

RUN FOR SOMETHING

Mentorship Program: Companion Guide for Candidates

Welcome to the Run for Something Mentorship Program Companion Guide. This document will walk you through the Mentorship process as a **Candidate** requesting Mentorship.

Contact Info:

Mentorship Concierge

Mentors@runforsomething.net

[The Mentors](#)

[The Process](#)

[Expectations](#)

[The Conversation](#)

[Follow Up](#)

ABOUT US

Run for Something (RFS) recruits and supports passionate young progressives running for office. We take chances on people the usual political institutions might never encounter, and we work with candidates from every corner of the country. We'll help people run for state legislatures, mayorships, city council seats, and more. We do whatever it takes to get more under-40 year-olds on the ballot.

ABOUT YOU

You're a Candidate running for office in a community you're deeply connected to. You're passionate about serving that community, and you're willing to do what it takes. You're:

- Pro-choice
- Pro-health care for all
- Pro-LGBT equality
- Pro-immigration reform
- Pro-campaign finance reform
- Pro-voting rights
- Pro-working families & organized labor
- Pro-gun violence prevention
- Focused on inequality, raising incomes, and creating jobs
- Aware that climate change is real, man-made, and our responsibility to fight
- An advocate for criminal justice reform

You bring the raw materials. We'll connect you with the know-how. Together, we'll ensure we see progressive candidates at every level of local, municipal, and state government.

THE MENTORS

WHO WE WORK WITH

RFS Mentors are political operatives, topic experts, and other types of professionals who values progressive representation at every level of government. Our Mentors want to use their skills and expertise to help Run for Something build a new bench of candidates that reflects the Democratic party at its best: inclusive, diverse, tolerant, and fair-minded.

Mentors have committed to speaking with Candidates for a minimum of one 30-minute session to answer questions they have about the electoral process and campaign strategies. For many, that is the maximum they are able to contribute on top of their current work, but many choose to go above and beyond that minimum, depending on their availability.

HOW WE CONNECT MENTORS & CANDIDATES

RFS uses several different criteria to connect Mentors and Candidates:

Location:

RFS works with candidates from every state in the country, but we believe that all politics are local. **First and foremost**, we will attempt to connect you with a Mentor who's based in the state as you, or who has deep professional or personal ties to your state.

While constituency familiarity isn't vital on some types of strategy questions (e.g. "how do I use VAN?"), we want you to feel that your Mentors really knows where you're coming from. We also find that proximity helps the Mentor feel even more personally invested - they get to personally see the impact of your campaign and their assistance.

Candidate Question / Mentor Area of Expertise:

Campaigns are complex, and candidates may have questions about any number of campaign components, from fundraising to field management to communications. We strive to connect you to Mentors who are particularly qualified to answer your specific questions.

Your RFS-Endorsement Status:

- **RFS-Endorsed Candidates:** We prioritize Mentorship facilitation for Candidates who have gone through the RFS endorsement process. As an RFS-endorsed Candidate, you: are currently running for office; have been vetted by the RFS team; and have been found to be a progressive, authentic, and sincere candidate. In many cases, RFS Regional Directors will personally refer Candidates to Mentors based on one-on-one conversations about your campaign experiences.
- **RFS Endorsement Applicants:** You may be in the process of applying for RFS-endorsement, but are already running for office and in need of advice. Even without having received an endorsement yet, we'll do our best to connect you to a qualified Mentor.
- **Haven't Applied for RFS Endorsement:** You may not have applied for RFS endorsement because you're still undecided about running for office, or still considering what office to run for. Though we prioritize current candidates, we still want to support you in getting the information you're looking for - you're the candidates of 2020 and beyond!

PLEASE NOTE:

We strive to connect candidates with local, qualified Mentors. However: the number of volunteers and their specialties varies significantly by region, which means that we're not always able to do so.

The differences in regional volunteers also means that some Mentors may receive many requests for support, while others receive fewer. For that reason, a Mentor may only be able to commit to the 30 minute call and absolutely no more. In no way is that a reflection of support for your candidacy. It's just a coincidence of the distribution of requests and the Mentor's bandwidth for volunteer activity.

THE PROCESS

OVERVIEW

You're a current or potential candidate (amazing!!). You have some questions and/or you need some help. The first step to getting it is to [fill out the Mentorship Request Form](#).

Once you've made a request, an RFS Mentorship Concierge will connect you to a Mentor using the criteria listed [above](#). The Concierge will send an email from Mentors@runforsomething.net introducing you and your Mentor. The email will include information about your needs (as you listed them in the Request Form), and background information on your Mentor's qualifications.

Once you've been connected to a Mentor, remember: this person has volunteered their time and expertise to help you out. You want to make that process as convenient as possible for them, so they feel inclined to keep helping you and other candidates down the line.

Once the introduction is made, you and your Mentor are responsible for **finding a time** that works for both of you to connect. To facilitate the process: whoever responds first should suggest three specific 30-minute windows that work for them. (Use time zones!)

You and your Mentor will also need to provide your preferred **means of communication** and clarify **who** will reach out at the appointed time. RFS will share your email addresses via the introduction, but for privacy purposes, we do *not* share candidate or Mentor phone numbers. If you want to connect via phone, it is your responsibility to share that information as you feel comfortable. If you *don't* feel comfortable sharing your number (which is fine), you might suggest setting up a video meeting instead, offer a conference call number, etc.

Once the time and means of communication has been provided, you as the Candidate should take the initiative to **set up a calendar event** with that information, and invite/share it with your Mentor. (This isn't a hard rule. The Mentor may also offer to set up the calendar event, but again - you want the Mentor to feel good about volunteering their time to help you out.)

