



Executive Mentorship Program Guide

A Message from the Chamber



Thank you for your participation in our Executive Mentorship program. As a talent development initiative of the Capital Region Chamber, the Young Professionals Network (YPN) plays a critical role to help connect, develop, and empower area YPs.

The Executive Mentorship Program connects ambitious young professionals with high-level business leaders to support each other's professional and personal development.

This handbook was developed to be a resource to both mentees and mentors. It includes important dates and guidelines, as well as required and suggested activities.

With your commitment to Executive Mentorship program, I'm sure it will be a mutually rewarding and enjoyable experience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark N. Eagan". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mark N. Eagan, CCE
President and CEO
Capital Region Chamber

Executive Mentorship Program Overview

"As expected, as the mentor I got as much out of this as I think the mentee did. It was very rewarding to see the two of us come from different perspectives on things and become better leaders as an outcome."

Paul Milton, President and CEO,
Ellis Medicine

The Executive Mentorship Program is a cornerstone of YPN's goal of developing the skills of young professionals. YPN began in 2004, and the Executive Mentorship Program soon followed.

The Executive Mentorship Program's mission is to strengthen the Capital Region workforce through pairing young professionals with experienced and successful individuals in our community. This program provides both parties the opportunity for personal and professional development, growth, fulfillment, and empowerment.

This program connects young professionals with accomplished professionals from a broad array of commercial, nonprofit and governmental backgrounds. **As a mentor**, you will help shape a young professional's future by sharing your knowledge and providing a firsthand glimpse of life and work in the Capital Region. **As a mentee**, you will get the insight and guidance from an experienced professional. At the conclusion of the program, mentors and mentees often find that the learning has been mutual, and that the relationship has grown in ways not foreseen at the start.

In order to establish a successful relationship, mentors and mentees need to be:

- Willing to be responsible for their own growth and development
- Receptive to feedback and coaching
- Self-aware
- Positive
- Goal-oriented
- Open and honest with each other

5 Tips for a Successful Mentor/Mentee Relationship

- 1. Define expectations.**

Be clear and honest about what you want to get out of the program. Establish realistic goals for the relationship and review them throughout the program. Set up a system to measure achievement and manage expectations.
- 2. Keep communication open.**

Consistent communication is one of the most important building blocks for a successful mentee/mentor relationship. Establish communication methods and frequency of contact from the beginning. Encourage open communication, and act as a resource for one another.
- 3. Actively participate.**

Commit to actively meeting with your mentee or mentor throughout the program. We suggest that you consider making scheduled appointments on a regular basis and attend the mentorship events. Approach your conversations with ideas/topics you would like to discuss and be prepared to learn from one another. Share knowledge, personal experiences and advice. Offer suggestions and feedback and encourage one another to explore new ways of thinking and strategizing.
- 4. Be reliable and consistent.**

Mentoring takes time and implies sacrifices for both the mentee and mentor. Be respectful of each other's time. The more consistent you are, the more you will be trusted.
- 5. Maintain respect and express gratitude.**

Uphold core relationship values including privacy, confidentiality, honesty and integrity. Listen to the feedback provided. Be kind and considerate. Be supportive and recognize the progress made to achieve your goals.

Required and Recommended Activities

Attendance at these events is highly suggested; it helps lay the foundation and promotes growth of the mentoring partnership:

Coffee Chat with Ambassadors

December 20, 2022 | 8:30-9:30 a.m.

Location: Virtual link to be sent

Kickoff Event

January 20, 2023 | 9 - 10:30 a.m.

Location: Palette, Schenectady

Mid-point Event

Thursday, March 16, 2023 | 4 - 6 p.m.

Location: TBA

Closing Event

Thursday, May 4, 2023 | 9 - 10:30 a.m.

Location: TBA

"Being involved in the YPN Executive Mentorship Program was very rewarding. It provided me with an opportunity to think purposefully about what I have to offer to a young professional - as well as what I could learn from her. I also found the planned programs to be of great value - offering useful information as well as additional opportunities to meet other Executives and young professionals. A great way to further build our community!"

-Robin Perry, Vice President of Learning and Development, Bishop House Consulting, Inc.

Recommended activities to make the most of your mentorship experience:

Meet Other Professionals

- Attend a Chamber event to network with other professionals in order to hear different perspectives on business and the region.

Regional Exposure

- Attend functions that expose mentees and mentors to regional assets such as cultural events, economic development programs or other social events.

Project-Based Learning

- Discuss a project or issue with your mentor/mentee. Offer perspective based on professional experiences.

On-Site or Virtual Meeting

- Attend a business meeting with your mentor/mentee.

Company Tour

- Take a company tour with your mentor/mentee to learn about his or her organizational culture and work environment.

