



Bench/Bar Judicial Mentoring Program Committee

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# Judicial Mentoring Program Handbook

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many individuals contributed to the implementation of the Contra Costa Judicial Mentoring Program and we acknowledge and thank them:

Co-Chairs of the Contra Costa Superior Court Bench/Bar Diversity Committee, Honorable **Barbara Zúñiga** and Honorable **Diana Becton Smith**, along with Honorable **Barry Goode**, Honorable **Lewis Davis**, Honorable **Steve Austin**, and Honorable **Susan Fenstermacher**; Contra Costa Bar Association members **Robin Pearson Esq.**, President, and **Joscelyn Jones Esq.**, and **Lisa Reep**, Executive Director.

We owe enormous gratitude to the Alameda County Bar Association's East Bay Diversity Bar Coalition for their generosity in allowing us to use their award winning Judicial Mentoring Project for the basis of this program and for portions of this handbook; and Ann Wassam, ACBA Executive Director.



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## **I. GENERAL OVERVIEW**

This program was established to provide attorneys contemplating a career on the bench with a structured method of obtaining guidance on how to reach that goal. Experienced judges will be able to provide valuable feedback and assistance to potential judicial candidates to help them hone the necessary skills for a judicial career.

The Judicial Mentoring Program's goals are:

- To promote diversity on the bench to reflect our community
- To facilitate attorneys with diverse backgrounds in pursuing a judicial appointment
- To increase the diversity of the judicial applicant pool

### **Qualifications**

Mentors must be active or retired judges who have agreed to mentor two or more attorneys for a period of 12 months.

All mentees must:

- Be a current CCCBA member
- Have at least 10 years experience as a licensed attorney.
- Plan to apply for a judgeship within 12 months of participating in this program

The following is also helpful:

- A demonstrated commitment to our community evidenced by civic activities;
- A commitment to public service

## II. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Q. How do I become a Mentor or Mentee?**

- A. Complete the respective statement of interest form available online at [www.cccbba.org](http://www.cccbba.org), or by contacting Lisa Reep at [lgreep@cccba.org](mailto:lgreep@cccba.org).

### **Q. Are there special requirements for Mentors?**

- A. Mentors must be committed to increasing the diversity of the bench and willing to devote a minimum of four hours to the Mentee during a 12 month period.

### **Q. Are there any special requirements for Mentees?**

- A. Each Mentee must be a member of the CCCBA, have at least 10 years experience as a licensed attorney, and plan to apply for a judgeship within 12 months of participating in this program.

### **Q. How are Mentees paired with Mentors?**

- A. Mentors will be paired with Mentees by the Bench/Bar Judicial Mentoring Program Committee (“Committee”). Pairing considerations will include the Mentor’s areas of previous legal practice and current department assignment, and will take into account the Mentee’s expressed preferences.

### **Q. What is the time commitment of the Mentor/Mentee relationship?**

- A. Mentors are required to meet with their Mentees, at a minimum, for four hours per year. The Mentor and Mentee may choose to meet more often.

### **Q. Will there be support for Mentors?**

- A. Yes. Members of the Committee will provide assistance and information to the Mentors.

### **Q. What are some of the benefits of being a mentee?**

- A.
  - Encouragement, support, and affirmation of their decision to seek a position on the bench;
  - The opportunity to explore new ideas and alternatives in attaining that goal;
  - Contacts with new individuals and groups that can aid them in their career goals;
  - Information about the informal relationship or politics within the professional community;
  - Help in challenging them to achieve their goals and the confidence to try.

### **Q. How does a mentor benefit from participating in this program?**

- A. Through the satisfaction of promoting efforts to increase diversity on our bench.

### III. GUIDELINES FOR MENTORS

The Mentor must share with the Mentee the specific skills and knowledge necessary for successful job performance on the bench. The method by which this knowledge is conveyed will vary with each individual Mentor. However, please keep in mind that you will become a role-model for your Mentee and you will have an impact on your Mentee's behavior. Open lines of communication and confidentiality are essential to a successful Mentor/Mentee relationship.

On a more practical level, a mentor should keep in mind the following:

1. **Be Prepared:** Read the Mentor section of this handbook;
2. **Time Commitment:** At a minimum, the Mentor should meet with each Mentee for at least four hours per year;
3. **Set the Specifics:** Let your mentee know the best time and way to reach you (i.e. e-mail or phone);
4. **Areas of Discussion:** Mentors should assist the Mentee with general issues related to applying for a position on the bench. An emphasis should be placed on ethics and professionalism questions, the value of reputations, and situational advice about how to be successful.

