Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities

Foundations of Successful Youth Mentoring

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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Hamilton Fish Institute

Foundations of Successful Youth Mentoring

Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities

A Guidebook for Program Development

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About the Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities Series

Mentoring is an increasingly popular way of providing guidance and support to young people in need. Recent years have seen youth mentoring expand from a relatively small youth intervention (usually for youth from single-parent homes) to a cornerstone youth service that is being implemented in schools, community centers, faith institutions, school-to-work programs, and a wide variety of other youth-serving institutions.

While almost any child can benefit from the magic of mentoring, those who design and implement mentoring programs also need guidance and support. Running an effective mentoring program is not easy, and there are many nuances and programmatic details that can have a big impact on outcomes for youth. Recent mentoring research even indicates that a short-lived, less-than-positive mentoring relationship (a hallmark of programs that are not well designed) can actually have a negative impact on participating youth. Mentoring is very much worth doing, but it is imperative that programs implement proven, research-based best practices if they are to achieve their desired outcomes. That's where this series of publications can help.

The Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities series, sponsored by the Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence, is designed to give practitioners a set of tools and ideas that they can use to build quality mentoring programs. Each title in the series is based on research (primarily from the esteemed Public/Private Ventures) and observed best practices from the field of mentoring, resulting in a collection of proven strategies, techniques, and program structures. Revised and updated by the National Mentoring Center at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, each book in this series provides insight into a critical area of mentor program development:

Foundations of Successful Youth Mentoring—This title offers a comprehensive overview of the characteristics of successful youth mentoring programs. Originally designed for a community-based model, its advice and planning tools can be adapted for use in other settings.

Generic Mentoring Program Policy and Procedure Manual—Much of the success of a mentoring program is dependent on the structure and consistency of service delivery, and this guide provides advice and a customizable template for creating an operations manual for a local mentoring program.

Training New Mentors—All mentors need thorough training if they are to possess the skills, attitudes, and activity ideas needed to effectively mentor a young person. This guide provides ready-to-use training modules for your program.

The ABCs of School-Based Mentoring—This guide explores the nuances of building a program in a school setting.

Building Relationships: A Guide for New Mentors—This resource is written directly for mentors, providing them with 10 simple rules for being a successful mentor and quotes from actual volunteers and youth on what they have learned from the mentoring experience.

Sustainability Planning and Resource Development for Youth Mentoring Programs—Mentoring programs must plan effectively for their sustainability if they are to provide services for the long run in their community. This guide explores key planning and fundraising strategies specifically for youth mentoring programs.

The Hamilton Fish Institute and the National Mentoring Center hope that the guides in this series help you and your program's stakeholders design effective, sustainable mentoring services that can bring positive direction and change to the young people you serve.

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Introduction

About This Guidebook

There is a great deal of variety in the design and structure of youth mentoring programs across the United States. Every program is unique in some way and faces its own circumstances. But there are some common characteristics that successful adult-youth mentoring programs share. This guide is intended to provide a generic program model based on current research that can be adapted and implemented in a variety of settings.

Citations of specific research findings have been included in this guide where appropriate, but there are several key pieces of literature on youth mentoring that contributed greatly to the overall program advice and structure promoted here:

- DuBois, D.L., Holloway, B.E., Valentine, J.C., & Cooper, H. (2002). Effectiveness of mentoring programs for youth: A meta-analytic review. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 30*(2), 157–197.
- Dubois, D.L., & Karcher, M.J. (Eds.). (2005). *Handbook of youth mentoring.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Grossman, J.B. (Ed.). (1999). *Contemporary issues in mentoring.* Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.
- Grossman, J.B., & Rhodes, J.E. (2002). The test of time: Predictors and effects of duration in youth mentoring programs. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 30*(2), 199–219.
- Jekielek, S., Moore, K.A., & Hair, E.C. (2002). *Mentoring programs and youth development: A synthesis*. Washington, DC: Child Trends.

- Rhodes, J.E. (2002). *Stand by me: The risks and rewards of mentoring today's youth*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Rhodes, J.E., & Dubois, D.L. (2006). Understanding and facilitating the youth mentoring movement. *Social Policy Report, 20*(3).
- Tierney, J., & Grossman, J.B., (with Resch, N.L.). (2000). *Making a difference: An impact study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters*. (Reissued ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.

In addition to these valuable resources, the National Mentoring Center has also drawn on its experience providing training and technical assistance to thousands of local programs nationwide in developing the content of this guidebook. The program components recommended here reflect our history of working with clients to implement real solutions to the common issues that mentoring programs need to address.

This guidebook is not meant to be the only resource you will ever need or the definitive word on any of the topics covered. Instead, it is meant to give your program a solid understanding of what it takes to build a successful program, with the expectation that you will build on this foundation by continuing to implement new ideas, apply new mentoring research, and refine your program's strategies and services over time.

How To Use This Guidebook

This guidebook is designed to provide useful information for a number of different audiences. Members of a program's Board of Directors or Advisory Committee may find the guide useful in designing program policies and in developing appropriate community partnerships to best deliver effective mentoring services. Program coordinators can find a wealth of useful information here to help design their day-to-day services and ensure that participants will be satisfied with their mentoring experience. Ideally, board members (who have the authority to make decisions about how the program will be implemented) and program coordinators (who must implement the program) will work together to use the framework provided here in creating solutions that meet program goals.

Both programs that are in the early stages of development and more established programs will find value in this guidebook:

- Programs in the planning stages will find the recommendations helpful in informing the overall development of their mentoring services. The self-assessment questions and planning checklist offer tools to help you focus your planning and build a program model that works for your specific circumstances.
- Programs that are already up and running may use this guide as a program assessment tool. Revisiting each of these components can help you gauge what your program is doing right and which aspects of your services may need improvement.

Moving Forward

Starting a mentoring program can be a lot of work and all of the information provided in this guide can be somewhat daunting to a new program and its staff members. But the information provided here will actually save you time and effort by guiding your decision making and aligning your services with best practices that are known to work. Even though there are many key decisions to be made about how your program will be structured, the good news is that you do not have to "reinvent the wheel" when it comes to designing your program.

Mentoring is a very powerful and personal way to enhance the lives of all types of youth. As you move forward with your valuable, life-changing program, we hope this guide is a useful tool for analyzing where your program is today and enhancing the services you offer in the future.

Section 1.

Preparing To Start a New Program

This section is designed to guide programs through the early stages of planning new mentoring services to meet an unmet need in their community. The program components recommended in this section should be completed prior to opening your doors: they ensure that the rationale for creating your mentoring program is sound and that your program is laying the groundwork for the community support it will need to thrive.

Find Your Niche: Assessing the Need for Mentoring in Your Community

As mentoring has grown in popularity in recent years, the number of new mentoring programs being created has increased considerably. While this is certainly positive for America's youth, it is important that new programs understand their place in the community and avoid duplicating existing services.

The first step in understanding where and how your new mentoring program might have an impact in the community is to conduct a needs assessment. Conducting a community needs assessment will inform decisions you make as you plan the program's scope of services and goals. Even if you already have a specific youth population in mind, a community needs assessment can help identify potential partners and can help clarify the specific role your program might play in conjunction with other educational and development opportunities available to your target youth.

In essence, a community needs assessment documents the challenges and problems facing young people, as well as the existing services available to youth in the community. By comparing the needs of youth with the services currently being provided, your program can best determine the unmet needs that it can address.

Sometimes the needs of youth in the community will be readily apparent: widespread gang activity or substance abuse, for example. But even if there are glaring needs, your program should have a good understanding of the many other areas in which youth in the community might need assistance. Common areas programs look at when doing a needs assessment include:

- School test scores
- Juvenile crime statistics
- Dropout rates

What Is Your Organizational Foundation?

Any group planning to launch a new mentoring program must have a basic organizational structure in place to effectively manage the business of running a program. Your group may already exist as a nonprofit organization, or you may have arranged to be sponsored by an existing organization to help you get started. You may be a faith-based group that can use the church structure for your mentoring program, or you may be part of a public entity or school district. Before you begin planning the specifics of your mentoring program, be sure that you have this basic foundation in place and the full support of your sponsoring organization's leadership.

If you need to start a new organization from scratch, consult the many helpful resources available on starting a nonprofit before you proceed too far with your planning. The Foundation Center Web site is a good place to begin your search for these resources: http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/faqs/html/starting_nonprofit.html

- Percentage of students on free/reduced-price lunch programs (an indicator of socioeconomic status)
- Teen pregnancy rates
- Substance abuse estimates
- Gang activity
- Numbers of youth engaged in other social services, such as foster care or transitional housing

Even if you already have a specific group of youth in mind, there is likely much more you can learn about them as part of assessing their needs. For example, if you want to serve youth in foster care, what do the demographics of that group look like? What percentage is enrolled in the school system and what is the breakdown by grade? Are many youth aging out of the system? Or does the biggest need seem to be for much younger children in foster care? There are always additional questions to ask when examining youth needs in detail. If possible, you may want to do focus groups or survey targeted youth in your community to find out what issues they feel are important and what types of support they want in their lives.

When assessing services that are already available in the community, be sure to examine those provided by:

- Schools and other educational facilities
- Youth-serving nonprofits
- State, county, and municipal government agencies
- Churches and other faith institutions
- Foundations
- Civic groups and service clubs
- Community/neighborhood associations

Pay extra attention to the existing mentoring programs already operating in your area. What outcomes do they focus on? Are specific groups of youth already targeted? Who are their current partners? Answering questions like these will help you determine if there are already programs offering the type of programming you are thinking about creating. You may find that your best option is to partner with an existing program rather than developing something from scratch. Many successful programs expand in this way, creating additional sites as new community leaders become interested in mentoring.

As part of your needs assessment, be sure to talk directly with a variety of community and youth service agency leaders. These conversations will not only inform your process but can also lay the groundwork for future community support, new partnerships, or membership for your board or advisory committee (more on this beginning on page 8). Ideally, you will already have a core team of interested community members who support your efforts. This group can be instrumental in identifying other people to talk to in the community and can help carry out the many investigative activities that go into a thorough needs assessment. The results of your assessment should provide a "lay of the land" that is critical in designing a program that can be integrated into the fabric of youth services in your community.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Has our program conducted a community needs assessment?

What information did we learn about our community and youth?

Have we identified any gaps in services currently being offered to them?

What other mentoring services are being offered youth in our community?

What might our niche be within the context of other programs?

How will information gathered in the needs assessment be incorporated into our program planning, goals, and operations?

WORKSHEET

Basic Community Needs Assessment

General Youth Needs	Details of Issues
Education/Local Schools	
Alcohol and Drugs	
Career Opportunities	
Access to Higher Education	
Gang Involvement	
Family Problems	
Access to Social Services	
Other Delinquent Behavior	
General Community Issues	**Details of Issues/Impact on Youth**
Poverty	
Changing Demographics	
Employment/Job Training	
Access to Higher Education	
Access to Social Services	
Crime	
Alcohol and Drugs	
Quality of Schools	

Other Youth Service Providers in Our Community	Details of Their Services and Target Population
Other Youth Service Providers in Our Community	**Details of Their Services and Target Population**

Guiding Questions

- What is changing for the better for youth in our community?
- What is getting worse?
- Are there specific groups of youth who may need special services?
- What organizations, groups, and individuals are already stepping up to help youth in our area?
- Where are the gaps in services to the youth in our community?
- Does our community provide broad support for schools and social services?
- If we could change one thing for the better for our youth, what would it be?

Create (or Get Support From) a Board or Advisory Committee

Any mentoring program's success stems from the skills, commitment, and vision of the individuals who oversee it. There is perhaps no program component that is more critical than the support of a strong Board of Directors or advisory committee. Their level of involvement affects many aspects of a program, including resource development, building partnerships, setting policies, fiscal oversight, and risk management.

Your advisory committee or board will have two primary roles as you plan and develop your program: providing leadership and guidance about the program's mission, goals, and design, and creating or strengthening connections to community organizations and stakeholders that can make the program a success once implemented.

For those of you creating a program within an existing youth-serving agency, it is important that the agency Board of Directors be actively involved in the design and oversight of the mentoring program. They can best determine how mentoring will fit with the other services offered and they can ensure that the program receives the administrative, financial, and community support it will need to thrive over time.

Even programs that are backed by a formal board often choose to create a separate advisory committee that can provide more hands-on support, especially if the program is part of a larger, multiservice agency. An advisory committee is also essential for developing a program that is supported by several partners. As you develop your committee, start with a core group of supporters and add new members as momentum for the project grows. You can draw initial members from:

- School personnel/boards
- Other youth service providers
- Parents or parent groups
- Civic organizations
- Clergy
- Local government
- Law enforcement
- Youth from the populations you are targeting

If your program is getting started in school settings, make sure that a school principal or other key administrator is involved in your planning. Their buy-in is critical to ensuring that other school personnel are supportive and committed once the program is underway.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Which stakeholders and community members should be involved in our planning process?

Are there key individuals that need to be on board for the program to succeed?

Does our advisory committee represent the diversity of our community and clients?

What skills should our advisory committee members possess?

Cultivate a Strong Knowledge of Mentoring and Youth Development Research

At this point, you have assessed your community and youth needs and gathered an initial team of leaders and decisionmakers. The natural inclination is to immediately design something and get the program rolling. However, quality programs always take a crucial extra step before proceeding: making sure they have a solid understanding of mentoring research and best practices. Successful mentoring programs make sure they know the basics of how mentoring "works" before structuring the services they will offer.

Programs that thoroughly review the existing mentoring literature will gain a better understanding of:

- The type and amount of impact their mentoring program might realistically have
- How mentoring relationships form and progress
- How different types of mentoring activities and approaches lead to different results
- The importance of match duration and quality
- The types of pre-match training that mentors and youth need
- Which adults and youth may not be a good fit for the mentoring model you are planning

The list of recommended reading in the Appendix offers an excellent starting point for increasing your knowledge about youth mentoring research and best practices. You may also consider seeking training for your team on youth mentoring best practices or asking your state mentoring partnership or other technical assistance provider for support in developing your plan. (See pp.74–75 for details about technical assistance resources available to mentoring programs.)

Be sure to learn more about youth development areas other than mentoring that may come to bear on the services you design. If you want to add other components to what you offer, such as tutoring, career exploration, service learning, or life skills development, make sure you also investigate research and proven practices for delivering those services.

Having this basic understanding of mentoring research allows you to build services that can be effective in producing the outcomes you want to achieve. Without this knowledge, you run the risk of setting your program up for failure by developing unrealistic goals or leaving out a critical program component. Take the time to become an expert on mentoring before you proceed with your planning.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Does our advisory committee have access to mentoring research and best practice literature?

How will we make sure that our program design is evidence based?

Is there specific research about how to best serve our target population(s) of youth

Which consultants, technical assistance providers, and state partnerships can help improve our understanding of mentoring models and best practices?