Professional Growth

- Discuss professional goals, share ideas and strategies for effective practice and professional and personal development.

Future Planning

- Discuss what it takes to be a successful professional, how to move up the career ladder and balance work and life effectively.

Career Shadowing

- Shadow your mentor/mentee at work. Learn about his or her industry, company, role, and career path.

Meet for a cup of coffee, virtually or in-person

YPN Mentorship Ambassadors

Upon confirmation of your mentorship pair, you will also be matched with an Ambassador. This person will provide guidance and support throughout the program and will be available to answer any questions that you have. We want to ensure you have a rewarding and meaningful experience and therefore encourage you to connect with your Ambassador as needed.



**2023
Committee Co-Chair**

Audrey Stone is the Community Engagement Program Manager for Sunmark Credit Union. Audrey, with her passion for helping others, has been a major contributor in the creation of the Sunmark foundation which began in 2015. With her guidance, the foundation expanded Sunmark Credit Union's ability to support local, nonprofit organizations in the Capital Region. Audrey also serves as Chair of the Executive Council for Special Olympics New York, board member for the Association of Fundraising Professionals, and volunteers on a number of local nonprofit committees. With over 15 years in the financial industry, Audrey is a Credit Union Certified Marketing Executive and has been recognized nationally by receiving a Diamond Award from the National Credit Union Association as well as the Mastercard Community Institutions Doing Well by Doing Good Award. Audrey and her family live in her hometown of Voorheesville.



**2023
Committee Co-Chair**

Nicki Brown is the Community Relations Manager at United Way of the Greater Capital Region, where she connects the caring power of donors to the issues that matter most to them. Focused on building relationships, Nicki manages individual and foundation relations, grants, and special projects. Previously she was the Director of Development at the Albany Institute of History & Art, a museum in downtown Albany. There, she managed all aspects of fundraising for the museum, focusing fund development efforts on expanding the museum's impact, with a firm belief that the arts are critical to the wellbeing of every community. Nicki is active in the community as a member of Leadership Tech Valley's Steering Committee and a Board Member of Washington Park Conservancy, a non-profit that preserves, protects, and promotes historic Washington Park in Albany. She previously served on the Board of Trustees for Historic Cherry Hill. Nicki received her Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology from the University of Georgia and Master of Arts in Museum Studies from New York University. Originally from Atlanta, she now lives in Niskayuna with her husband and a slight menagerie of pets including two dogs that she loves dearly.



**2022
Chair of YPN**

Brittany Lawton is MBA is the Founder + Managing Director of Highly Caffeinated Marketing LLC. She started her business in 2016 and prides herself on serving as a trusted advisor to her clients and developing a unique approach to each business's marketing needs. She holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration — Marketing from Saint Leo University and an MBA specialized in Marketing from the same institution. She is a 2019 graduate of Leadership Capital Region and has been involved with the Capital Region Young Professionals Network (YPN) since 2018. As you may have guessed from her business name, Brittany loves coffee and can often be found sipping a cold brew.



**2023
Chair of YPN**

Cassie Papandrea is the Advertising Director for the Albany Business Review where she creates and executes strategic revenue and marketing initiatives and partners with clients to create integrated marketing solutions to meet their business goals. Prior to this role, she served as the events director and was an integral part of their continued event growth. Cassie started her career in hospitality sales and marketing and transitioned to event planning after 10 years in hotels. She has received several awards for her accomplishments in revenue management and events. Most recently she was named a 2020 Connect Association 40 Under 40 honoree. Cassie is passionate about creating connection, building relationships, and helping others. A native of the Capital Region, Cassie resides in Niskayuna with her husband, son, and dogs.

YPN Mentorship Ambassadors



Kimberly Lengyel serves as a Senior Commercial Credit Underwriter at Broadview Federal Credit Union (formerly CAPCOM) where every day is a chance to make a difference in a members life. Kim ensures the financial stability of new and existing commercial loans for the Credit Union. Kim also owns her own business as a Family Leave Care Coordinator. Through her experiences of managing difficult conversations she helps families navigate what's available. She is known as a maverick leader with a calming presence in the face of chaos. Kim received her Bachelor Degree from The University of Scranton Business School, KSOM. Originally from Northeastern Pennsylvania, she now lives in Clifton Park, NY with 3 children and 3 dogs. In her free time, Kim can be found training for a race, hiking or reading.



Rachel Malik studied at Edinburgh University, achieving a BA in Linguistics and English Language. Originally from England, she relocated from the UK to the Capital region earlier this year. In her most recent role at one of the world's largest consumer goods companies she specialized in pureplay e-commerce, leading key retailer accounts. External speaker and mentor, Rachel is committed to driving cultural change through talent development and Executive coaching. She will draw upon her experiences as Co-chair of the Women's group for PepsiCo UK and champion of diversity and inclusion. This is Rachel's first year as an Executive Mentoring Ambassador and she is looking forward to helping connect YPN's in the local area.



