



Competitive Employment Opportunities

Mentor Manual

Division of Specialized Instruction
Transition Team
Office of Teaching and Learning

Competitive Employment Opportunities Program Mission

Our mission is to ensure that every DCPS student with a disability is exposed to the world of competitive employment, is prepared to join the workforce, and is inspired to strive for excellence. We teach student with disabilities tenacity, poise, and initiative to position them for paid internships in their fields of interest

Table of Contents

I. Welcome to the CEO Program	4
II. Mentor Requirements	5
A. DCPS CEO Program Mentor Application	5
B. DCPS Volunteer Clearance	5
C. Orientation	6
D. CEO Match Celebration	6
E. Career Focused Project Mentor Sessions Calendar	6
F. Summer Work	9
III. CEO Program Rules for Interns, and Expectations for Mentors	10
A. Rules for Interns	10
B. CEO Curriculum Character Strengths: Tenacity, Poise, Initiative	10
C. Policies for Mentors	11
D. Expectations for Mentors	10

I. Welcome to the CEO Program

It's so wonderful to have you with us as a CEO mentor. Every CEO Program year, we're astounded by the generosity, wisdom and collective impact of our mentor corps. This year is no different, and we are excited to get underway with CEO's newest cohort. Since CEO started 12 years ago, it has created a couple hundred paid internships for students with disabilities. We have partnered with over 50 organizations and agencies in the DMV area and worked with a plethora of different mentors within them. This year, we have several mentors returning to serve, and we also have a lot of new faces. Whether you're mentoring for the first time or returning, we extend our warmest welcome and appreciation.

Our CEO mentors commit to a Kick-off Celebration (where they meet their intern for the first time), eight Career Focus Project Mentor Sessions, two project presentations, and an 80-hour summertime internship. Throughout each component, our staff is here to offer support and guidance. We are hands-on and personalized in our approach to mentor and intern support.

This manual explains all of the information that is relevant to our mentors and launches into some details about each segment of the program. Of course, always feel free to follow up directly with us if you have more specific questions about anything contained here.

Again, thank you for your commitment and welcome to the CEO Program.

Sincerely,

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II. Mentor Requirements

A. DCPS CEO Program Mentor Application

- All mentors must complete a mentor application using [this form](#). The completed mentor applications are used to assist us during our pairing process. We strive to align mentors' roles and responsibilities in the workplace with interns' interests and passions.

B. DCPS Volunteer Clearance

- All mentors must complete the mandatory DCPS background check and volunteer clearance process unless you are a mentor with an active secret or top-secret federal security clearance. Please see further guidance below for mentors who qualify for exemption*. The volunteer clearance and background check screens for individuals with dangerous criminal histories and/or active tuberculosis. The following must take place to complete the volunteer clearance and background check process.

1. Submit [a DCPS Clearance Application](#)

Failure to submit this application first will prevent the DCPS Clearance team from processing fingerprinting results, documenting other required steps, or issuing clearance compliance. The DCPS Clearance application must be completed in one sitting. Most of the information is standard demographic and employment (or volunteer) information however you are encouraged to scroll through the application and review the requested information before starting

2. Schedule and Complete a Criminal Background Check

DCPS has partnered with FieldPrint to offer remote fingerprinting services. After you submit your DCPS Clearance Application you will receive an email with a link to instructions to use to schedule and complete a FieldPrint appointment. You must use the DCPS appointment code provided within those instructions to complete this process and ensure that your results are provided to DCPS

3. Submit Tuberculosis (TB) Risk Assessment

The Clearance application contains self-reported TB Risk Assessment Screening questions regarding your travel history, TB testing history, and possible TB virus exposure.

Based on how you respond to these questions, the assessment will either satisfy the TB screening requirement, or you will be directed to complete and submit a TB test. Guidance on your next steps and whether you are required to provide a TB test will be provided in an automated email sent to you once this application has been submitted

***Exceptions**

If a mentor qualifies for exemption and has an active secret or top-secret federal security clearance, the mentor should complete the Federal Security Clearance Verification [Form](#) in lieu of being fingerprinted with DCPS. The original signed verification form and a copy of a state issued photo ID to dcps.clearance@k12.dc.gov.

