



THE EDI DIVERSITY MENTORSHIP PROGRAM CHARTER

Mentoring is a partnership that gives individuals the opportunity to share professional and personal knowledge, skills, and experiences to promote growth and development in their careers. The Electronic Discovery Institute's (EDI) Diversity Initiative has identified mentoring as a key component of its mission to foster diversity in the electronic discovery community.

This Charter is intended to provide Program members with an overview of the Mentorship Program, guidelines for the implementation of the Program, and an understanding of what is required for participation.

The Mission

EDI's Mentorship Program will provide mentees an opportunity to gain insight from experienced attorneys, technology specialists and other eDiscovery professionals, and is designed to foster career development, cultivate a growth mindset, and increase collaboration and communication through expanding networks and sharing knowledge. The Mentorship Program will help build up the talent of the next generation of eDiscovery industry leaders, while attempting to provide opportunities not previously available to the mentees.

Overview of Mentorship

Mentoring is a partnership between two people, where the mentor and mentee work collaboratively in a mutually beneficial relationship. In a recent study conducted for the American Bar Association, those immediately out of law school cited having a mentor as a contributing factor for satisfaction within their career. Career satisfaction, however, is just one benefit of having a mentor-mentee relationship.

Mentoring is the process of providing personalized assistance and guidance to a mentee based on the mentee's individual needs. This may include, but is not limited to, skill and knowledge development, coaching, networking and introductions or career advice. The mentoring relationship should ideally be based on openness, respect, trust, and a willingness to learn and share. Both mentor and mentee should respect the confidentiality of the relationship.

In addition, mentors may help mentees maximize their professional potential. Mentors can offer career advice, assist in handling challenges, offer insight about the work environment, and introduce mentees to networks within the industry. Both the mentor and the mentee bring different perspectives to the process, and both should gain from the relationship. Therefore, both parties are equally accountable for the success of the relationship.

Roles & Responsibilities

Participants in the Mentorship Program should be aware that certain characteristics lend themselves to a successful mentoring relationship. Mentors require patience, listening skills, a positive outlook about their own accomplishments and those of the organization with which they are affiliated, encouraging excellence in others, and accepting and understanding the views of others. The Program believes that a qualified mentor will be able to exercise good judgment and set realistic targets and action plans with the mentee. Likewise, mentees can gain many benefits from participating in a mentoring program and to do so, must remain a responsible partner in the process. They should take time to identify goals, show initiative and follow through with suggestions and tasks. Mentees should be considerate of the mentor's time, return phone or email messages promptly and listen carefully to the mentor's advice. Most importantly, the mentee should take advantage of opportunities provided and show appreciation towards the mentor.

Mentoring Plan

The mentors and mentees will be expected to develop a Mentorship Plan which includes core concepts such as skills, activities and experiences framed as actions for the mentee. A sample Mentorship Plan, which includes suggested discussion topics, will be provided to participants as a starting point. The action plan is designed to facilitate ongoing professional learning and development, but may be customized to the individual needs and personal goals of the mentee. The Mentorship Plan will serve as an evaluative tool to assess the Mentorship Program's process and learning. Mentors and mentees shall engage in an annual minimum of four one-hour meetings, in person or by videoconference or telephone, and complete the selected list of actions in the Mentorship Plan. While meeting face to face is encouraged, it may not be feasible. Fostering a successful remote mentoring relationship is still possible with the use of videoconferencing platforms to facilitate that e-face-to-face meeting. In addition, participating in more than the minimum number of meetings is encouraged. Engaging in additional meetings fosters a more meaningful relationship between the mentor and mentee, producing a more valuable learning experience.

Expectations

A pool of mentors and mentees will be identified by the EDI Diversity Committee through the utilization of volunteers and referrals from the EDI Community, in addition to other professionals who work for the same organizations. EDI will provide administrative support for mentor-mentee communications, and help participants track their meetings and progress. After going through an appropriate vetting process, mentors and mentees will be paired and asked to meet to set expectations and goals for the relationship. It is suggested that the mentee initiate the first meeting by contacting the mentor directly and setting an agenda. Generally, the first meeting should be informal, spending some time getting to know each other and discussing goals for enhancement of knowledge, skills and resources.

The mentor should be available to meet and be prepared to talk about goals and expectations for the partnership. It is suggested that the participants discuss ideas and strategies for ways to help achieve the mentee's goals. Throughout the mentoring relationship the parties should re-examine expectations, review progress, and create plans for moving forward in the future. It is recommended that the mentor and mentee meet more regularly during the initial stages of the relationship. However, the frequency of meetings will depend on the expectations of each party. Time commitments should be determined at the beginning stages of the relationship.

APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS & REQUIREMENTS

Qualifications: Mentors

The success of the EDI Diversity Mentorship Program depends upon experienced and reputable eDiscovery practitioners who are willing to commit the time to volunteer as Mentors so that they may convey the core values and best practices of the profession. Effective mentors value teaching and personally strive to improve the eDiscovery profession through their mentorship. Mentors must have excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to facilitate quality lessons about the best practices and highest values of their profession. Before agreeing to serve as a Mentor, the EDI Diversity Committee will evaluate if the applicant possess the skills needed to guide and teach a prospective Mentee, if they can devote the requisite time to the activities and experiences as required by the Mentorship Plan, and if they can demonstrate clear and highly professional habits in the eDiscovery practice. Moreover, the qualifications set forth below are standards that must be met to serve as a Mentor.

The Mentor must:

- Be a practicing attorney, technology specialist or other eDiscovery professional for ten years or more;
- Be respected among peers in the eDiscovery community for ethical and professional conduct;
- Exhibit patience and listening skills;
- Encourage excellence in others, while accepting and understanding the views of others.

Qualifications: Mentees

The purpose of the EDI Diversity Mentorship Program is to elevate the competence, professionalism and success of Mentees. Specifically, the mentoring relationship should:

- Foster the development of the Mentee's practical skills and increase knowledge of practice customs
- Create a sense of pride and integrity in the profession
- Promote collegial relationships among peers and involvement in the eDiscovery groups and initiatives
- Improve professional ability and judgment
- Encourage the use of best practices and highest ideals in the eDiscovery practice.

The Mentee must:

- Be a relatively newly practicing or aspiring attorney, technology specialist or discovery professional
- Be a member of a recognized diverse group as defined by the EDI Diversity Initiative
- Identify goals and show initiative and follow through with suggestions and tasks;
- Be considerate of the mentor's time and return phone or email messages promptly;
- Listen carefully to the mentor's advice;
- Take advantage of opportunities provided and show appreciation for the mentor.