



BEGINNING
FARMERS

Peer to Peer Learning

Activity 1: Planning a Mentorship Project

Resources for Mentorship Organizers.

KEY TERMS

Mentor: An experienced farmer who supports a beginning farmer by answering questions, offering insights and helping the beginning farmer to set and achieve their goals.

Mentee: A farmer who is connected with a mentor to learn skills, answer questions and help them to move their farm forward.

Peer: Farmers who are supporting each other through sharing knowledge with each other.

Mentorship Organizer: Farm educator, farmer or advocate who connects mentors & mentees, offers trainings and checks in with mentors & mentees regularly.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- Mentorship Organizer(s)
 - Farm professionals from Extension, USDA, state agencies, farm non-profits
 - Farmers with an interest in being mentors or mentees
- If Online
 - Link for zoom, Google Meet or other online meeting space
 - Links to shared documents
 - Ability to create breakout rooms
- If In-person
 - White board or poster paper, markers, pens
 - Comfortable space with chairs & tables to meet



Planning a Mentorship Project: Mentorship Planning Meeting

PROCEDURE

Planning to start a mentorship!

- **Introduction Prompt:** Describe one of your mentors and how they've impacted you.
- **Brainstorming:** Create a shared online document, posters or whiteboards to brainstorm for a mentorship program.
 - **Full Group:**
 - **Who?** What types of beginning farmers or group(s) do we want to connect with mentors? What are their needs? Who might make great mentors?
 - **Breakout Groups:**
 - **What?** What topics (eg soil, financials, up to 4 focus areas) should be the focus for the mentorship? Should mentors and mentees sign a contract with best contact info, when they will meet, the mentee's learning goals for the mentorship, etc.?
 - **Where?** Should meetings be online, in-person, on-farms, at existing conferences or in several of those locations? Should mentors and mentees be from a particular region? How often should mentors & mentees meet?
 - **How?** Should we seek funding for the mentorship? Should mentors or mentees be paid? What organizations could partner to lead the project?
 - **Full Group:**
 - **When?** Make a timeline for marketing, matching mentor/mentee pairs, hosting the meet & greet, check-ins and evaluation charrette
- **Signup & Delegate!**
 - Using the timeline, educators in the meeting are each encouraged to lead one aspect of the mentorship by signing up for an item above by highlighting and/or adding their initials to items they can lead. Examples:
 - Making a signup form (30 minutes)
 - Reaching out to mentors (10 minutes per mentor)
 - Planning & Facilitating a training (training time x 3 + travel)
 - Planning & Facilitating a meeting (meeting time x 1.5 + travel)
 - Writing an Article to promote the mentorship (2 hours)
 - Matching mentors with mentees (30 minutes per pair)
 - Quarterly check-ins individually with a mentor and mentee (4 hours/year)
 - Keeping everyone on track with their tasks (12 hours per year)



What does it mean for mentees?

Discuss with a farmer or educator:

How would mentorship help the mentee farmers?

What challenges might arise for mentees? How can we support mentees in these situations?

What does it mean for mentors?

Discuss with a farmer or educator:

How would the mentorship benefit mentors?

What challenges might arise for mentors? How can we support mentors in these situations?