

## **Clarke County Mentor Program Social Media Guidelines**

While all Clarke County Mentors are welcome to participate in social media, we expect everyone who participates in online commentary to understand and to follow these simple but important guidelines. These guidelines apply to mentors who create or contribute to blogs, wikis, social networks, virtual worlds, or any other kind of social media. Whether you log into Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, Twitter, Yelp, YouTube, or Wikipedia pages, or comment on online media stories — these guidelines are for you.

Our overall goal is simple: to participate online in a respectful, relevant way that protects our reputation. Be prudent and use common sense. Remember everything you contribute online stays forever and that everything you do, often on a personal basis, reflects on the Clarke County Mentor Program as an organization.

Here are ways you can make your social media messages more effective:

- Be transparent and state that you are a mentor with the Clarke County Mentor Program. Your honesty will be noted in the social media environment. If you are writing about the mentor program, use your real name, identify that you are a mentor with the program, and be clear about your role. If you have a vested interest in what you are discussing, be the first to say so.
- Post meaningful, relevant, interesting and respectful comments — in other words, please, no spam and no remarks that are off-topic, offensive, includes profanity or could commonly be viewed as being sexually explicit, racially offensive, threatening or libelous.
- Use common sense and common courtesy: for example, it's best to ask permission to publish or report on conversations that are meant to be private or internal to the Clarke County Mentor Program. Make sure your efforts to be transparent don't violate the Clarke County Mentor Program privacy, confidentiality, and legal guidelines for external commercial speech.
- When disagreeing with others' opinions, keep it appropriate and polite. If you find yourself in a situation online that looks as if it's becoming antagonistic, do not get overly defensive and do not disengage from the conversation abruptly; feel free to ask the director of the Clarke County Mentor Program for advice and/or to disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner that reflects well on the program.
- Please never comment on anything related to legal matters, litigation, or any parties the Clarke County Mentor Program may be in litigation with.
- Never participate in social media when the topic being discussed may be considered a crisis situation. Even anonymous comments may be traced back to you or your IP address. Refer all social media activity around crisis topics to the director of the Clarke County Mentor Program..
- Be smart about protecting yourself, your privacy, your mentee and Clarke County Mentor Program confidential information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully.
- Copyrights and Trademarks: Respect copyright and fair use laws. When citing the work of another person or organization, professional bloggers, like journalists, will use proper attribution as well as a link (if applicable). Trademarks such as logos, slogans and various digital content (art, music, photos, etc.) may require permission from the copyright owner. It is your responsibility to seek that permission if you intend to use any such trademarked content.

**Established 10/10/11**