

BASIC FACTS OF CIRCLE MENTORING

Q. WHAT IS CIRCLE MENTORING?

Circle mentoring is one of three types of mentoring opportunities offered through the New Lawyer Training Program (NLTP). The three types of mentoring opportunities include: inside mentoring; outside mentoring; and circle mentoring. Further explanation of these approaches to mentoring can be found in the NLTP Manual on page 15.

Circle mentoring provides an opportunity for new lawyers who are not practicing law to meet the requirements of the NLTP. The program provides group mentoring to 4 – 6 new lawyers working with 1 or 2 Utah Supreme Court approved mentors.

Q. WHAT WILL I BE DOING DURING THE TWELVE-MONTH CIRCLE MENTORING TERM?

Circle Mentoring requires new lawyers to complete the Circle Mentoring Plan. The Circle Mentoring Plan is similar to the Model Mentoring Plan used in one-on-one mentoring relationships. However, the Circle Mentoring Plan has been modified, taking into account that new lawyers participating will not be practicing law.

Specifically, the plan requires that new lawyers attend four large group seminars. The seminars will be organized and scheduled by the NLTP Administrator. **Attendance at the seminars is mandatory.** Seminar topics will include:

- (1) “Introduction to the Bar”;
- (2) “Introduction to the Courthouse”;
- (3) “Professionalism and Ethics”; and
- (4) “Introduction to Law Office Management.”

Additionally, new lawyers will meet regularly as a group with their mentors. The topics discussed at the monthly meetings will be organized by the mentor(s) and will focus on the required subjects and activities contained in the Circle Mentoring Plan. The monthly meetings may also include subjects reflecting the professional goals and interests of the new lawyers in each group.

Q. WHAT IF I AM UNABLE TO ATTEND A LARGE GROUP SEMINAR?

If your schedule prevents you from attending any one of the four large group seminars listed above, you will have the opportunity to phone in for the seminar or view a video replay of the event by contacting the NLTP Administrator at (801)297-7026.

Q. I AM NOT CURRENTLY PRACTICING LAW. WHY AM I REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN CIRCLE MENTORING?

As an “ACTIVE” status member of the Utah Bar, Supreme Court Rules of Professional Practice require “all new lawyers admitted to practice law in Utah on active status must . . . complete the requirements of the Bar’s NLTP . . .” (Supreme Court Rules of Professional Practice, Rule 14-808(a)).

Q. CAN I DELAY PARTICIPATING IN THE NLTP UNTIL I FIND EMPLOYMENT RATHER THAN PARTICIPATE IN CIRCLE MENTORING?

New lawyers have the option to delay participating in the NLTP while unemployed. There are two options for deferring participation in the NLTP while a new lawyer is unemployed: (1) the new lawyer can seek a 6-month, temporary deferment by completing the NLTP Declaration of Exemption of Deferment form and submitting it the NLTP Administrator during the NLTP Enrollment period; or (2) the new lawyer can obtain an indefinite deferment by switching their Bar license status from “ACTIVE” to “INACTIVE.” Information regarding changing license status is available online at <http://www.utahbar.org/members/Welcome.html> and selecting “Inactive Status Request.”

Q. WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF CHANGING MY LICENSE STATUS FROM “ACTIVE” TO “INACTIVE”?

There are few consequences to changing license status to “INACTIVE.” A member on “INACTIVE” status is not required to complete CLE hours and membership dues are lower.

Additionally, lawyers on “INACTIVE” status are prohibited from practicing law in Utah and may not be admitted by reciprocity by another jurisdiction if the new lawyer maintains an inactive license.

Q. I WOULD LIKE A MENTOR ASSIGNED ONE-ON-ONE TO ASSIST ME IN MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE NLTP. HOW DOES A NEW LAWYER GET ASSIGNED A ONE-ON-ONE MENTOR?

There are three ways to have an individual mentor: (1) open your own law practice and the NLTP Administrator will assist you in finding an outside mentor, preferably with experience starting a law practice; (2) work in association with a legal organization or law firm which agrees to assign an inside mentor to assist you one-on-one; or (3) locate an outside mentor on your own.

Q. I AM CURRENTLY UNEMPLOYED BUT SEEKING LEGAL EMPLOYMENT. AM I ABLE TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE NLTP THROUGH A ONE-ON-ONE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP INSTEAD OF CIRCLE MENTORING ?

Yes; however the NLTP is designed to train lawyers practicing law. Mentors are not responsible for providing legal work to new lawyers (with the exception of inside mentors). Thus, new lawyers who are not engaged in the practice of law will have difficulty meeting the requirements of the program unless they participate in pro bono legal work.

Additionally, the NLTP Administrator will not place new lawyers not engaged in the practice of law with one-on-one mentors. Thus, if an unemployed new lawyer seeks one-on-one mentoring he/she will be responsible for locating an outside mentor willing to assist the new lawyer.

Q. I AM CURRENTLY IN CIRCLE MENTORING BUT I HAVE LOCATED AN ATTORNEY WILLING TO SERVE AS AN INDIVIDUAL MENTOR FOR ME. WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

Complete and submit the Mentor Migration Form to the NLTP Administrator. The form is available online at www.utahbar.org/nltp.

Q. HOW MUCH IS THE FEE FOR ATTENDING CIRCLE MENTORING SEMINARS?

There is no additional fee for attending Circle Mentoring seminars. New lawyers simply pay the NLTP fee of \$300 (\$150 at enrollment and \$150 upon completion).

Q. HOW DO I OBTAIN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON CIRCLE MENTORING?

For additional information, contact the NLTP Administrator at (801)297-7026 or mentoring@utahbar.org. Additionally, all NLTP materials are available online at www.utahbar.org/nltp.