



# Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program Report

2020 – 2022 Mentor and Mentee Cohorts





# Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program Report

## 2020 – 2022 Mentor and Mentee Cohorts

Published: July 2024

---

Sharon L. Kennedy

CHIEF JUSTICE

Patrick F. Fischer

R. Patrick DeWine

Michael P. Donnelly

Melody J. Stewart

Jennifer Brunner

Joseph T. Deters

JUSTICES

Robert W. Horner, III

ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR

James P. Cappelli

DEPUTY ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR,  
OPERATIONS

Gina White Palmer

DEPUTY ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR,  
LEGAL SERVICES

---



Dear Chief Justice and Justices of the Supreme Court of Ohio,

On behalf of the commissioners, I present the Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program Report from the Commission on Professionalism. As required by Gov. Bar R. XV of the Supreme Court Rules for the Government of the Bar of Ohio, the Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program shall be subject to review by the Secretary and Commission once every three years. Details of this review shall be submitted to the Court and must include:

- A review of program participation statistics,
- An overview of participant evaluation data, and
- An assessment of the current program's success.

The enclosed report contains data from the 2020, 2021, and 2022 cohorts of new lawyers and registered mentors.

Under the authority of the Supreme Court, the Commission on Professionalism is tasked with championing professionalism among attorneys admitted to law practice in Ohio. In furtherance of this work, the Commission oversees and administers the Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program, which has been approved since 2008, and has provided mentoring support to over 9,000 new lawyers. The Commission is pleased to provide the Court with further insight into these efforts.

Respectfully submitted,



Bradley J. Martinez  
*Deputy Director, Office of Attorney Services*  
*Interim Secretary to the Commission on Professionalism*



## I. The Commission on Professionalism

The Commission on Professionalism is composed of 15 members, including five judges appointed by the Supreme Court; six attorneys, three of whom shall be appointed by the Ohio Metropolitan Bar Association Consortium and three of whom shall be appointed by the Ohio State Bar Association; two law school administrators or faculty from different law schools and appointed by the Supreme Court; and two persons who are not admitted to the practice of law in any state and are appointed by the Supreme Court. Commission members shall serve three-year terms and are limited to two consecutive terms. Commissioners serve as volunteers and are not compensated.



### Chairperson

Halle Hara was elected to serve as the Commission chairperson in 2024. She is serving her second term on the Commission. Hara is a Senior Lecturer and the Director of Externships at The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law.



### Vice-Chairperson

Laura Welles Wilson was elected to serve as the Commission vice-chairperson in 2024. She is serving her second term on the Commission. Welles Wilson is with Freking Myers & Reul in Cincinnati.