Develop a Mission Statement, a Vision, and a Logic Model

The development of your mission statement is the beginning of your program design. The mission statement should articulate what the program hopes to achieve, for whom, and how. Mission statements should be fairly short and to the point, yet still answer the question, "Why do we exist?"

What will your mission statement look like in practice? What do you hope to achieve with your program? What will your community look like if it is successful? These are the types of questions you should answer when developing a long-term vision for your program. Your program's long-term goals should influence decisions that are made as the program moves forward. Many programs put these long-range objectives into a vision statement that acts as a compass, ensuring that the program is moving in the right direction over time.

As important as your mission and vision statements are, they are really only meaningful within the context of your logic model, the visual representation of how you think the program will have its impact on youth. A logic model provides the framework for program implementation, evaluation, and future planning.

A basic logic model will follow an outline similar to the one shown below:

Sample Mission Statements

From a Big Brothers Big Sisters Agency:

"To improve the lives of young people and enable them to become productive, responsible adults by creating one-to-one mentoring relationships between at-risk children and qualified adult volunteers."

From a federally funded mentoring program:

"(Program X) is dedicated to the self-empowerment of girls in low-income communities by providing the tools to help them make positive choices to achieve academic success, break the cycles of teen pregnancy and poverty, and overcome the barriers of racism and sexism."

From a fictional program:

New Insights Mentoring Program envisions a community in which every youth experiences nurturing one-to-one relationships and community support, which in turn allows each of them to develop into their full potential, capable of making informed, responsible decisions as involved members of our community.

Logic Model

Need ➡	Resources/ Inputs ➡	Activities ➡	Outputs ➡	Intermediate Outcomes ➡	Long-Term Outcomes ➡
The problem(s) your program will address	Program ingredients, such as funds, staff, volunteers, materials, partners, etc.	Specific activities and services the program will provide	Specific evidence of services provided (numbers)	Positive changes that will take place as a result of services	Lasting and significant results of your program over the long term

Obviously, filling in these details can only happen as you design the program itself, factoring in all the other components and best practices that have yet to come in this guidebook. But we've placed the creation of your logic model early in the preparation process because it is something that needs to happen before youth are admitted to the program and matched with mentors. As you move through this guide, remember that everything else you design about the program will feed into your logic model at some level. It is the master blueprint of your services, and without one, programs struggle to find direction and identify outcomes.

Be sure that your logic model is as specific as possible when it comes to the types of activities planned, evidence of services provided, and the outcomes you expect to achieve. Make sure your logic model includes:

- Information about what your services and activities actually are, including how many youth you plan to serve and how services are delivered
- Written and measurable program outcomes
- Specific benchmarks for the outcomes you've identified

Remember when working with logic models that the end result should be one that clearly defines what you are trying to achieve. There are many different ways to graphically display your logic model, so search for a format that best meets your needs. The resources at the end of this section provide several useful online tools to help you with your logic model. You may also want to consult a program evaluator to get some feedback on whether your planned goals, activities, and outcomes are realistic, measurable, and achievable.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Does our program have mission and vision statements?

Is there agreement on our advisory committee about what the mission of the program will be?

As we plan for the delivery of services, how will we construct our logic model?

Does our program have clear and achievable goals with measurable outcomes?

Is our logic model strong enough that it can also serve as a road map for program evaluation?

Develop Partnerships To Deliver Services Effectively

Perhaps the hardest box to fill in for a new program's logic model is "inputs," the resources, staff, and partners you need to make the rest of the model function effectively. Strong partnerships, both formal and informal, can be especially important, as youth mentoring programs often need to collaborate to maximize the impact of their services. In the last section of this guide we discuss creating informal partnerships and coalitions as a sustainability strategy (see p. 84). Here, we address creating formal partnerships with schools, youth-serving organizations, and community groups as part of the core design of the program.

The development of formal partnerships will help you design the best possible program for the type of mentoring you want to offer and the youth you expect to serve. For example, your mentoring model may be most effective if housed in a local school that can offer additional resources, or you may need to develop a solid volunteer pool by developing a relationship with a local employer who will provide you with enough qualified mentors. If your program is grant funded, you may be required to collaborate with another agency. Whatever the purpose, successful mentoring programs invest time and resources into cultivating mutually beneficial relationships with community partners.

For these partnerships to be effective, it is essential that everyone who will be involved at each organization clearly understands the goals, objectives, policies, and activities of your mentoring program. It's also helpful if your partners have a voice in your program's design to increase their sense of ownership and commitment. This process takes time and energy, but by developing this shared understanding and commitment up front, your partnerships are more likely to be successful and avoid problems down the road.

Key strategies for developing and maintaining partnerships include the following:

Establish mutual expectations between your program and each community partner. These should be clearly described in formal written Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) signed by all parties. These expectations may include referral of students to the program, sharing confidential information (such as attendance records or test scores), or data collection tasks for evaluation purposes. Financial agreements may require a separate contract or may be included in your MOU, depending on the requirements of the organization's fiscal management. (See sample MOU on page 14).

Identify a primary contact person at each partner organization and ensure that person is aware of the expectations of the partnership. This person will be able to respond to day-to-day issues as they come up rather than letting them grow and become a barrier to program success. Orientation for key partner contacts should occur whenever there is staff turnover at that position.

Include representatives from partner organizations on your advisory committee. This can help maintain interagency communication and facilitate your partners' ongoing input on programmatic issues. In the absence of such representation, your program should meet regularly with its partners to discuss how the collaborations are going and to inform them of the progress made toward the goals of the program.

Meet individually with each partner on an annual basis to review partnership agreements. This provides an opportunity to discuss how the partnership is working, iron out problems, clarify expectations, and make any changes that are needed.

- Maintain routine communication with the community partner. This communication might include brief check-in phone calls, frequent print/e-mail updates, and periodic face-to-face meetings. Let your partners know you are available and that you care about their work as well as your own.

- Acknowledge your partnerships and celebrate your successes. Building solid relationships with formal partner organizations improves your program's ability to deliver quality services to youth and positions your program to meet its benchmarks for success. Let your partners know you are proud of the partnerships you have built and acknowledge their role in your program's successes publicly.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Do we have the right program partners to fully implement the program model we've designed?

Does our program have a written MOU that documents each partner's roles and responsibilities?

Do we have a process in place to ensure that the obligations of the MOU are met when staff turnover occurs at partner organizations or among our own personnel?

Do we have a designated contact person at each partner organization?

Are there special considerations related to our collaborations with other organizations that are tied to specific funding?

What is our process for ensuring compliance with the MOU?

Is there a process in place to deal with a partner not fulfilling the obligations of an agreed-upon MOU?

How often are we sharing information related to progress of the program with our partner organizations?

SAMPLE
Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) made this 7th day of January, 2007, as managed by the New Insights Mentoring Program (NIMP). This MOU establishes that NIMP, Winwood Heights Middle School (WHMS), Winwood Heights High School (WHHS), and Winwood Heights Recreation Center (WHRC) agree to the following terms and conditions as partners in the New Insights Mentoring Program:

NIMP will:

- Identify, solicit, and recruit volunteer mentor applicants
- Manage programmatic activities including but not limited to development of policies and procedures, fund development, and case management
- Oversee all operational activities including screening, training, matching, support and supervision, recognition, and closure procedures
- Coordinate one-to-one mentor and mentee matching to meet the goal of 25 new matches per year
- Manage all fiscal requirements including fund development, budget management, and fiscal planning
- Provide evaluation summaries of the project to all partners

WHMS will:

- Provide on-site coordination, an adequate project site, office space, and facility amenities
- Identify appropriate WHMS students for referral
- Advise on the academic needs of participating youth
- Assist in providing program evaluation data for participating students including grades, attendance records, discipline records, and counselor and teacher reports
- Provide a contact person
- Cooperate to the fullest extent possible with NIMP Coordinator

WHHS will:

- Provide on-site coordination, an adequate project site, office space, and facility amenities
- Identify appropriate WHHS students for referral
- Advise on the academic needs of participating youth
- Assist in providing program evaluation data for participating students, including grades, attendance records, discipline records, and counselor and teacher reports
- Provide a contact person
- Cooperate to the fullest extent possible with NIMP Coordinator

WHRC will:

- Serve as the primary agency for group recreational activities and games
- Provide training programs in youth development, leadership, and relationship building to mentors and program staff
- Provide a contact person
- Cooperate to the fullest extent possible with NIMP Coordinator

NIMP, WHMS, WHHS, and WHRC will hold all information confidential regarding participants and release such information only with signed parental consent or in cooperation with law enforcement investigations in compliance with local and state laws and statutes. In witness whereof, the parties hereto have caused this MOU to be executed as of the day and year listed below.

New Insights Mentoring Program:

____

Name Title Date

Winwood Heights Middle School:

____

Name Title Date

Winwood Heights High School:

____

Name Title Date

Winwood Heights Recreation Center:

____

Name Title Date

Sample adapted, with permission, from Ballasy, Fulop, & Garringer, 2007.

Plan Implementation Carefully

Once you have your model for services fully designed, it's time to get down to the details of implementing your program. Establishing a timeline for getting each step of your program in place will help move you forward, recognizing that you may need to adjust your plan as you work through each task. You may also have external requirements that will affect your timeline and activities, such as those of a funding source. Or it may be entirely up to your board or advisory committee to decide when the program will launch. As you set your implementation timetable, be sure to factor in considerations such as:

- ***Hiring and training staff***. How many people will your model need and when will they need to be hired? What kind of training will they need?
- ***Infrastructure***. Do you have adequate facilities? Are your technology needs met? How will you develop and produce your brochures and forms?
- ***Record keeping***. How will you store information and track matches?
- ***Recruitment and matching***. How long will it take to find qualified volunteers? To attract youth in need of your services? To make matches that will last?
- ***Curriculum development***. What training will participants need and who will deliver it? Do you plan to develop your own training curriculum or use existing resources?
- ***Funding***. You may have enough to get started, but how will the program sustain itself once initial funding runs out? Who is in charge of developing future resources?
- ***Policies and procedures***. Have you laid the groundwork up front for a safe and effective program? Have your policies been reviewed and approved by your leadership? Will you be able to implement the policies and procedures you've developed? (See the last section of this guide for further discussion about creating policies and procedures and collecting them into a permanent manual.)
- ***Coordination with other timelines***. If your program is tied to the school year, when do you need to start certain activities to be ready on the first day? If you are planning on pursuing a particular grant, what is the launch date for those who get the awards?

The Sample Year One Timeline in the Appendix can help you plan your timetable for implementation. Just make sure that your plan builds in enough lead time that it can adapt to unforeseen changes and open its doors at full operating capacity.

About the Research Behind This Book

There is no right or wrong way to go through the steps outlined in this section. But it is critical that you and your Board of Directors or advisory committee members do go through them when designing a new mentoring program for the youth in your community. These steps ensure that your program is addressing a real need and implementing a well-planned model that is poised for success. The next section details how to structure specific program services for maximum impact.

Resources That Can Assist You With the Components in This Section

Developing a Logic Model

Examples of Logic Models (University of Wisconsin-Extension)
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodelexamples.html

Learning from Logic Models in Out-of-School Time (Harvard Family Research Project)
http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/content/projects/afterschool/resources/learning_logic_models.pdf

Logic Model Worksheet (Harvard Family Research Project)
http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/content/projects/afterschool/resources/logic_model_wksht_figure.pdf

Logic Model Worksheets (University of Wisconsin-Extension)
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodelworksheets.html

W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide (W.K. Kellogg Foundation)
http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub3669.pdf

Developing Mission and Vision Statements

How to Write a Mission Statement (The Grantsmanship Center)
http://www.tgci.com/magazine/How%20to%20Write%20a%20Mission%20Statement.pdf

What Should Our Mission Statement Say? (Idealist.org's Nonprofit FAQ)
http://www.idealist.org/npofaq/03/21.html

Creating Effective Partnerships

Creating and Maintaining Coalitions and Partnerships (University of Kansas Community Toolbox)
http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/tk/en/tools_tk_1.jsp

Strengthening Mentoring Programs Training Curriculum, Module #4: Forming and Maintaining Partnerships (National Mentoring Center)
http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/pdf/Mod4.pdf

Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (Amherst H. Wilder Foundation)
http://surveys.wilder.org/public_cfi/index.php

General Program Start-up

Designing and Planning a Mentoring Program (MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership)
http://www.mentoring.org/program_staff/design/designing_and_planning_a_mentoring_program.php?pid=1

How to Build a Successful Mentoring Program Using the Elements of Effective Practice (MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership)
www.mentoring.org/eeptoolkit/

Mentoring Program Development: A Start-Up Toolkit (National Mentoring Center)
http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/pdf/startup_toolkit.pdf

Starting a Mentoring Program (EMT Group)
http://emt.org/userfiles/StartMentWeb.pdf

Starting a Nonprofit Organization (Free Management Library)
http://www.managementhelp.org/strt_org/strt_np/strt_np.htm

Additional online resources to assist with the components in this section can be found on the National Mentoring Center Web site at: http://wwwnwrel.org/mentoring.

Section II.

Designing Mentoring Services

This section covers research-based best practices for developing and implementing youth mentoring services. These are the components that will make up the structure of your day-to-day operations. The critical program design components are:

- Volunteer recruitment
- Initial orientation for prospective mentors and mentees
- Mentor/mentee intake
- Mentor screening
- Pre-match training for mentors and mentees
- Making matches
- Monitoring matches
- Support, ongoing training, and recognition for volunteers
- Match closure
- Program evaluation

No two mentoring programs are alike, and the structure you create in these areas must fit your program goals and capabilities. But it is critical that your program puts careful thought into how each of these components will be carried out once you officially begin services and how you will improve them over time.

Volunteer Recruitment

The first step in creating high-quality mentoring relationships is finding suitable adults who are interested in volunteering with your program. The more targeted your recruitment strategies, the more likely you are to find an appropriate match for each youth in your program.

There are several steps in creating an effective recruitment plan:

1. Adequately Staff Your Recruitment Efforts

Designate staff members who are responsible for developing and implementing your volunteer recruitment efforts. Recruitment can be a labor-intensive task, so be sure that your staff has sufficient time available to give recruitment the attention it deserves. In addition to adequate time, be sure that the staff members responsible for your recruitment efforts have the proper knowledge and skills to be successful. You may need to seek out training or other professional development activities to ensure that your recruitment personnel have a good understanding of effective recruitment strategies for reaching your audiences.

2. Identify Target Populations and Volunteer-Rich Environments

Your recruitment plan starts with the types of individuals you will want to recruit and the volunteer-rich environments in which you might find them. The specific populations your program chooses to target will vary, depending on your program's mission, goals, and clients. The key is to identify the groups in your community that might supply the types of mentors that would work well in your program. Your community needs assessment should provide a good understanding of the demographic make-up of your community and an awareness of potential volunteer sources on which you can focus.

