



# **The Academy of Board Certified Environmental Professionals Mentoring Program**

## ***Mentee Manual***

**2023**

# Welcome

Whether you are a Certified Environmental Professional–In Training (CEP-IT) or an applicant for becoming a Certified Environmental Professional (CEP), the Board of Trustees (BOT) of the Academy of Board Certified Environmental Professionals (ABCEP) welcomes you! We are excited to have you participate in the Mentoring Program, and we wish you the best in this endeavor. We want your experience to be the best that it can be. We also want you to know that this process is confidential, and that your participation and the participation of your Mentor are voluntary. Contact the ABCEP Executive Administrator ([office@abcep.org](mailto:office@abcep.org)) if there is anything that can be done to increase the success of your mentorship.

We want to make sure that your mentoring experience is rewarding and helpful. As ABCEP Trustees we constantly remind ourselves that this is a volunteer organization. Our goal is to provide as much support as we can to our Members for the betterment of the organization and the profession. Try to be understanding and patient in your mentoring relationship. If you have questions that cannot be answered by your Mentor, or if issues arise that cannot be resolved with your Mentor, the ABCEP Executive Administrator is your first point of contact. If needed, the Executive Administrator will connect you with other personnel and resources that are available to help you.

Thank you,

ABCEP Board of Trustees

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## What's In It For Me?

A CEP is a senior professional in environmental practice who has demonstrated exemplary standards of ethics and technical practice. CEPs are a source of knowledge and insight into environmental professions and professionalism. The primary goals of the ABCEP Mentoring Program are to help CEP candidates navigate the CEP application process through the assistance of an Applicant Advisor, and to guide CEP-ITs as they navigate their Career Plan through the assistance of a Career Coach. (This Mentee Manual is primarily designed to serve Mentees who are CEP-ITs working with a Career Coach.) Other Mentoring Program outcomes may include:

- Increased Visibility
  - This opportunity will allow you to demonstrate your skills, as well as create opportunities for you to learn new one
  - It will also provide further insight into the environmental field and environmental professionalism
- Additional Career / Professional Experience
  - This opportunity could increase your marketability, enhance your work experience, and further develop your personal skill set
- Better Communication and Listening Skills
  - This is essential for success in both the workplace and the marketplace
  - You will become more proficient in effective communications

***What is my personal goal or reason for participating in the ABCEP Mentoring Program?***

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# Expectations

There are several key expectations for you during this process. These include the following:

- Develop responses to the questions herein prior to the first meeting with your Mentor
- Develop your Career Plan with guidance from your Mentor soon after your first meeting.
- ABCEP career planning involves the following questions (found on the annual maintenance hours report you will be asked to complete each year during the dues renewal cycle):
  1. What are your greatest accomplishments over the past year? Where they all met? If not, why?
  2. What were your greatest professional challenges over the past year? How did you overcome those challenges?
  3. What are your short term project goals for the next year?
  4. What are your short term professional growth goals for next year? How are you preparing yourself to meet those goals?
  5. What are your project goals for next year?
  6. What are your longer term professional growth goals in the foreseeable future? How are you preparing yourself to meet those goals?
  7. What is your timeframe for applying for the CEP?
  8. How are you preparing yourself for achieving the CEP certification?
- Be proactive and take initiative – your Mentor is there to guide and support you, not to do the work for you
- Commit to self-development and be willing to invest the time and effort to increase your knowledge and competence
- Articulate clear and specific development goals and communicate them to your Mentor
- Suggest ways the Mentor can help and be willing to accept what the Mentor is able and willing to offer
- Embrace new ideas, learn, and try new things
- Be sensitive and respectful to the Mentor’s time constraints
- Keep appointments and meet commitments made to the Mentor
- Be willing to take risks and to make mistakes and learn from them
- Accept feedback graciously
- Make a genuine effort to implement changes that will help achieve your goals
- Ask for advice rather than asking for help
- Draw upon your Mentor’s guidance, expertise, and wisdom
- Respect confidentiality and be sensitive to your Mentor’s responsibilities when sharing confidential information
- Communicate problems or issues clearly and on a timely basis
- Be honest and candid in all dealings with your Mentor

## Expectations (cont.)

*What are some of your expectations for the ABCEP Mentoring Program?*

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The ABCEP Executive Administrator will match you with a Mentor. Once your Mentor has been assigned, your Mentor will contact you to schedule your first meeting. In preparation for this meeting, you should develop responses to the following questions, which will be discussed with your Mentor at the meeting:

1. *Why did you sign up to be a Mentee?*

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2. *What do you hope to accomplish during this partnership?*

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3. *Identify at least two objectives that you would like to focus on during this partnership.*

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Sharing the responses to these questions with your Mentor will allow your Mentor to put together a game plan for your Mentoring Program.

## **Code of Ethics and Confidentiality**

Upholding the ABCEP Code of Ethics ([https://www.abcep.org/code\\_of\\_ethics.php](https://www.abcep.org/code_of_ethics.php)) should be a primary focus in any ABCEP and/or professional endeavor. This is particularly true in the Mentoring Program. You will not be a direct subordinate of your Mentor, which should afford you the luxury of having open and honest discussions with your Mentor without the fear of it negatively affecting your career. Your Mentor is here to help and guide you.