## The Commission on Professionalism

**Halle B. Hara, Esq. (Chair)**

Ohio State University  
Moritz College of Law  
*Law School Faculty*

**Laura Welles Wilson (Vice-Chair)**

Freking Myers & Reul LLC  
*OMBAC Appointment*

**Hon. Craig Baldwin**

Fifth District Court of Appeals  
*Judge*

**Amy Ikerd, Esq.**

Mercer County Prosecutor's Office  
*OSBA Appointment*

**Belinda S. Barnes, Esq.**

Gallagher, Gams, Tallan,  
Barnes & Littrel, L.L.P.  
*OSBA Appointment*

**Hon. Molly K. Johnson**

Mahoning County Court  
*Judge*

**Hon. Ginger Bock**

First District Court of Appeals  
*Judge*

**Melissa Kidder, Esq.**

Ohio Northern University  
Pettit College of Law  
*Law School Faculty*

**Courtnee Carrigan**

Raising the Bar Performance Group  
*Non-Attorney*

**Jay E. Michael, Esq.**

Jay E. Michael Law, LLC  
*OMBAC Appointment*

**Lindsay Ford Ellis, Esq.**

Bath & Body Works, Inc.  
*OSBA Appointment*

**Debra D. Overly**

Colley Shroyer & Abraham Co., LPA  
*Non-Attorney*

**Hon. Christopher B. Epley**

Second District Court of Appeals  
*Judge*

**Karen E. Rubin, Esq.**

Thompson Hine LLP (Retired)  
*OMBAC Appointment*

**Hon. David Hamilton**

Akron Municipal Court  
*Judge*

## Former Commissioners

**Stephanie Adams, Esq. (Chair, 2022)**

The Sherwin-Williams Company  
*OSBA Appointment*

**Emily C. Samlow, Esq. (Chair, 2021)**

Sixth District Court of Appeals  
*OSBA Appointment*

**Denise Platfoot Lacey, Esq. (Chair, 2020)**

University of Dayton School of Law  
*Law School Faculty*

**Felicia Bernardini**

*Non-Attorney*

**Honorable Michelle Garcia Miller**

Jefferson County Court of Common Pleas  
*Judge*

**Honorable Timothy Paul Cannon**

Eleventh District Court of Appeals  
*Judge*

**Honorable Russell J. Mock II**

First District Court of Appeals  
*Judge*

**Claudia Cortez-Reinhardt**

*Non-Attorney*

**Honorable Beth A. Myers**

First District Court of Appeals  
*Judge*

**Douglas Dennis, Esq.**

Frost Brown Todd LLC  
*OMBAC Appointment*

**Honorable Latecia E. Wiles**

Wayne County Probate & Juvenile Court  
*Judge*

**Eleana A. Drakatos, Esq.**

Yacobozzi Drakatos LLC  
*OSBA Appointment*

**Karen E. Rubin, Esq.**

Thompson Hine LLP (Retired)  
*OMBAC Appointment*

**Mina Jones Jefferson, Esq.**

University of Cincinnati College of Law  
*Law School Faculty*



## II. Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program Overview

In 2006, the Commission on Professionalism launched a statewide mentoring pilot for newly admitted lawyers. In this pilot project, a select group of 174 newly admitted Ohio attorneys participated in mentoring to fulfill part of their new lawyer training requirements. Upon the program's completion, surveys were issued to participants, and the responses received were overwhelmingly positive. Considering this initial success, the Commission on Professionalism subsequently developed a robust curriculum and programmatic approach to mentorship for presentation to the Supreme Court.

More specifically, the Commission proposed a managed mentoring program that would foster an environment for seasoned lawyers to mentor new lawyers during the transition from student to practitioner. In addition to passing on fundamental skills and core values of professionalism essential to the practice of law, the program would align curriculum goals with those that already award Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credits to new and established attorneys. This would permit the participating mentors and mentees an opportunity to secure CLE credit at no additional cost to them.

In 2008, the Supreme Court approved and codified the proposed mentoring program in Gov. Bar R. XV (3) (A) (7), assigning its oversight and administration to the Commission. Branded as the Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program, it became a permanent program offered to new lawyers admitted in November 2008 and every class after that. In its current state, participants may register for the program online, subject to approval by the Commission and as administered by the Office of Attorney Services. New mentee attorneys completing the program earn nine CLE/New Lawyer Training credits, while mentors earn twelve CLE credits.



### III. The 2023 Report

As required by Gov. Bar R. XV of the Supreme Court Rules for the Government of the Bar of Ohio, the Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program shall be subject to review by the Secretary and Commission once every three years. Details of this review shall be submitted to the Court and must include:

- A review of program participation statistics,
- An overview of participant evaluation data, and
- An assessment of the current program's success.

The mentorship program curriculum consists of an 11-month cycle, so the 2023 Report includes data about attorneys admitted in 2020, 2021, and 2022.

#### A. Participation Statistics

Since the inception of the Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program in 2009, mentees and mentors have answered a survey upon completing their mentoring term (in July and October each year). The current survey has 37 questions and asks about all aspects of the program's administrative structure, curriculum, and facilitation. The information reported here includes data from the May and November cohorts collected after each term in 2020, 2021, and 2022.

##### **Mentee Data**

The Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program supported 1,408 new attorney mentees between 2020 and 2022. The 1,408 new attorney participants represented 55% of all new attorneys admitted via examination in the State of Ohio between 2020 and 2022 (2,574 new attorneys were admitted via examination in 2020, 2021, and 2022 combined). New attorney admissions declined by 2% between 2020 (854) and 2022 (837), and mentoring participants declined at a slightly higher rate of 5% between 2020 and 2022.

Mentees are permitted to either select a pre-approved mentor from the Lawyer to Lawyer Program's active pool, or they may identify an unregistered attorney mentor known to them. The unregistered mentor attorneys are subject to program approval and must undergo the traditional mentor registration and orientation requirements to participate.