Your initial list of target groups will likely include broad categories such as college students or retirees, specific occupational groups such as lawyers or businesspeople, and groups with common interests, such as outdoor enthusiasts or artists. You may also target specific demographic groups, such as a specific ethnic group, gender, or age range. Be sure to include important personal characteristics that are needed. Your chart of potential recruits for a community-based program might look like the example at the bottom of the page.

Common volunteer-rich environments include:

- Local colleges and universities (or specific campus groups such as fraternities and sororities)
- Retirement communities
- Social, civic, and fraternal organizations
- Local businesses
- Local/regional government agencies
- Faith-based organizations
- Professional associations

Developing contacts with these organizations may eventually result in formal partnerships that support your recruitment efforts. Some have likened recruitment in these volunteer-rich environments to a "wholesale" (large quantity) rather than "retail" (traditional one-to-one recruitment of individuals) approach to finding volunteers.

Keep a written list of general targeted groups and specific volunteer-rich environments on which you focus your recruitment efforts. Periodically update, expand, and refine this list so that your recruitment efforts are flexible and can expand in the future.

Personal Qualities	Demographics	Groups
Honest	Ages 30–45	College students
Dependable	Men/Women	Doctors
Well-educated	Specific race/ethnicity	Lawyers
Caring	Living on the west side of town	Rotarians
Empathetic	College graduate	Local artists and musicians
Professional	Retired	Church members
Religious	Owns vehicle	Outdoorsmen
Resilient		Teachers
Outgoing		

Source: Garringer, 2006.

3. Customize Your Recruitment Message

Once you have identified the groups your program would like to target, you should begin the process of tailoring your "message" to appeal to those groups, recognizing that mentoring will appeal to different groups of adults for different reasons. Each group will likely have some unique motivational appeals that should be considered in designing your various recruitment messages. For example, college students might be motivated by developing new skills in working effectively with adolescents, whereas members of a church group may be attracted primarily by the opportunity to give back to their community. You may want to test your messages with focus groups to make sure that they appeal to their intended audience.

As you craft these different messages, be sure to retain the integrity of your program's mission and goals, and to clearly describe volunteer responsibilities and other service details. Potential volunteers need to know both the expectations and the rewards of being involved in your program, regardless of what their individual motivations may be.

4. Develop Your Recruitment Strategies

Once you know who you are targeting, where you might find them, and what you want to say to them, it's time to develop some methods of delivery for your recruitment message. There are many vehicles for getting your recruitment message out to your targeted groups. Some of the most common are:

Program Brochures and Flyers. Your program should have brochures, posters, newsletters, flyers, and other print materials that you can give to prospective mentors and disseminate at community events. These print materials should explain the mission and goals of the program and contain motivational language that would inspire someone to further explore volunteering in your program.

A Mentor "Job Description. Be sure to have a well-defined written job description for mentors that describes the roles, responsibilities, and benefits of mentoring as a volunteer with your organization. This description should tie in closely with your program's mission and goals and the population of youth you are serving.

Newspaper and Media Advertising. Your program should explore the possibility of reaching out to targeted groups through print ads or through public service announcements. This type of outreach can often be done more inexpensively than one might expect, often in the form of in-kind donations. Your program may also consider writing a letter to the editor or submitting press releases to local papers about the program's progress.

Program Web Site. Having an effective program Web site is fast becoming a necessity, not a luxury. Having a presence on the Web can really expand your program's visibility, even at the local level. Once your Web site is up, be sure to get it listed on other Web sites that help with volunteer recruitment (such as volunteer.org or your state's mentoring partnership Web site).

Presentations. Your program should regularly be making recruitment presentations to local businesses and organizations. It is important to have a dynamic presenter represent your agency—someone who can engage an audience and inspire passion about the work your program does. It also helps to bring along an experienced and enthusiastic current mentor to share his or her story.

Displays at Events. Whenever possible, your program should have a booth or table at community events where appropriate groups of mentors might be found. It is important to be visible in the community and increase general awareness of your program.

Recruitment (or Referral) of Youth Participants

Some programs do not actively recruit youth to the program because they have formal partnerships with schools or youth service agencies who refer appropriate youth. If your program does not have a built-in youth referral system, you will need to go through the steps outlined above from a youth perspective, identifying the types and characteristics of youth you want to target (based on your needs assessment and program model), where you can reach them, and the customized recruitment messages that will lead to their involvement in your program. Targeting some of your messages to parents/guardians may also be helpful.

Word of Mouth. One of the best ways of attracting new volunteers is through your existing pool of mentors. Ask your mentors to provide personal testimony and help in recruiting friends, co-workers, and family members. "Word of mouth" advertising is your reward for running a quality program. If your program is well-regarded in the community, and if your volunteers are happy, then people will have positive things to say about your program. That kind of positive reputation can go a long way in helping all aspects of your recruitment process.

There are several planning tools beginning on page 23 that can help you organize and implement your recruitment activities and generate meaningful recruitment messages.

Regardless of the methods you use in recruiting volunteers, it is important to create a "customer-friendly" atmosphere. Designate staff members to follow up on volunteer inquiries in a timely and professional manner. Your printed materials should describe the steps in the process of becoming a mentor, so that people know what they're getting into. Most important, your program should be perceived as being welcoming, attentive, and supportive.

By taking the time to present your program as something special, something worth being involved in, and by being engaged with the targeted groups you are recruiting, you are laying the foundation for creating successful matches down the road.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Does our program have a written recruitment plan that includes goals for recruitment, timeline of scheduled activities, program staff responsible for implementing activities, and a budget for recruitment efforts?

Does our program have a written volunteer "job description" that includes responsibilities, requirements, and benefits of mentoring?

What is the message that "sells" our organization to potential mentors?

How does our program tailor its message to specific groups of prospective volunteers?

Do we diversify our recruitment strategies to "target" different populations of prospective mentors?

Are our recruitment messages broadly distributed throughout our community using a variety of methods?

How does our organization utilize customer service principles in making the recruitment process comfortable and easy for potential volunteers?

What types of recruitment materials does our program use?

Do we utilize the diversity of our staff, current volunteers, and board members to our advantage in recruiting mentors?

WORKSHEET
Defining Our Mentors

Personal Qualities	Demographics	Groups
■	■	■
■	■	■
■	■	■
■	■	■
■	■	■
■	■	■
■	■	■
■	■	■
■	■	■
■	■	■
■	■	■
■	■	■

Worksheet adapted, with permission, from Garringer, 2006.

WORKSHEET
Inventory of Recruitment Locations

Category	Specific group/ location	What we know about this group/ location	What could they provide (best case scenario)
Local businesses			
Service organizations			
Professional organizations/associations			
Civic and cultural groups			
Religious institutions			
Schools and educational settings			
Government agencies			
Public spaces (malls, parks, libraries, etc.)			
Military/police			
Sections of town			
Other			
Other			

Worksheet adapted, with permission, from Garringer, 2006.

WORKSHEET

Recruitment Activity

Activity	Targeted Group(s)	Recruitment Goal(s)	Core Messages, Motivations	Specific Steps	Resources Needed	Timeline	Persons Responsible

Worksheet adapted, with permission, from Garringer, 2006.

Initial Orientation of Prospective Mentors and Mentees

One of the most important first impressions that you set for potential program participants occurs during your initial orientation sessions. These orientations may take place during an initial recruitment presentation or be a separate follow-up event for interested individuals, but it should always take place before the volunteer application and screening process begins. By giving prospective participants a thorough overview of your program you ensure that applicants understand what your program is trying to accomplish and how they might be able to help or benefit from it.

Orientation sessions will naturally be different for mentors than for mentees in terms of length, style of presentations, and depth of content. However, both groups should leave the session with a clear understanding of:

- What mentoring is all about
- The history, goals, and values of your program
- Key policies and procedures
- Qualifications of mentors and mentees
- Positive outcomes or benefits of participating in the program

These orientations should build on your previous recruitment messages and should clearly describe next steps in your application, screening, and selection process. Be sure to provide print materials that all orientation participants can take with them (and have applications available for those who are interested).

Orientations also provide you with a wonderful opportunity to gather information about your potential mentors and mentees. This information can give you great insight into their suitability for your program, and may provide specific knowledge about the volunteer that you can use later when making matches.

An initial orientation can be the "hook" that takes someone from being simply interested in the program to actually becoming a mentor. Staff should follow up with orientation participants shortly after the event to see if they are interested in volunteering or have further questions or concerns about the program.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Has our program developed an initial orientation for prospective mentors and mentees?

Does the orientation convey the mission, history, goals, and positive outcomes of our program?

Does the orientation clearly outline the responsibilities, qualifications, and rules for participating in the program?

Does it explain the next steps in the application/screening/training/matching process?

Does it "sell" the program by explaining the benefits of participation for both the youth and volunteers?

Does the content of the orientation fit in with our recruitment, screening, and matching procedure?

What does our program learn about prospective participants during the orientation sessions and what is done with that information down the road if they sign up?

Mentor/Mentee Intake

Your program should develop and implement written standardized mentor and mentee intake procedures that detail the step-by-step process that takes an individual from applicant to participant. Although your materials and approach will be quite different for mentors and mentees, many of the key elements of your intake process will be similar for both:

Additional "behind the scenes" activities will include the creation of case files for mentor and mentee, entering data into your program's database for tracking and evaluation purposes, and following up with potential volunteers and youth who are not selected for participation. Many programs also maintain a waiting list of youth who may be involved in occasional group activities while they are waiting for services. Procedures for these activities should also be developed in writing.

These intake procedures are discussed in more detail later in this section. But it is important to view the establishment of these procedures as a separate activity. Your program may be doing screening and matching, but if it is being done in a haphazard manner, chances are you will struggle to make effective matches.

Intake procedures should establish a timeline for getting someone from applicant to participant. With identifiable steps you (and the participants themselves) can easily tell where individuals are on the road to becoming a mentor or mentee. (These sequential steps will also ensure that you gather all of the information you will need for evaluation purposes.) Without established procedures, potential volunteers may fall through the cracks as your staff loses track of individuals at various points in the process. Similarly, youth most in need of mentoring may lose interest in your services if the process is too lengthy or unclear.

These intake procedures also ensure a level of consistency that is crucial from a *risk management* perspective. A program that is conducting intake and matching in a random, case-by-case manner is vulnerable to breakdowns or omissions in the screening process that can compromise the safety of youth and have potentially disastrous consequences.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Does our program have established mentor and mentee intake procedures?

What are the steps we have deemed necessary for participation in the program?

Are these steps in alignment with our program's policies?

Is this written procedure included in our policy and procedure manual?

How do we track the progress of volunteers and youth through the steps of the procedures?

Is our procedure adequate from a customer service perspective? A risk management perspective?

For Mentors	For Mentees
Timely response to inquiries	Timely response to inquiries/referrals
Participation in a program orientation	Participation in a program orientation
Completion of a written application	Completion of a written application
Completion of criminal background checks and other screening protocols	Obtaining parental or guardian permission to participate
Checking personal and professional references	Input/recommendation from teacher, counselor, or other youth professional
Conducting in-person interviews	Conducting in-person interviews
Matching volunteer with appropriate youth	Matching youth with appropriate volunteer
Initial meeting with mentee	Initial meeting with mentor

Mentor Screening

Perhaps your program's biggest responsibility is to adequately screen your mentor applicants to ensure they are both safe and suitable for the young people in your program. Screening is an absolutely essential part of risk management for your program. Just one incident of abuse or mistreatment of a youth in your program may destroy everything your program has worked to achieve.

Screening should not just be looked at as a liability and risk management tool. It should also be viewed as a crucial method of ensuring that your mentors are appropriate for your program in terms of their level of commitment and having the necessary traits to be an effective mentor. The screening process has two major goals: ensuring the **safety of the youth** and determining the **suitability of mentors.**

The first components of your screening process are the mentor "job description" and mentor eligibility policy. The job description should outline the mentor's responsibilities and obligations, minimum requirements for becoming a mentor (such as minimum age, time requirements, no history of criminal activity, etc.), and the benefits of being a mentor. Your mentor eligibility policy should clearly detail what characteristics would either qualify or disqualify someone from participating in your program. These two documents act as the initial filter for applicants by clearly spelling out who will and will not be accepted into the program. Individuals who are either ineligible or who cannot meet the requirements of the job description are screened out early in the process, saving the time of both the staff and volunteer.

For volunteers who meet the requirements of the job description, programs need to employ several additional levels of screening. These may include but are not limited to:

- A written application
- A face-to-face interview
- Written personal references that are verified by staff
- A reference from their employer
- A criminal records check
- A child abuse registry check
- A driving record check
- An in-home visit and assessment

These screening tools address the issues of safety and suitability mentioned earlier. Employing several of these tools not only ensures that the volunteer is safe and trustworthy, but also allows staff to learn a great deal about the personal traits and interests of the volunteer that can be used in making an appropriate match with a youth.

You will need to decide what the appropriate level of screening is for your type of program. The written application, a face-to-face interview, reference checks, and a comprehensive criminal background check are employed almost universally by youth mentoring programs. ***These four screening tools represent the baseline, the minimum screening procedure, for running a safe program.***

Whether you choose to employ additional screening measures, such as driving records checks or home visits, will depend on your program setting and the level of supervision you can provide. For example, if you have a community-based mentoring program where the mentor will be transporting youth in a car, you may determine that a driver's license record check and proof of auto insurance are important screening tools.

Let's look at the four basic screening tools more closely:

1. Written Application

This application should be similar to a job application in terms of personal and reference information gathered (see samples beginning on page 33). You will want to ask the applicant to divulge any criminal history, motivations for wanting to be a mentor, interests and hobbies, any special skills they could bring to a mentoring relationship, and the type of youth with whom they would like to be matched. Applicants are also asked to sign a release of information form, allowing the program to conduct criminal background checks and obtain other sensitive personal information. Be sure to tailor your application to your specific program and evaluation needs so that it collects all of the initial applicant information you require.

2. Face-to-Face Interview

Develop a standard written interview guide for staff and a set of interview questions that will ensure a consistent level of screening no matter who does the interviewing. The interview should add greater depth and understanding to the information gathered on the application. For instance, if an applicant writes that he wants to be a mentor because he "likes helping children," the interview is the time to figure out what he means by that. The interview is the best time for a program to really learn about an applicant's personality, history, and motivations, so the interview questions should be tailored to reflect those areas.

Staff should be trained in effective interviewing techniques. It is important that they can interview applicants with a sense of compassion while also having the ability to ask tough questions and spot potential "red flags." The interview is not the time to be selling the program or getting the applicant "hooked." It is the time to spot potential problems and to learn all you can about this person who wants to become a mentor.

The interview should also provide the applicant with a chance to ask questions about your program and the next steps in the mentoring procedure, as well as an opportunity for your staff to discuss any potential eligibility concerns with the applicant.