Generally as the Candidate, it is **your responsibility** to reach out to the Mentor at the appointed time. (However, if your Mentor has offered to call, that's fine too.) At the appointed time, the appointed person will call, and you'll **have the conversation** with your Mentor!

At this point, the Mentorship process is complete (unless the Mentor offers longer-term assistance). Please **thank your Mentor (over the phone and in a follow up email)** and **let RFS know** you've completed the conversation, by responding on your introduction email that you had your conversation and thanking the Mentor for their assistance.

PROCESS OUTLINE

1. **Request:** Once you've thought about what you need help with (even something like "help me get started!"), you'll submit a [request for Mentorship](#) via the RFS website.
2. **Match:** The RFS Mentorship Concierge identifies a suitable Mentor based on criteria such as location, expertise, etc.
3. **Email Introduction:** The RFS Mentorship Concierge will connect you and your Mentor via email, introducing both people and the questions up for discussion.
4. **Scheduling:** Once connected, you and your Mentor are responsible to do the following: (Remember to **"Reply All"** on these communications).
 - a. **Pick a time:** Whoever replies to the email first should provide at least three 30-minute windows in which they are available to speak. (*Always* include time zones.)
 - b. **Provide contact methods:** Provide the phone number you want to use, or express a preference for alternative communication method like video meeting. (RFS does not provide conference lines or share private phone numbers.)
 - c. **Determine the caller:** Decide in advance who's going to call whom. Generally the candidate is responsible for making the call, but if the Mentor offers to do so, that's fine too.
 - d. **Set up a shared calendar event:** Again, as the Candidate, **you** are responsible for creating a shared calendar event - but again, if the Mentor chooses to do so, just roll with it.
5. **The Conversation:** At the appointed time, chat with your Mentor! The general practice is for Mentors and candidates get in touch by phone, but some people prefer video hangouts, and some pairs have even met in person when they live close enough. If you feel comfortable with alternative communication options, you are welcome to suggest/choose those.
6. **Thank You + Close Out:** "Reply All" on the original introduction email thread. Thank your Mentor and confirm with the Mentorship Concierge that you've completed your conversation. (You may be asked to fill out a quick form letting us know how the meeting went, so we can track the success of the program and identify room for improvement.)

7. **Repeat!** If you come up with more questions as your campaign continues, feel free to start the process over. We're happy to connect you additional Mentors as necessary.

EXPECTATIONS

APPROACH THE PROCESS THOUGHTFULLY

We want to connect you to the Mentor who best fits your needs, and we want to make the experience as smooth as possible for both of you.

It's important to be as specific as possible on your [Mentorship Request Form](#). The information on your Request Form will be used to pick an appropriate Mentor for you, and used in the introduction to your Mentor. Help us, help your Mentor, and help yourself by being clear on what you're looking for.

If you're thinking: "Help! I don't even know where to start. I don't have a specific question yet; I just need broad, general advice," - **that's A-OK!** We are more than happy to connect you to someone who can give you broad, general advice, but it's important for us and your Mentor to understand that that's what you're looking for.

PUNCTUALITY & TIME LIMITS

Respond to introductions in a timely manner.

After you've made a request for Mentorship, you will receive an email from an RFS Mentorship Concierge to connect you with your Mentor.

Show up on time and ready to go.

Help your Mentor help you.

RFS informs both Candidates and Mentors that each call is allotted no more than 30 minutes. We ask Candidates to respect the time limit.

Once you have scheduled a call, please do everything you can to honor that commitment. If you need to cancel, please let the Mentor know in advance and make every effort to reschedule.

AFTER THE CALL

Do not solicit funds or additional support.

Participation in this program is limited to a volunteer basis. While many Mentors provide paid professional consulting services, Mentors should not use these conversations as an opportunity for business development. Similarly, Candidates should not use these conversations as a method for fundraising from the Mentor or the Mentor's network for their own campaign.

THE CONVERSATION

So you asked for help, and you've been connected to one of our amazing, knowledgeable, experienced Mentors! Here are some notes about getting in and out of that conversation smoothly.

Best Practices

1. You've thought about, and submitted your initial questions ahead of time. This will help the Mentor prepare for the conversation, and provide structure to the conversation, ensuring a positive experience for you and the Mentor.
2. If you are concerned about privacy of your phone number, feel free to block your number (*67) or set up a Google Voice number.
3. At the beginning of the call, please introduce yourself as a Run for Something Candidate and confirm that the time still works for both of you. Your Mentor should provide a very brief overview of their experience, and you should provide a brief summary of the office you're running for. You both know where the other is coming from, so this should be a more personal introduction.
4. After the introduction, you'll take it away -- this is **your** call, and the Mentor is there to make sure you get the help you need. It's up to you to have good questions prepared, and to make the most of your Mentor's time.
5. Feel free to mention if the call is about to run over - you're not obligated to stay on the phone beyond the designated 30 minutes. In the same vein, if your burning question has been answered satisfactorily, feel free to end the call before 30 minutes are up!
6. If at the end of the call, you want to ask for additional help, that is up to you to coordinate with the Mentor. The Mentor is not obligated beyond the 30 minutes unless you make the choice to build a longer-term relationship.

FEEDBACK

So you wrapped up a call!

First, send a thank you note to your Mentor with specific actions you plan to take from their advice. If appropriate, send an additional follow up showing how you put their advice into place -- for instance, if you asked for help on social media best practices, you can invite them to follow you to see the results, or if you asked for help building a field plan, let the mentor know how your recent canvasses have been going. Please cc: the RFS mentor on this follow up so we can see how your meeting played out.

Second, let us know how the match went. We know not every match is perfect, and if there is information you still need, we can find another Mentor for you to speak with. And, if the Mentor was an amazing resource that others should know about, let us know that too.