



Mentor Guidelines

Leaders of Today Central Ohio

www.leadersoftodayco.com

What is Leaders of Today?

Leadership ~ Generosity ~ Innovation ~ Teamwork

Networking ~ Service ~ Fun

About: Leaders of Today is a non-profit organization that was created to help high school and college students be the best people they can be. The goal of Leaders of Today is to encourage students to develop a habit of working to improve their community and being generous with their time, talents, and resources. We do this by entrusting them with money to help them on their journey of helping others. We would like to be one step in helping them cultivate these habits.

Mission: Our mission is to help students achieve their goals and improve their communities by helping Central Ohio be the best it can be. We believe that allowing students, the leaders of today, the opportunity to serve and make an impact where they live will create vision and entrepreneurship for a better tomorrow.

What We Do:

Micro-Grants: Leaders of Today allows students (14-25) to apply for micro-grants which are awarded to students who complete a multi-step application process. Micro-grants can range from \$250 to \$1,000. Judges award students with money during our event in October. Not all students are awarded a micro-grant but all are encouraged to dream big and finish what they started!

Mentorship: As soon as students submit an application, they are assigned a mentor! This mentor will help each student fine-tune their idea. Mentors also help keep students on track and complete all of the tasks needed to win a micro-grant. However, a mentor is not a babysitter. Students will still be required to work towards their dreams using skills they've acquired. If students are awarded a micro-grant, their mentor will follow their students to help them complete their goals in changing their community.



Our Application Process:

Identify a Problem: To apply for a grant, each student must identify a problem within their community that they would like to improve.

Apply for a Grant: The next step in our student's process is to submit an application. This application lets us know generally what a student's community improvement project is, who they are, and how they plan on using the funds.

Complete Viability Exploration: The Viability Exploration is a meeting with the applicant, our Executive Director, and a few board members. During this meeting, the student more completely explains what their project is. This helps us more deeply understand the project and also the applicant themselves. This step is in place because our Executive Director's parents were asked one day, "If you could tell a college admissions counselor anything about your student what would it be?" Their response was "Jordan is so much more than what you can see on paper. Sit down with him and see who he really is." Our goal is to see who each applicant really is.

Meet with Mentor: This is where you jump in! Before you meet with the applicant, you should have access to their application. If you are about to meet with your mentee and you do not yet have access to the application, please email jordan@leadersoftodayco.com. During this meeting, there are two major parts. First, you will get to meet with the applicant and learn about their project. Your mentee should have a project that is something that you have expertise in. Second, your mentee should have a budget that they have prepared. You are going to help your mentee refine their budget. After you meet with your mentee, we would like you to sit down with our Executive Director and/or a board member to give us your opinion on the applicant. If you truly do not think that this person should continue with Leaders of Today, please be honest.

Complete Final Budget: The student has one week after meeting with you to submit a final budget. This budget helps us get a real understanding of how much the applicant truly needs to complete their project. Not every applicant will receive a grant or have their project completely funded.

Grants Awarded: Our final step is to award the grants to our applicants. This is where the real work begins.



Mentoring 101

The Benefits of Mentoring:

Benefits to the Mentee:

- Access to a more experienced or knowledgeable person who will provide feedback and advice for his/her professional development
- A channel to brainstorm ideas, communicate concerns, and receive support
- A supportive forum to develop a focused plan for professional development that is tied to skills, knowledge, and actions

Benefits to the Mentor:

- Opportunity to use and develop leadership skills
- Enhanced and strengthened interpersonal and coaching skills
- Personal satisfaction of guiding and sharing with a mentee

Overview - Mentoring Guidelines:

~Focus on professional development

~Build and maintain confidentiality and trust

~Plan effective meetings

~Identify action steps

~Respond to communications in a timely manner (48 hours)

~Meet with mentees through a video call or in person once per month

*The responsibility for identifying discussion topics, surfacing ideas and structuring the relationship is shared by both mentors and mentees.



Key Mentoring Skills

Linda Phillips-Jones, Ph.D., mentoring expert and author of *The New Mentors & Protégés: How to Succeed with the New Mentoring Partnerships*, and numerous guides and tools for mentors and mentees, studied hundreds of mentor-protégé relationships and developed a set of critical mentoring skills and competencies. The key mentoring skills discussed here are adapted from her work.

Active Listening:

- Show interest in what he/she is saying, and reflect back on important aspects of what he/she has said to show that you've understood.
- Use body language (such as making eye contact) that shows you are paying attention to what he/she is saying.
- If you are talking to him/her by phone, reduce background noise and limit interruptions. When utilizing e-mail, answer within 48 hours if possible, and be sure your message is responsive to his/her original message.
- Reserve discussing your own experiences or giving advice until after your mentee has had a chance to thoroughly explain his/her issue, question, or concern.

Building Trust:

- Trust is built over time. Be patient!
- Increase trust by keeping your conversations and other communications with your mentee professional and confidential, honoring your scheduled meetings and calls, consistently showing interest and support, and being honest.



Goal Setting:

- Assist him/her with finding resources such as people, books, articles, tools, and web-based information.
- Impart knowledge and skills by explaining, giving useful examples, demonstrating processes, and asking thought-provoking questions.
- Help him/her gain broader perspectives of his/her responsibilities.
- Discuss actions you've taken in your career and explain your rationale.

Encouraging and Inspiring:

- Comment favorably on his/her accomplishments.
- Communicate your belief in his/her capacity to grow personally and professionally and reach his/her goals.
- Respond to his/her frustrations and challenges with words of support, understanding, encouragement, and praise.
- Describe experiences, mistakes, and successes you or others have encountered on the road to achieving your goals.
- Talk with him/her about people who have inspired and motivated you.
- Introduce him/her to your colleagues who can be additional useful contacts.