3. Reference Checks

Employers, relatives, friends, and co-workers are all potential references that you may wish to check. Each program needs to decide how it will contact references (mail, phone, e-mail) and what information it is looking for (verification of information on the written application, endorsements of the applicant, etc.). More than one reference should be checked; your procedure should state how many references you will gather. Once again, be sure to make the method of contact and the questions asked reflect your screening objectives.

4. Criminal Background Checks

The process for conducting criminal background checks of volunteers varies from state to state. Your program will need to contact your state's criminal history records repository to determine what the process is for conducting these record checks (see the resources listing at the end of this section for Web links to this information online). Other important records to check include sex offender and child abuse registries, which also vary from state to state. You may consider using a private vendor to conduct criminal history record checks. Some screening companies have specially designed services aimed at nonprofit volunteers.

Many programs use FBI records for more complete screening. As of this publication's release date, nationwide FBI fingerprint-based background checks can be conducted through a program called SafetyNET, a program created by the U.S. Congress that operates in conjunction with MENTOR/The National Mentoring Partnership. (http://apps.mentoring.org/safetynet/index.adp)

If your program has never screened volunteers or conducted background checks, consider getting some peer assistance from other mentoring or youth-serving programs in your area before finalizing your screening procedures. Local law enforcement or social service agencies may also be able to provide guidance.

Establishing Clear Criteria for Accepting or Rejecting Applicants

There are a few ground rules about screening criteria that apply across the board for youth mentoring programs. While most of your screening activities are geared to accepting qualified applicants, it's also critical that you develop a list of events or offenses that automatically disqualify a potential mentor. The disqualifying offenses should be included in your mentor eligibility policy and are nonnegotiable.

There are four events that may show up on a background check that automatically disqualify an applicant and for which there are *no mitigating circumstances:* **past history of sexual abuse of children, conviction of any crime in which children were involved, history of extreme violence or sexually exploitive behavior, and termination from a paid or volunteer position due to misconduct involving a child.** This is why it is important to include sex offender and child abuse registries in your screening process.

Programs should also develop a list of lesser "red flags" (events or activities that show up in a background check) that could *potentially* disqualify a potential volunteer, along with guidelines for judging the relevance of the information. For example, under what circumstances would your program accept a mentor with a misdemeanor on her record? Would it matter how long ago it happened? Are some misdemeanors of more concern to your program than others? What has the applicant told you about the event? This list of potentially disqualifying events and "mitigating circumstances" should provide guidance for staff when an offense is not covered by the eligibility policy and there is room for interpretation and use of judgment.

In addition to the risk management-related information gathered by these screening tools, programs should also make sure that their procedure gathers information on the applicant's work and family responsibilities, other volunteer commitments and experiences, their understanding of a mentor's role, what they are hoping to get out of being a mentor, and other factors that may give you an indication of whether they are suitable for your program, and if so, the type of child with whom they might work best. If your program does these things, you can be sure that your screening procedures cover both safety issues and the suitability of the volunteer.

Finally, remember that volunteer applicants have the right to be treated fairly, to have their privacy respected, and to have an opportunity to correct any false information that has been uncovered as a result of the screening. Mentoring programs should establish and implement policies and procedures that protect the confidentiality of the information they gather and the method by which rejected applicants are notified.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Does our program have a detailed, written screening procedure that is appropriate for our type of mentoring program?

Do we have a thorough understanding of our legal liability and responsibilities?

Does our screening procedure look at the mentor's suitability as well as safety concerns?

Does our program have a written policy on who we will accept or reject as a volunteer?

What are the tools/steps we use in our screening process?

Does our program have a written mentor job description?

Do we conduct face-to-face interviews with volunteers using standard questions?

Is our staff trained in how to conduct interviews and assess the information gathered?

What references do we ask for and what types of information do we collect from them?

What parts of our screening process allow us to gauge an applicant's dependability, motivations, and suitability?

Does our program understand all the options for conducting background checks?

Have we developed a list of disqualifying events based on our eligibility policy, as well as potential mitigating circumstances for those transgressions not covered by the policy?

Who makes the final decision on acceptance or rejection?

Do we have policies and procedures that protect applicant confidentiality?

Do we have a process for notifying applicants who are not accepted into the program?

SAMPLE

Mentor Application

(please print)

Date ____________________

Name of Applicant ____________________ Birth Date _______ SS# ______________

Address ____

City ____________________________________ State ________ ZIP ______________

Home Telephone ____________________ Home E-mail ___________________________

Employer ___________________________ Occupation ___________________________

Address ____

City ____________________________________ State ________ ZIP ______________

Business: Phone _______________ Fax _________________ E-mail ________________

Preferred Mentoring Day (Mon–Fri): Choice #1 _____________ Choice #2 ____________

Best Time of Day To Mentor (check all that apply): ☐ morning ☐ afternoon ☐ evening

Do you prefer to be matched with: (check one) ☐ A boy ☐ A girl ☐ No preference

I would like to work with a child in grade (circle):

Elementary School: K 1 2 3 4 5   Middle School: 6 7 8   High School: 9 10 11 12

Write a brief statement on why you wish to be a mentor in the program:

Describe special interests/hobbies, which may be helpful in matching you with a mentee (e.g., cooking, crafts, career interests, chess, stamp collecting, sports such as baseball or football, computers, art, needlepoint, speak another language, music, painting):

State the addresses where you have lived for the last five years (begin with the most recent after the current one):

DATES ____________________ Address ________________________________
City ______________________ State _______________ ZIP ______________

DATES ____________________ Address ________________________________
City ______________________ State _______________ ZIP ______________

DATES ____________________ Address ________________________________
City ______________________ State _______________ ZIP ______________

Mentor Personal/Employment History and Release Statement

Please provide two **personal references** (other than family members):

1. Name __________________ Telephone ___________ Relationship ________
   Address ________________ City _______________ State ____ ZIP ______
2. Name __________________ Telephone ___________ Relationship ________
   Address ________________ City _______________ State ____ ZIP ______

Employment History

List the last three places of employment with the most recent first:

1. Company ____________________ Address _________________________
   City __________________________ State _______________ ZIP ________
   Dates of Employment _______ to _______ Title ____________________
2. Company ____________________ Address _________________________
   City __________________________ State _______________ ZIP ________
   Dates of Employment _______ to _______ Title ____________________
3. Company ____________________ Address _________________________
   City __________________________ State _______________ ZIP ________
   Dates of Employment _______ to _______ Title ____________________

SAMPLE
Mentor Release Statement

I, the undersigned, hereby state that if accepted as a mentor, I agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the ____________________ Mentoring Program. I understand that the program involves spending a minimum of one hour/week at the assigned location. Further, I understand that I will attend a training session, keep in regular contact with my mentee, and communicate with staff regularly during this period. I am willing to commit to one year in the program and then will be asked to renew for another year.

I have not been convicted, within the past 10 years, of any felony or misdemeanor classified as an offense against a person or family, of public indecency, or a violation involving a state or federally controlled substance. I am not under current indictment.

Further, I hereby fully release, discharge, and hold harmless the ____________________ Mentoring Program, participating organizations, and all of the foregoing employees, officers, directors, and coordinators from any and all liability, claims, causes of action, costs and expenses which may be or may at any time hereafter become attributable to my participation in the ____ Mentoring Program.

I understand that the ____________________ staff reserves the right to terminate a mentor from the program. The program takes place within the confines of the program's policies and does not encourage or approve of relationships established between mentor/mentee and family members beyond the organized and supervised activities of the program. I give permission for program staff to conduct a criminal background check as part of the screening for entrance into the program. This includes verification of personal and employment references as well as a criminal check with the local authorities. Program staff has final right of acceptance of an applicant into the program and reserves the right to terminate a mentor from the program at any time. I have read the above Release Statement and agree to the contents. I certify that all statements in this application are true and accurate.

____ ____________________

Signature of applicant Date

Sample form developed by Susan G. Weinberger (Norwalk, CT: Mentor Consulting Group). Used, with permission, from Weinberger, Garringer, & MacRae, 2005.

SAMPLE
Mentee Referral Form

Youth Name: ____

Age: ________ Grade: ________School: ______________________________

Requested by: ____

Position: __________________________ Phone Number: ________________________

The child is being referred for assistance in the following areas (check all that apply):

☐ Academic Issues	☐ Behavioral Issues	☐ Delinquency	☐ Vocational Training
☐ Self-Esteem	☐ Study Habits	☐ Social Skills	☐ Peer Relationships
☐ Family Issues	☐ Special Needs	☐ Attitude	☐ Other, specify:

Why do you feel this youth might benefit from a mentor?

What particular interests, either in school or out, do you know of that the child has?

What strategies/learning models might be effective for a mentor working with this youth?

On a scale of 1–10 (10 being highest) rate the student's level of:

_____ Academic performance	_____ Social skills	_____ Self-esteem
_____ Family support	_____ Communication skills	
_____ Attitude about school/education	_____ Peer relations	

With what specific academic subjects, if any, does the student need assistance?

Additional comments:

Sample used, with permission, from Ballasy, Fulop, & Garringer, 2007.

SAMPLE
Mentor Interview

Applicant Name: ______________________

Interviewed by: ______________________ Date: ____________

I need to ask a number of questions about you that will help me in matching you with a mentee. Some of the questions are personal and this interview is confidential. However, I am required to report anything that indicates you have done or may do harm to yourself or others. Some information, like personal qualities and what you would like to do with a mentee or things you are interested in may be shared with a prospective mentee and/or their parents. Do you understand?

1. Why do you want to become a mentor?
2. Why do you think you can help a youth by mentoring? (if not answered in question 1)
3. What do you think are your strengths?
4. How about your weaknesses?
5. What type of child would you like to be matched with?
6. Will you be able to fulfill the commitments of the program—eight hours per month with weekly contact for one year?
7. What was your own childhood like?
8. Have you ever abused or molested a youth?
9. Have you ever been arrested? If so, when and for what?
10. Do you currently use any alcohol, drugs, or tobacco?
11. Have you ever undergone treatment for alcohol or substance abuse?
12. Have you ever been treated or hospitalized for a mental condition?
13. Do you have any experience working with children? If so, how will it help you in working with your mentee?
14. What challenges do you think young people face today that they need help with the most?
15. Mentoring a young person is a big responsibility and can change the lives of both the mentor and the mentee. What do you hope to gain from the experience and what do you hope the mentee gains from the relationship?
16. What are some of the biggest problems in the world or in your community that concern you?
17. What types of activities would you do with a mentee?

18. Who else in your household might be present at any given time when you are with your mentee?
19. What hobbies or interests do you have?
20. At this point, clarify any questions of concern that arose from the written application.
21. Do you have any questions about the program I can answer for you?

Interviewer Comments:

Sample used, with permission, from Ballasy, Fulop, & Garringer, 2007.

SAMPLE

Mentor Assessment Summary

Applicant Name: ______________________________ Date: __________

Screening Materials	Date Sent to Applicant	Date Rec'd From Applicant	Date Sent to Agency	Date Item Completed
Written Application				
Copy of Driver's License				
Proof of Auto Insurance				
Information Release				
Personal References				
Interest Survey				
DMV Release Form				
Criminal History Release Form				
Child Abuse & Neglect Release Form				
Sexual Offender Release Form				
Volunteer Interview				
Personal Reference Interview				
Personal Reference Interview				
Personal Reference Interview				
Acceptance/Rejection Letter				

Eligibility Criteria

Does the applicant meet each of the eligibility criteria? Please check the appropriate box.

Yes	No	Eligibility Criteria
		21 years of age or older
		Resides in metro area
		Willing to adhere to program policies and procedures
		Agrees to a one-year commitment
		Commits to eight hours per month
		Agrees to weekly contact with mentee
		Completed screening procedure
		Agrees to attend required training sessions
		Willing to communicate regularly with program coordinator and submit monthly meeting and activity information
		Has reliable transportation
		Has current driver's license, insurance, and driving record

Yes	No	Eligibility Criteria
		Has clean criminal history
		Has never been accused, arrested, charged, or convicted of child sexual abuse
		Has not been convicted of a felony in past seven years
		Does not use illicit drugs
		Does not use alcohol or controlled substances inappropriately
		Is not in treatment for substance abuse. Has had a non-addictive period for at least the past five years
		Has not been hospitalized for a mental disorder in past three years
		Has not falsified information during screening process

Does the mentor applicant meet all eligibility criteria? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, are there any mitigating circumstances?

General Assessment Areas

Did the applicant relate appropriately to the program staff during the following steps:

- ☐ Initial contact and inquiry
- ☐ Orientation
- ☐ Interview

Did the applicant complete the screening process with ease and appropriateness?

Are his/her reasons for wanting to be a mentor appropriate?

Is the applicant's personal and professional life appropriate and stable?

Does the applicant exhibit qualities of open-mindedness, flexibility, and emotional stability?

Does the applicant have experience working with youth?

Did the applicant's references speak well of him/her?

Does the individual have appropriate age-related interests and ability?

Overall comments:

Recommendation To Approve:

☐ Yes ☐ No

Reasons why:

Approved:

☐ Yes ☐ No

By: ______________________________

By: ______________________________

By: ______________________________

Date: ____________________

Sample used, with permission, from Ballasy, Fulop, & Garringer, 2007.

Additional Resource

Be sure to see the revised *Generic Mentoring Program Policy and Procedure Manual*, also available as part of the Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities series, for many more sample forms that can support your mentor and mentee intake and screening. Available online at: http://www.hamfish.org

Training? Orientation? What's the Difference?

Mentor Orientation: Usually a one-hour, pre-match introduction to the organization, program goals, and requirements for mentors. Often used as a recruitment event to solicit applications from interested mentors.

Initial Mentor Training: Also known as preservice training. Initial mentor training is offered to accepted and screened mentors prior to the first mentor-mentee meeting. This should be a required training for all mentors and can last from a few hours to several days, depending on the amount of relevant material to cover. The National Mentoring Center recommends a minimum of four hours covering many of the topics found in the next few pages of this book.

Follow-Up Training: Also known as ongoing training. Follow-up training often focuses on building additional skills as relationships progress. Topics should address issues brought forth by mentors, staff, youth, and parents. This type of training is often offered monthly or quarterly, usually one to two hours in length.

Mentee Training: Also known as mentee orientation. Mentee training is usually offered prior to the first mentor-mentee meeting. This type of training usually lasts about one hour. Some programs find great success in offering initial training to youth and their parents at the same time. This can be a good way of boosting parental involvement early in the process.

Parent Training: Also known as parent orientation. Parent training is usually offered prior to the first mentor-mentee meeting. This type of training usually lasts about one hour and can be coordinated at the same time as mentee training. Depending on the structure and goals of your program, parents may receive additional training.

Used, with permission, from National Mentoring Center, 2007.

Pre-Match Training for Mentors and Mentees

You must require training for your new mentors and mentees. If your matches are going to be successful, you must provide the knowledge, skills, and guidance necessary for your volunteers and youth to feel comfortable in their new roles and relationships. Initial training for mentors and mentees needs to take place *before* a match is made.