C. Orientation

Mentors are required to attend Virtual Mentor Orientation on Wednesday, January 15, 2025, 5:00-6:00pm on Microsoft Teams.

D. CEO Kick-off Celebration

Mentors are required to attend the CEO Program's Kick-off Celebration. At the celebration, mentors will meet their interns and have a chance to mingle with other interns, teachers and family members. The CEO Kick-off Celebration takes place Wednesday, January 22, 2025, from 6:00 - 7:30PM at the DC Public Schools Central office (1200 First Street NE Washington, DC 20002, 10th Floor). Light refreshments will be served at the Celebration.

E. Career Focused Project Mentor Sessions

Mentors are required to attend all Career Focused Project Mentor Sessions in order to prepare their intern for a 5–10-minute presentation on a career-oriented topic of their choice to an audience consisting of their classmates, mentors, CEO Program staff, and community members. The Career Focused Project Mentor Sessions are an opportunity for mentors to collaborate with their interns on projects that develop the skills and/or knowledge necessary for success in their specific field.

The following is the schedule of mentor meetings with the interns. All mentor sessions are in-person from 4:30-6:00pm at our central office 1200 First Street NE Washington, DC 20002 (10th Floor). Mentors should email their preference for Tuesday or Thursday prior to the Kick-off Celebration.

During Career-Focused Project sessions, the CEO staff member is on hand to provide guidance and support as your intern builds out their project. We will do some facilitation to help jump-start the projects. We can also offer basic supplies (pens, paper, poster board, art supplies), and can meet more specific requests if we're given advanced notice.

Please attend the following dates below in-person at the DC Public School's Central Office 1200 First Street NE Washington, DC 20002 10th Floor

Team Tuesday	Team Thursday	Session Number	Time
1/15/25 5:00-6:00 pm			
Mentor Orientation *VIRTUAL*			
1/22/25 6:00-7:30 pm			
CEO KICKOFF CELEBRATION			
2/4/25	2/6/25	Career Focused Project 1	4:30- 6:00 pm
2/18/25	2/20/25	Career Focused Project 2	4:30- 6:00 pm
3/4/25	3/6/25	Career Focused Project 3	4:30- 6:00 pm
3/18/25	3/20/25	Career Focused Project 4	4:30- 6:00 pm
4/1/25	4/3/25	Career Focused Project 5	4:30- 6:00 pm
4/22/25	4/24/25	Career Focused Project 6	4:30- 6:00 pm
5/6/25	5/8/25	Career Focused Project 7	4:30- 6:00 pm
5/20/25	5/22/25	Career Focused Project 8	4:30- 6:00 pm
6/3/25	6/5/25	PRESENTATION WEEK 1	
6/10/25	6/12/25	PRESENTATION WEEK 2	
TBD		SUMMER KICKOFF CELEBRATION	

F. Summer Work

If an intern successfully completes all the above requirements, the culmination is an opportunity to intern at his or her mentor's office for 80 hours over the summer. CEO staff provides hands-on, personalized support to each mentor to help define an appropriate schedule and set of tasks and opportunities for their intern over the summer. A set of resources will be provided to each mentor as they prepare for the summer internship. This process begins in May as we get closer to the summer.

- Mentors will be the interns' primary supervisor over the summer. If a mentor needs another staff member to be their intern's supervisor over the summer, they must first speak with the CEO Staff.
- Mentors should consider early on what steps will need to be completed for their intern to access their workplace safely and easily during the summer. However, CEO staff takes primary responsibility for ensuring each intern is equipped and knows how to reach their mentor's place of employment.
- Mentors should consider what space, supplies and support will be available for their intern over the summer.
- CEO staff assists the student-interns with navigating public transportation to reach your place of work for their internship. We work closely with students to ensure they feel comfortable and can reach your place of work in a timely fashion.
- All student-interns in CEO do sign a waiver that waives any possible claim against DCPS, its employees, volunteers, or our partner organizations (e.g. your employers) in the event of any student's injury or death.