Heather-Liz Meglino serves as Director of Development, Individual Giving & Strategic Partnerships for Special Olympics New York. Prior to joining Special Olympics, she worked as the Associate Director of Alumni Engagement & Annual Giving at Albany Law School. She has also worked for Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Capital Region, Capital Bank, and the Capital District Women's Bar Association. Heather-Liz is very active in volunteering in the community, working with such organizations as the Capital Alliance for Young Professionals (Past-President), Albany Civic Theatre, and Schenectady Light Opera Company. She earned her BA from Marymount Manhattan College and her MA from The Catholic University of America.



Joelle Monaco is passionate about educating others from a People First Principle, an organization's employees are their most valuable asset — each with their own experiences, assets, and purpose. Joelle's expertise expands over ten years in organizational development across the for-profit and non-profit sectors, with extensive experience in planning, directing, and training enhancements for employee and organizational success. Currently, Joelle is the Director of Outreach & Business Engagement at the Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc (MHANYS). Joelle oversees training and development for universities and organizations in addition to MHANYS Workforce Development & Outreach Programming within the Capital Region and across the Mental Health Association Affiliate Network. Joelle received her MBA and BS in Psychology with a minor in Education from the University at Albany, New York.

YPN Mentorship Ambassadors



Natalie Orcutt is the Director of Advancement at Albany Leadership Charter School for Girls. In her current role, she manages internal and external communications, enrollment, fund development, marketing and community engagement. Natalie is a graduate of the University at Albany and graduated with a Masters Degree in Interpersonal and Intercultural Communications. Natalie was a participant in the Executive Mentorship Program three years ago and was paired with a wonderful mentor who she credits with getting her more involved with the Capital Region Chamber and growing her personal and professional network. Natalie aspires to help people connect with a focus on youth development and how the community can support children in all aspect of their lives. She is actively involved in her community and sits on the Troy YMCA Advisory Committee, Rensselaer Chamber Golf Committee and is excited to join the Capital Region Chamber's Executive Mentorship Committee. Natalie lives in Troy with her husband Ray and two daughters, Isabella and Elliana. She enjoys spending time outside with her family and friends.



Kait Ross is a Northeast Senior Director at Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. Since graduating from Siena College with a Bachelor's in English and a minor in Communications, Kait has been in various Development roles over the last ten years, mostly in the healthcare industry. Kait currently supports children's hospitals in NY and PA by strategically helping them meet their revenue goals and is also responsible for managing and executing corporate partner cause marketing campaigns on a national and regional level. She finds purpose in what she does knowing her work directly impacts thousands of children in need of their local children's hospital. This is Kait's first year on the Executive Mentorship Committee and she is very eager to get involved with other professionals in the Capital Region.



James Wighaus, originally from Long Island, moved to the Capital Region in July 2018 after graduating from the Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University. James is an Associate Attorney at Lavelle & Finn, LLP in Latham, New York. In practice, James assists clients in their estate planning and long-term care needs, business planning objectives, real estate transactions and tax matters. He has a passion for being able to help individuals and their families in situations where they may not be able to help themselves. That passion is what drives James' work ethic each day. At Lavelle & Finn, James sees every day as a new opportunity to work together with his co-workers, learn, solve problems, and provide a sense of comfort to each client. Out of the office, he is an avid sports fan and enjoys competing or watching his favorite teams. Although being a Jets fan is more difficult than not, James is a loyal fan that hopes one day he can attend a Super Bowl Parade in New York City.

YPN Overview

CONNECT

Get connected to one another and to top business, governmental, and civic leaders in the region that are vital to success.

DEVELOP

Attend programs that enable you to develop both professionally and personally.

EMPOWER

Feel prepared to impact your place of employment and the community.

As a workforce development initiative of the Capital Region Chamber, the Young Professionals Network (YPN) exists to attract and retain a strong talent pipeline throughout the Capital Region. The group serves as a catalyst to connect, develop and empower young professionals.

What makes us unique is ultimately what brings us together. YPN provides people of all professions the opportunity to come together and share their ideas and vision for the future.

YPN is a dynamic and diverse group of young professionals with the desire to build lasting relationships, a willingness to learn and grow, and the enthusiasm and drive to get involved within the community.

Presenting Sponsors



Supporting Sponsors

Community Resource
Federal Credit Union

MVP Healthcare

The above organizations believe in the mission of YPN and understand that attracting and retaining talent is a top priority for the region.

