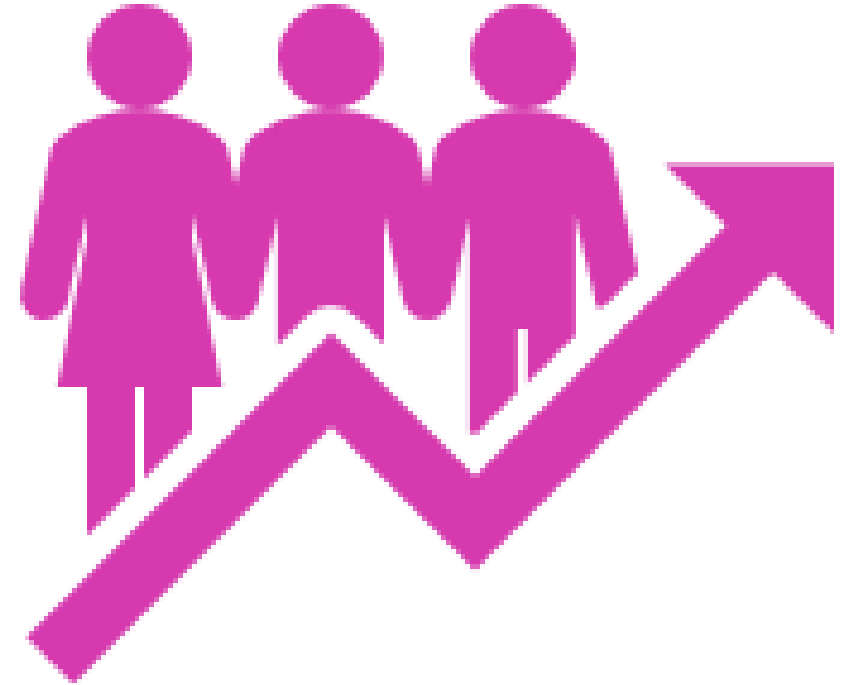




2026 Business Mentoring Program

Our Purpose

- Recruit established business owners to mentor small business owners who desire to grow and develop their businesses
- Pair small businesses with larger more mature businesses for training in order to enhance all aspects of their business operations. (i.e. accounting, management, bonding, insurance)



Proposed Business Mentoring Calendar

- October, 2025 Save-the-Date Flyer - Announcing 2026 City's Business Mentoring Program
 - October 29, 2025 Kickoff for 2026 Mentoring Program
 - November 15, 2025 Applications Due
 - December 15, 2025 Selections made – Mentors and Protégés – Team Matchups (Notifications of Selections)
 - January 1, 2026 Program Begins
 - January 12-16, 2026 Hosting of Individual Sessions with Teams (Virtual or In-Person)
 - January 28, 2026 Meeting with All Teams
 - January – December, 2026 Monthly Meeting(s) between Mentor/Protégé Teams
 - February – November, 2026 Workshops
 - May 18-22, 2026 Mid Year Check-In Sessions
 - December, 2026 Commission Recognition & Graduation Celebration*
- 15th of April, July, October & December, 2026 Quarterly Report Submissions Due

(*Commission Meeting Dates for December of 2026 are to be announced (TBA), so listed is anticipated date to consider, however the Commission Recognition/Reception date and other dates, herein, may be subject to change).

Qualifications, Responsibilities, & Benefits for Mentors and Protégés



Mentors should have the following qualifications

- Business established - preferably a minimum of 3 years (previous experience in the industry may substitute for the 3-year minimum)
- Credibility with colleagues and peers
- The respect of peers and other professionals
- Expertise in his or her field of knowledge
- A willingness to commit time and energy to the relationship
- Ability to help the protégés establish and attain goals
- Willingness to assist with training protégés (i.e. virtual, in-person, etc.)



QUALIFICATIONS

Mentor Responsibilities

Typical mentor responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

Acts as a resource for information about the profession

Helps the protégé develop new/improved capabilities in terms of skills and knowledge in order to reach important goals

Establishes trust with the protégé and maintains confidentiality

- Challenges the protégé to think and analyze options

Listens actively

Helps the protégé identify specific goals

Provides vision and insight

Offers constructive and meaningful feedback

Mentor Benefits

- The personal satisfaction of giving back to Gainesville and surrounding communities
- A legacy of personal knowledge, insight and experience
- Professional enhancement, higher visibility and prestige
- Expansion of professional network





PROTÉGÉS SHOULD HAVE THE FOLLOWING QUALIFICATIONS

- Desire to learn business essentials of owning & operating a business
- Ambition to succeed
- Strong commitment to goals and personal responsibility
- Ability to listen and follow through with directions



Protégé Responsibilities

- Make the initial contact with the mentor.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.
- Respect the mentor's time
- Take advantage of opportunities presented by by the Mentor
- Follow through on communications and goals set during the mentoring sessions.
- Be receptive to feedback and coaching.
- Assess his or her individual needs.
- Actively participants in the mentoring relationship.



PROTÉGÉ BENEFITS

City of
Gainesville

- Assistance in defining business goals, strategies and options
- Help in building confidence to grow beyond the usual expectations
- Personalized training geared toward specific needs
- A sounding board for ideas and approaches
- Referrals to experts with specialized industry knowledge
- Mentors may potentially enter into joint-venture or teaming arrangements with protégés to compete for and perform on contracts.

THE MATCHING PROCESS



Office of Equity and Inclusion reviews applications received from mentors and protégés and pair teams based on the mentor's field of training offered as well as protégé's areas of interest for mentorship.



We will make the best-suited partnerships based on information received from each applicant (mentors/protégés).



