

# BACK STORY

## MENTORSHIP PROGRAM UNDERWAY

BY LISA MCGRANE, CLIENT PROTECTION MANAGER

By now, the word is out. Transitioning into Practice (TIP) is operational and the process of recruiting attorney mentors and pairing them with new attorneys entering the profession has begun. Nevada is one of just seven states to implement a comprehensive program, such as TIP, that introduces newly admitted attorneys to the practice of law by teaming them with experienced and well-respected attorneys for a six-month-long mentorship experience.

### How it Works

Mentors and newly admitted attorneys are paired based on shared practice areas, locations, etc. For instance, a new attorney practicing in bankruptcy law will be paired with a mentor practicing in the same specialty. This match can be made with attorneys practicing in the same office or with an attorney practicing in an office nearby. A new attorney can request a specific mentor or vice versa.

Once a match is made, the mentor and new attorney will establish a schedule for completing the mandatory and elective activities and experiences contained in the Model Mentoring Plan. The plan is designed to provide an introduction to the topics a lawyer needs to be familiar with prior to entering the practice of law. With the exception of certain mandatory elements, the plan may be customized to meet the needs of each individual lawyer.

Examples of some of the required elements include:

- Reviewing the Nevada Rules of Professional Conduct;
- Discussing ethical conflicts;
- Discussing good time management skills and techniques; and
- Reviewing the importance of good client communication.

The mentor and new attorney have six months to complete the required program elements, along with a minimum of six electives in one or more of 18 defined practice areas. Mentors may work with their new lawyer on a one-on-one basis or involve other attorneys with expertise in specific areas.



New lawyers are responsible for tracking their TIP progress online and mentors will attest that the activities have been completed.

### When it begins

The Nevada Supreme Court issued an order effective November 16, 2011 that suspended the Bridge the Gap program for one year and established TIP as a pilot program. The program will encompass those attorneys admitted on October 2011 or later and those attorneys previously admitted who have not yet completed Bridge the Gap. Enrollment in the TIP program begins in April 2012.

*"I think the mentoring program, now known as TIP, will be a tremendous opportunity for our new and seasoned attorneys. With the program goal being an enhanced model of professionalism, everyone – lawyers, clients and judges – will benefit."*

**Chief Justice Nancy Saitta**

### Oversight and Resources

Each mentor serving in the program is vetted through the Standing Committee on Transitioning into Practice, approved by the State Bar of Nevada's Board of Governors and formally appointed by the Nevada Supreme Court.

Mentors will be provided with training materials and, once the mentor-attorney relationship is established, the pair will have access to an online resource library designed to aid in the discussion of required program elements. Members

of the standing committee will also be available to serve as mentor coaches.

### Program Exceptions

Newly admitted attorneys may request exemptions or deferrals from the program under limited circumstances. For more information or to request a deferral or exemption, visit the TIP webpage at [www.nvbar.org/tip](http://www.nvbar.org/tip). ■



**LISA MCGRANE** is the State Bar of Nevada's Client Protection Manager and oversees the administration of the bar's Fee Dispute and Clients' Security Fund programs. She can be reached at [lisam@nvbar.org](mailto:lisam@nvbar.org).