III. CEO Program Rules for Interns, and Expectations for Mentors

A. Rules for Interns

In managing intern behavior, the CEO Program abides by the DCPS Student Discipline Policy found in Chapter 25 of the DC Municipal Regulations. For your reference, the policy can be found in its entirety by visiting [dcps.gov / about DCPS / Strategic Documents / DCPS Policies / Chapter 25 – Student Discipline](http://dcps.gov/about-DCPS/Strategic-Documents/DCPS-Policies/Chapter-25-Student-Discipline).

CEO staff's rules for its student-interns are as follows:

1. Follow directions the first time they are given.
2. Use polite and respectful language.
3. Arrive on time, prepared, and ready to work.

Mentors are encouraged to model adherence to these rules while working with their interns at Career-Focused Project Sessions and summer internships.

B. CEO Curriculum Character Strengths: Tenacity, Poise, Initiative

This year, CEO staff will focus on developing three-character strengths in program interns that are critical for professional success: tenacity, poise and initiative. We are heavily incorporating the tenacity, poise and initiative theme into the program's culture. Our objective in doing so is that students will understand that "professionalism" is about much more than wearing a tie and using a firm handshake. Professionals know how to be tenacious, develop their poise, and take initiative.

During Career-Focused Project sessions, you will hear CEO staff referring to tenacity, poise and initiative as we interact with students. Mentors are encouraged to bring these elements into their conversations with students and into the summer internships. Our objective is that students achieve a developed understanding of the application of tenacity, poise and initiative in the workplace.

C. Policies for Mentors

1. Attendance and Make-Up Policy:

Mentors are expected to arrive on time. However, we understand that your professional and family obligations may occasionally conflict with your obligations to the CEO Program. If you are going to be late or absent to a session:

- Mentors should contact the CEO Coordinator, as well as their intern, as far in advance as possible to let him or her know that he or she will not be able to attend a Career Focused Project Mentor Session.
- If a mentor misses a session, we strive to make up that session. Team Tuesday mentors can make up sessions on Thursdays and Thursday mentors can make up sessions on Tuesdays, if that is possible for both the student and the mentor.
- The most successful mentors, and the ones who develop the best relationships with their interns, are the ones who consistently attend Career Focused Project Mentor Sessions and who reliably communicate to their interns in advance about when they are going to be absent.

2. Mentor-Intern Contact Policy

- **In-Person Meetings:** Mentors should not meet their interns in person outside of regularly scheduled Career Focused Project Mentor Sessions or summer internship work hours. If you would like to meet with your intern at a different location, please fill out the off-site request form.
- **Phone Calls and Text Messaging:** Mentors can choose whether to exchange personal phone numbers with their interns. It is our experience that interns are easiest to reach via cell phone and text message.
- **Email:** Mentors are expected to communicate with their interns via email throughout the duration of the CEO Program in order to encourage the development of email communication skills and etiquette.
- **Social Media:** We prefer that mentors do not connect with their interns on social media without first discussing the professional purpose of this connection with the CEO Program Manager.

3. Posting on Social Media

- Mentors are encouraged to share the work they are doing with the students. We ask to be tagged @dcps_transition and use the following hashtags #dcpsceo and #watchmework. Before posting a picture with your mentee check with the CEO Coordinator to make sure the intern has signed a DCPS media release. In addition, mentors need explicit consent from the CEO interns to have their picture taken and posted.

D. Expectations for Mentors

Be Present: be physically present and mentally focused while with your intern.

Be Professional: always model professional behavior for your intern.

Be Confident and Enthusiastic: be confident in your own abilities as a mentor.

Remember that, in the eyes of your intern, you are an expert in your field.

Believe in Your Intern: believe that your intern can complete rigorous assignments. Encourage them to try new things and to do great work.

Be Patient: Each intern has different interpersonal skills and preferences, and each mentor-intern pair is different. Don't be discouraged if your intern seems withdrawn when you first meet him or her. Over time you will build a relationship that you are both comfortable with.

Be Ability-Aware: Each intern has different strengths, needs, preferences, and weaknesses. Encourage your intern to be open about where they excel and what they enjoy, as well as where they need assistance. Model self-advocacy.

