



**Skills for Work. Confidence for
Life.**



StreetWise Partners Mentor Handbook Winter 2020

Accountability, Preparedness, and Professionalism

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Skills for Work. Confidence for
Life

Mentor Handbook

Welcome to StreetWise Partners!

Welcome to StreetWise Partners! StreetWise Partners was founded in 1997 to help unemployed and underemployed individuals develop the skills, confidence, connections, and strategies needed to achieve their career potential. We do this by leveraging partnerships with leading global corporations and the experiences of a diverse network of volunteer business professionals to provide career mentoring and professional development services. To date, StreetWise Partners has served more than 7,000 individuals with the help of over 10,000 volunteers.

Graduates from our program have said:

- *“While I was in the StreetWise program, I received and accepted an offer at Wells Fargo. I wouldn’t have been able to do this without my mentors’ help. Without them both, I would have still been going down the same road I had been down before.”*
- *“If it wasn’t for StreetWise Partners, I would still be sitting at home sending out resumes that were full of mistakes, waiting for a call back. I never imagined having options, but I do now!”*

Over the next 13 weeks, you will work with your mentee to set goals, expand their professional network, and complete a high-quality portfolio of job search materials. With your dedication and commitment, together we will provide our mentees with the tools they need to make significant progress on their journey to professional success!

Staff, Lead Volunteers and experienced mentors are here to support your efforts and provide you with guidance to help your mentee meet their career potential. If you have any questions during the course of this program, please contact staff as noted below:

NY Program:

- Dave Font, New York Program Director
David@streetwisepartners.org, 646-704-0039
- Michele Stine, Program Coordinator,
Michele@streetwisepartners.org, 646-704-0039

We thank you for your commitment and look forward to working with you to help our mentees achieve their career goals!



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StreetWise Partners Mentor Attendance Policy

Mentor Absences

- All mentors are expected to attend each session. However, emergencies happen, therefore each mentor is allotted 3 Emergency Absences.
- Notify your mentee, co-mentor, Lead Volunteer, and Staff liaison of absences/lateness at least 24 hours before session if possible so that Lead Volunteers can find a replacement mentor if necessary.

Mentor Lateness

- All mentors are expected to be on time to every session. We understand that sometimes lateness is not preventable, however mentors are role models for the mentees so lateness should be prevented at all costs.

Mentee Absences

- If your mentee is absent, please plan to attend session anyway, as there will be the opportunity to work with other mentees.

Mentee Drops/Dismissals

- If your mentee is unable to continue the program, you will be re-paired with another mentee/mentor pair whenever possible.



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SESSION	TOPICS
Session 1	Community Building and Contracting
Session 2	Goal Setting and Job Descriptions
Session 3	Resume and Cover Letter
Session 4	Networking: Elevator Pitch and Informational Interviews
Session 5	Resume and Job Search
Session 6	Online Presence and Review
Session 7	Speed Networking
Session 8	Interview Skills
Session 9	Interview Prep
Session 10	Mock Interview Day
Session 11	Nine Month Work Plan
Session 12	Presentations!

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The Mentoring Basics

A mentor is a professional who shares insights and provides guidance, wisdom, and support to help another individual establish and reach their professional goals. A mentor should serve as a teacher, sponsor, coach, confidante, devil's advocate, and role model with the ultimate goal of helping someone reach their full career potential and meet the changing demands of their environment. Both parties benefit:

Mentees develop the skills and gain the confidence and tools to make use of their talents and eliminate the gap between their current and potential position.

Mentors apply and hone their own skills and knowledge, including leadership, team management, teaching/training, interviewing and resume analysis.

