

# Bridge the Gap Mentorship Program Curriculum

**\*Subject to change**

## Overview

The BTG Mentorship program was developed to help new attorneys acquire the skills they need to become successful practitioners. Through the BTG Mentorship program, new attorneys receive the 12 CLE credits (10 General and 2 Ethics/Professionalism) required for their first full year of practice. New attorneys pay a flat fee of \$300 for the program.

## *Curriculum*

The BTG curriculum consists of **7 credits of traditional, structured CLE classes** and **5 credits** earned through the New Attorneys activities with the mentor. The 7 credits of traditional, structured CLE classes will cover ethics and law practice topics. The classes are taught by members of the legal community with special expertise in each topic area. The mentor/mentee activities for the remaining 5 CLE credits will focus on mentors helping the new attorneys learn about and be introduced to the legal community.

Mentors receive 6 credits for their participation in the curriculum. Five of these credits are for the actual time spent with the new attorney and an additional 1 credit is given for time spent planning the activities. Mentors can participate in the Mentorship program every year, receiving 6 credits each year, and be in compliance with the 12 credits every 2-year limit imposed by Rule 24-110(B)(2) NMRA.

## *Other Benefits*

In addition to earning the 12 required CLE credits, new attorneys are also allowed to audit up to 18 hours of CLE programming offered by the State Bar Foundation at no additional charge beyond the Mentorship fee. These CLE classes include the State Bar Foundation How to Practice Series, which helps new attorneys quickly learn the basics of practice in a specific legal area such as Adult Guardianship, Probate, or Family Law. Also included are State Bar Section programs such as the Family Law Institute, the Annual Bankruptcy Year in Review, the Real Property Institute, among many others. State Bar Foundation CLE events are a wonderful way to network with other attorneys and explore the legal community.

### Traditional/Structured CLE Classes (**7 hours/CLE credits**)

**One-day Mentorship class (6 hours total).** This class provide 6 CLE credits and include the topics described below. The class is offered live in June and December each year. It is also offered through video replay at least two other times during the year. Each class is webcast for out of town participants.

- **Practice Management (1 hour):** Calendaring; Case file management; Time keeping; Fees/billing; Succession Planning. *2018 speakers: Jeannie Hunt and her Paralegal*
- **Client Relations (2 hours):** Client interviewing and fact gathering; Accepting/declining representation; Managing client expectations; Handling difficult clients; Lawyer as a problem solver not just a litigator; Confidentiality; Conflicts; Common malpractice and grievance issues; Understanding who the client is in different work situations (government, in-house counsel, private firm); Succession planning as it relates to client expectations. *2018 speakers: Panel with each attorney giving a short presentation on the topic followed by Q&A. 2018 Speakers: Maureen Sanders, Ruth Pregenzer, Jack Brant, Jerry Dixon.*
- **Self-Care (1 hour):** Healthy ways to handle stress and maintain optimal mental, emotional and physical health; *2018 speaker: Pam Moore, JLAP Program Director*
- **Diversity and Cultural Competence (1 hour):** Diversity and cultural competence in the profession (with both peers and clients). *2018 speakers: Leon Howard and Denise Chanez, Committee on Diversity Co-Chairs*
- **Professional Development and Contributing to the Legal Community (1 hour):** Services available through the Bar (ethics hotline, rooms, referral services); SBNM Sections, Committees, Divisions; Voluntary Bars; National organizations (ABA); Pro Bono and community service; MCLE requirements; Other requirements of licensing. *2018 speakers: Richard Spinello ED State Bar, Stormy Ralstin General Counsel State Bar, Aja Brooks - State-wide Pro Bono Coordinator, Dina Afek - Volunteer Attorney Pool*

**Trust Accounting and IOLTA (1 hour)** - All new attorneys are also required to attend the Disciplinary Board's Trust Accounting CLE. This requirement can be fulfilled by attending any of the numerous offerings of this class throughout the year.

### **New Attorney/Mentor Interaction (Discussion and Activities) (5 hours/CLE credits)**

In addition to the structured CLE classes discussed above, each new attorney is paired with a mentor. The role of the mentor is to introduce the new attorney to the legal community. Together, the mentor and new attorney will engage in several of the following activities totaling a minimum of 5 hours.

NOTE: All attorneys newly admitted in New Mexico are required to attend a 1-day training that includes a thorough discussion of “**Relations within the Legal Community**” including: civility and professionalism; communicating with opposing counsel; handling perceived ethical violations of other attorneys and duty to report; courtroom etiquette. The BTG program does not require new attorneys to repeat this training. However, the mentor and new attorney should revisit and discuss these topics.

Other activities and topics for discussion include:

- Attend professional events together (State Bar, Voluntary Bars, Local Bars)
- Volunteer at a legal fair together
- Attend a court proceeding together
- Further discussion of any of the CLE topics listed above
- Diversity and cultural competency activities from provided resources
- American Bar Association Fit2Practice events
- Succession Planning activities from provided resources