To make these trainings successful, you will need to have trained, skilled facilitators. While there are many guides and training curricula available to assist in developing the content of these trainings, it is important that facilitators are experienced in delivering training for both adult and youth audiences. Knowing how to conduct a good training is as important as the content being delivered. Program staff conducting mentor/mentee training sessions should be encouraged to attend a "train the trainer" type of workshop to improve their facilitation skills if necessary.

Often programs will use outside trainers who have expertise on specific topics. This can be a good way to establish community partnerships and expand the knowledge base from which your own staff can draw. If you use outside trainers, you must make sure that the content they provide is consistent with the rest of your pre-match training and is aligned with your program's mission and goals.

In addition to having qualified staff to conduct the training, it is critical that programs adapt or develop a written training curriculum for both mentors and mentees. A written training manual serves as a sustainable resource for all current and future staff, allowing for consistency of training over time and across trainers. While not intended to be a comprehensive outline, what follows is a list of the essential content areas for a pre-match training curriculum (see page 44 for sample agendas for training mentors, youth, and groups of parents):

Program Overview/Orientation. Although already covered during the recruitment process and initial orientation, any pre-match training should begin with a review of your program's history, mission, and policies and procedures. Including this information one last time will make sure that all your mentors and mentees are on the same page when it comes to things such as reporting requirements, the obligations and responsibilities of the match, and the outcome goals of the program. You should also touch on all your policies during this training. It is especially important to review your program's policies regarding confidentiality, unacceptable behavior, and child abuse reporting at this time.

Defining the Roles of Both the Mentor and the Mentee. Often, volunteers and youth who are new to a program have different opinions about the boundaries, roles, and responsibilities of the mentoring relationship. Both parties will need a clear set of "Do's and Don'ts" that is appropriate to your program. Youth, in particular, may need help in understanding the role of a mentor in their lives, while mentors may need extra guidance in knowing where to draw the line in their effort to support the youth.

Strategies for Starting the Match. Both mentors and mentees will need guidance on getting through the often rough initial stages of a match. This training should address the natural progression of the match that participants can expect, the importance of building trust, and some exercises and activities that the match can do during their initial meetings. It should also introduce the support services your program makes available to assist the match on an ongoing basis.

Communication Skills Development. Effective communication skills form the very core of any successful mentoring relationship. Without the ability to communicate effectively through active listening and personal sharing, mentoring relationships fail to achieve the bond that leads to positive outcomes. Provide training for mentors and mentees on listening skills, verbal and nonverbal communication, and sharing personal information.

Diversity Training. Mentoring relationships often pair individuals from very different cultural backgrounds, age groups, and socioeconomic situations. Consider providing training to both mentors and mentees on respecting differences, valuing diversity, and cultural sensitivity.

Youth Development. Mentors will benefit greatly from having an understanding of what constitutes positive youth development. Your training should provide them with a basic understanding of the needs of the youth in your program and the strategies youth and mentors might employ to address these needs. This training should also explore how mentoring fits into the larger framework of youth development. Broadly speaking, youth development not only includes mentoring, but also peer, family, school, and other community supports that enable youth to make healthful and responsible decisions.

Crisis Management and Networks of Support. There may be times when the support mentees need to cope with a situation is beyond a mentor's capacity or expertise. Mentors should be given indepth training on how to identify potential problems or crisis situations that may come up during the match and their limitations as volunteers to help in certain situations. They should also understand the role of your program's professional staff in handling crisis situations through action and referral to other professional and supportive resources in the community.

Mentees (and their families) should also be made aware of the network of support agencies available to them in their community and the limitations of the mentor to help them in certain situations.

Sample Training Agendas

Sample
Parent Training Agenda

9:00 Welcome and introductions
9:10 Overview of the program (goals and objectives)
9:20 Overview of mentoring
9:30 Overview of program nuts and bolts
9:40 What a mentor is and who our mentors are
9:50 Mentor screening procedures
10:00 Mentor roles and responsibilities
10:10 Parent roles and responsibilities
10:20 Youth roles and responsibilities
10:35 Confidentiality and abuse issues
10:45 Break
11:00 Community resources
11:10 Important names and phone numbers
11:15 Questions
11:30 Adjourn

Sample used, with permission, from Cannata, & Garringer. (2006).

Sample
Middle School Mentee Training Agenda

3:30 Welcome
3:45 Icebreaker activity
4:00 Mentoring overview
- What is mentoring?
- What a mentor can do for you

4:15 Expectations, roles, and limitations
- Do's and don'ts
- Characteristics of good mentors and mentees
- The importance of being dependable
- Confidentiality

4:30 Break
4:45 Communicating with your mentor
- How to decline an offer
- Schedule for communication (when is it OK to call?)
- Where and when to meet
- What to do with your mentor (suggesting activities)
- Ideas and examples of available/appropriate activities

5:15 Questions and answers
5:30 Adjourn

Sample
Mentor Training Agenda

8:30 Registration and Refreshments
9:00 Welcome and Introduction – Project Director
9:45 Overview of Our Organization – Lead Trainer
10:00 Overview of Mentoring – Lead Trainer
10:30 Break
10:45 Special Characteristics of Our Youth – Program Staff & Outside Speaker
- Who they are (demographics and personal histories)
- Strengths and concerns of our youth
- Our hopes for their future

12:00 Lunch
1:00 Our Mentoring Program – Project Director
- Program Structure and Philosophy
- Mentor Commitment
- Policies and Procedures

1:30 Mentoring Skills and Tools – Lead Trainer & Panel of Former Mentors
- Effective Communication
- Body Language
- Open Ended Questions
- Tips from Past Mentors

2:15 Boundaries of the Relationship and Dealing With Difficult Issues – Lead Trainer
2:45 Mentor Support From the Program – Lead Trainer
3:00 Activities You Can Do With Your Mentee – Program Staff
3:10 Building Trust (a short exercise) – Lead Trainer
3:25 Match Closure
3:45 Q & A, Wrap-Up
4:00 Adjourn

Sample used, with permission, from Cannata, & Garringer. (2006).

Child Abuse Reporting. There are federal and state laws that require the reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect, and your training should give mentors an understanding of the legal responsibilities that they, and your program, have to report incidents of abuse. Training for mentors should cover how to spot potential abuse and how to handle the situation, while youth should receive information about what constitutes abuse and why they need to come forward and tell someone if they are being abused. Because of the legal and liability implications, your program may want to bring in outside presenters with expertise on the topic of child abuse and reporting requirements for your county or state.

Other Pre-Match Training Topics. Depending on the goals and objectives of your program, you may wish to offer additional training topics. For instance, if your program places a heavy emphasis on improved academic performance, you may want to train mentors on effective tutoring practices. If your program works with a specific population of youth, you may want to include additional information that will allow the mentor to better understand his or her mentee. If your program works with older youth, you may want to include training on life skills development or career exploration, emphasizing how a mentor may be able to help in these areas.

Evaluation of the Training. Each training session should be evaluated by the participants, measuring the mentor's or mentee's specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes associated with the training content. This ensures that mentors and youth are getting the information they feel they need, and that they are engaged in the training process. Evaluating your trainings will allow your program to improve them over time and refine the pre-match information that your participants receive.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Does our program offer pre-match training sessions for both mentors and mentees?

Do our trainers and facilitators have the necessary skills and training to conduct these sessions?

In what areas of our pre-match training are we weak?

Does our program have a written training curriculum that reflects the goals of the program and the nature of our mentoring relationships?

Are the following topics addressed in our training curriculum?

- *Program policies, procedures, and goals*
- *Mentor and mentee roles*
- *Strategies for beginning the match*
- *Communication skills*
- *Diversity issues*
- *Youth development*
- *Crisis management*
- *Networks of support*
- *Other topics needed for our specific program*

Does our program use outside trainers? Could we improve our training by drawing from other individuals and organizations in the community?

Have we been conducting evaluations of our training? If so, what are we doing with the results?

Making Matches

Matching youth with an *appropriate* mentor is crucial, not only for the success of that individual match, but for the overall success of your program. As with your recruitment, screening, and training efforts, your procedure on making matches should be a reflection of your program's goals and objectives.

The first step in creating a matching procedure is the development of matching criteria. Identify the qualities you will look for in your mentors and mentees that will allow you to make a good match. Some common matching criteria are:

- Same gender
- Similarity of racial/ethnic/cultural/language background
- Shared interests between the mentor and youth
- The mentor's personality and temperament
- The youth's personality and temperament
- Special needs of the youth that may be met by a particular mentor
- Geographic proximity between the mentor and youth
- Compatibility of available meeting times
- Similarity between the mentor's career and the career interests of the youth

Designing a Matching Strategy

If your recruitment, intake, orientation, and pre-match training procedures are well designed, you should have gathered a great deal of relevant matching information about your mentors and mentees from their applications, interviews, reference checks, training sessions, and other interactions. The guiding principle in making solid matches is to *consider the needs and circumstances of the youth first, then try and find a mentor with suitable skills and qualities for that youth.*

Creating a hierarchy of criteria aligns your matching procedure with your program's goals. For instance, if job skill development is the centerpiece of your program's desired outcomes, then it makes sense to consider the mentor's career and the youth's career interests more heavily than other criteria. If your program puts a heavy emphasis on frequent, consistent meetings between the mentor and mentee, then geographic proximity and compatibility of meeting times may become more important.

Obviously, one particular piece of information cannot be weighted so heavily as to override all others. Simply decide what is important to your program being able to meet its objectives. You should also leave room in your process for "gut instincts." A good program coordinator sometimes senses that a particular adult and youth will just do well together. Be sure your strategy gives a voice to these intuitions.

The amount of time mentors and mentees spend on your waiting list also needs to be factored into your matching process. If your program has too many volunteers and youth waiting long periods of time in order to find the "perfect match," it may be an indication that your matching criteria are too stringent or that recruitment efforts may need to target more appropriate volunteers. The one thing a program should *never* do is to make matches just to reach a particular benchmark. As mentioned elsewhere in this guide, low-quality mentoring relationships that fail can leave your youth worse off than they were before entering your program. Make your matches for the right reasons.

Designing a Matching Procedure

Once you have developed written criteria for making the matches, determine your program's step-by-step procedure. You will need to decide which staff members will actually do the matching, what the role of the parents or guardians will be, and how the mentors and mentees will be informed of the match and formally introduced.

Staff Role. Your program will likely have multiple staff members involved in the matching process. One may be familiar with the volunteers; one may be working with the youth; another may have gained some insight while conducting a pre-match training. Your program might have several staff members that do all these tasks. No matter who does the actual matching, the key is to have a procedure in place by which all of the information and insights about the adult and youth gathered to this point can be taken into account in making a match. This may require extensive communication among different staff members who are working with mentors and youth, but it is important to have all the "criteria pieces" in place if you are going to make the best match. The mentor or mentee's case files should be the repository of all the information your staff will need to make an appropriate match.

Parent/Guardian Role. Most programs choose to give parents or guardians a voice in the matching process. This may involve a meeting with the mentor prior to the match or during their first meeting with the mentee. It may be something as simple as a "match approval" form that they sign. Involving parents or guardians in the matching process can ease some of the tensions and misunderstandings that can form when a mentor becomes a presence in the youth's life. Develop a process that defines the parent's or guardian's role. At the very least, written parent/guardian permission for the youth to participate in the program must be obtained and kept on file.

The First Meeting. Your program should develop a structured first meeting between the mentor and mentee. Many programs have a staff member facilitate an initial meeting that takes place at the program site, rather than simply having the mentor and mentee meet off-site for the first time. This first meeting should have some clear goals and activities that will help the match get off to a good start. Give the mentor and mentee information and insight about each other. You may also want to develop a role for parents at this initial meeting. The next steps for the match, such as future meeting times and the schedule for checking in with your staff, should also be covered at the first meeting.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Does our program have a written plan for making appropriate matches?

Has our program determined what our criteria are for making a match?

Do these matching criteria reflect our program's mission and goals?

Do our mentor and mentee intake and training procedures provide our staff with the necessary information to make informed matching decisions?

Who on our staff is responsible for making matches?

Have we provided parents or guardians a role in the matching process?

Are we putting the needs of the child first in making matches?

Do we prepare mentors and mentees for their first meeting?

Do the first meetings between mentors and mentees have structure and goals?

Monitoring Matches

Monitoring and supervising matches is another essential aspect of running a successful mentoring program. Recent research has shown that, on average, it takes six months to a year to begin seeing the desired outcomes from mentoring (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Sipe, 1996). This research also shows that unsupported mentor/mentee matches frequently fail, leaving the volunteer dissatisfied and potentially harming the very youth the program was designed to help (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). Putting time and energy into monitoring and supporting your matches can help ensure that the relationships develop positively and are more likely to last.

Monitoring your matches is also one of your primary risk management tools. Your staff needs to be informed as to what is going on in those mentoring relationships, not just to ensure that they are going well, but to assess whether there may be serious problems with the behavior of the mentor or mentee. It is extremely important that your program implements a systematic procedure for monitoring matches. This provides support for the match and assists in the early identification and resolution of potential difficulties in the mentor/mentee relationship.

Developing a Monitoring Procedure

While the exact system for monitoring relationships can vary among different types of programs, it is important that there is a step-by-step procedure in place and that it is rigorously followed by staff members in charge of matches. As your staff follows the procedure they should keep detailed written records about the progress and problems of each match. Keeping written records ensures that, in the event of staff turnover, new staff can learn the history and characteristics of an individual match.

Many programs have created a monitoring procedure similar to this:

1. Contact the mentor, youth, and parent/guardian (if the parent is involved) within the first two weeks of the match.
2. Check in with the mentor and youth every two weeks for the first few months of the match.
3. Check in monthly with the mentor and youth for the rest of the first year, then quarterly after that, if the match is doing well.
4. Check in with the parent/guardian periodically.

Once you have established a schedule for checking in on your matches, determine what information you will collect and what you will ask. Some common questions are:

- How often do the mentor and mentee meet?
- Are the mentor and mentee following the program rules?
- How is the relationship developing?
- What activities are they doing and how are they selected?
- Are both the mentor and mentee satisfied with the activities and the relationship?
- How is the communication between the mentor and the mentee?
- Does the parent/guardian have any particular concerns about the relationship?
- Are there any particular problems, issues, or concerns?
- Any special highlights or achievements?
- Is there any support the mentor or mentee needs?
- Are there any forms, data, reports, or other business that needs to be completed?

As you gather information from parent, mentor, and mentee, listen for any underlying themes or unspoken issues that may be red flags that the match is in trouble, such as many missed appointments, ongoing poor communication, apathy or ambivalence about the match, lack of trust, parental concerns, or signs of general incompatibility. Also be sure to listen for highlights and accomplishments.

