

M.A.T.C.H

Mentoring ▪ **Accompanying** ▪ **Teaching** ▪ **Catalyzing** ▪ **Helping**

Mentoring Program Outline



ABOUT MATCH

Purpose

MATCH is a program that puts undergraduate students, graduate students and early-career professionals in touch with volunteer professionals experienced in the GIS field. MATCH facilitates mentorship and informational interviews, a method that is effective in sharing knowledge and developing professional networks.

The purpose of MATCH is to enrich the local GIS community by sharing the experience of seasoned professionals with those new to the field. This will be achieved by pairing a mentee with an appropriate mentor based on the focus/discipline and professional GIS goals of the mentee. Early-career professionals can then ask questions, receive support, guidance, and applicable information to help build up their professional profiles.

Benefits

Students and early-career professionals benefit by obtaining invaluable, personalized insight into the GIS profession. The mentee will gain confidence and begin to develop a network of GIS professionals through this experience. The information that the experienced professionals will be able to offer, be it technical, ethical, or professional, will be invaluable to aspiring professionals as they move forward in their careers.

The program also provides opportunities for professionals to volunteer as a mentor and contribute to the GIS profession by sharing their knowledge and experience. Mentoring through the MATCH program also affords GIS professionals with the opportunity to earn GISP points through the GIS Certification Institute (GISCI).

Getting Started

To begin participation in the MATCH program a prospective mentee or mentor must first sign up by filling out a form on the Ohio URISA [website](#). The Ohio URISA MATCH Committee will review the information provided and contact you to confirm your information was received. An appropriate match between a mentor and a mentee will be identified based on the mentees desired focus and GIS professional goals.

The Ohio URISA MATCH Chair will contact a potential mentor to gauge their willingness and ability to work with a prospective mentee. After the match has been made, the MATCH Chair will notify the mentee of the successful match. Then the MATCH Chair will provide the necessary contact information of the mentee to the mentor.

The mentor will then communicate with the mentee to establish a professional relationship that helps promote growth, education, and a strengthening of the mentee's professional development. Communication between the mentor and mentee could be in person or via email or telephone as is convenient. The Ohio Chapter of URISA's JoinMe online meeting account is also available for the mentor and mentee to use if Ohio URISA, the board, a committee, or a user group does not need the line at that time.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

How to be an Effective Mentor

A mentor should be genuinely interested in people and have a desire to help others. A supportive mentor will be interested in the mentee's needs and aspirations, will encourage them to accept challenges and overcome difficulties, and will motivate and inspire them to reach their full potential.

A mentor needs to be someone the mentee can respect, can look to for advice, and can trust to discuss sensitive career issues confidentially. A mentor must be friendly and approachable, patient, be able to effectively communicate and actively listen, and be willing to devote time towards discussing the mentees goals and working with them on a career development plan.

The relationship, activities, or information provided can be based on the mentee's needs. Suggesting activities and giving advice is highly encouraged, but try not to make the mentee feel pressured or burdened by a project or activity you suggest.

How to be an Effective Mentee

A mentee must be an active partner in the mentoring partnership. The mentee must know and be able to discuss their needs and objectives with their mentor. The mentee must be able to communicate effectively, periodically assess the progress of the relationship, and let the mentor know when priorities need to be realigned.

A mentee should be competent, credible, ambitious, eager to learn, flexible, have a positive attitude, be able to listen, work as a partner, keep confidences, and accept responsibilities. The mentee needs to be able to receive feedback, take the mentors advice into consideration, and work to gain skills and knowledge.

The mentee must also take responsibility for his or her career and goals. Although they have the benefit of the mentor's guidance, they are responsible for their own path and achievements. The mentor is not expected to troubleshoot GIS problems or to search for or create a job for the mentee. Remember that the mentor is a working professional; respect the time that they are freely giving.

WHAT TO DO

Each mentoring relationship will be unique, and it is up to the participants to determine their level of interaction and expectations for the program. Some suggestions to help guide the relationship are below.

The First Meeting

The first meeting should be a time of getting to know each other, building rapport, sharing your career or school histories, and setting up guidelines. The first contact is usually done by email, but the mentor can reach out by phone if that is preferred. Some questions to address may be:

How will you communicate?

Will this communication be via email, phone, or face to face? If you will be meeting in person, decide on the location. If you are communicating via telephone, will you use a personal or business number? Are there certain times of the day you do not wish to receive calls?

How often will you communicate?

You may choose to check in weekly, monthly, or just on an as needed basis. It is suggested that in the initial stages partners exchange several emails over a short period of time. It may need to be more often when working on a specific goal, such as preparing the GISP submittal, applying for graduate school, or considering a transition to another GIS career.

How long will you communicate?

