

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE UAA/USAID MENTORING PROGRAM

The USAID Alumni Association (UAA) is a non-profit association of former USAID employees with the goal of, *inter alia*, assisting USAID on leadership and operational issues. UAA and USAID have been partners since 2013 in a program that brings alumni experience and expertise to mentoring relationships with interested USAID Foreign Service Officers posted overseas.

- **Who is eligible to participate in the Program?** The program works with career foreign service officers posted overseas, ranging from First Tour Officers to Mission Directors. It is active in many participating Bureaus and supports the overseas Senior Leadership Group. UAA works closely with USAID through HCTM, Bureau Coordinators, and the Senior Leadership Group (SLG) Career Counselors.
- **What do UAA mentors do?** The main objective is to provide mentees with career and personal development and professional support. Mentors can provide perspective and context for mentees at all career levels as they navigate the complexities of the overseas environment. Mentors take part in a one-day training program that will flesh out roles and methodologies. Mentees receive training via a webinar. Although we seek to match backstops, a mentor is not considered a technical consultant.
- **How do mentors and mentees communicate?** They talk via internet services such as Zoom, Google, or WhatsApp. Email communication also is used. While meeting in person is, no doubt, desirable, no funding is available for such travel.
- **How much of my time will this take?** All mentor/mentee relationships are unique. Generally, mentors and mentees initially aspire to talk biweekly, every three weeks, or monthly. Preparation and emailing may add additional time.
- **What other requirements do mentors have?** At a minimum, each mentor must sign a confidentiality statement. This is part of the Mentor-Mentee Agreement.
- **How long must I commit to this program?** Only prospective mentees who are willing to commit to working with a mentor for 6 months should apply. Mentees should realistically consider whether they have the time and energy to devote to the program before they ask to be assigned a mentor. The Mentee Agreement states that the mentee should be willing to participate for at least six months. However, pairs often continue to work well beyond that, some lasting many years if they mutually agree. On the other end, some mentor/mentee pairings may not work out for whatever reason. In that case, there is a provision for early termination.
- **Who are the mentees and mentors?** Mentees are career Foreign Service Officers from all levels to Mission Directors who express interest in participating. Mentors

are UAA member volunteers. UAA members are retired USAID FSOs or other employment categories with substantial coaching and/or overseas experience.

- **How are matches made?** UAA coordinates with USAID Bureau Coordinators, SLG Counselors, and HCTM staff. The USAID coordinators/counselors communicate directly with Mission leadership, requesting him or her to send an email to mission field FSOs, encouraging them to consider participating in the program. Interested FSOs will be instructed to send their expressions of interest to the Bureau Coordinator/SLG Counselor. UAA recruits potential mentors and coordinates with Bureau/SLG Coordinators to identify an appropriate mentor. UAA contacts potential mentors requesting approval for the mentee match, and Bureau Coordinators/SLG Counselors then communicate the proposed match to the mentee for approval.

Participation in the program is entirely voluntary, so if, for any reason, the mentee believes the proposed match is not a good one, he or she may decline the match.

- **When does all this happen?**

The program is announced in the fall with an application deadline. Matches are typically made through November and December. Training for the Mentors and Mentees will take place in January 2024. Training is virtual.