The following guidelines will help you establish rapport as a mentor:

Mentoring is a dialogue

- **It is a give-and-take sharing of ideas, not a one-sided initiative. You should be listening just as much as (if not more than) talking to your mentee to help them achieve their potential.**

Communication is key

- **Set clear, specific, realistic goals and stick to them. Communicate high expectations for your mentee and support them in their development. Work with your mentee at the second session to find out what they hope to achieve during the program cycle. Keep referring back to this to see how far they are coming towards achieving these goals.**

Set clear expectations for the relationship

- **This also helps to set the right expectations and hold your mentee accountable. Brainstorm a list of ground rules together for your relationship. When your mentee is involved in creating the rules, they are more likely to stick to them.**

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The Mentoring Basics

The StreetWise Partners curriculum provides a framework

- Remember that all mentees are coming to StreetWise Partners from different places, so you will need to tailor the curriculum delivery to their specific needs. For some mentees it is just right; for others it is too advanced or too basic. Use it as a guide to find which skills are most important for your mentee to learn.

When you don't know the answer to something, admit it

- Being a mentor is about being resourceful. Offer to find the answer (talk to an Officer or staff, speak with your fellow mentors, or do some research online) and provide it the next time you speak with one another. Don't be afraid to sit with your mentee and learn something new together.

Be patient, small steps is the way to go

- Recognize that each of our mentees starts from a different skill base. Regardless of what your mentee's skills are, make sure that he/she is learning. Let them do the work.

Leverage your professional and real life experiences/network

- Relate your real experiences and stories to your mentee when mentoring; when doing so, use "I" and not the generic "you" to talk about yourself. This will convey clear accountability and make the connection and mentorship more authentic.

Keep your relationship focused on career mentoring

- Clearly set the expectations for what you can and cannot help your mentee with during your time together. This will help keep both of you on course. If a matter comes up that requires a different type of help (i.e., housing, basic needs, other support), speak with the StreetWise Partners staff and we can refer your mentee to the proper city or social services agencies.

Lead by example

- This involves showing up on time for meetings, being prepared for each session, following up on action items in a timely manner, and being willing to role play situations for practice. You can't expect your mentee to do something you don't do in front of them.

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The Mentoring Basics

Match your mentee's technique

- To establish rapport, you may need to “adopt” your mentee’s style. A good place to start is with pace. Consider how fast (or slow) your mentee talks, walks, listens, and breathes—everything. Compare it to your style and make adjustments to match theirs.

List your goals for each session

- This will ensure neither you nor your mentee loses focus in an individual session.

Develop interim deadlines with your mentee

- If your mentee proposes the deadlines, there is a higher probability that they will continually meet them.

Avoid negatives that discourage and exclude

- Such as “I don’t think...” and “You shouldn’t...” Negatives put people on the defensive. Instead, you want to encourage and include with phrases that start with:
 - ✓ “What if we tried to...”
 - ✓ “Maybe you should...”
 - ✓ “Have you considered doing...”

Networking is key

- Let us know of any job opportunities you may find. Feel free to forward your mentee’s resume to your networks!

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Additional Tips for Being a Great Mentor

- **Be cognizant of your mentee's learning style.**
 - ✓ **Visual learners need visual aids and corresponding body language. Use movement and facial expressions as tools to enhance what you're saying.**
 - ✓ **Auditory learners learn by talking through things and listening to others. Make your work discussion-based and ask them to read aloud from an exercise, deliverable or presentation during work time or on the phone.**
 - ✓ **Tactile/kinesthetic learners learn through moving and doing things themselves. Encourage them to learn by doing and jumping right into a task; just be sure to guide and support their work.**
- **Have realistic expectations and a thorough understanding of what your mentee is hoping to achieve in the program, as well as what StreetWise Partners expects all mentees to accomplish by graduation.**
- **Make sure your mentee has a partner each session. If you can't attend, inform your officer ahead of time so that we can set up alternative arrangements.**
- **If you know your mentee is going to be absent, still come to session! You will be paired with another mentee for that session. This is an excellent way to get to know other mentees in the program and widen the impact of your expertise.**
- **Call and email with your mentee at least once a week. It will help you get on the same page and help you to develop a lasting relationship.**
- **Let your mentee know if the emails they send you are unprofessional. Give them feedback. Similarly, give them feedback on their voicemail message and the way they answer the phone.**
- **Remain formal and professional in your communications with your mentee to set a standard for professional communications.**
- **Develop your mentee's professional network and knowledge of different fields by connecting them to people in your network who might be able to help them.**
- **Be flexible, keep an open mind, be positive, and have fun!**

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Potential Warning Signs for At-Risk Mentees

All of the mentees accepted into the StreetWise Partners undergo an extensive vetting and review process.