Both you and your Mentor have a professional obligation to maintain confidentiality regarding your discussions. You will be speaking freely, and you should not fear that anything discussed in your interactions will get back to your company or organization, or other professionals. However, an individual's obligation to ethical and professional standards will always take precedence. As such, neither party should share information that will put the other in the awkward and unfortunate position of considering an obligation to break confidence. For example, disclosing information that is illegal in nature or which may cause harm to others may not be suitable to remain confidential. Both Mentors and Mentees are expected to act with their best professional discretion.

# Sample Goals and Objectives

At the first meeting it is your responsibility to provide your Mentor with your goals and objectives. The first meeting can be in advance of you completing your Career Plan, as your Mentor may provide valuable insight regarding the Plan. Here are samples of goals and objectives for your consideration:

## Sample Goals

- To be a more effective leader
- To become a better communicator, utilizing skills and abilities that will be learned through the mentorship
- To develop a better understanding of the environmental professional
- To develop a greater understanding of my discipline within the environmental field
- To learn ways to enhance my career from my Mentor.

***What is your main goal for your Mentoring Program?***

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## Sample Objectives

- As a result of participating in the ABCEP Mentoring Program, I want to develop excellent listening skills
- Taking part in the Mentoring Program should help me to overcome my shyness and fear of public speaking, for example, through posters and presentations at conferences
- I want to successfully complete the Mentoring Program as a Mentee, and then become a CEP and Mentor

***What are three specific objectives that you would like to complete in your Mentoring Program?***

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## Mentoring Program Goal

The main tool for interaction with your Mentor will be your Career Plan. The items below should help you consider what to include in the Plan.

***My Mentoring Program goal is:***

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***My Mentor and I have identified the following steps to help me reach my goal:***

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***Additional steps that I will take to reach my goal include the following:***

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***My Mentor and I have also identified the following resources as other helpful tools for me to utilize during the Mentoring Program:***

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## Mentoring Program Objectives

My desired Mentoring Program objectives are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

***My Mentor and I have identified the following steps to help me reach Objective #1:***

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***Below is a summary of the steps I took in reaching Objective #1:***

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***My Mentor and I also identified the following resources as other helpful tools for me to utilize to reach Objective #1:***

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***I took advantage of the following additional resources for Objective #1 and these were the outcomes:***

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## **Mentoring Program Objectives (cont.)**

***My Mentor and I have identified the following steps to help me reach Objective #2:***

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***Below is a summary of the steps I took in reaching Objective #2:***

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***My Mentor and I also identified the following resources as other helpful tools for me to utilize to reach Objective #2:***

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***I took advantage of the following additional resources for Objective #2 and these were the outcomes:***

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***My Mentor and I have identified the following steps to help me reach Objective #3:***

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***Below is a summary of the steps I took in reaching Objective #3:***

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***My Mentor and I have also identified the following resources as other helpful tools for me to utilize to reach Objective #3:***

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## **Mentoring Program Objectives (cont.)**

***I took advantage of the following additional resources for Objective #3 and these were the outcomes:***

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# Methods of Communication

There are many ways for you and your Mentor to communicate with each other. We recommend laying out and agreeing a communication plan early in your partnership. Some communication options include the following:

## *In Person*

If you are fortunate enough to be within reasonable traveling distance with your Mentor, this is the preferred communication forum. Not all meetings need to be in person, but at least the initial meeting and key follow-up meetings will benefit from face-to-face interaction.

## *Video Conference*

If meeting in person is not an option, a video conference (e.g., Teams, Zoom, etc.) is typically the next best option. Be sure to turn your cameras on and interact casually as if you were sitting across a table from one another. You can also share and prepare your documents in real time.

## *Teleconference*

This option is less personal but often the most convenient. Be sure to have a clear agenda and topics to cover in the phone call to make the best use of your and your Mentor's time.

## *Email*

Email is a good option for follow-up after in-person, video, or teleconference meetings to confirm certain points. It can also be used when you have challenges in aligning schedules for live meetings, but it is not recommended to be the only means of communication between you and your Mentor.

## *Texting / Instant Messaging*

As with email, this method of communication is only recommended for short communications, such as confirming meeting times and arrangements or other quick requests.

***What is your preferred method of communication for this partnership?***

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# Initiating Mentoring

Upon indicating your interest in the Mentoring Program as a CEP-IT or CEP applicant, the following steps will occur:

1. The ABCEP Executive Administrator will match you with a Mentor. The Mentor is responsible for confirming the match with the ABCEP Executive Administrator.
2. If you and your Mentor accept the proposed match, your Mentor will take responsibility to initiate contact and schedule your first meeting.
3. Prior to your first meeting you should review this Mentee Manual, and complete the relevant questions – be thorough, and be prepared to discuss the topics with your Mentor.
4. During your initial meeting, you and your Mentor will discuss your background, your interests, and your proposed goal and objectives. Your Mentor will give feedback based on their experience, and you may agree to revise goals and objectives.
5. Following your initial meeting, your Mentor will consider their personal level of confidence in helping you meet your desired outcomes, and you should do the same – it is important that both parties feel confident that there is value to be gained from the partnership.
6. Should you desire to move forward with the partnership, you will create your Career Plan and work together with your Mentor to identify the steps necessary to reach your goals and objectives; agree to your communications plan; and set a regular meeting schedule to ensure your plan is progressing.

If at any time you feel the partnership is not working, is not beneficial, and/or is not a valuable use of your and your Mentor's time, immediately contact the ABCEP Executive Administrator ([office@abcep.org](mailto:office@abcep.org)) so that each of you can receive new matches.