#### IV. GUIDELINES FOR MENTEES

1. **Be Prepared:** Identify personal goals for the mentoring relationship and how your Mentor can help you.
2. **Be Considerate:** Be mindful of your Mentor's schedule. Be on time for your meetings.
3. **The Introduction:** It is the Mentee's responsibility to contact the Mentor. You should initiate the first call and set up the first meeting.
4. **Set the Specifics:** Establishing guidelines in the beginning will be helpful to both the busy Mentor and to the busy Mentee (e.g., scheduling meeting times by phone only, email to be used for "quick" questions, in person meetings during lunch time or after 6 pm). If you are easier to reach at certain times, let your Mentor know.
5. **Discussion:** Mentees should initiate discussions regarding general issues related to applying for a position on the bench. Pay particular attention to ethics and professionalism questions, the value of reputations, and situational advice about how to be successful. Be clear about what you want from your Mentor. Ask for the specific type of support that you want.
6. **Keep it Professional:** Remember that you have a professional relationship with your Mentor. A Mentor is a counselor, not a best friend.
7. **Keep it Confidential:** Discussions between Mentors and Mentees must remain confidential. This will ensure that Mentors feel comfortable candidly discussing various aspects of and issues related to applying for judgeship and vice versa.

## **V. TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

### **February – April 2008**

- Contra Costa Superior Court Appoints the Bench/Bar Diversity Sub-Committee.
- Establish a committee to lead the project (Bench/Bar Diversity Committee; CCCBA Executive Director; CCCBA President; public/non-profit attorney; criminal attorney; civil attorney)

### **May – June 2008**

- Conduct outreach to Contra Costa County bench officers and attorneys;
- Host a mixer for prospective mentors and mentees;
- Send letter encouraging participation to judges and attorneys;
- Distribute orientation packets to all interested participants;
- Begin Enrollment;
- Select judges and attorneys to participate in the program;
- Match Mentors and Mentees.

### **July 2008 – August 2008**

- Contact participants.
- Send invitations to enroll.

### **September 2008 – May 2009**

- Sponsor “So You want To Be A Judge” workshop
  - An Overview of Application Process
  - What Attorneys Should Know About the Interviews and the JNE Process
- Contact participants;
- Distribute program evaluation forms;
- Begin outreach for 2009 project participants;
- Send invitations to enroll.

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**Judicial  
Mentoring  
Program  
Materials**

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## LETTER TO POTENTIAL MENTORS

Dear Honorable/Commissioner [Name]:

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Mentor in the Judicial Mentoring Program!

The Contra Costa Superior Court Bench/Bar Diversity Committee and the Contra Costa County Bar Association are pleased to announce the Judicial Mentoring Program (JMP). The Judicial Mentoring Program was created to provide attorneys contemplating a career on the bench with a structured method of obtaining guidance on how to reach that goal. As a mentor, you can provide valuable feedback and assistance to potential judicial candidates to help them hone the necessary skills for a successful judicial candidacy.

Enclosed is a JMP Mentor Statement of Interest. Please mail the completed Statement of Interest to: Lisa Reep, Executive Director, Contra Costa County Bar Association, 704 Main Street, Martinez, CA 94553. A copy of the Program's handbook is also enclosed for your reference and includes information for both Mentors and Mentees.

We are very excited about this endeavor and look forward to its success!

Sincerely,

**Hon. Barbara Zúñiga**  
**Hon. Diana Becton Smith**  
**Co-Chairs Bench/Bar Diversity Committee**  
**Contra Costa Superior Court**



## JUDICIAL MENTORING PROGRAM

### Mentor Statement of Interest

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Department \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to be contacted via:  phone;  fax;  e-mail;  no preference

I am interested in participating in the Judicial Mentoring Project by:

Becoming a Mentor. I agree to work with at least two Mentees in the next twelve months and commit to spend at least four hours with each Mentee.

Participating in a training session: I am willing to participate as a panelist or trainer for the following session(s):

So you want to become a judge: An Overview of the Application Process

The Interviews: What Attorneys Should Know About the Interviews & the JNE Process

Before taking the bench, I practiced in the following substantive areas:

Criminal Law;  Civil Law;  Family Law;  Other

*(Please describe your practice briefly)* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## LETTER TO POTENTIAL MENTEES

Thank you for your interest in participating in the Contra Costa County Bar Association's Judicial Mentoring Program!