Despite this effort, not every mentee completes the entire program. Some are forced to quit due to personal/family issues that arise, while others drop out by choice or are asked to leave the program. Mentee retention is one of StreetWise Partners' top priorities and every effort is made to ensure that each mentee receives maximum support to remain in the program for its entire duration.

The following list provides some potential “warning signs” to look for as you begin working through the curriculum with your mentee. If you notice your mentee exhibiting one or more of these signs, contact your officer immediately.

Please alert your Lead Volunteer if your mentee:

- Does not respond to emails, despite repeated follow-ups
- Misses a scheduled weekly phone call
- Misses a session due to a non-illness or non-emergency situation and does not provide advance notice
- Does not attend any in-person meetings established outside of session
- Misses two or more sessions in a row, whether or not advance notice is provided
- Is more than one week behind on assigned deliverables
- Does not seem motivated at sessions

Staff is also available to troubleshoot mentee issues.

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Empowering your Mentee with Constructive Feedback

The StreetWise Partners program empowers mentees with the skills, strategies, and confidence needed to achieve their career goals. Ongoing constructive feedback from mentors is crucial in this process. Below are some tips for providing feedback to your mentee.

Create a good climate for feedback

- Establish trust with your mentee with honesty, warmth and understanding
- Explain your purpose with affirmative “I” statements – “I think,” “I feel,” etc. so it comes off as an expression and not an attack
- Work to understand your mentee and invite them to help shape the process by regularly asking, “What do you think?” and “What was your thought here?”

1

- Calmly describe the behavior and results – focus on the behavior, not the person

2

- Detail the impact/result of the behavior and allow the other person to explain their side

3

- Focus on one or two areas to maintain or improve and identify positive potential outcomes

4

- Develop a habit of recognizing and commending specific positive behaviors as they occur

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Helping Mentees Overcome Employment Barriers

StreetWise Partners mentees may face many barriers to employment. Our goal is to give them the skills, confidence and strategies to overcome those barriers, and mentors are on the frontlines of this effort. Below is a list of barriers that your mentee may face and some tips for coaching your mentee through them.

Unemployment

- Encourage your mentee to treat the job search like a full time job and work with them to create weekly goals for contacts, networking activities, applications and follow-up.
- Target contract, temp, recruitment or volunteer work that will allow mentees to utilize skills and put them back as “employed” on their resume/LinkedIn profile.
- Stress the importance of networking.

Employment gap(s)

- If there’s a specific reason for the gap (sabbatical, pursued a degree, etc.) – make sure that’s apparent on their resume and LinkedIn profile.
- Focus goals on more recent experience and stress achievements during that time.
- If the gaps are big, they may consider a hybrid or functional resume, though this would only be in select cases because chronological is the preferred format for employers.

No college degree

- Resume and LinkedIn profile will need to stress results – have them spend extra time brainstorming relevant *quantifiable* accomplishments.
- Include certifications, trainings or licenses on resume and LinkedIn profile.
- If they have some college credit, list the school, major, degree program, and number of years or credits completed.
- Target opportunities where no degree is required – i.e. “Bachelor’s degree or relevant experience”.

Source: TheLadders

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Helping Mentees Overcome Employment Barriers

Foreign degree that doesn't articulate to United States

- Assist them in researching credential evaluation options in their industry.
- Encourage them to research certification/training opportunities and professional organizations in their field.
- Stress the importance of professional experience and results attained in their field before they moved to the US.
- Educate them on the job search culture in the US. Discuss how it differs from their native country.
- Make sure LinkedIn profile, cover letter and resume notes that mentee is eligible to work in the US.

