

New and Interim Directors Committee: Buddy Toolkit

About the Buddy Program

Through the New and Interim Director Buddy Program, we hope to ensure that our newest AAHSL members in leadership positions quickly gain access to the information and resources needed to build a professional network of peers. Through the buddy program, new and interim directors will learn about the Association and connect with colleagues who can provide advice and support.

Getting Started:

The Chair of the New and Interim Director's Committee will recruit new Buddies and pair them with the new or interim directors as requested. Each pairing will be provided with a program overview that includes the following:

- Program goals
- Roles and responsibilities of both the buddy and the new director.
- Advice for each pair to develop a timeline for the program, including the duration and frequency of meetings that meet both parties' needs.

The First Meeting:

At the first meeting of each pairing, buddies and new directors will be encouraged to review the following:

1. Relationship Building
 - Offer tips on establishing a strong mentor-mentee relationship built on trust, respect, and open communication.
 - Consider using icebreaker activities or discussion topics to get to know each other.
 - Set expectations and boundaries for the relationship.
 - Acknowledge the need for flexibility.
2. Goal setting
 - Both parties should discuss whether or not goal setting will be included as part of the buddy program. Different pairings may choose to take different approaches.
 - Identify new director professional development goals and create action plans.
 - Encourage individuals to reflect on their strengths, areas for improvement, and long-term career aspirations.
 - Provide templates for setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals
 - Encourage participants to set short-term (1-3 months) and long-term (6-12 months) goals
 - Establish times for regular check-ins to monitor progress and adjust as appropriate.
 - Encourage participants to reassess and adjust their goals based on changing circumstances or priorities.
 - Confidentiality should be maintained throughout goal-setting, with mentors and mentees creating a safe space for open and honest discussion.
3. Networking and Professional Development:
 - Both parties should discuss whether or not networking or professional development will be included as part of the buddy program. Different pairings may choose to take different approaches.

- Encourage participants to attend relevant conferences, workshops, or webinars together.
 - Provide information on professional organizations and resources for library directors.
 - Buddies will actively introduce new directors to other AAHSL members, both at events and through virtual means, helping to expand their professional network within the association.
4. Discussion Topics:
- Provide a list of suggested topics for mentor-mentee discussions, such as leadership skills, strategic planning, budget management, community outreach, and staff development. Include resources, articles, or case studies related to each topic to facilitate meaningful conversations.
5. Time commitment:
- Buddies should contact their new director within a month of being assigned to develop a plan to meet over a six-to-twelve-month period. Once paired, each pair will decide how to connect and how frequently.
 - Establish clear expectations regarding the time commitment required for both parties.
 - Specify the minimum number of meetings or hours expected per month or quarter.
 - Ensure a meeting duration that allows for meaningful discussion and progress.
 - Establish a meeting schedule that works for both parties.
 - Ensure consistency and reliability in meeting commitments.
 - Establish a communications plan so the meeting can be rescheduled if necessary
 - Suggest setting reminders or calendar invites to ensure meetings are not forgotten.

AAHSL Content:

The buddy program will allow new directors to familiarize themselves with AAHSL's mission, structure, and significance in the health sciences library field. Through regular conversations, new directors and their assigned buddies should be encouraged to review the following:

- *Organizational Overview:* A comprehensive overview of AAHSL, including its history, governance structure, and strategic initiatives.
- *Membership Benefits:* Access to resources, professional development opportunities, and collaborative projects.
- *Committee Structures:* A description of AAHSL's committee system, including an overview of how new directors can become involved and contribute to the association's work and leadership.
- *Annual Meeting Information:* Review the purpose of the annual meeting, its importance, and how to make the most of this networking opportunity.
- *Leadership Opportunities:* Introduce the various leadership roles within AAHSL and pathways for professional growth within the association.
- *Collaborative Initiatives:* Highlight key AAHSL initiatives and how new directors can participate in or benefit from them.
- *Discussion Lists and Communication Channels:* Guidance regarding how to access and use AAHSL's email discussion lists, social media presence, and other communication platforms to stay connected with the community.
- *Resources and Publications:* Overview of AAHSL's key publications, statistical reports, and other valuable resources.
- *External Partnerships:* An explanation of AAHSL's relationships with other professional organizations and how these partnerships benefit members.

- *Advocacy Role:* Describe AAHSL's advocacy efforts and how they can advance health sciences libraries' interests.

Best Practices (New or Interim Directors):

- Be open and receptive to guidance and feedback
- Maintain regular communication with your buddy
- Come prepared with questions and topics for discussion
- Be proactive in seeking advice and information
- Respect your buddy's time and stick to agreed-upon meeting schedules
- Be honest about your challenges and areas where you need support
- Follow through on suggestions and action items from your buddy
- Maintain confidentiality regarding sensitive discussions
- Show appreciation for your buddy's time and effort

Best Practices (Buddies):

- Be patient and understanding of the new director's learning curve
- Maintain a non-judgmental and supportive attitude
- Share your experiences and lessons learned openly
- Respect the new director's autonomy and decision-making process
- Be flexible in your approach and communication style
- Maintain confidentiality and build trust
- Provide constructive feedback and encouragement
- Be proactive in offering resources and networking opportunities
- Set clear expectations and boundaries for the mentoring relationship

Program Evaluation:

The New and Interim Directors Committee should develop a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of the buddy program. This evaluation may include surveys or feedback forms for participants to complete at various stages of the program. Evaluation tools should encourage participants to share success stories and lessons learned to help improve the program over time.

How to get involved:

If you are a new or interim director and want to be paired with a “buddy,” please contact Melissa Rethlefsen, mrethlefsen@salud.unm.edu, NIDC Chair, with your name and contact information (email, phone, institution). If you are willing to be a buddy to a new or interim director, please get in touch with Melissa Rethlefsen at mrethlefsen@salud.unm.edu.