



# AEP MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

## I. AEP PROFESSIONAL MENTORSHIP PROGRAM SUMMARY

AEP is thrilled to announce the second edition of our mentorship program. This program is tailored for early, mid-career, and established professionals, while a separate program is available for our student members. The AEP Mentorship Program offers professionals an opportunity to be both mentee and mentor at the same time and has been designed to provide maximum flexibility and opportunities for our members. The AEP Mentorship Program for professionals consists of both at-will and programmed opportunities. The at-will option will allow mentors to search our member database for potential mentees who have designated themselves to be interested in mentoring. The programmed option will guide peer groups of 3 to 5 members on a 9-session curriculum together. We know that business is better with diverse teams and AEP strongly believes that mentoring can be too.

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN! For our programmed mentorship opportunity, you will be able to sign up through the AEP website:

[https://mms.califaep.org/members/mlogin.php?org\\_id=CAEP&bounce=%2Fmembers%2Fform.php%3Forgcode%3DCAEP%26fid%3D7926793](https://mms.califaep.org/members/mlogin.php?org_id=CAEP&bounce=%2Fmembers%2Fform.php%3Forgcode%3DCAEP%26fid%3D7926793)

Once registration ends, anyone interested in the programmed mentorship opportunity will be assigned to a Peer Mentoring Group by the AEP Mentorship Committee. Sessions will be held (in-person or online) nine times, approximately once per month – choosing dates and times that work best for the group members. Groups will be assigned based on the registration information you provide. The AEP Mentorship Program also offer a great way to build community in a smaller group setting. Some groups will meet in person and others will meet online through Teams, Zoom, google hangouts, and other conferencing tools, depending on participants' preferences indicated at the time of registration.

For the at-will mentorship opportunity, please log in to our membership directory ([https://mms.califaep.org/members/mlogin.php?org\\_id=CAEP&bounce=%2Fmembers%2Fdirectory%2Fsearch\\_bootstrap.php%3Forg\\_id%3DCAEP](https://mms.califaep.org/members/mlogin.php?org_id=CAEP&bounce=%2Fmembers%2Fdirectory%2Fsearch_bootstrap.php%3Forg_id%3DCAEP)) and from there, you can sort for fellow members that are interested in being a mentor and/or mentee and might share some interests of yours. While there, don't forget to review your profile and update all of your information!

If you have any questions or are interested in joining the AEP Mentorship Committee please contact Konnie Dobrev ( [konnie@epdsolutions.com](mailto:konnie@epdsolutions.com) ) or Corinne Lytle Bonine ( [corinne.lytle@aes.com](mailto:corinne.lytle@aes.com) ).

## II. AEP MENTORSHIP PROGRAM MISSION

Provide an opportunity for members of all ages to interact in a mentor/mentee relationship with like-minded environmental professionals. AEP will provide a platform that fosters inclusion, collaboration, personal career growth, and continued excellence in the environmental profession. As a service to our members, the Mentorship

Program will develop personal relationships and continue to foster personal contributions to the AEP community, including emphasis on volunteerism, “passing the torch”, and staying involved.

### III. OVERVIEW AND ELIGIBILITY

Career success requires more than education and willingness to work. Experts say that many successful people have benefited from having a mentor, a senior guide to the field, who can answer questions, point out opportunities, and smooth the way for a newcomer. Some mentoring relationships arise spontaneously, but not everyone is that lucky. How do you find a mentor if you don’t already have one?

AEP has set up a program to support environmental professionals as they progress in their career. The mentoring programs strive to offer a mix of mentor experiences and backgrounds to suit a diverse range of mentees, mentors, and those interested in peer group mentoring. AEP provides two mentorship programs:

1. At-Will Mentoring: Mentee-Initiated Program using Membership Directory/MemberLeap
2. Programmed Peer Group Mentoring

These programs are open to all AEP Members. If you are not a member, but interested in participating and recognizing a ton more membership benefits such as reduced pricing to CEQA workshops and conferences, please join AEP here: [https://mms.califaep.org/members/newmem/new-mem-reg.php?org\\_id=CAEP](https://mms.califaep.org/members/newmem/new-mem-reg.php?org_id=CAEP)

### IV. AT-WILL MENTORING OPTION

AEP provides the support and platform using MemberLeap for an exclusively mentee-driven program where our members are given the ability to create and/or update their MemberLeap profile within the membership directory to indicate they are willing/able to be a mentor as well as provide key information (expertise, location, etc.).