ESL (English as a Second Language)

- Stress the importance of speed networking, public speaking, and mock interviewing events as opportunities to practice communication skills.
- Make sure LinkedIn profile, cover letter and resume notes that mentee is eligible to work in the US.
- Consider listing language skills on resume/LinkedIn and search for jobs that value language skills.
- Have mentees read what they write out loud so they can hear where they might be making mistakes.
- Provide honest feedback on written items and go over edits together.

Criminal Record

- Talk to your mentee about their record and help them develop a compelling answer for interviews to explain what has been learned from the experience, and goals and objectives moving forward.
- Research companies that have open hiring practices. Keep in mind that smaller, "mom and pop" businesses are more likely to hire someone with a criminal background than large businesses and corporations.

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StreetWise Partners Volunteer Code of Conduct

Thank you for volunteering with StreetWise Partners! In order to maintain a high standard of excellence for our volunteers and mentees, StreetWise Partners expects volunteers to comply with the following guidelines:

Program Expectations of Mentors

- Mentors are expected to be present at every program session, and an excess of three emergency absences is grounds for dismissal.
 - For an emergency absence a mentor must notify all appropriate parties (mentee, co-mentor, officers and staff member) as soon as they are aware they will need to miss session, and at least 24 hours in advance.
- Mentors must review first drafts of all deliverables that are due and provide feedback for mentees to incorporate. Mentees are expected to have first drafts to mentors at the weekly deadline that they determine with mentors in advance, and then upload the updated version of the assignment to the program website at least the day before the program session. Mentors will work with mentees to ensure a high-quality Graduation Portfolio.
- Mentors are expected to communicate with mentees at least once per week outside of program sessions. Mentors and mentees are also expected to communicate via email and the program website multiple times per week to submit and review deliverables.
- Business smart clothing should be worn at all StreetWise Partners events unless otherwise indicated (no jeans, no sneakers).

Expectations of Mentors

- While participating in StreetWise Partners activities, volunteers will not engage in the following:
 - Discriminatory statements or behaviors, including those based on race, gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, nationality or religion;
 - Sexual harassment;
 - Any unlawful or inappropriate activity (ex: no romantic relationship with any mentee, no using drugs or alcohol with any mentee)
- Volunteers may not use their participation in StreetWise Partners to promote partisan politics, religious matters or other affiliations.
- Volunteers will treat mentees, and everyone in the program, with respect and professionalism.



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- **Volunteers must maintain the confidentiality of all personal or proprietary information to which they are exposed. Additional information about the protection of confidential information can be found in the Volunteer Agreement below.**
- **Volunteers may not use the name “StreetWise Partners” in association with any event or activity without explicit permission from a StreetWise Partners staff member.**
- **A primary purpose of the program is for StreetWise Partners employees and volunteers to evaluate mentees’ potential for future success and provide objective mentorship. Accordingly, volunteers are absolutely prohibited from seeking to have or having a romantic and/or sexual relationship with StreetWise Partners mentees throughout the duration of the twelve-month program. It is imperative that no mentee be placed in the uncomfortable position of wondering whether a volunteer’s invitation to a social event is anything other than a chance to become acquainted as part of our overall mentorship effort. Please be mindful of this and avoid any action that might be misinterpreted. During their time in the program, our mentees should be focused on developing skills and networking in a professional manner.**

Mentor Dismissal

StreetWise Partners reserves the right to reassign or dismiss volunteers when such action is in the best interest of the volunteer, StreetWise Partners, and/or a mentee. Reasons for dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

- **Missing more than three program sessions;**
- **Excessive lateness;**
- **Involvement in any illegal activities;**
- **Failure to adhere to any of StreetWise Partners’ policies;**
- **Any behavior deemed inappropriate by StreetWise Partners as an organization.**