa colleagues will worry about you!
- All Mentees: Listen. Ask to be part of any activities and/or projects your Mentor is involved in to assist or observe.
- Mentor: Engage in your own learning while you are mentoring, collaborate on projects, and ask questions and experiment.

Be innovative and creative.

- Mentee: Offer ideas on what activities and exercises you can do together.
- Mentor: Share your ideas, give advice and be a resource for new ideas.

Get to know each other.

- Mentee and Mentor: Remember that people come from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Get to know each other on an individual basis.

Be reliable and consistent.

- Mentee and Mentor: The more consistent you are, the more you will be trusted.

Stay positive!

- Mentee: Think the best: Always think the best of yourself, your Mentor and your Altrusan colleagues. Remember that your mentor is offering feedback and not criticizing.
- Mentor: Recognize the work you Mentee has done and the progress made.

LET'S GET YOU CONNECTED

- Commit to the Mentoring Program. Acknowledge you are both very busy people and then make the time to meet.
- Use technology to enable meetings to occur. There are many no cost options, for example, Free Conference Call which can be a video or phone meeting; Messenger video calls; Facetime are options that are freely available

A FEW GROUND RULES

Confidentiality

- What is said in your meetings with each other, stays with each other.
- Seek permission if you want to share information or include other people to your mentoring relationship because you see a mutual benefit

Formalize your expectations

- Mentee – Be clear on what you want from this relationship. Have your goals sorted because you know what you want from your mentoring experience.
- Mentor – Be honest about what you can and cannot do

Keep it real and realistic

Decide how you will measure the success of your mentoring program.

- You may not feel the connection and that is okay
- If it isn't working, say so, and move on. Seek another Mentor and work with your Club or District Board contacts to assist with this.
- Do not stretch yourself too thin. Mentors should have no more than two Mentees at any time, otherwise you will not do justice to your mentoring relationship.

Maintain momentum

- Keep each other committed and honest about your availability
- Have a regular scheduled program on contact and meetings
- Do not let each other down; however, accept life events happen
- Do something for someone they can't do for themselves
- Remember why you become an Altrusan