

CLUW National Executive Board Endorses ‘Intentional’ Mentoring: Urges Chapters, Unions to Create Programs

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Mentoring, * which helps to develop future leaders, has taken place in unions since the early days of the labor movement. However, mentoring in the labor movement has largely been informal and random, that is, more seasoned leaders have sought out younger members who tend to be either someone who looks like them (or looked like them when they were younger), Many women and minorities, therefore, have not had access to mentors.

“Intentional” or “formal” mentoring programs, on the other hand, are available to all members of a group. These programs are endorsed by the parent organization; they are accountable to that organization and there is a commitment to sustain the program over time so that future members have access to it

Over the last two years, CLUW – at various meetings – has provided training on intentional mentoring, based on ***The Next Generation: A Handbook for Mentoring Future Union Leaders***, which was written specifically for unions and not-for-profits.

As the handbook points out, studies show that these types of “mentoring programs can help a union (or a CLUW chapter) thrive over time, as they create a vehicle for more seasoned leaders to transfer knowledge and experience to younger workers and activists. Ultimately, building union leaders to help to keep unions strong.

“Mentoring can especially help women, who constitute almost half the workforce but are under-represented in the leadership ranks of unions. Mentoring can help by providing women with the support they need to move up through the ranks and reach the top positions.

“Having more women visible in leadership positions can increase women’s activism in unions.”

Two types of intentional mentoring programs are particularly relevant to the structures of unions and constituency groups: they are “**traditional**” – or “**one-on-one**” programs – or “**mentoring circles**” – also known as “**group mentoring**.” The circles are made up of a “collection of mentoring relationships that meets on a regular basis for an agreed length of time. Participants can act as mentors or protégés or both, depending on the immediate situation.” (from: *A Guide to Mentoring Circles, 2008, Abbott*)

<http://www.blacksgonegeek.org/Documents/Abbott-Mentoring-Circles-Guide.pdf>

Therefore be it resolved; that the Coalition of Labor Union Women goes on record in support of intentional/formal mentoring for its chapters; and

Be it further resolved, that the Coalition of Labor Union Women urges all of its chapters to set up a traditional mentoring program or a mentoring circle and to use the resources noted here to develop their specific program.

Additionally, CLUW urges its chapters (and their members) to encourage the local unions that support it and have members who belong to it to adopt and implement these programs.

** "Mentoring is a professional relationship devoted to developing a person's career. It involves a 'mentor' (trusted advisor or teacher) and 'mentee'(learner or protégé). Traditionally, people have understood mentoring as a relationship between an older, more experienced mentor and a younger, less experienced colleague. Mentoring, however, can also happen between peers at a similar level within an organization. And it can be a two-way process between individuals of different ages: older mentors can learn new skills from their younger mentees (such as ways to use technology) and come to see the union from a different perspective."*

The Next Generation: A Handbook for Mentoring Future Union Leaders

<http://www.bergermarks.org/resources/index.php#mentor>