

This webinar, presented by Karen Miller (Planning Mentor program manager) and Leigh Skaggs (lead author, Planning Mentor Handbook) provided an overview of the purpose of the Planning Mentor program, the role of Planning Mentors, and the recently published Planning Mentor Handbook. The presenters discussed each of the major topics covered in the handbook and provide examples of how each of the risk-informed planning tools described in the



document were employed in a variety of USACE studies or activities. While originally envisioned as an aid to Planning Mentors, the handbook is applicable to any planner who wants to learn more about risk-informed planning and how to apply it. For more information about the Planning Mentor program or requesting a mentor, planners should reach out to Karen Miller.

This summary of the Question / Answer session of the webinar is not a transcription; questions and responses have been edited and reordered for clarity.

What is the range of effort mentors have been providing to PDTs?

The scope of mentor efforts has included such things as assisting project delivery teams (PDTs) with kicking off studies and guiding them through the first 90 days to get to the Alternatives milestone; helping with the risk register; facilitating PDT meetings throughout the study process; leading or participating in the iteration of the planning process; and reviewing drafted materials.

Are mentors expected to be funded from study funds, or is there a separate pot of funding available for their labor?

When the program was first piloted in early 2018, there was a limited amount of Planning Support Program (PSP) funding set aside for new mentors to help existing studies and PDTs identified by the MSC Planning Chiefs as needing support.

When the 2018 Emergency Supplemental studies were named, PDTs were required to use mentors and were asked to include that support in their study budgets, which were fully federally funded. In addition, PSP funding for mentors was maintained throughout FY19 and FY20 to provide limited support for PDTs who had not budgeted for a mentor, and it is anticipated that some funding will be available in FY21 as well.

Typically, mentors have been funded either by PSP funds or study funds in the range of \$5K to \$8K, with factors including number of labor hours needed and mentor location determining the final cost.

Are all new studies required to have an assigned planning mentor?

Only the 2018 Emergency Supplemental and FY 19 new start studies were required to use mentors; a similar requirement is not currently in place for any other studies.

Where can a list of the current mentors be accessed and are there any mentors with Continuing Authorities Program (CAP) experience? Is there a plan to add new mentors to the current cadre?

Karen Miller maintains a list of mentors assigned to studies and can share that list as needed with those who are interested. Several new mentors have been added to the cadre since 2018 based on

recommendations from the MSC Planning Chiefs, although there is not a formal process for adding new mentors.

The current mentor cadre has a wide range of experience, including mentors with CAP experience.

Who should PDTs contact to arrange for mentor support?

PDTs should contact Karen Miller, who will work with the Planning Community of Practice to determine which mentor will be the best fit and has capacity and whether any PSP funding is available for mentor support.

Is there a way to nominate a mentor for an award, or otherwise recognize a mentor?

The annual Planning Champion award has been used recently to recognize the work of a mentor. Other recognition may be offered locally, regionally, or nationally through nomination for the annual national Planning Excellence award.

In addition, PDTs should feel free to reach out to a mentor's supervisor or Karen Miller to let them know about positive feedback so that the mentor can be recognized, and so that mentor best practices can be captured and shared with other mentors, PDTs, and the community.