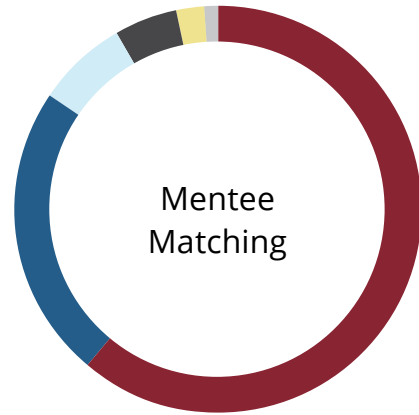
Over 60% of mentees utilized the program’s pool of pre-approved mentors. The remaining mentees were matched as follows:

- Provided their own mentor, known to them (23%),
- Were assigned a mentor by their firm or organization (7%),
- Were permitted to choose an in-house mentor by their firm or organization (5%),
- Were assigned a mentor by the program administrator (2%), and
- Other (1%).

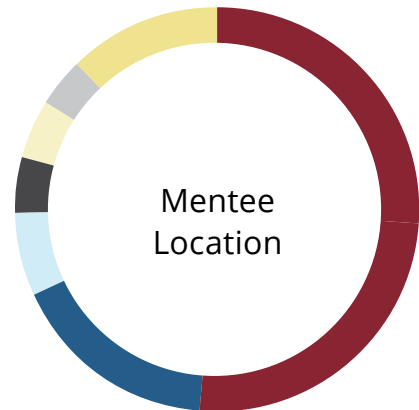
More than two-thirds (69%) of mentees reported being paired with an attorney outside their practice or firm.

Between 2020 and 2022, 97% of all mentees completed the Lawyer to Lawyer Program requirements for 12,672 New Lawyer Training (NLT) credits. Only a collective 46 mentees could not complete the program in 2020 (13), 2021 (17), and 2022 (16).

Since 2020, nearly three-quarters of surveyed mentees indicate they are practicing in the Cleveland (28%), Columbus (27%), and Cincinnati (18%) metropolitan areas. The remaining mentees surveyed indicated they practice in Akron (5%), Toledo (5%), Dayton (4%), or Other – an unspecified location in the state (13%).



- Utilized pre-approved pool of mentors (60%)
- Provided their own, known mentor (23%)
- Assigned mentor by firm/org. (7%)
- Chose mentor at firm/org. (5%)
- Assigned mentor by program admin. (2%)
- Other (1%)



- Cleveland (28%)
- Columbus (27%)
- Cincinnati (18%)
- Akron (5%)
- Toledo (5%)
- Dayton (4%)
- Other/Unspecified (13%)

**Mentor Data**

Since 2020, the Lawyer to Lawyer Program has made 1,523 attorney mentors available for the 1,408 new lawyer mentee participants.

The Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program has been successful in attracting new mentors. Between 2020 and 2022, the program welcomed 270 first-time mentors to the program. There has been a slight decline in the total number of mentors since 2020.

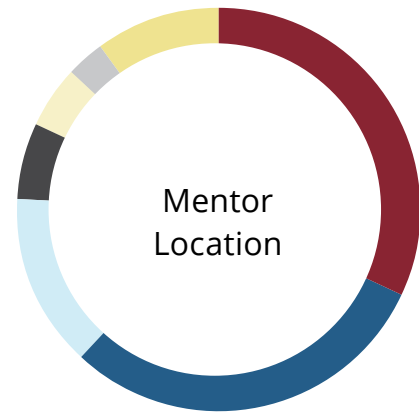
Survey results indicate that the Lawyer to Lawyer Program maintains a steady roster of first-time mentors and those with more than five years of mentoring experience, with a smaller percentage of mentors serving in their second to fourth years. More specifically, approximately one-third (32%) of surveyed mentors report they are in their first year with the program, and 41% of the mentor pool report having participated five or more times. The remaining returning mentors (26%) report having participated less than five times (two – 11%, three – 9%, and four – 6%).

Over the three-year review period, more than two-thirds of mentors (1,061 of the 1,523 available mentors) were made available for matching through the Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program. The remaining 462 mentors (30%) were initially non-participants identified and referred to the program for one-time matching by their mentees.