Set a specific amount of time to communicate (ex. one year) and set a checkpoint date (ex. 6 months) at which you will evaluate the relationship to make sure it is still working for both parties, if goals are being reached, or if perhaps a different partnership might be more beneficial at that point.

It can take a while to get to know each other and establish trust where both feel open to sharing honest thoughts and ideas. Setting a communication period of 6 months or a year will give you time to develop the relationship. Ideally the relationship will continue indefinitely, even if contact becomes infrequent as the mentee needs less and less support.

What are the expectations?

Identifying the mentees goals and expectations early on will help the partnership be successful. Needs may change over time, but the first meeting is a good time to address what the benefits of the relationship could be.

What is the level of confidentiality?

Open and honest communication will facilitate learning for the mentee and help the mentor understand the needs of the mentee. As such, confidential information about work or school may be discussed. It is important for both the mentor and mentee to keep such discussions in confidence.

Get to Know Each Other

Within a few weeks, begin to define the mentee's short and long-term career goals and get to know each other. Sample questions are provided below to facilitate communication:

If the mentee is a student, some points of discussion or information to share might be:

1. Career goals.
2. Which courses are available, and which may be beneficial.
3. Exams, projects or assignments - perhaps the mentor can offer advice.
4. Resources such as data repositories or upcoming workshops.
5. Internships, volunteer opportunities, or job postings.

If the mentee is an early-career professional, some points of discussion or information to share might be:

1. Projects they are each working on – the mentor may be able to offer advice on a mentee's project and the mentee may learn more about what the professional does.
2. Job postings if the mentee is considering a career change.
3. Resources such as data repositories or upcoming workshops.

Some questions for the mentee to ask the mentor might be:

1. Which skills should I learn to accomplish my career goals?
2. What advice would you give to someone new in the field?
3. How can I network with more GIS professionals?
4. What volunteer opportunities are available?
5. What did you learn on the job that you didn't learn in school?
6. What would you do differently if you had the chance?
7. What is the most difficult aspect of your job?
8. What is the most rewarding aspect of your job?

Ongoing Support

Stay in contact over the following months. Check in as needed or on a schedule, as you prefer.

Some ways for the mentor to continue engaging the mentee include:

1. Provide information on common workplace issues and procedures, sharing the benefits and insights of your experiences.
2. Let the mentee know about projects that you are working on so they get an understanding of what you do.
3. Encourage involvement in professional organizations and local GIS user groups.
4. Share resources and continuing education opportunities such as ESRI MOOCs.
5. Share books, articles, or other GIS related publications.
6. Encourage them to present their projects at upcoming conferences or meetings.
7. Invite the mentee to tour your office or shadow you.

Some ways for the mentee to stay engaged include:

1. Let your mentor know about projects you are working on or classes you are taking.
2. Send your resume to your mentor for review.
3. Attend conferences and symposiums that your mentor is attending.
4. Submit publications or maps to map galleries and contests.
5. Volunteer for GIS Day activities.
6. Attend available workshops or free courses.

GUIDELINES AND RESOURCES

Guidelines

Participants must be Ohio URISA members. Mentors should have at least 5 years of experience in the GIS field. Mentees should be students or early-career professionals with less than 5 years of experience. The mentoring program is not for established practitioners looking to change jobs or develop sales contacts.

The length of the mentoring relationship and frequency of communication is to be determined by the mentor and mentee. There is a single minimum requirement: to establish at least one interview/discussion.

GISP Points

A mentor's time is considered Volunteer Contributions through GISCI and eligible for credit towards a GISP. Mentors wishing to use mentoring hours towards their GISP should contact Ohio URISA to request a letter documenting their hours served and participation in the MATCH program. Mentors should keep a record of the time they spend mentoring so that Ohio URISA and GISCI can confirm their participation. More information on GISP application procedures can be found on the GISCI [website](#).

Resources

If you have a question or need assistance, contact the Ohio URISA MATCH Chair at match@ohurisa.org. The following online resources are also available to assist you in the MATCH program:

Ohio URISA Resources

Ohio URISA MATCH Homepage: <https://www.ohurisa.org/match/>

Ohio URISA Mentor Signup: <https://www.ohurisa.org/match/match-mentor-signup/>

Ohio URISA Mentee Signup: <https://www.ohurisa.org/match/match-mentee-signup/>

MATCH Program Outline (this document):

<https://www.ohurisa.org/wp-content/uploads/MATCH-Handbook.pdf>

URISA International Resources

URISA Homepage: www.urisa.org

URISA Mentoring: <https://sites.google.com/site/mentoringurisa/>

GIS Certification Institute

GISCI Homepage: <https://www.gisci.org/>

GISCI Mentoring: <https://www.gisci.org/Students/MentoringProgram.aspx>