Mentors may train more than one protégé based on the mentor's availability.



ESTABLISHING A RELATIONSHIP: MENTOR

To prepare for your first meeting, you might want to:

- Summarize your goals and expectations for the mentoring partnership
- Review your protégés' profile and work experience.
- Address logistics of monthly/quarterly meetings, i.e., “How should we work together? Will we stay in touch between meetings, and how?”
- Which skills do you desire to develop?
- How can I help you develop these skills?
- What attracted you to this program?



ESTABLISHING A RELATIONSHIP: MENTOR CONTINUED

Next, interview your protégés.



- In preparation for that first one-on-one meeting, review the interview questions below. Use these questions as a guideline to help you begin to get to know your protégé personally and professionally:
 - What is important to you
 - Which area have you practiced the most?
 - What areas of business would you like to develop?
 - What skills do you have with which you are confident?
 - Six months from now, how would you like to have grown, as a result of this mentoring relationship.
 - What can I do to ensure a positive experience for you in this relationship?
 - What should I expect from you in this mentoring partnership.

ESTABLISHING A RELATIONSHIP: PROTÉGÉS

To prepare for your first meeting, you might want to:

Prepare your business profile or an updated résumé and or a detailed summary of your work experience.

Summarize your professional goals.

Identify your goals and expectations of the mentoring relationship.

Prepare a personal SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis to help you and the mentor determine on which areas to focus.



TRAINING SCHEDULES

- Each team will meet and set up their own schedules based on each team member's availability. Face-to-face training as well as virtual or phone conferences are acceptable.
- Each team is expected to meet at least monthly, but teams are encouraged to meet more often should schedules permit.

Program Quality Assurance

- Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI) will require a quarterly report as well as a final year-end report from each team member regarding the progress of their partnership
- Information will be gathered such as: (not limited to these items)
 1. Meeting dates, times, and locations
 2. Goals vs. Progress
 3. Areas of concern and etc.
- Quarterly meeting with all teams to review progress and discuss feedback from quarterly surveys.
- Opportunity for mentors/Protégés to discuss what does/doesn't work and how we can improve program in the future.

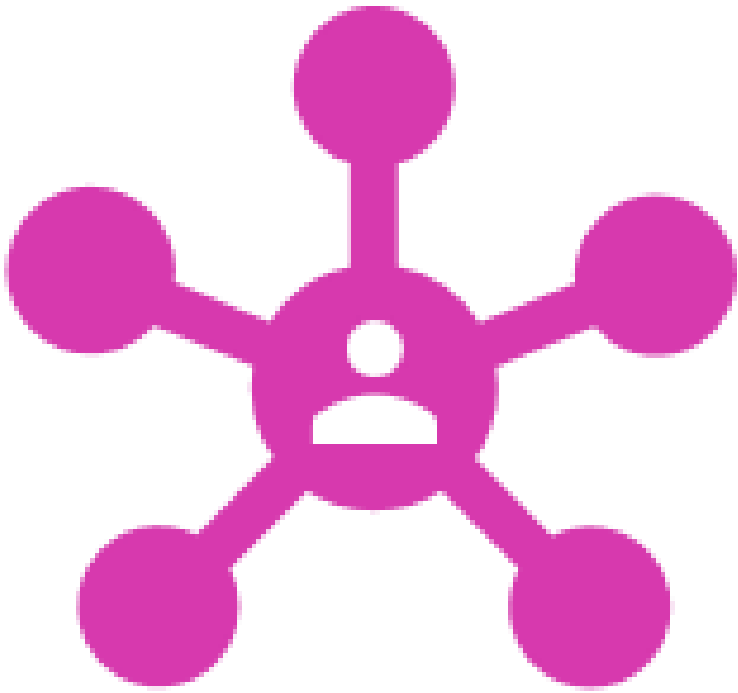


2024 Mentor Quarterly Progress Report

Date:

MENTOR COMPANY NAME:	PROTÉGÉ COMPANY NAME:
Address:	Address:
Phone#:	Phone#:

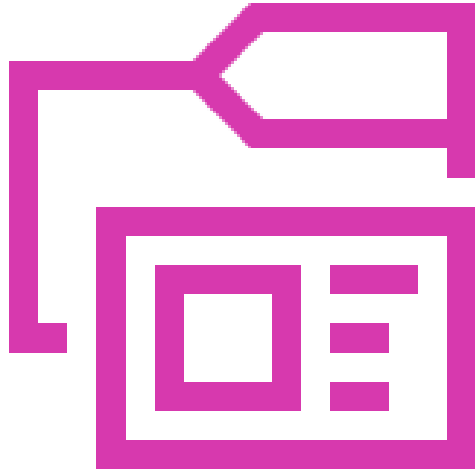
Please complete this report and submit it to our office either in person, fax, email, or U.S. mail.



WHAT IF THE PARTNERSHIP DOESN'T WORK OUT?

Compatibility - If it doesn't fit...don't force it!

- If there is a desire for either mentor/protégé to dissolve the partnership, please submit a letter to our office with specific details as to why you feel the partnership is not working. There is no guarantee, however, that there will be an opportunity for pairing during the course of the 1-year cycle allotted to each team to work together.



MENTORING PROGRAM RECOGNITION & RECEPTION

Upon successful completion of the City of Gainesville's Small Business Mentoring

Program, each company is eligible to graduate and receive a plaque as well as be recognized publicly at one of our televised City Commission meetings.







SOURCES:

W: aicpa.org/ABVMentormentoringgroup.com
perrone-ambrose.com
shrm.org
astd.org