

Based on feedback from last year's mentors and finalist teams, the Big Ideas team has developed a list of tips for successful mentorship:

- Establish clear objectives, work goals, and deadlines at the outset of the mentorship and be accountable to those goals.
- Discuss expectations and boundaries of the mentorship relationship at the 1st meeting. Teams must keep in mind that Big Ideas mentors are volunteering their time and often have challenging schedules. Teams must be as flexible as possible to accommodate these scheduling constraints, and be responsive in their communication with their mentors.
- Set up a regular time for meetings each week.
- Conduct face-to-face meetings when possible (in person, Skype), and establish a desired means of communication for all parties (email, phone, Skype).
- Setting an agenda for each meeting can lead to more productive use of mentors' time.
- Be upfront about potential scheduling difficulties that may occur, including travel and work or school deadlines.
- Review the judging criteria before mentorship begins to ensure that both mentors and the team understand how their proposals will be judged in the final round of the contest.
- Review feedback provided to the team by pre-proposal judges together.
- Mentors should practice active listening and ask questions to challenge the team.
- Mentors should encourage the team to take an active approach to problem solving rather than rely solely on you as their mentor to develop solutions for their issues.
- In sum, this mentorship opportunity is entirely what mentors and teams make of it. Therefore, it is essential that teams and mentors establish and maintain a clear schedule and good communication throughout the mentorship phase.

### **Additional Resources for the Mentorship**

- Top 10 Qualities of a Good Mentor from About.com:  
<http://internships.about.com/od/internships101/tp/MentQualities.htm>
- Building Blocks for Teams from Penn State:  
<http://archive.tlt.psu.edu/suggestions/teams/student/>
- Free Conference Call Services: Skype, Google Hangout, Free Conference Calling, Dim Dim, TokBox, Goto Meeting, Powwow Now
- Meeting Scheduling Services: Doodle, When2meet, Wejoinin
- File Sharing: Box.net, Google Drive
- Project Management and Collaboration: Zoho Projects