Since 2020, over three quarters of surveyed mentors indicated they are practicing in the Columbus (32%), Cleveland (30%), and Cincinnati (14%) metropolitan areas. The remaining mentors indicated they practice in Toledo (6%), Akron (5%), Dayton (3%), or Other – an unspecified location in the state (10%).



- One year (32%)
- Two years (11%)
- Three years (9%)
- Four years (6%)
- Five or more years (41%)



- Columbus (32%)
- Cleveland (30%)
- Cincinnati (14%)
- Toledo (6%)
- Akron (5%)
- Dayton (3%)
- Other/Unspecified (10%)

## B. Evaluation Data

### Mentee Data

Since 2020, surveyed mentees participating in the Lawyer to Lawyer Program have reported an overwhelmingly positive experience. Ninety-nine percent of surveyed mentees indicated that they would recommend the program to other lawyers. Of the 671 total responses, just six mentees stated they would decline the recommendation.

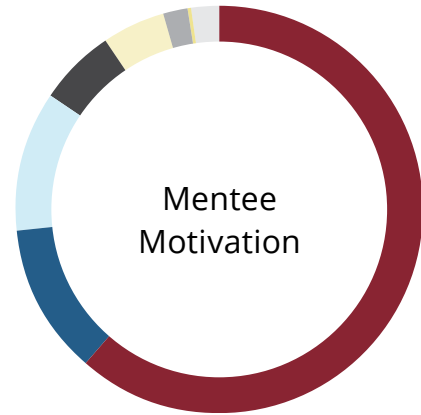
Feedback regarding the Lawyer to Lawyer Program shows that the program has been incredibly effective despite a wide range of mentee participation goals. Over the three-year span, 99% (669 of 674) of surveyed mentees reported that the program met all their goals.

Over half (61%) of mentees indicated their primary goal for participation in the Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program was to gain advice and insight from an experienced attorney. Other program goals included (paraphrased):

- Learn practice skills (12%),
- Earn New Lawyer Training (NLT) credit (11%),
- Gain new perspectives from another law practice, office, or position (6%),
- Expand network (5%),
- Avoid taking NLT credit in a classroom setting (2%),
- Meet an employer requirement (.3%), and
- Other, write-in responses (2%).

Mentees were also invited to indicate a secondary goal for participation in the program. Responses were distributed more evenly in this instance and included (paraphrased):

- Learn practice skills (40%),
- Earn New Lawyer Training (NLT) credit (39%),
- Expand network (39%),



- Gain new perspectives from another law practice, office, or position (27%),
- Avoid taking NLT credit in a classroom setting (13%),
- Meet an employer requirement (4%), and
- Other, write-in responses (.4%).

More telling of program outcomes, when asked if the Lawyer to Lawyer Program positively impacted their professional future, mentees reported very high marks. In particular:

- 98% said they are better prepared for the practice of law.
- 99% said they learned about legal customs.
- 86% said they built collegial relationships with other members of the bar.
- 98% said they are better equipped to deal with ethical and professionalism considerations in their daily practice.
- 96% said they have more practice knowledge about the practice of law.

The Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program also facilitated strong relationships between mentees and mentors. Ninety-seven percent of mentees indicated they would maintain a relationship with their mentor after program completion, and 98% said they would recommend their mentor to other new attorneys. Most interactions between mentors and mentees consist of one-on-one meetings; however, approximately one-quarter of mentees attended a bar association or court-sponsored event with their mentor or participated in pro bono activities with their mentor.

The survey has several opportunities for mentees to provide written feedback. Sample comments from mentees include the following:

“ The greatest benefit of my participation in mentoring has been all the practical advice that I received from my mentor on various legal and ethical questions that may arise in my day-to-day practice.”

“ I now have a colleague in the profession who I can talk to about issues/questions in the legal profession as well as how outside life intersects in our work life.”



**Mentor Data**

Like their mentee counterparts, surveyed mentors who have participated in the Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program since 2020 reported an overwhelmingly positive experience. Ninety-nine percent of surveyed mentors indicated that they would recommend the program to other experienced practitioners. Of the 549 total responses, just three mentors stated they would decline the recommendation.



