FEPA
Mentorship Program

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Cohort 02 - Program Details
FEPA Mentorship Program

FEPA was created to help professional Emergency Managers work to protect the people of Florida and to promote professional expertise and diversity through training and education and sharing best practices. To support this goal, the FEPA Mentorship Program has been developed to support FEPA’s strategic goal to advance the professional development and career enhancement of the members through the exchange of ideas, development and provision of training, education, and promotion of professional standards through the growth of current and new members by experienced mentors.

Purpose
This program is aimed to help practitioners with their knowledge, job, skill, and career development. The FEPA Mentorship Program will:

- Support members in understanding the organization’s mission, vision, values, and goals
- Share the skills and knowledge of successful and experienced members with new members
- Provide support in locating and accessing organizational resources and individuals
- Foster open communication and dialogue between participants, program coordinators, and Association leadership
- Provide opportunities for established and mid-career members to utilize our experienced, long-serving membership

Mission
The mission of the FEPA Mentorship Program is to partner new and existing members with experienced members who can provide advice, coaching, and professional support that will encourage mentees’ growth and development.

Goals
The FEPA Mentorship Program has been designed to achieve the following goals:

- Knowledge and Skill Transfer: The mentoring program should provide participants with opportunities to develop specific skills and abilities, increase their knowledge of programmatic areas, pass on their experiences and lessons learned, and gain perspective on recent developments in the field.
- Professional Development: The mentoring program should help participants gain insight on best ways to grow within their careers, transition to new areas, and pursue rich experiences to enhance their career progress.
- Situational Guidance: The mentoring program should enable participants to gain coaching, guidance, and advice on how to handle practitioner-related projects, duties, dilemmas, and problems.
- FEPA Involvement: The mentoring program should enable participants to determine areas within the Association where they can increase their involvement and provide input on the future direction of the Association.

These goals will serve as the foundation of the Mentee Action Plan and program evaluation surveys, which allows participants to develop a unique framework of accountability and will be completed and agreed upon by mentor and mentee.
**Structure**

In order to achieve these broad goals, the mentorship program has been designed to require minimal resources while maximizing progress. Participation will be solely on a voluntary basis, and the program will be as user-friendly and administratively simple as possible.

To provide the balance between structure and flexibility in a way that achieves the program’s goals, and to deal with the real-world limitations of formal mentoring and the geographic areas covered through this mentorship, the majority of the proposed program will be conducted virtually, with opportunities for in-person meetings at FEPA conferences and work sessions.

Each Cohort will have a limited number of matches per year, and each Cohort will last between FEPA Annual and FEPA Mid-Year. Mentors and mentees will be expected to work together to identify and dedicate time to meet and discuss the goals of the mentee and will be asked and expected to complete personal and programmatic surveys to provide feedback.

**Mentors**

A mentor would be required to:

- Be currently involved in a FEPA Committee, or serve as an Area/Alternate Area Governor
- Have earned a designation as a Florida Professional Emergency Manager or FEPA certification level above Mentee
- Provide a peer reference, and be respected as an experienced professional in the field
- Prioritize mentorship program and meet programmatic deadlines
- Complete all requested surveys
- Provide a short bio and professional picture

Should be able to:

- Explain how FEPA is structured, and best ways to be involved
- Explain and support FEPA’s mission, vision, and goals
- Stay accessible, committed, and engaged during the length of the program
- Listen well and offer encouragement through genuine positive reinforcement
- Be a positive role model
- Share “lessons learned” from their own experiences
- Be a resource and a sounding board
- Model continual learning and growth
Mentees
Mentees would be required to:
• Maintain a regular or student membership with FEPA
• Complete all requested surveys
• Provide a short bio and picture

Should be able to:
• Commit to self-development; assuming responsibility to acquire/improve skills and knowledge
• Discuss individual development planning with their mentor
• Be open and honest regarding their goals, expectations, challenges, and concerns
• Actively listen and ask questions
• Seek advice, opinions, feedback, and direction from their mentor
• Be open to constructive criticism/feedback and ask for it
• Respect their mentor’s time and resources
• Stay accessible, committed, and engaged during the length of the program
• Comfortably give feedback to their mentor on what is working or not working

Personal Evaluation
Mentors and mentees will be asked to complete a DiSC assessment, and about mid-way through mentees will be asked to complete a 360 assessment. Participants will be provided with links to these surveys.

Programmatic Evaluation
A pre-program, midway and post-program evaluation will be conducted with all participants. The online assessments will measure participants’ perceptions regarding:
• Satisfaction with the mentoring program
• Perceived usefulness of the mentoring program
• Perceived usefulness and satisfaction with the Mentee Action Plan objectives
• Suggestions for improvement

Continuous Contact
Mentors and mentees will be expected to set time when they will be able to virtually meet or talk to one another. This may be weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly based on their availabilities and schedules, and will be encouraged to ensure the next meeting during each of their meetings. Mentors and mentees should prioritize their time and scheduled meetings in order to build a fulfilling partnership.

The Mentorship Program Coordinators will be available to mentors and mentees as needed and will periodically reach out to participants to check-in with them.
Feedback Received from Cohort 01
In 2019, FEPA conducted a pilot of the program, with four mentor/mentee matches which allowed for increased communication with participants, thorough evaluation throughout the year, and permitted continuous improvement to build a sustainable mentorship program for the Association. Feedback received from Cohort 01 included:

On the Relationship with their Mentor:

- My mentor was continually supportive and guided me through acquiring a new job while professionally leaving my current job.
- I am beyond grateful to have been paired with Kimberly. Her professionalism and grit are inspiring; I look forward to continuing to grow a bit more each day and greatly appreciate her role in my professional and personal growth.

Greatest Benefit/Success:

- Having a friendly person in my field, but not in my work place to speak to.
- Being able to share my experience and knowledge to benefit an up-and-coming EM professional.
- Having the opportunity to build a relationship with a person in a leadership role that can share insight and guidance to help lead the way for a younger/aspiring emergency manager.

Greatest Challenges:

- Timing was probably the only challenge identified, but overall we have been able to connect rather regularly.
- Finding time in both of our complicated schedules. Especially during the summer with PTO.

Final Thoughts:

- Through my partnership with my mentor, I've become more involved in the FEPA Higher Ed committee.
- I am thrilled to be a part of the FEPA Mentorship Pilot Program. The opportunities that this program offers both an incoming and seasoned emergency management professional are endless.

When asked “how likely they are to recommend the FEPA mentorship program to others”, there was a 92% positive response.
Program Process and Timeline

December
- 11 – Webinar for interested parties to go over FEPA Mentorship Program and answer any questions
- 22 – Deadline for applications

January
- Mentors/Mentees notified of pairings
- Mentors/Mentees asked to complete a DiSC assessment and bring their responses with them to FEPA Annual Workshop

February
- Annual - Group orientation/introduction session will be held at FEPA Annual
- Mentors/Mentees complete Mentee Action Plan
- Mentors/Mentees communicate with one another

March
- Co-chairs check in with mentors and mentees
- Mentees to complete 360 assessment for discussion
- Mentors/Mentees communicate with one another

April
- Facilitated check-in with mentors and mentees as one group, conducted virtually
- Mentors/Mentees communicate with one another

June
- Co-chairs check in with mentors and mentees
- Mentors/Mentees to complete mid-point survey
- Mentors/Mentees communicate with one another

July
- Co-chairs check in with mentors and mentees
- Mentors/Mentees communicate with one another

August
- Wrap up session with mentors, mentees, and co-chairs during FEPA Mid-Year
- Mentors/Mentees asked to complete post-evaluations
- Mentors/Mentees communicate with one another