These in-person check-ins are the most effective way to monitor matches, because they allow staff to gather more in-depth information, ask follow-up questions as needed, and offer advice and encouragement. You can supplement these calls or meetings with monthly activity logs, e-mail communication, or other remote methods of tracking activities and meetings.

Staff members who are monitoring matches may need training themselves in active listening and problem solving. They will also need to create an atmosphere in which mentors, youth, and parents all feel comfortable sharing information with the program. When checking in with mentors and mentees your staff should take the time to thank volunteers for their commitment, make the youth feel good about having a mentor, and offer helpful tips and activity suggestions as needed.

Actively Use the Information You Gather

There should be a strong connection between the information gathered during match supervision and the kind of match support you provide, such as ongoing training, individual coaching, or conflict mediation. Staff should take an active role in helping the mentor find appropriate resources for the mentee, such as a tutor if academics are a concern. Your program should be familiar with outside community resources and have a referral system in place for dealing with problems that are outside your scope.

You may need to decide at what point a match between a specific mentor and mentee becomes detrimental and counterproductive. If your staff has made several attempts to rectify problems in a relationship to no avail, it may be time to dissolve the match and find a better fit for both the volunteer and youth. Your monitoring procedure should give guidance for handling your toughest, least successful matches.

You may want to do periodic assessments of relationship quality using a survey or other standard tool, as some researchers have suggested (Jucovy, 2001). This can illuminate specific match issues as well as larger trends in the satisfaction of youth participants. Information gathered during this type of assessment can help guide your matching, training, and support systems. The concept of making changes to your programming based on evaluation results is covered in more detail later in this guide.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Has our program determined which staff members are responsible for monitoring matches?

Does our program have a written, step-by-step procedure for monitoring matches?

What is our timeline for checking in with the mentor, mentee, and parents throughout the course of the match?

What information does our program want to collect through the monitoring process?

Are our questions and tracking tools in place to ensure we collect the needed information?

What are the "red flags" that might indicate a match is having serious problems?

Is our staff properly trained to effectively monitor matches?

Are program participants comfortable sharing information about the match with our program staff?

How does information gathered during the monitoring process relate to ongoing mentor training and other support that our program provides the match?

SAMPLE
Match Check-in Sheet

Match Supervisor ______________________________

Mentee ______________________________ Phone ______________

Mentor ______________________________ Phone ______________

Caregiver ______________________________ Phone ______________

Contact Date	Person Contacted	Recent Relationship Activities	Supervisor Comments & Recommended Follow-Up

Sample form developed by the National Mentoring Center, 1999.

Ongoing Training, Support, and Recognition of Volunteers

Volunteers are the most important assets mentoring programs have, so it is imperative that programs offer a support system for volunteers that can guide them through the mentoring journey. Research has shown that volunteers who do not feel supported by their program, are not given the resources and skills to be successful, and are not recognized for their contributions, are more likely to stop participating (Sipe, 1999). Having a high number of mentors ending service early hinders your ability to meet program objectives and can even cause negative outcomes for youth as a result of brief, failed matches. Retain your mentors by offering ongoing training, personalized assistance, mentor support groups, and a process for recognizing and thanking mentors for their efforts.

One mentor support idea . . .

You might want to consider using mentors who have been matched for a while in training newer mentors. Often these veteran mentors can "mentor" new volunteers, sharing things they have learned about relating to their youth. New mentors may be hesitant to convey problems to your program staff, but might open up to an experienced fellow mentor.

Ongoing Training

As mentoring relationships evolve over time, your mentors are likely to need training that goes beyond the basics covered during pre-match training. Providing additional training on a regular basis gives mentors frequent opportunities to learn new skills, ask questions, and share effective approaches together. It's also a good time to bring in an outside speaker to address a particular topic. Some ideas for ongoing training include:

- Diversity and cultural awareness
- Helping mentees set goals
- Handling conflict or problems with the mentee's parents/guardian
- Child abuse and neglect
- Helping youth build self-esteem
- Career planning
- Effective tutoring
- High-risk behaviors, such as sexuality, drug use, or gang activity
- Handling crisis situations that come up during the relationship

As you monitor your matches, you will begin to see common themes in the issues that come up for mentors in your program. Use these to drive the content of your ongoing training. If several mentors are having trouble with their mentee's family, organize a workshop to provide advanced skills in dealing with these issues. If many of your program's youth are struggling with peer relationships, give your mentors training on how to support and guide them. Providing training that is relevant to the issues mentors are facing will help them feel supported, listened to, and confident in what they are doing.

As with your pre-match training, have mentors complete post-training evaluations so that you can gauge effectiveness and improve training efforts over time.

Personalized Assistance

In addition to offering ongoing group training for mentors, it's also important to offer more personalized assistance for individual mentors. Mentors can encounter difficulties with their mentees that range from simple to quite serious, and they may not know how to handle a particular situation. Whatever the issues, be sure that your staff is supportive of mentors and designs specific guidance, intervention, or referral to help them and their mentee through problems as they arise.

Some examples of this type of assistance include:

- Active listening and simple problem solving
- Mediation or conflict resolution between a mentor and mentee
- Group meetings with involved parties (mentor, youth, parent, teachers, program staff, etc.) to address a specific problem
- Referral to outside support systems to handle problems beyond the scope of your program or the mentor's ability
- Checking in more frequently with an "at-risk" match

Let the mentors know, on a case-by-case basis, that your staff supports them—it will strengthen the mentor's commitment to the program and provide needed encouragement.

Mentor Support Groups

Mentor support groups are a popular way to offer additional support in an informal group setting. Your program will need to decide where and how often the group will meet. Provide some structure for the meeting and have a facilitator present who can keep the conversations moving and productive. Guidelines to ensure confidentiality of the youth in the matches being discussed should also be developed.

Support groups mostly focus around the mentors' discussion of topics such as:

- What is going well in the relationship
- What people are learning about how to be an effective mentor
- What isn't working in the relationship
- Specific questions or situations with which the group can assist

Your staff may also have topics they would like to address. Support sessions allow mentors to share their triumphs, get advice and support from other mentors who are facing similar challenges, ask questions of staff and learn about resources, and build a stronger sense of connection to the program as a whole.

Some programs have even adopted technology-based support for mentors. Consider hosting an e-mail discussion group where mentors can seek advice and gain support. Conducting these sessions online can help get around some confidentiality issues that can occur during in-person support groups. These online groups can be a great way to collect and disseminate frequently asked questions to all mentors, creating an online repository of advice.

Mentor Recognition

Provide your mentors with formal recognition for all they do for the youth in your program. This recognition can take many forms:

- An annual awards dinner, picnic, or reception
- Designating a mentor/mentee match of the month
- Gifts or awards on the anniversary of their participation

- Profiling their match on your Web site or in your newsletter
- Letters of appreciation
- A handwritten note

Mentors who feel truly appreciated and valued will be more likely to stay motivated and involved, will have more fun participating in your program, and will be more likely to recommend volunteering with your program to others.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Does our program provide ongoing training opportunities for mentors?

If so, how often, and what process do we use to determine these additional training topics?

Does our program have connections to individuals or organizations in the community that could provide training on topics with which our own staff does not have expertise?

Do we have a process to provide personalized assistance to mentors and matches that may be in trouble or are facing difficult issues?

Does our program offer a mentor support group?

How well and how often do we recognize and thank mentors for their efforts?

Do we know the level of satisfaction and feelings of support that our mentors have?

Match Closure

It is inevitable that some of your program's matches will end. In an ideal situation, the formal matches your program creates would end naturally after a lengthy period of time. For some programs, the structure of services may dictate the end of a formal match—for example, the case of a school-based program where matches terminate at the end of the school year. In less than ideal circumstances, some matches may terminate because of a variety of factors, such as:

- An obvious incompatibility ("bad match")
- Problems within a match (such as disinterest by the youth or communication problems)
- Youth or mentor moving out of the area
- A change in the amount of time a mentor is able to devote to the program
- Violation of your rules of conduct

The end of the relationship, regardless the reason, can be difficult for both the mentor and mentee. Provide support services for both to help them make the transition out of the relationship and, when appropriate, prepare them for a possible new mentoring relationship.

Because matches end for a variety of reasons, your program should have written procedures and policies for handling each type of closure. Even if you have just one overarching closure procedure, be sure that it has the flexibility to handle the many circumstances that lead to matches dissolving. Do not assume that the process that works in closing down a match where the youth is moving away will work for dissolving a match where there were serious problems with the mentor's level of commitment.

Tip: Develop a clear policy regarding future contact

☞ Mentoring programs must have clear policies that address future contact between the mentor, the mentee, and the mentee's family once the match has formally ended. Without having a policy that is communicated to all parties, a program is exposed to liability risks if the match continues to meet without supervision and support. Having no policy also leaves both mentor and mentee feeling uncertain about their future relationship. Your policy should explain in clear terms what mentors, mentees, and parents can and cannot do regarding future contact and the limits of your program's responsibility once the match formally ends. Ideally, this policy should be spelled out in a contract that all parties sign at the time of closure.

Most programs use exit interviews for the mentor, mentee, and parents/guardians as the basic framework around which to build a closure process. While there may be some aspects of your process that cut across different types of closures (such as the questions asked during the exit interview or policies regarding future contact), be sure to tailor the overall process for the youth, mentor, and parents to meet their particular situation.

Closure for the Youth

Chances are that some of the youth participating in your program have already been let down by adults in their life. In many ways, the inherent value of your program is in providing them with something they have been lacking: a stable, caring adult presence.

For this reason, programs must take great care to offer support and provide context for youth whose matches are ending. Strategies for helping mentees through this process include:

- Giving the mentee ample warning of the closure of the match (if possible)
- Having the mentor discuss the end of the match with the youth (preferably in person)
- Having program staff explain to the youth why the match is ending
- Encouraging the match to do something special together on their last meeting or exchange a small gift (if allowed by your program)
- Encouraging the youth to express his or her feelings about the match ending, either to the mentor or with program staff
- Providing access and referral to counseling or other support services
- Providing guidance on continuing with the program or, in the case of a youth who is moving, finding an appropriate mentoring opportunity in their new location

Remember that your program exists solely for the benefit of these youth. Put as much consideration and caring into how you handle the ending of their relationship as you did into creating it.

Closure for the Mentor

Your mentors should also be provided the opportunity to have closure with their mentee and meet with your program staff regarding their future. How you handle closure with mentors will depend on why the relationship ended. Mentors may wish to be matched with another youth. If not, they may need assistance in finding other volunteer opportunities that are more suitable for them. If they are moving, they may want to find a similar volunteer opportunity elsewhere.

Many programs incorporate information on match closure into their ongoing mentor training so that all participants are better prepared for the process when it does happen. Others prefer to handle the situations in a one-to-one setting at the time of closure so that the process can be customized to the particular match. No matter how your program handles closure with mentors, keep this thought in mind: volunteer mentors are a rare and precious commodity. If the termination of their relationship is handled with care, they will be much more likely to want to continue making a difference in someone's life as a mentor.

Closure for Parents or Guardians

Be sure to include parents or guardians in the closure process. Parents/guardians may be angry about the match failing, or feel that the program has let them down. They may need assistance in finding other services for the youth to make the transition easier. They will certainly have questions and concerns about the end of the match and what happens next. Take time to meet with them, answer any questions they may have, refer them to other assistance they may need.

The written results and outcomes of your exit interviews and other closure procedures should be kept in your case files for future reference.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

What are some of the reasons why matches may end in our program?

What are the indicators that a match may need to be terminated by our staff?

Do we have written procedures and policies that address the closure of matches?

Do our procedures and policies take into account the many different reasons why a match may end?

Do our procedures and policies provide opportunities for positive closure for the youth, volunteer, and parents/guardian?

Is our staff aware of outside support services that may help a mentor or mentee deal with the closure of the match or move on to another mentoring opportunity?

Do we have a clear policy signed by all parties to the match about ongoing contact once the match has ended?

Program Evaluation

If your program is going to be successful over time, you need to evaluate your services and the impact they are having on participants. A local program evaluation that is based on your logic model provides the information you need to improve services and ensure that you are meeting your program's goals and objectives. It can also be instrumental in telling your story to potential funders and volunteers.

Evaluation can often be labor-intensive, complicated, and confusing. Programs may avoid evaluation because they are afraid of what a systematic look at their operations and outcomes might reveal. But evaluation can help your program understand the impact it is making and guide decisions about program improvements. The usefulness of evaluation data to your program far outweighs the time and effort that go into creating it. Most programs find that conducting an evaluation seems much less intimidating once they have a better understanding of the basic process.

This section is not intended to give a comprehensive guide to setting up an evaluation—there are many resources already out there that provide guidance on evaluation design and structure. Instead, let's focus on some of the major steps in the process.

1. Determine what you want to measure

There are two main areas to focus on when determining what your evaluation will measure: process indicators and outcome indicators.

Process indicators measure how effective your program policies, procedures, and activities are in the delivery of services. You might want to determine if your volunteer recruitment methods are effective or if your mentors are being adequately trained before being matched. Or you may want to evaluate whether your match supervision system is effective in keeping matches healthy and happy. Perhaps you want to gauge the satisfaction of mentee's parents with your services. No matter what processes you decide to evaluate, actively use the information you gather to improve, streamline, and enhance the services you provide your volunteers and youth.

Outcome indicators measure the impact your services have on youth, volunteers, and the community. Review your logic model and accompanying goals and objectives when determining outcomes to measure. For example, if the goal of your program is to reduce teen pregnancy rates, then it doesn't make much sense to be measuring changes in incidents of school violence.

Focus on those outcomes that best match your core program objectives and avoid trying to measure too many types of outcomes during evaluation. Be realistic in what you expect your program to achieve given your program model, population being served, and what is already known about the potential impact of mentoring. Mentoring programs that try to measure improvements in every facet of a child's development are setting themselves up for disappointment. Remember that key mentoring research shows that, even in the very best mentoring programs, the results are often modest (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002).

2. Identify the kinds of information, or data, you will need to collect

Once you know what you want to measure, determine the specific sources of data that you can gather to show that the outcomes you established are being achieved. Some outcomes can be more easily measured than others. For example, if one of your outcomes is "improved school behavior" you can fairly easily use school attendance records, test scores, and incidents of bullying/fighting/detention to measure success. However, if your program has a vaguer outcome, such as "improved life skills," you will need to find ways to measure success in this area, such as giving youth a pre-post survey or skills check-list.

3. Determine who will conduct the evaluation

Programs generally have two choices here: either design and conduct the evaluation internally, or work with an outside evaluator. Many programs choose to work with an outside evaluator in an effort to minimize the impact on program staff and to ensure that the evaluation is professionally and scientifically conducted. While hiring an outside evaluator can be an expensive proposition, programs might avoid these costs by collaborating with a college or university or using an intern or graduate student to design and implement the evaluation.

