



NOSSCR Mentorship Program Participant Information Overview

Introduction to the Program

The NOSSCR Mentorship Program provides an organizational structure within which experienced NOSSCR members provide general professional and specific subject matter guidance to junior NOSSCR members.

Participants enter into a voluntary relationship facilitated through NOSSCR in which the mentor is one aspect of a new practitioner's support network. In monthly individual mentor/mentee video/teleconference sessions, the mentor is available to provide support to the mentee on career-related issues including subject matter, career development, and work/life questions from the mentee.

The estimated time commitment for participants is approximately 60 minutes a month.

Participants

All participants in the mentorship program must remain NOSSCR members throughout the entire mentorship period.

Mentors

- **Attorneys** practicing Social Security law as at least 50% of their caseload for more than 10 years, who are NOSSCR members in good standing.
- **Non-attorney** representatives with more than 10 years of full-time experience representing Social Security disability claimants, who are eligible for direct payment and are NOSSCR members in good standing.

Mentees

- **Attorneys** who are NOSSCR members in good standing and have been either (1) practicing law less than 5 years OR (2) who are new to the practice of Social Security law.
- **Non-attorney** representatives who are NOSSCR members in good standing, are eligible for direct payment, and are currently representing Social Security disability claimants on a full-time basis, but have less than 5 years experience in such representation.

Registration and Matching

Timeline

The program year is ten (10) calendar months, from January through October.

Each mentorship match is one program year in duration, starting January 1 and ending October 31.

The enrollment period is from October 1 through October 31. Participants will be informed of their matches in November for the following program year.

Registration

Registration in the program constitutes agreement to the following confidentiality and conflict provisions:

Confidentiality Agreement

As a participant in NOSSCR's Mentorship Program, I understand that mentor-mentee communications regarding personal and practice related issues are confidential. I agree not to disclose such communications whether verbal or in writing.

Conflict of Interest Agreement

I understand that this program is not for the purpose of obtaining referrals and is structured to avoid conflicts of interest.

I understand that if I become co-counsel on a claim/case or work together with my mentor/mentee for compensation or potential future compensation in any manner, the mentorship program must be notified, and the mentor/mentee assignment will be terminated.

I understand that mentors and mentees cannot maintain offices within the same circuit, or from adjoining states across circuit lines. If I establish an office or practice regularly in the same circuit, or from adjoining states across circuit lines, as my mentor/mentee, I must notify both my mentor/mentee and the mentorship program.

Matching

Participants are matched by the Mentorship Committee in accordance with the following limitations:

- Registration for the program does not guarantee a match.
- Registrants will state why they are interested in the program and provide basic information about themselves and their practice.
- Attorneys are generally matched with attorneys, and non-attorneys are generally matched non-attorneys; however, there may be attorney/non-attorney matches depending on the number of participants.
- Mentors and mentees cannot maintain offices within the same circuit, or from adjoining states across circuit lines.
 - For example, Illinois/Iowa or Illinois/Wisconsin will not be matched; however, Maine/Vermont or Mississippi/Nevada matches are acceptable.
 - This provision is included to foster cooperation without concern about competition, and to encourage a focus on wider subject matter and professional issues rather than specific questions about a locality.

- Requests for a specific mentor/mentee match by individual or by practice type will not be considered.
 - Although types of practice are considered as part of the matching process, participants may be matched with someone who has a different type of practice (e.g., small firm vs. large firm, federal court practice vs. administrative only).
 - Participants may not necessarily be matched with similarly situated individuals: “It’s the people who *don’t* seem to share common ground who may, to your surprise, find their differences to benefit them the most.” Molly DiBianca, [“Engaging Lawyers with Reverse Mentoring”](#), *Law Practice Today* (ABA Law Practice Division, October 2011), available at:
- Any mentor/mentee match who have been in, are in, or are planning on working together on a claim/case in any manner cannot be matched.

Communication

Registration for the program is also registration for the online discussion board.

Mentors/mentees can communicate individually by any preferred method. However, the online discussion board will be the only method through which all program-related documents and communication will be processed.

Sessions

Structure

The individual sessions should conform to the same basic structure:

- Held once each calendar month at a mutually convenient time
- Occur by video or telephone conference
- Last 25-60 minutes

Content

The mentor and mentee should start the program year with a discussion of the type of support and guidance the mentee is seeking, including a review of the mentee's enrollment information and a clarification of the mentor's role, if necessary.

- The mentee may request assistance/guidance with specific subject matter topics. However, the program is not intended to supplant other resources such as active pursuit of CLE, consultation with supervisor(s), or in the place of qualified co-counsel.
- The mentee may present career-related questions on general matters.
- If the mentor and mentee become co-counsel on a claim/case or work together for compensation or potential future compensation in any manner, the mentorship program must be notified, and the mentor/mentee assignment will be terminated.

[View the complete program outline.](#)