

Frequently Asked Questions

Erase the Wait Mentorship Program

Mentors



1. What is the mentorship program?

The Erase the Wait Mentorship program is facilitated by Donate Life Northwest, a nonprofit committed to educating residents of Oregon and Washington about organ, eye, and tissue donation and transplant. We partner with all three transplant centers in Oregon to make this training available to anyone interested in exploring living kidney donation. People who have received a living kidney donation or who were a living kidney donor go through a one-day mentor training. Mentors learn how to support others who are dealing with the day-to-day challenges that accompany kidney disease and how to communicate to mentees that they are not alone, that someone cares. Trained mentors are then matched with a patient who is currently waitlisted for a kidney transplant. As a mentor, you will be able to support someone in their exploration of living kidney donation by sharing your experience and assisting them in spreading their story and explaining why they need a kidney.

2. How does this program benefit waitlisted kidney patients?

Before being matched with a mentor, waitlisted kidney patients go through three trainings with their support person and fellow kidney patients to learn more about living donation and practice ways to tell their story and connect with potential donors. The opportunity to network with peers and to be mentored by someone who has successfully navigated a similar situation brings patients hope and inspiration as well as practical tools for pursuing living donation.

3. As a mentor, how will this program benefit me?

Through the required training, mentors will learn valuable skills in communication and mentorship as well as current information on renal disease and transplant. If you are a living donation recipient, this is an opportunity to recognize the generosity of your donor. For both recipients and donors, being a mentor offers the opportunity to reflect and share insights from the significant life experience of transplant. As a volunteer with Donate Life Northwest, you enter into a supportive community of transplant recipients, living donors, deceased donor families, and supporters of donation.

4. What is the time commitment for this program?

Mentor participants commit to attending 1 one-day (five hour) training with other mentors and they also attend 1 one-day (five hour) training in which they meet their mentees. All formal trainings take place during the weekends and food is provided. Mentors are expected to maintain regular contact with mentees. Your contact with your mentee depends on the needs and availability of you both – some pairs meet monthly for coffee, others email or call regularly. We expect mentors to commit to being in their mentorship pair for two years, or until your mentee gets a transplant, whichever comes first. Mentors also have the option of presenting on patient training panels and at other Donate Life Northwest events.

5. What kind of support will I receive as a mentor?

After the full day training, Donate Life Northwest staff will contact you personally to answer further questions and address any concerns. Your initial meeting with your patient mentee will be in the structured group atmosphere of the last patient training session. At this session, all participate in community-building activities and mentors work with mentees on exercises to instill their story/need sharing confidence. After this first meeting, mentors and mentees are expected to initiate and maintain communication. Donate Life Northwest Staff are always available to answer questions and support mentors by making regular check-in phone calls, debriefing challenges, and brainstorming solutions. You will also be invited to mentor reunions, in which participants collectively work through scenarios and share their successes and best practices.

6. Is there a cost to attend this program?

No, all costs associated with this program are covered by Donate Life Northwest and participating transplant centers. None of the participants – patients and their support people, or mentors – are required to pay for the program. If you wish to make a voluntary contribution to help cover the costs of this program and other programs that promote organ, eye, and tissue donation through education and outreach we ask that you do that independently by going online to donatelifenw.org and click “Contribute” in the upper right.

To learn more, visit:

www.donatelifenw.org/erasethewait

To register for an upcoming training, email:

livingdonation@donatelifenw.org