If a program has the appropriate staffing, it may want to conduct the evaluation internally. Although the evaluation process varies in complexity depending on a program's needs, most local programs have found that by using existing evaluation resources and materials, the staff can design and conduct an appropriate and useful evaluation. The familiarity your staff has with the youth and volunteers is another asset that an outside evaluator may not bring to the table.

4. Adopt, adapt, or develop your data collection instruments

Your program will need to identify data collection instruments to gather and organize the data you want. Programs generally use a combination of questionnaires, surveys, and interviews in conjunction with statistics from outside sources (such as school test scores or arrest rates). There are many survey tools currently available that can be adopted or adapted for use in evaluating a mentoring program.

These instruments do not need to be complicated to be effective. They simply need to collect the information you are after. For instance, if one of the program processes you are measuring is volunteer intake, a short survey for your current mentors on their level of satisfaction with the intake process should collect the information you are after. If one of your outcome indicators is improved self-esteem among the youth in your program, then a youth survey given at two or more points during the mentoring relationship might show the progress you are looking for. A professional evaluator can be a valuable asset in identifying existing instruments you can use.

5. Decide when you will collect the data

Ideally, you will want to start collecting your evaluation data when youth first enroll in your program, providing a baseline against which to measure progress. This baseline creates a clean division of pre- and postparticipation in the mentoring program. If your program is already well established with many ongoing matches, you may want to include mentors and mentees who have been in the program for a while. For these groups, the baseline for measuring progress becomes the first set of data you collect from them during the initial evaluation.

As mentioned earlier in this guide, research indicates that programs generally do not see the impact of a mentor's influence until almost a year into the relationship. For this reason, most programs choose to wait six months, and again at one year, to conduct their follow-up measures. The key is to establish a clear timeline and pick data collection points that work for your program.

6. Analyze your data

The next step in your evaluation is data analysis. You will need to decide if your program is capable of analyzing the data you collect, or if you should bring in an outside evaluator to assist with interpreting your data. It is important to interpret the data correctly—all of your efforts in collecting accurate data will be for naught if the wrong conclusions are reached about your program's operations and outcomes. And remember that while data analysis often is presented in the form of impersonal numbers, graphs, and charts, this analysis of evaluation data is essential to accurately telling the very human story of your program's impact. Keep your program goals and mission in mind when determining exactly what your results "say" about the work you are doing.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Does our program have an evaluation plan that measures both the processes and desired outcomes of our program?

What are the outcomes that we would want to measure based on our program's mission and vision?

What specific data might we collect that shows progress toward those outcomes?

Would we want to bring in an outside evaluator or could the evaluation be handled by our own staff with the proper resources and guidance?

Do we have appropriate staffing necessary for data collection and input?

Are we required to conduct an evaluation as part of a funding requirement?

Are we part of an external, funding-driven evaluation process?

If so, is that existing evaluation giving our program the information it needs?

Have we established an appropriate timeline for conducting our evaluation?

Additional Resources

Online Resources for Finding a Program Evaluator:

What Works Clearinghouse—Registry of Outcome Evaluators
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/tech_assistance/index.asp

American Evaluation Association—Find an Evaluator Database
http://www.eval.org/find_an_evaluator/evaluator_search.asp

Western Michigan University's Directory of Evaluators
http://ec.wmich.edu/evaldir/index.html

Resources That Can Assist With the Components in This Section

Applicable titles in the Hamilton Fish Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities series (available online at: **http://www.hamfish.org)**

Generic Mentoring Program Policy and Procedure Manual

The ABCs of School-Based Mentoring

Training New Mentors

Building Relationships: A Guide for New Mentors

Mentoring Program Development (including recruitment, screening, training, and match supervision)

The Building Blocks of Quality Mentoring Programs (Big Brgothers Big Sisters of Canada)
http://www.mentoringcanada.ca/training/Mentors/index.html

Community Mentoring for Adolescent Development (Baylor University)
http://www.mentoring.org/program_staff/pdf/MentorTraining.pdf

Creating and Sustaining a Winning Match (EMT Group)
http://www.emt.org/userfiles/MatchSeries2.pdf

Designing a Successful Mentor Training (EMT Group)
http://www.emt.org/userfiles/DesignTraining.pdf

Effective Mentor Recruitment: Getting Organized, Getting Results (Mentoring Resource Center)
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/recruitment.pdf

Going the Distance: A Guide to Building Lasting Relationships in Mentoring Programs (Mentoring Resource Center)
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/going_the_distance.pdf

Guide to Mentoring for Parents and Guardians [template version] (Mentoring Resource Center)
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/parent_handbook.doc

Handbook of Youth Mentoring (Sage Publications)
http://wwws.agepub.com/book.aspx?pid=10596

How to Build a Successful Mentoring Program Using the Elements of Effective Practice (MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership)
http://www.mentoring.org/program_staff/eeptoolkit/index.php

Making the Grade: A Guide to Incorporating Academic Achievement into Mentoring Programs and Relationships (Mentoring Resource Center)
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/making_the_grade.pdf

Meaningful Mentoring: A Handbook of Effective Strategies, Projects, and Activities (YouthLight, Inc)
http://www.youthlightbooks.com/products/390.html

Mentoring Answer Book (Big Brothers Big Sisters of McHenry County)
http://www.mentoringanswerbook.com/

Mentoring Children in Foster Care: Considerations and Partnership Strategies for Senior Corps Directors (LEARNS)
http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/sites/learns/resources/seniorcorps/products/Mentoring_Children_in_Foster_Care_Final_Revised.pdf

Mentoring Children of Incarcerated Parents (LEARNS)
http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/sites/learns/resources/seniorcorps/products/MCIP_Senior_Toolkit.pdf

More Than a Matter of Trust: Managing the Risks of Mentoring (Nonprofit Risk Management Center)
http://nonprofitrisk.org/pubs/mentor.htm

Putting Youth Development Principles To Work in Mentoring Programs (Mentoring Resource Center)
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/factsheet14.pdf

Running a Safe and Effective Mentoring Program (Friends for Youth Mentoring Institute)
http://stores.friendsforyouth.org/Detail.bok?no=34

Strengthening Native Community Commitment Through Mentoring (Mentor Consulting Group)
http://www.mentorconsultinggroup.com/docs/native_mentoring.pdf

Supporting Mentors [Technical Assistance Packet #6] (National Mentoring Center)
http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/pdf/packsix.pdf

Training New Mentees: A Manual for Preparing Youth in Mentoring Programs (National Mentoring Center)
http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/pdf/training_new_mentees.pdf

The U.S. Department of Education Mentoring Program's Guide to Screening and Background Checks (Mentoring Resource Center)
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/screening.pdf

Program Evaluation

Evaluating Your Program: A Beginner's Self-Evaluation Workbook for Mentoring Programs (Information Technology International & Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation)
http://www.itiincorporated.com/_includes/pdf/SEW-Full.pdf

Frequently Asked Questions About Research and Evaluation (Mentoring Resource Center)
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/ws2_supplement2.pdf

Measuring the Quality of Mentor-Youth Relationships: A Tool for Mentoring Programs (National Mentoring Center)
http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/pdf/packeight.pdf

Outcome-Based Evaluation: A Training Toolkit for Programs of Faith (FASTEN)
http://www.fastennetwork.org/Uploads/2F3325EC-7630-425B-8EDF-847AAA69BE76.pdf

What's Working? Tools for Evaluating Your Mentoring Program (Search Institute)
http://www.search-institute.org/catalog/product.php?productid=16214

W.K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook (W.K. Kellogg Foundation)
http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub770.pdf

Additional online resources to assist with the components in this section can be found on the National Mentoring Center Web site at: http://nwrel.org/mentoring/.

Section III.

Sustaining the Program Through Increased Organizational Capacity

This section addresses program components that position your program for long-term success and sustainability. These components are related to the planning and program design elements discussed to this point—many are the logical outcome of launching a quality program, others may need to be developed alongside the other tasks outlined in this book. Regardless of when you develop these components, all are proven to be important for mentoring programs if they are to thrive over time.

Develop a Written Policy and Procedure Manual

One of the most valuable assets to your organization will be your policy and procedure manual. This manual formalizes the decisions you have made regarding program ground rules and provides a blueprint for day-to-day operations. A comprehensive policy and procedure manual becomes a sustainable resource that can guide your program through staff turnover, improve the delivery and consistency of services, and ensure that your staff, volunteers, and youth have clear expectations and guidance. Your manual should be accessible by all program staff and frequently reviewed and updated.

An effective manual should include three main sections: policies, procedures, and supporting documentation about your organization.

Policies

Policies are essentially the “nonnegotiable” rules of your program. Often, these are formal rules and regulations approved by your board of directors or advisory council. Common focus areas for policies may include, but are not limited to:

- Mentor Eligibility and Screening
- Rules of Conduct for Mentors and Mentees
- Confidentiality
- Record Keeping
- Child Abuse Reporting
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Sexual Harassment

- Nondiscrimination
- Future Contact Once a Match Ends

Additional Resource

Be sure to see the revised *Generic Mentoring Program Policy and Procedure Manual*, also available as part of the Hamilton Fish Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Mentoring in Schools and Communities series, for much more detailed information on this topic. Available online at: http://www.hamfish.org

Procedures

Procedures are the step-by-step means by which tasks get accomplished in your program. They support the policies you have developed and give staff a road map for implementing policies and day-to-day activities consistently. Examples of procedures include:

- Conducting Mentor Recruitment Campaigns
- Mentor/Mentee Intake
- Conducting Background Checks
- Training Volunteers
- Making Matches
- Monitoring Matches
- Volunteer Recognition
- Grievances
- Closing/Ending Matches

Supporting Documentation

Many programs also include the following information in their policy and procedure manual to make it a more comprehensive resource:

- Program History
- Mission and Vision Statements
- Organizational Chart
- Copies of MOUs
- 501(c)(3) letter
- Copies of Brochures, Flyers, and Forms

In addition to the policy and procedure manual, your program will have a variety of materials and documents that support program operations. These should also be organized and kept in a central location with your policy and procedure manual. Examples of these documents include lesson plans for training sessions, marketing and recruitment plans, board and committee minutes, and evaluation plans and instruments.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Has our program developed a written policy and procedure manual?

Does our policy and procedure manual cover all aspects of program operations and provide guidance for handling particular situations that have come up?

Are our policies approved by our board or advisory council?

Does our program orient new and current staff to the contents of the policy and procedure manual?

Are our policy and procedure manual and other supporting materials accessible to all staff?

How often is our policy and procedure manual reviewed and revised?

Implement a Resource Development Plan

One of the biggest factors in making your program a long-term success is the creation and implementation of a resource development plan. Programs often find it difficult to focus on planning for long-term financial stability when they are caught up in day-to-day operations. However, any program expecting to last beyond the first few years of operation must make the development of new and diversified resources a priority.

The steps described below offer a basic introduction to the process of resource development planning for mentoring programs. A large body of fundraising and nonprofit sustainability literature is available that can help mentoring programs with this work, and the resource listing at the end of this section offers some useful starting points.

1. Establish a Resource Development Committee

This committee's function is to assess both the internal and external resources that your program can potentially access and to develop your written resource development plan. Forming such a committee is more effective than assigning this responsibility to one person. The distributed responsibility of a committee ensures that, if the one person leaves, all of your sustainability efforts don't leave with them.

It is critical that your Board of Directors (or advisory committee) is actively involved and engaged with this group. Ideally, your development committee will be composed of board members, with volunteers, representatives from partner organizations, and program staff selected as needed.

This committee has three main functions that will be discussed later in this section:

- Mapping internal resources
- Mapping external resources
- Creation and implementation of a written development plan

The committee's work will likely involve two phases, the first being an intensive planning process that will require significant time commitment and skilled facilitation. This planning needs to be governed by a relatively short timeline (such as an intensive two- or three-day retreat or weekly planning meeting) to ensure that momentum is not lost.

The second phase of the committee's work is the implementation and monitoring of the plan itself. This phase can often be managed with less frequent meetings (such as monthly or quarterly) as long as someone is charged with monitoring and communicating progress between meetings.

If your program is currently funded by large or long-term grants or awards, it is important that you start the process of resource development early in the funding cycle. Some programs don't think about sustainability until current funding is about to run out. By then it is often too late to generate sufficient resources to continue the program. The effort your committee makes when you have sufficient funding will better position you to generate the resources needed to continue, and possibly expand, your program's work.

Additional Resource

Be sure to see the revised *Sustainability Planning and Resource Development for Youth Mentoring Programs*, also available as part of the Hamilton Fish Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Mentoring in Schools and Communities series, for much more detailed information on this topic. Available online at: http://www.hamfish.org

2. Mapping Internal Resources

One of the first tasks of your resource development committee is to map out what "internal resources" are available to your program. Internal resources include the assets that your board members, staff, volunteers, and community partners bring to the table. These resources are most often defined by the connections and contacts your program has in the community. For example:

- One of your board members also serves on the board of a local corporation. Your program can later use this connection to seek a donation from the corporation or tap into their employees as a pool of potential volunteers.
- You realize that almost 25 percent of your volunteers are students from the local university. Perhaps you can use those volunteers to recruit other students on campus, or even form a formal partnership with the student union, a fraternity, or the university administration.
- Chances are that several of your board members have extensive grant and proposal writing experience. Writing effective grant applications and proposals requires unique skills. These individuals can be resources in applying for government or foundation resources.
- One of your staff members serves on the local PTA or is president of the Rotary Club, making him an invaluable connection for setting up a formal partnership with the school district down the road.
- You learn that one of your volunteers is a Web designer. You might be able to convince her to redesign the program Web site for improved marketability (even as an activity to do with her mentee). By tapping into this resource, you have saved your program hundreds of dollars by not having to hire an outside designer.

These internal resources will greatly influence the shape of your resource development plan. For example, if you find that you have no one on your committee with grantwriting experience, you may decide not to go after many grants. You may decide to have several individuals attend a grantwriting seminar or determine that you need to hire an outside grantwriter. If your assessment of internal resources reveals that your board members have many connections to local businesses, your development plan may focus on increasing financial and other support from these "doable" sources.

Your internal resources are just as important to your program's sustainability as the external sources of funding that you may want to pursue. Mapping them allows you to take advantage of opportunities and get the most out of the community connections you have spent so much time building.

3. Mapping External Resources

In addition to mapping internal resources, your resource development committee should also assess the many external resources you currently have or that may be available to you. When most people think of tapping into external resources, they think of grants, awards, and other direct funding streams. While the acquisition of funding is certainly one result of utilizing external resources, it is important to remember that external support can take many different forms, including in-kind donations and volunteer support. External resources include *anything* that can support your program's operations, not just its fiscal strength.

Some of the common external resources that resource development committees investigate include:

Foundations. There are literally thousands of local, state, and national foundations that offer grants and other financial support that your program may be able to receive. Your local or regional public library, volunteer center, or United Way may have national and state foundation guides that summarize foundation programs, parameters, and application procedures.

