

**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 15-10**

**Creation of the Judicial Coaching Program**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to D.C. Code § 11-906(a), the chief judge shall administer and superintend the business of the Superior Court; and

**WHEREAS**, Superior Court Judicial Coaching Program began in March 2014 under the attached Policies and Procedures; and

**WHEREAS**, participation in the Judicial Coaching Program is voluntary except for new judicial officers, who are required to participate in the coaching program for one year; and

**WHEREAS**, the D.C. Courts developed the 2013-2017 Strategic Plan of the District of Columbia Courts, which sets forth the Courts' strategic goals and values; and

**WHEREAS**, the Judicial Coaching Program supports the Courts' goal of maintaining a strong judiciary and workforce and demonstrates the Courts' values of excellence and transparency;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, it is by the Court,

**ORDERED**, there is hereby created the Judicial Coaching Program.

**SO ORDERED.**

**BY THE COURT.**

**DATE: May 14, 2015**

**/s/**

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**Lee F. Satterfield  
Chief Judge**

**Copies to:**

All Judges  
Executive Officer  
Clerk of the Court  
Division Directors  
Judge-in-Chambers  
Librarian



# **The Superior Court Judicial Coaching Program Policies and Practices**

**Lee F. Satterfield  
Chief Judge**

## **Introduction**

The District of Columbia Superior Court Judicial Coaching Program is a professional development resource that provides a collaborative system of support among judicial colleagues. It is grounded on the principle that mentor coaching by judges, who are trained in judicial coaching and perform the coaching within a formalized and structured program, is a highly effective way to support the professional development of judges throughout their judicial careers. The Program is open to all judges who request a coach, but mandatory for all new judges.

The judges' commitment to the following Policies and Practices is an essential component of this program. Adherence to these Policies and Practices will ensure quality, consistency and sustainability in the Program's implementation and operation.

- 1. Selection of Mentor Coaches.** The Chief Judge will select judicial officers to be trained and to work as mentor coaches. Selection criteria include broad-based knowledge and experience in the judiciary, a reputation for excellence, a desire to support colleagues, an ability to listen well, a commitment to learning, strong interpersonal skills, and the willingness to devote the time and effort necessary to be successful.
- 2. Required Learning for Mentor Coaches.** Mentor coaches are required to attend foundation training before being qualified to work as a mentor coach. Mentor coaches may also attend learning labs or other reinforcement of the foundational training as needed. The Chief Judge will ensure that the judicial assignment schedule allows mentor coaches to meet all training requirements.
- 3. Assignment of Mentor Coaches.** The Chief Judge will consider a number of factors before assigning a particular mentor coach to a mentee. Factors might include the calendar assignment of the mentee, input from a potential mentor coach, input from the mentee, any particular issues being addressed or goals set for the coaching, and the length and kind of judicial experience of the mentor coach and mentee. Assignment of mentor coaches may be made across the divisions of the Court.
- 4. Duration of Assignment.** The duration of a mentor coach assignment typically will be one year for new judicial officer mentees. The length of the assignment for experienced judicial officers will depend on many factors including the nature of the issues to be addressed, the goals of the assignment, and the quantity and quality of time spent by the mentor coach and mentee working together. A coaching engagement for a more experienced judicial officer will typically last for a minimum of six sessions, to be arranged according to a schedule mutually agreed to by the mentor coach and mentee.
- 5. Initial Assignment Meeting.** Once a decision is made to assign a mentor coach to a mentee, the Chief Judge will conduct an initial assignment meeting with the

mentor coach and the mentee. This initial in-person meeting is critical to successfully launch the formal collaboration between the mentor coach and the mentee. During this initial meeting, the Chief Judge will discuss the overall goals and requirements of the Program, the specific goals and objectives of the assignment, the anticipated duration of the assignment, the proposed frequency of meetings/contacts between the mentor coach and the mentee, scheduling and logistical details, and any other expectations. The Chief Judge will emphasize that meetings and other collaborative work between the mentor coach and mentee should take place during regular work hours. Before the meeting is over, the Chief Judge will schedule the six-month follow-up meeting.

- 6. Mentor Coach and Mentee Collaboration.** Meetings and other collaborative work between the mentor coach and mentee will typically take place during regular work hours and at a location determined by them.

For new judicial officers, meetings or courtroom observation sessions should take place at least once every two weeks for the first six months. After the first six months, the frequency of meetings may decline over time. However, it is critical to maintain the formality, structure and focus of the work and to bring the assignment to a formal conclusion when the work is completed.

Before each meeting is over, the mentor coach and the mentee should schedule the next contact/meeting and agree on the work to take place before it occurs. Issues around scheduling time off the bench and other matters critical to the work of the mentor coach and mentee should be brought to the attention of the Chief Judge.

- 7. Confidentiality.** To promote the highest level of trust and confidence between the mentor coach and the mentee, the existence and duration of the coaching relationship may be disclosed, but specific communication between the mentor coach and the mentee should remain confidential. This communication will not be subject to disclosure unless provided by the Code of Judicial Conduct.
- 8. The Six-Month Meeting.** The Chief Judge will conduct a follow-up meeting with the mentor coach and a new judicial officer mentee within six months of the initial assignment meeting. The purpose of the six month meeting is to check in with the mentor coach and the mentee to ensure that they are meeting and working toward the goal(s) of the assignment. Any concerns or questions of any of the parties should be addressed at this time. This is an opportunity for the Chief Judge to do some course correction, redefine goals and ensure that the assignment doesn't languish. Before the six month meeting is over, the Chief Judge will schedule the next meeting, which should occur no later than one year from the date of the initial assignment meeting.
- 9. The One-Year Meeting.** The Chief Judge will conduct an in-person meeting with the mentor coach and the new judicial officer mentee at about the one-year

anniversary date of the initial assignment meeting. The one-year meeting serves as another opportunity to check in with the mentor coach and the mentee and to inquire about progress toward established goal(s). If the objectives of the assignment have been reached, the one-year meeting will also be the concluding meeting. This will most often be the case for new judge assignments.

**10. The Concluding Meeting.** Every mentor coach-mentee assignment [including short-term mentor coach-mentee relationships for experienced judicial officers] will end with a formal concluding meeting conducted by the Chief Judge. In most cases, the Chief Judge will conclude the assignment because the agreed-upon goal(s) and objectives have been met. In other cases, if goals have not been met, redefinition of goals may take place. The concluding meeting provides an opportunity for the Chief Judge to celebrate the progress made through the mentor coach-mentee collaboration, to encourage the parties to stay in touch on an informal basis and to thank them for their work.