Surveyed mentors reported a wide range of motivations for participating in the program. Those include, but are not limited to (paraphrased):

- Enjoyment of the mentoring experience (39%),
- At the request of a mentee attorney (29%),
- A sense of professional obligation (13%),
- For Continuing Legal Education credits at no cost (9%),
- They had participated previously as a mentee (7%), and
- They were nominated by a professional entity (2%).

Regardless of their rationale for participation, most mentors reported beneficial outcomes both personally and professionally. Eighty-seven percent of surveyed mentors stated that their participation in the Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program contributed to an increase in their job satisfaction. Moreover, 92% indicated that the program contributed to an increase in their professionalism.

Survey results also indicate that nearly all (97%) mentors will maintain a relationship with their mentee beyond the mentoring term. The vast majority (85%) of respondents indicated they would maintain communications through email, texts, or phone calls, and 50% also expressed that they planned to continue contact through meals and coffee meetings. Two-thirds of mentors believe they will engage with their former mentee at least a few times yearly.

Echoing mentee feedback, most mentors report the interaction as one-on-one meetings; however, 23% noted participation in a bar association or court-sponsored event with their mentee, and 30% reported participating in pro bono activities together.



The survey has several opportunities for mentors to provide written feedback. Sample comments from mentors include the following:

“ I think this program is absolutely vital to new lawyers and wish it was available when I began practicing.”

“ My mentee has very different political views from me... However, this program provided a helpful framework for us to get to know one another without those differences getting in the way.”

“ The support materials and worksheets were great – any expansion and development of these materials would be welcome.”

“ I found the experience very rewarding and believe my mentee felt the same.”

### C. Assessment of the Current Program's Success

The survey data overwhelmingly shows that the Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program is effective and well-received by new attorneys and mentors. The most telling indication of success is that 99% of surveyed mentees and mentors said they would recommend the program to other attorneys. New attorneys joining the program are driven primarily by learning outcomes but value the secondary benefits of networking and completion of new lawyer training requirements. Additionally, an overwhelming number of mentors said program participation contributed to an increase in their professionalism and job satisfaction. The program offers a highly effective curriculum and mentor pool to meet mentees' desired outcomes, with 99% of surveyed mentees saying the program met their goals.



**99%**  
of mentees and  
mentors said they  
would recommend  
the program.



**99%**  
of mentees say  
the program met  
their goals.

The Commission is proud that 1,408 new attorneys, over half of all newly admitted attorneys, have participated in the Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program since 2020. Although there is a slight decline in participation, this may be attributable to state trends admitting fewer new attorneys and individuals taking the Uniform Bar Exam in Ohio but opting to practice in another state. Nevertheless, the Office of Attorney Services Director and Staff and the Commission on Professionalism have been working diligently to increase program visibility in various ways. These efforts include creating and distributing a Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program brochure and video, hosting a table and meet and greet during the Supreme Court Bar Admissions Celebration Receptions, a professionalism video series from 2021 to 2022 that garnered over 1,000 views on The Ohio Channel, and regular speaking engagements throughout the state. The Commission on Professionalism also has several subcommittees dedicated to enhancing the Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program. These include:

- The Student to Lawyer Symposium Subcommittee, which plans and presents a webinar biannually;
  - The October 2022 webinar had over 400 attendees (226 of whom were Ohio attorneys who received CLE credit) and the Commission is expecting similar attendance for its upcoming October 2024 webinar.
- The Curriculum Subcommittee, which is dedicated to reviewing and updating program materials on an ongoing basis;
- The Courthouse Connections Subcommittee, which hosts events, including courthouse tours, for mentees and mentors;

- The newly formed Focus Group Subcommittee, which will conduct an intensive study of the program with select participants in 2024; and
- The Access to Justice Subcommittee (formerly the Pro Bono Subcommittee), which promotes pro bono opportunities for mentees and mentors.

The Office of Attorney Services Director and Staff and the Commission on Professionalism have found that the Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program is in a healthy place, with data and participant satisfaction indicating its success. The program is achieving its goal of promoting professionalism among new attorneys, and the impact of the mentoring relationships is ongoing. With 97% of mentors indicating they will maintain a relationship with their mentee beyond the mentoring term, the program's influence continues long after the initial mentoring period.





PUBLISHED BY  
THE SUPREME COURT *of* OHIO  
[supremecourt.ohio.gov](http://supremecourt.ohio.gov)