

## **What is Mentoring and Why is it Important?**

Mentoring is a relationship between a volunteer senior officer (mentor) and a junior officer (mentee). The role of the mentor is to inspire, encourage, and support the mentee, and to contribute to professional and personal development.

### **A mentoring relationship is important to both senior and junior officers because:**

- Mentoring will help focus the mentee's career in positive ways (e.g., understanding the need for and formulating an individualized career plan);
- A positive mentoring relationship will not only help the mentee prepare for promotion, but also aid in meeting other career milestones (e.g., finding billets of increasing responsibility and leadership); and
- Mentoring is an expected professional role to show clear evidence of leadership capability and investment in the mission of the Corps.

### **Mentees will:**

- Be proactive in shaping the relationship and initiating contact
- Be prepared for meetings, on time, and will have sent an agenda to the mentor ahead of the meeting
- Gain insight into PHS's organizational and political culture
- Develop a larger network of professional colleagues and contacts
- Build upon existing strengths and get guidance on potential areas of growth
- Learn from someone else's mistakes!

### **Some of the activities a mentor can help with include:**

- Creating or revising goals, objectives, and career plans
- Identifying potential rotational assignments or job shadowing activities
- Identifying possible formal training activities to enhance knowledge and skills
- Giving career advice and sharing experience through personal stories and lessons learned
- Encouragement to try new projects or assignments
- Connection with other sources of information about career opportunities and growth
- Identifying opportunities for promotion and identification of unique skills of mentee

### **Mentors will have:**

- Time commitment of approximately one hour of support per month
- Interest and willingness to mentor a junior officer
- Knowledge of PHS and the federal agency the mentee is assigned to and expertise in the same general area
- Interpersonal and communication skills and will not be judgmental or critical
- Credibility and will be positive role models
- Respect for confidentiality

Mentors, but especially mentees, should be proactive in establishing and maintaining the relationship. An initial, in-person meeting (when possible) is recommended. At least quarterly check-ins are advised after the initial meeting. The mentor and mentee should discuss frequency of meetings and the duration of the relationship. If there are any concerns, contact the Mentoring Subcommittee for confidential advice and feedback.