Upon commencing the program and at any point thereafter, mentees in search of mentorship will be encouraged to find mentors using the Member Directory Search tool when you log in to your AEP membership. This would allow people seeking mentors to use the search function to see a list of all currently available mentors, including key information about them (interests, years of experience, specialties, etc.) and contact information. It would then be largely incumbent on the mentee/mentor to build the relationship, however, AEP will provide support materials (general guidance, links to interesting topics, etc.) within our membership page on the website.

The at-will mentoring program is intended to be “mentee-driven”. That means all Mentoring Partnerships are initiated by the Mentee and focus on the Mentee’s goals even if in the end, as is often the case, mentoring partnerships end up benefitting both partners. We suggest that mentors and mentees interact a minimum of 9 times over a period of 12 months. Meetings might take place in person or virtually. We suggest using the initial meeting to define goals and agree on expectations. Each session will be focused on the mentee’s requirements, with topics ranging from leadership skills, public speaking, work-life balance, starting their own business, and advice on career progression.

It is up to mentors and mentees to determine when they meet, for how long, and whether it is a physical, virtual or telephone meeting. Generally, longer sessions are better for exploring deeper issues, whereas shorter sessions are useful for quick check-ins to see that the mentee is on track with agreed tasks. It is the mentees’ responsibility to arrange and push for meetings to happen; mentors supply their experience, knowledge, and time.

## V. PROGRAMMED MENTORING OPTIONS

Peer Group Mentoring offers an opportunity to be both mentee and mentor at the same time. Groups consist of 3 to 5 members and the program is designed such that members all have a chance to learn from each other while walking through a curriculum together. We know that business is better with diverse teams and so far, it seems that mentoring can be too!

AEP welcomes participants with a variety of experience levels and backgrounds to participate. We recognize that the environmental planning field is rapidly growing and changing, and even one year of experience can be tremendously valuable to mentees who are just starting out. Also, given the expansive breadth of the environmental profession careers we welcome those from all sectors, including scientists, policy-makers, engineers, government employees, technicians, project managers, developers, non-profit employees, lobbyists and advocates, educators, generalists, specialists and attorneys – just to name a few. And a mentoring relationship can be a two-way street. In this program, sometimes a skill swap allows mentors/mentees to play both roles and share expertise – for example someone that knows a lot about air quality/greenhouse gasses might want to pair up with someone who knows about marketing and communications and together they learn from each other.

All of this is compounded further by signing up for peer group mentoring which will allow for groups of 3-5 environmental professionals to engage in the programmed mentorship curriculum together. Peer Groups also offer a great way to build community in a smaller group setting. Some groups, when possible, meet in-person, while others meet online through conferencing tools.

How will this work?

- When registration is open (a 1-month period, once a year), you will be able to sign up here. When registration ends, you will be assigned to a group.
- Groups will meet (in-person or online, depending on stated preference) nine times approximately once per month – choosing dates and times that work best for the group members.
- Groups are encouraged to meet more or continue to meet outside of or beyond those meetings if they would like.
- Groups will be assigned based on registration information you provide.
- Session Guides and Information will be provided for the whole group for each session. Group members will rotate the facilitator role for the remaining sessions.

How to get started? Look out for our registration. Start by letting us know you are interested – whether as a peer group lead who will initiate the first session or peer group participant – we'll match you with an environmental professional or environmental professionals and a mentoring ambassador from our state Mentorship Committee who can help you navigate the program and find the best options for your situation.