Modeled after the highly successful "Judicial Mentoring Project" (The Project) developed in Alameda County by their Bar Association's East Bay Diversity Bar Coalition, we are thrilled to be reaping the benefit of a lot of hard work on their part and hope our program becomes as well-utilized as theirs.

The Project was created to provide attorneys contemplating a career on the bench with a structured method of obtaining guidance about how to reach that goal. As a Mentee, you can obtain valuable feedback and assistance from experienced bench officers to help hone the necessary skills for a successful judicial candidacy. We invite you to submit an application/statement of interest to become a Mentee.

This handbook contains all of the basic information you need to know about the CCCBA's Judicial Mentoring Program – necessary forms, guidelines, expectations of both mentors and mentees, and our annual timeline. Please submit your completed application/statement of interest to Lisa Reep, CCCBA Executive Director, 704 Main Street, Martinez, CA 94553 by (date).

If you need additional information about our program or have concerns not addressed in this handbook, please contact Lisa Reep at 925/288-2555, or [lgreep@cccba.org](mailto:lgreep@cccba.org).

We are very excited about this endeavor and look forward to its success!

Sincerely,

Robin M. Pearson  
2008 CCCBA President

Cc: Honorable Steve Austin, Honorable Diana Becton Smith, Honorable Lewis Davis, Honorable Susanne Fenstermacher, Honorable Barry Goode, Honorable Barbara Zúñiga, Lisa Reep



It is the policy of the CCCBA that users (i.e., staff, Committee representatives, and volunteers) shall respect and preserve the privacy, confidentiality and security of the information included in this application.

## JUDICIAL MENTORING PROGRAM

### Mentee Statement of Interest

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to be contacted via:

phone;  fax;  email;  no preference

Please rank the following characteristics of a potential mentor according to their importance to you with #1 being most important. Rate only those that are important to you.

Previous Legal Experience

Location of Mentor

Previous Legal Experience

Same Gender

Mentor's Other Involvements

Other (please explain):

1. I request a Mentor who is assigned to a:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No preference           | <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile Department    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal Department     | <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Department       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Probate Department      | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Law Department  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Law & Motion Department | <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic Department     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Federal court           | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain) |

2. I request a Mentor who is located in:

- West Contra Costa County** (including El Cerrito, Richmond, San Pablo, Hercules, Pinole, and Rodeo)
- East Contra Costa County** (including Bay Point, Pittsburg, Antioch, Oakley, and Brentwood)
- Central Contra Costa County** (Including Orinda, Lafayette, Pleasant Hill, Walnut Creek, Concord, and Martinez)

3. I request a Mentor who has previous legal experience in the following areas of law (pick no more than 5; number them 1-5 with 1 being most important):

- |                                 |                              |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ___ Administrative/Governmental | ___ Taxation                 |
| ___ Employment Law              | ___ Wills/Trusts/Estates     |
| ___ Personal Injury             | ___ General Practice         |
| ___ Real Estate                 | ___ Criminal Law             |
| ___ Business/Commercial         | ___ International Practice   |
| ___ Environmental Law           | ___ Sports/Entertainment Law |
| ___ Family Law                  | ___ Other (please explain)   |

Personal background:

4. a. I am a current member of the following organizations that promote diversity \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b. I currently am or have previously held the following leadership role(s) within the above named bar association (i.e., Officer, Director, Committee Chair):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Other Professional Experience (please explain any pro bono activities including pro tem experience that are not included on your resume):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Community Participation (please explain any non-legal activities that you regularly participate in that are not included on your resume):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Additional information you would like the matching committee to know about you in pairing you with a mentor:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I understand that I must meet the following minimum criteria for participating in this mentoring program:

- I am a current CCCBA member
- I have at least 10 years of legal experience
- I plan to apply for judgeship within 12 months of participating in this program

I certify that I am eligible to participate in this program.

I have attached a copy of my current resume.

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Date

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Signature



## MENTOR EVALUATION FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Please rate your experience participating in the Judicial Mentoring Project:

Very Satisfactory       Okay       Disappointing

2. How would you improve the Judicial Mentoring Program?

3. Would you recommend participation as a mentor in the Judicial Mentoring Program to your colleagues on the bench?

Yes       No

4. Any other comments:

## MENTEE EVALUATION FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Please rate your experience participating in the Judicial Mentoring Program:

Very Satisfactory       Okay       Disappointing

6. How would you improve the Judicial Mentoring Program?

7. Would you recommend participation as a mentor in the Judicial Mentoring Project to your colleagues who are interested in becoming a judge?

Yes       No

8. Any other comments: