



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is The Exchange and how does it work?

The Exchange is a mentoring program for AWWEE members. Members complete a detailed application based on the role they are interested in. The application includes questions about experience, interests, and goals.

Program organizers review profiles and pair participants based on their responses. Program organizers provide guidance along the way, but once participants are matched, it is up to them to establish goals, schedule meetings, and work together throughout the year.

I would like to participate but I don't have a lot of time. How long is the program and how much time will I need to commit?

The Exchange is a one-year program, but many participants form close connections and continue to connect after the program ends.

During the year, we request participants meet at least once per quarter for at least one hour per meeting. Many participants choose to meet more frequently and communicate between meetings, as well.

Please keep in mind that you will likely need to invest extra time on your own to achieve the goals you are working toward.

Is the program specifically for people working in or interested in pursuing technical positions?

Not at all! We have applicants from all levels and roles.

Who can be a mentee?

A mentee is typically less experienced and seeking support from a more experienced mentor. Mentees may have a goal they need support to achieve, a professional change they want to make, a challenge they need some help navigating, or could just use some guidance from a more experienced professional. Mentees range from students and early professionals preparing to embark on their career to well-established professionals seeking support to transition to something new. Be clear on your application about what you hope to gain from your partner so program organizers can find the best match for you.

I have been in my career for several years and I would like to give back, but I'm not sure I'm qualified to be a mentor. Who can be a mentor?

We encourage anyone with 5 or more years of experience to consider participating as a mentor. Even if you consider yourself somewhat inexperienced, we have many students and early professionals who would love to be paired with someone who has more recent experience entering the workforce.

Be clear on your application about what experience you have and how you think you can best contribute to your partner's experience. This will help program organizers find the best mentee match for you.



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I would like to be a mentor, but my work is confidential. How much of my work itself am I expected to discuss with a mentee?

There are no requirements for what mentors and mentees must discuss. How much you share is entirely up to you. Most mentees are interested in your general professional experience and advice versus specific examples; however, boundaries regarding what you can and cannot discuss, as well as the confidentiality of your discussions with your mentee is a great point to capture when completing the mentoring agreement early in your partnership.

Can someone participate as both a mentor and a mentee?

Yes. If you have the time to commit to two partnerships, you can apply for both roles. You will be prompted to complete both the mentee and mentor sections of the application.

Can a mentor have more than one mentee?

Yes. We limit the number of mentees to 2. If you have the time to commit to two partnerships, we always have a need for more mentors.

Am I guaranteed a partner if I apply?

Program organizers attempt to match as many applicants as possible. However, we have learned that everyone's experience is better when we focus on pairing participants with their best possible match. Our ability to do that is limited by the number of applications received for both roles and the unique needs and experience of each applicant.

How can I improve my chances of being partnered with someone?

The best partnerships are not only aligned in interests and expertise, but also in expected outcomes from the program. Often, the detail you provide on your application is the only information program organizers have that distinguishes your hopes and expectations from those of other applicants. Keep this in mind as you are completing the profile and provide as much detail as possible about yourself, your goals, what you hope to contribute and what you hope to gain.

What goals are participants expected to achieve?

Recognizing that everyone's personal and professional goals are different, AWWEE leaves goals up to the participants to define. Partners are expected to complete a mentoring agreement to set and agree to goals and other terms of the partnership at the onset of the program. Of course, these goals may change over the year, but we have found it's easier to get the partnership started by defining at least an initial set of goals to work toward.



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What makes a partnership successful?

Unclear expectations, scheduling, and poor communication have been the primary causes for trouble in partnerships. Pairs who complete the mentoring agreement during the first meeting, check in on the agreed upon goals and other terms periodically, and schedule their meetings in advance tend to have the most success in the program.

Recognize that your partner is making time to participate in this program with you. Be respectful of that time – not only by showing up when and where you're scheduled to meet, but by preparing in advance of meetings, taking action in between, and communicating with your partner if life starts to get in the way.

What if my partner and I do not get along?

Program organizers will do their best to make great matches for all participants, but personality fit is often an unknown. If the partnership isn't working for one or both of you, program organizers will support your decision to leave the partnership and work with you and your partner on appropriate next steps. Our goal is for you both to leave the partnership on a positive note.

If you are not comfortable having the discussion to end the partnership with your partner directly, contact us at exchange@awwee.org and we'll assist.

What if I can no longer participate in the program after it has begun?

We ask that you apply to participate if you reasonably expect you can commit for the duration of the program. However, we understand that priorities and life can change unexpectedly. Please do not abandon the program and your partner without notice. If you are unable to continue, program organizers will support your decision and will work with you and your partner on appropriate next steps.