Stages of Formal Mentoring Relationships

Your formal mentoring relationship will likely reflect four developmental stages:

I. Building the Relationship

II. Exchanging Information and Setting Goals

III. Working Towards Goals/Deepening the Engagement

IV. Ending the Formal Mentoring Relationship/Planning for the Future

There is no strict formula for determining the length of each stage. In a year-long relationship, Stages I and II typically unfold during the first three to four months of the relationship, and the relationship will work towards a close in months 11 and 12.

Stage I: Building the Relationship

During your first meeting, discuss your backgrounds, experiences, interests, and expectations. You will also make agreements about confidentiality and the frequency of contact. During this first stage, it is important to establish a schedule for communicating regularly, whether in-person, via video call, phone, or e-mail.

**Please note - if meeting in person, a member of the board MUST be present. Contact Allison Grosik (allison@leadersoftodayco.com) to set up an in-person appointment*

Questions to ask during the first meeting:

- Tell me a little more about yourself, your skills, your organization or community, the political environment, some key challenges you are facing, etc.
- How have you benefited from other mentoring relationships?
- What are some of your preliminary goals for our mentoring relationship?



Stage II: Exchanging Information and Setting Goals

During Stage II, you will exchange more information and set goals. Your relationship and trust will deepen. As the mentoring relationship unfolds, be attentive to practicing active listening and consistently expressing encouragement.

Helping Your Mentee Set Goals:

- By exchanging information, you will gain insight into the goals your mentee hopes to achieve through the mentoring relationship.
- Goals are helpful because they help the mentee see beyond the day-to-day demands of his/her position and help his/her gain clarity on how to get the most out of the mentoring relationship.
- Coach your mentee to refer back to his/her goals periodically as a way of re-focusing on goals and measuring progress. Referring to the goals regularly is also a good way for you to know if you are helping him/her achieve them.

Setting SMART Goals:

When helping your mentee set goals, make sure that they are...

- **Specific:** Their choices should be specific and narrow for more effective planning
- **Measurable:** Define what evidence will prove they're making progress
- **Attainable:** Make sure they can reasonably accomplish their goal
- **Relevant:** Their goals should align with their values and long-term objectives
- **Timely:** Set a realistic, ambitious end date (one year) for task prioritization



Stage III: Working Towards Goals and Deepening the Engagement

During Stage III, which is typically the longest, you will help your mentee work towards achieving his/her goals. This is a rich phase marked by openness and trust, meaningful discussion, and the application of new insights and approaches. Your mentee needs your ongoing encouragement at this stage. You may also feel comfortable enough to challenge him/her to think in new ways or approach a problem differently. This is a good point in the journey to reflect on progress toward goals and on the relationship itself.

Consider discussing the following:

- What are the benefits of the relationship up to this point? How am I helping you (mentee) achieve your goals?
- What changes do you see in yourself and in the way you approach your work as a result of the mentoring relationship?
- What kinds of adjustments or changes, if any, are needed in your goals or in our relationship?

This is also the stage during which energy in the relationship can wane. Sometimes, the mentee will feel concerned that he or she is burdening you. Other responsibilities will often compete with his or her commitment to the mentoring relationship. If you haven't heard from your mentee, check in with him or her. Take the lead if necessary. Also, take stock of your own time and energy. Is the partnership working well for you? Do you need to make some adjustments?



Examples of challenges other mentors and mentees have faced and resolved:

Time and Energy: The most common challenge, by far, is finding sufficient time to do all you want to do in the partnership. Despite good intentions, other priorities interfere for both of you.

***Solution:** Think small rather than large, especially in the beginning. Avoid promising more time than you can deliver. Some mentors and mentees may want to meet more than required, but in order to fulfill your commitment, we are asking for one meeting a month although we recognize things happen! Check with your mentee to be certain you are both comfortable with the time you are spending and with the learning that is occurring.*

Building Trust Quickly: With little contact each month, it is not easy to build the kind of trust you both would like.

***Solution:** Listen very carefully, and remember what your mentee has said in the past. Demonstrate your credibility. Keep your promises and commitments -- if any need to be changed, let your mentee know immediately and reschedule or renegotiate them. Admit some errors made and lessons learned. Avoid talking negatively about others.*

Not Being the “Expert” on all your Mentee’s Needs: Many mentors find it difficult when they do not have all the answers.

***Solution:** Explain your role as a “learning facilitator” early in your relationship. Tell your mentee that you will not have all the answers and that you are looking forward to learning together as well as seeking help from others who are experts on different topics.*



Stage IV: Ending the Formal Mentoring Relationship and Planning for the Future:

During this stage, planning for the mentee's continued success is balanced with bringing the formal mentoring relationship to a close. Work with your mentee to define the types of support he/she may need in the future.

Adjournment brings closure to the journey. Your final discussion should be dedicated to the following:

- Reflecting on accomplishments, challenges, and progress towards goals (What will your mentee remember most about the relationship? What challenges lie ahead for him/her?)
- Exploring other types of support he or she may still need
- Discussing whether the relationship will continue informally and how it will be implemented
- Expressing thanks and best wishes!

Questions/Concerns:

Feel free to reach out to any of the following Leaders of Today board members:

- Jordan Reeves (Executive Director): Jordan@LeadersofTodayco.com
- Josh Mitchell (President): Josh@LeadersofTodayco.com
- Madison Voinovich (Vice-President): Madison@LeadersofTodayco.com
- Allison Grosik (Mentor Lead & Board Member): Allison@LeadersofTodayco.com

