

SAR Mentor Program

Recognizing the immediate need for an SAR Mentor Program which President General J. Michael Tomme charged the Membership Committee to develop, rather than waiting until a comprehensive program is developed the committee is launching this program with the understanding that it is "a work in progress." We encourage every Society and Chapter to take this information and establish a Mentor Program. Please share with the Membership Committee any information that will improve what is presented, preferably by January 31, 2017 to be included in the additions to be presented at Spring Leadership; email to sarrevdoc@comcast.net

The SAR Mentor Program is part of the Americanism Contest, effective January 1, 2017.

The Basics

To understand what an SAR mentor program might include, we should define some terms first.

Mentor (noun) - an experienced and trusted adviser; (verb) - advise or train (someone, especially a younger colleague).

Mentorship is a relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person. The mentor may be older or younger than the person being mentored, but she or he must have a certain area of expertise. It is a learning and development partnership between someone with vast experience and someone who wants to learn.^[1] Mentorship experience and relationship structure affect the "amount of psychosocial support, career guidance, role modeling, and communication that occurs in the mentoring relationships in which the protégés and mentors engaged.

Within the context of the Sons of the American Revolution and its recommending a Mentor within chapters, a **Mentor would be**

- A chapter member who would either volunteer or be assigned by the chapter to work with a new member to introduce, guide, and foster a long-term relationship with the new member.
- Have a good understanding of the chapter's officers, committees, its activities, and goals.
- May or may not be the 1st or 2nd line sponsor for the new member.
- Should have sufficient time and energy to provide the needed support in the integrating the new member into the SAR.

Role of the Mentor

Assuming the new member has at least some interest in learning about the S.A.R. (some don't) and his chapter, the focus should be on the neophyte's education and interest. This refers to insuring the new member receives information regarding the S.A.R. in general and the chapter in particular, and is able to spark some interest in the new member remaining active and even becoming involved in the chapter. Therefore, the mentor must have sufficient knowledge regarding both the S.A.R. and the chapter along with a good degree of both communication skills and empathy to be effective. He should endeavor to become a friend, if he is not already, of the new member and tailor his guidance to the member's desire to learn and be involved. The mentor should presume the new member is interested and wants to be a part of the chapter.

It is recommended that chapters establish a formal mentorship program where the mentors receive instruction/training prior to being assigned to assist new members. In addition, the new member should be introduced to his member and encouraged to use him as a resource. This introduction should take place when the chapter is informed the new member is registered at National; it need not wait until the installation ceremony. Ideally, the mentor relationship will continue a minimum of 4 years.

The mentor program is only one retention tool and should be used in conjunction with a formal welcome and introduction to the chapter along with an on-going sense of welcome and inclusion by the chapter's officers.

Guidelines for Selecting Mentors

The lifeblood of chapters will be members who are willing to: take an active part in the leadership of the chapter, participate in the activities of the chapter, volunteer when called for and encourage others to get involved. Active, growing chapters require that more members are encouraged to become active and participate at some level in the chapter. If the chapter can enrich the experience of new members from day one they are more likely to pay their dues and remain a member. Thus retention of members requires that they be given good reason to remain a member.

There are members in chapters who have been active participants and are familiar with the goals and programs supported by the Sons of the American Revolution. A chapter can encourage future leadership and program support by assigning mentors to new members as they are approved. Good mentors will be able to use their experiences in The Sons of the American Revolution and its programs to identify the interests and life experiences of new members and be able to guide and encourage these new members toward maintaining their membership. The best use of mentors will be to limit one mentor to each new member. However this mentor could be assigned more than one new member.

The following are suggestions for identifying experienced chapter members for the role of mentor.

- Possibly the first line sponsor
- Has risen through chapter officer ranks and is looking for additional challenges
- Is a longtime member
- Has a working knowledge of the Sons of the American Revolution and what we are about
- Understands the chapter officer positions, activities and committee roles
- Is comfortable working with people
- Has the time and energy to devote to guiding new members
- Could work with more than one new member if called on to do so
- Is familiar with the Mentorship Program
- Is typically willing to take on new duties and challenges

For states with an at large membership category, the state society will identify mentors from the membership as they deem appropriate.

Why Mentors are Important

In addition to developing programs and strategies to promote new membership, the Membership Committee needs to ensure that retention of our members is a priority. Therefore, it is imperative that our chapters and societies promote the mentorship of new members and the Mentorship Program. The appointment of a mentor to ensure the new member is welcomed and integrated into the chapter should have a positive impact on retention and make the State Society more competitive for the Richard H. Thompson Jr Award which is presented at Congress to the State Society that has the smallest number of members dropped for non-payment of dues.

SAR Membership Committee