

SCBWI-NM Equity in Publishing Fellowship Mentorship Guidelines

Mentorship should be a positive experience for both mentor and mentee, so we encourage you to fit the relationship to your mutual needs and establish appropriate boundaries that work for both of you. Your mentorship plan should include:

1. An initial meeting in person or via phone call or Zoom (you may set up a Zoom call using the SCBWI-NM account with the RA's assistance) during which:
 - a. The Mentee shares what they hope to accomplish in the six month period (April-October).
 - b. The Mentor helps the Mentee refine their goals into a six month goal (e.g., the completion of a creative project or revision) or several smaller goals with shorter time frames (e.g., developing a marketing plan for a release, developing a school visit presentation, and refining brand via author or illustrator website – 2 months each).
 - c. The Mentor and Mentee then create an action plan with SMART goals for the next 3 months which the mentee can complete independently or with support.
 - d. The Mentor and Mentee establish communication preferences and boundaries (e.g., they will communicate by email if the Mentee has a question or runs into a problem; or the Mentor will check in once a week via text to see how the Mentee is progressing on SMART goals).
2. Substantive check-in half way through via an agreed upon communication method (e.g., Zoom; or packet exchange via email) where the Mentee updates the Mentor on progress toward goals and the Mentor advises Mentee on how to move forward or improve.
3. A final meeting near the end of the year on Zoom with the Mentor, Mentee, and RA or E&I Team Leader to share progress, challenges, and how the RA and E&I Leader should adjust the program for the future.

Example A –

At their initial meeting, the Mentee shares her goal to get ready for her picture book launch. The Mentor helps refine that big goal into smaller goals with actionable steps: creating a marketing plan; planning a launch party; and cultivating local media and book blogs for reviews. The Mentee is an illustrator with a busy job as a graphic designer, and she can only meet in the evenings. Meanwhile the Mentor has trouble with evenings because she has to deal with her kids' bedtimes and getting everyone ready for the next day of school. The two decide that instead of live meetings, they will exchange emails. One month in, the Mentee sends her marketing plan draft to the Mentor who provides substantive feedback. At the end of the second month, she has a solid plan in place and can move forward with implementing the steps. She turns her attention to the next goal...

Example B –

The Mentee is a middle grade author who has queried previous manuscripts with no industry interest, and she wants to focus this six months on getting her latest manuscript into a strong place for querying. The Mentor agrees that getting a manuscript query-reading is an achievable goal. They decide to use their first two months with the Mentor reading and commenting on the manuscript while the Mentee drafts a query letter. They both agree that they get way too much email, so they decide to meet via Zoom at the end of two months. At that meeting they talk through the developmental issues the Mentor noticed in the manuscript and brainstorm solutions. For the next two months, the Mentee will implement those developmental changes, and they exchange texts every other Friday so the Mentor can help the Mentee overcome any roadblocks. At the end of those two months, the manuscript is in much better shape. It doesn't take the Mentor as long to read through it for last comments on the manuscript and query letter.