



WOMEN  
COMMUNICATORS  
*of* AUSTIN

# Become a Peer Mentor

As a WCA member, you are eligible to volunteer as a peer mentor, no matter your years of experience, your role in communications, or your familiarity with other fields. Mentees have many needs, and you may be the best fit to support someone.

Being a WCA Peer Mentor is a great way to develop leadership skills and build your network, while sharing your knowledge and expertise. This comes with the personal reward of potentially shaping someone's path to success.

“Life experience and wisdom is hard earned. I’m happy when I can share my experiences with someone who is on a similar journey.”

– PAIGE BOOTH, PEER MENTOR

## How does peer mentoring work?

Peer mentors share advice, encouragement, and lessons learned with mentees through one-on-one conversations. Career goals, work-life balance, and professional development are frequent topics. Pairs are asked to check in at the three-month mark to decide whether to continue or conclude the relationship.

### Each peer mentorship is different; here are some examples of how you might assist as a peer mentor:

- Give guidance on a specific topic – for instance, what subjects a student might consider for a career in communications; suggestions on where to intern; or how to interview effectively.
- Provide career guidance; discuss challenges at work; explore creative or professional development.
- Work with mentees to gain clarity on their talents, strengths, and career interests.
- Provide honest feedback about cover letters, portfolios, or other professional materials.

### WCA Peer Mentors do not provide:

Professional-grade career coaching. (WCA has many qualified members who provide this service.)

Specific logistical assistance in starting or revamping a business venture.

Any kind of psychological input or feedback beyond a friendly ear and helpful suggestions based on professional experiences.

### When/where should I mentor?

You and your mentee are free to decide. Coffee or lunch? Phone call? Zoom? Some pairs may meet once or twice to discuss a specific issue, while others may form longer relationships.

### Nitty gritty: What is the process?

#### 1. Get started

Once a mentee requests a peer mentor via the form on the mentor program page of the website, you will choose whether or not to volunteer as a match. If more than one peer mentor volunteers, the peer mentor program chair will select the best fit. The program chair will introduce the mentor and mentee, and it is the mentee's responsibility to follow up with the mentor to arrange a first discussion.

#### Usual items for first contact:

- Make introductions.
- Give a little background about yourself.
- Discuss what the mentee is looking to gain from the mentorship.
- Decide what method of communication is best for both of you.
- If the fit is right, end the conversation by scheduling your first session.
- If the fit is not right, discuss with the mentee and let the program chair know so that another potential match can be arranged.

#### 2. Typical sessions

- Get to know each other (and it shouldn't be all about work!).
- Discuss specific issues or questions.
- Brainstorm ways that you can help.
- Discuss meeting frequency if you will meet more than once.
- Assign action items for your mentee to accomplish before your next meeting.
- Consider offering availability by phone and email between sessions.

#### 3. Next steps

- After the first meeting, it is the responsibility of the mentee to stay in touch.
- Mark the three-month period by discussing the future of your pairing. Let the program chair know whether you and your mentee intend to continue the relationship or to conclude it.
- Sometimes life happens and you won't hear from the mentee again. Email the program chair at [mentors@wcaustin.org](mailto:mentors@wcaustin.org) if this happens. It may be time to close out the relationship.
- Let the program chair know when you are ready to take on a new mentee.

### Support for peer mentors

Mentors gather quarterly to discuss the program and share feedback. Fellow mentors are always available if you need assistance or advice for your mentee or yourself. The Peer Mentor Program chair and the VP Career Services are also always available to guide and answer any questions.

**Learn more and sign up  
to become a peer mentor!**

[mentors@wcaustin.org](mailto:mentors@wcaustin.org)  
[wcaustin.org/become-a-mentor](http://wcaustin.org/become-a-mentor)