Government agencies. Local, state, and federal government agencies are important sources of financial support. Federal grant opportunities can be researched in the Federal Register or the Grants.gov Web site. State, county, and municipal agencies can also provide support for your program, either through direct funding or through non-cash assistance such as donated space and allowing employees time off to volunteer. Do not expect to survive on government support alone, though, since political priorities and resources fluctuate.

Local corporations and businesses. Most large corporations and businesses engage in some form of community service or support. This may include cash, employee programs that encourage volunteering, or the donation of equipment and supplies. Even smaller businesses may have something valuable to contribute to your program. A local print shop could produce your flyers at a reduced cost, an ad agency might donate time to help market your program, or a grocery store may be able to donate food for an upcoming event. If you do a good job of selling the value of your program, you may find several small businesses willing to give direct financial support. Developing support from local businesses is almost certain to be the result of the one-to-one connections you have made through community collaborations and outreach. The internal assets your development committee has identified can really drive the success of your outreach to the business community.

Individual support. Often undervalued by mentoring programs, individual giving has the potential to be your largest source of revenue and support. In 2006, individuals donated almost $200 billion, 82 percent of all the money donated to charities and other institutions that year (Giving USA Foundation, 2006). Sustainability efforts built around individual giving also have excellent marketing and volunteer recruitment benefits because of the personal nature of the strategy.

Your program can build an individual giving program by creating a database of past and current contributors and adding potential new donors as you develop recognition in the community, hold fundraising events, and cultivate new partnerships.

Special events. Fundraising events can generate immediate income, help you tap into a variety of new external resources, and build your database of individual and corporate supporters for future use. While fundraising events vary in size and sophistication, there are a few important principles to remember. New fundraising events often start with modest expectation and grow over time. Often they take a few years to build momentum and community interest. Even if you only break even financially, these events can also be worthwhile in terms of building community awareness, recruiting groups of mentors, and recognizing and thanking your current mentors and youth.

Other forms of external support. Other potential resources your committee may want to investigate include sponsorships, capital campaigns, endowment funds, fees for services, income investments, gifts in-kind, membership dues, e-commerce, product sales, and social entrepreneurship.

As part of your external review, examine what is currently being accessed across these various resources, mapping out what revenue and other support is currently being brought in each area. Once the committee has assessed these external resources, they will be able to analyze, compare, and combine them with the assessment of internal resources to provide a direction for future resource development work.

4. Creation and Implementation of a Written Development Plan

Once your committee has mapped your internal and external resources, they will need to analyze that information and develop a written plan that will set the course of action for your sustainability efforts.

This process is more than simply charting your various revenue streams and identifying a few grants to go after. It should be a much deeper look into how you are working toward resource development. There are several things for the committee to consider in analyzing your current status and creating your future plan of action:

Efficacy of previous efforts. Your committee should review the fundraising and resource development activities you have tried in the past to determine what has worked and what hasn't. Decide which fundraising activities to continue by determining if they have the potential to grow over time or offer other important benefits to your program, such as volunteer recruitment or marketing. List foundations you have approached and determine your rate of success and the quality of the relationship you have developed with them.

Compatibility of new resources with the program's mission, vision, and operations. Programs can get themselves in trouble when they take on funding with expectations and responsibilities that do not support the agency's mission and goals. Programs also experience problems when they expand too fast. Rapid program expansion can have a negative impact on staff, running the risk of lowering the quality of service in exchange for an increased quantity of matches.

Compatibility with timelines. When does your current funding run out? When might new grants be available? Mapping out your resources chronologically will help develop a realistic implementation plan.

Scenario planning. Your committee should plan for multiple scenarios when creating a resource development plan. What if you don't get that big federal grant? What if the economy stagnates and individuals donate less money to charities? What if political priorities shift and current funding is reduced or eliminated? If you decide to focus your efforts on increasing individual giving, might that hurt your program's ability to respond effectively to grant applications? These types of questions can help build a plan that will be adaptable and effective in spite of inevitable changes in resource availability.

Realistic expectations. You may find that only 20 percent of your assets come from local businesses. Is it realistic to expect to increase that to 45 percent in two years? Be sure not to set unrealistic expectations for resource development right off the bat. Keep in mind that your plan will take shape over time and will be changing as circumstances change.

Diversification. Just as a savvy investor builds a broad portfolio of stocks, bonds, and income funds, so a nonprofit program needs to ensure that it is not putting all its eggs into one basket. If your sources of funding are spread out across several categories, such as government grants, a large annual fundraising event, and a growing individual giving campaign, you are more likely to be able to survive if one of these sources fails to produce in a given year.

As your committee weighs these questions and considerations, it will start to get a clearer picture of how your program can improve its resource development. The decisions your committee makes at this point will inform your written resource development plan.

Components of the Resource Development Plan

What a resource development plan looks like in the end varies widely across programs. Every program's situation is unique and the strategies they employ to ensure sustainability are diverse. But there are some common elements of a written resource development plan that should be included in the one you create:

Assumptions made and rationale for decisions. Document the scenarios under which your plan was developed and the reasons decisions were made regarding resource development strategies, goals, and objectives. If your plan assumes that federal grants will not be available, that individual giving is underutilized by your program, and that the acquisition of donor tracking software is vital, then your plan should spell out how those conclusions were reached. This will help your partners, stakeholders, and potential funders understand the course of action you are taking.

Clear goals and objectives. Your resource development plan should have established goals and benchmarks. For example, your program may want to increase financial support from local businesses by 15 percent each year. You may have the acquisition of a particular grant as a clear goal. Or perhaps increased in-kind donations are a priority. Whatever your goals are, make sure that they are concrete, realistic, measurable, and understood by all the people responsible for implementing the plan.

Reasonable, clear timeline. Ideally, you will want to create a two- to three-year plan. Some agencies even plan out five or more years in advance. Even though your plan might change over time, it is important to set a timeline that everyone can follow and that you can use to track your progress.

Designation of responsibilities. Resource development is a lot of work, and your plan needs to spell out exactly who is responsible for specific tasks. One committee member may be designated to track foundation resources, while another member is responsible for initiating contact with local businesses. Still another member might be charged with building a partnership with the local school district. Be sure that everyone involved understands and accepts the role they will have in carrying out the plan.

Support systems. How will you ensure that the resource development plan is being implemented? What resources or skills do your committee members need to carry out the plan? How frequently will your committee meet to discuss progress and revise the plan? These types of questions should be addressed in the written plan. Include the ways you will support, track, and update your resource development work in your written plan.

If your resource development committee has done a good job of mapping resources, and planned for a variety of circumstances that could affect those resources, then your written plan will significantly increase your chances for long-term sustainability.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Does our program have a resource development committee that has taken ownership of the process?

Are members of our board of directors participating on the committee?

How often does our committee meet?

Has our committee mapped out the internal resources at our disposal?

What community connections and skills do our board members, program staff, and volunteers bring to our program?

How can we use these connections and skills in the creation and implementation of our resource development plan?

Has our resource development committee mapped out current and potential external resources?

Have we looked at receiving support through foundations, government agencies, individuals, local businesses, and special events?

Have we also included other forms of support we can receive from external sources, such as in-kind donations or volunteer time?

Does our program have a written resource development plan that is based on our underlying assumptions?

Does our plan have realistic goals, objectives, benchmarks, and timelines that are appropriate for our program's current situation?

Does our plan assign clear roles and responsibilities for implementing the plan?

Do the individuals working on our resource development have the necessary skills and experience?

Have we built a system to track the progress of the plan and to revise it as needed?

WORKSHEET

Sustainability Planning Checklist

Preparation

- ☐ Get approval and buy-in from key decisionmakers to engage in your planning process
- ☐ Identify leadership for the planning effort
- ☐ Recruit and establish a planning team
- ☐ Clarify your team's role and the scope of their work

Assess the current internal and external factors that impact sustainability

- ☐ Conduct an internal assessment, including:
  - ☐ Goals, objectives, and outcomes to date
  - ☐ Current funding, budget, and other resources
  - ☐ Organizational capacity and limitations
  - ☐ Involvement of Board of Directors or advisory boards
- ☐ Conduct an assessment of your partnerships, including:
  - ☐ Responsibilities of partners
  - ☐ Strengths and challenges of partnerships
  - ☐ Potential for enhancing existing partnerships
- ☐ Conduct an assessment of the broader community
  - ☐ Community needs and priorities
  - ☐ Current mix of services offered and how your services support them
  - ☐ Potential new partners
  - ☐ Funding resources in your community
- ☐ Record findings and identify key themes, issues, strengths, and challenges

Develop a lasting plan—the eight steps to sustainability

- ☐ Know your primary reason for developing resources
- ☐ Develop and clarify your priorities for ensuring a sustainable program
- ☐ Review and understand primary resource development options
- ☐ Develop goals and measurable objectives based on your assessment and identified priorities
- ☐ Develop activities with realistic timelines, and assign roles for accountability
- ☐ Develop a final, written resource development plan
- ☐ Implement the action plan
- ☐ Monitor, review, and celebrate your progress

Implement, review, and adjust your plan

- ☐ Develop a final document and share it with everyone
- ☐ Monitor your progress and continue to meet with the planning team
- ☐ Adjust and modify the plan as needed
- ☐ Celebrate and publicize your successes

Used, with permission, from Garringer, 2007.

Develop a Qualified and Stable Staff

Of the many resources that will make your program successful, your own staff should be considered one of the most important. These are the people who interact daily with the volunteers, youth, parents, teachers, and community members. They are also the individuals who recruit, train, and support participants—essentially serving as the "face" of the program. Your program builds a foundation for a successful and sustainable future by carefully selecting and investing in these individuals.

Keep in mind that one of the biggest issues mentoring programs struggle with is staff turnover. Your program will need to do all it can to find and keep a quality staff. Ultimately, these individuals are the ones who will determine whether or not you achieve your program goals.

Your program (or parent organization) should have written job descriptions for all staff members, including minimum qualifications for knowledge, skills, and experience for each position. A strong background and experience in youth work, volunteer management, and community organization are critical skills for key staff in your program.

Don't forget . . .

Since your staff will be having contact with youth, you must screen all applicants from a risk management perspective as well. Staff should be subject to the same background checks and other safety measures taken with volunteers in your program.

Offer an orientation for new staff that includes an introduction to the program's mission and goals, an explanation of any grant or funding obligations, and a review of your policy and procedure manual. The program coordinator, specifically, should have extensive knowledge of (or receive extensive training in) best practices in youth mentoring and nonprofit management. You should also create an ongoing staff development plan that includes opportunities for networking with other professionals, continued training, and reflection activities.

Staff Recruitment Strategies

Your recruitment efforts should create the largest pool of qualified applicants from which to choose. Diversify your recruitment strategy to include:

- Print ads
- Listservs and Web pages
- Radio/TV
- University bulletin boards
- Community centers
- Networking with other local agencies and partners
- Networking with state mentoring partnerships

Finding qualified staff can be one of the payoffs for having a strong reputation in your community. If people know that the work you are doing is making a difference, they will more likely want to be part of your efforts.

Staff Selection

As noted earlier, key staff should have previous youth service and volunteer management experience, preferably with a mentoring program, as well as experience in community organization and building community partnerships. Insist on only hiring staff who meet your qualifications—the safety of your youth and your outcomes are at stake. Be sure that staff members are a good "fit" with your program and will be able to fill the many difficult and time-consuming responsibilities of their positions. Also, consider your program's commitment to a diverse work environment and how representative your organization is of the community you serve.

Staff Support Systems

Mentoring programs, especially ones in the "start-up" phase, can experience high rates of turnover at the program coordinator and other key positions. It can be difficult for smaller nonprofits, such as mentoring programs, to offer competitive salaries and benefits compared to similar private sector positions. Youth workers can also simply get "burned out" by the demands and stresses of setting up a program, managing day-to-day operations, and working intensely with youth who have serious needs.

Staffing losses can severely disrupt the support and supervision of mentoring relationships, which ultimately harms the sense of trust your volunteers and youth feel toward your program. Consistent services to youth can only occur through consistent staffing patterns. To minimize the damage that can come from turnover, it is important that your agency lets staff know that it is committed to them, and that their contributions are valued and supported.

Plan ahead to position new staff members for success from the first day of employment. New employees should receive an orientation to your program, including applicable skills training and professional development planning. They should also receive a copy of your program's policy and procedure manual and become familiar with the program's expectations. Be sure to "check in" frequently with program coordinators and other key staff, possibly setting aside weekly meeting times to discuss the program and challenges that have come up, and to gather ideas and suggestions new employees may have for improving your services. By taking the time to listen and communicate, you let your staff know that you care about what they are doing and that you are there to advocate for them.

You may not be able to offer high salaries or lots of perks, but creating a work environment where staff can learn and find support will minimize turnover and increase the quality of your services. Seek out ongoing opportunities for professional development and networking so that program staff can continue to grow in their positions and provide better services over time. The next section discusses how to find quality training and technical assistance opportunities that can facilitate the growth of your staff members.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Does our program have written job descriptions for all positions that include minimum qualifications for knowledge, skills, and experience?

Does our program require program coordinators to have a background in youth development work, volunteer management, and/or youth mentoring?

Do we use many diverse strategies to recruit staff in order to receive the largest possible applicant pool of qualified candidates?

What is our process for screening qualified candidates to ensure that they are a good match for our program and meet our risk management standards?

Are we properly preparing new staff members for their roles?

What ongoing professional development opportunities does our program make available to staff, including networking, ongoing training, and reflection?

Has our program experienced staff turnover that has affected the quality of services in the past?

If so, have we implemented support systems in an effort to minimize future turnover?

Use Training and Technical Assistance Services

No agency or individual is able to build the perfect youth mentoring program without a little help every now and then. Luckily, there are places to turn for assistance in designing and implementing your program.

Many local, state, and national mentoring organizations provide training, technical assistance, publications, data collection, recruitment assistance, and networking opportunities for you and your staff. Some of these organizations provide phone and e-mail consultation and materials free of charge and offer inexpensive training opportunities.

At the state and regional levels, much of this support is provided by state or local mentoring partnerships. Twenty-three states and 15 urban centers around the country currently have formal partnerships in place. While the level of service and support varies among these entities, chances are that they can act as a guiding influence on the work of your program. Almost all these partnerships help with staff development and mentor recruitment to some degree, and may be able to help in other areas, such as mentor training or resource development.

In addition to this hands-on help, you can also participate in e-mail discussion groups (listservs) and Web-based message boards related to mentoring, youth development, and nonprofit management. These discussion groups are excellent sources of information and provide great opportunities for peer-to-peer networking and professional development.

Many programs also build their own in-house resource collections featuring mentoring research, how-to guides, and youth development literature. Such a collection can be invaluable in improving a program's operating procedures and in delivering effective mentor training. A resource collection keeps the knowledge of mentoring experts at your fingertips even when you cannot take the time to attend training events and conferences.

By taking advantage of the expertise available from other organizations and practitioners, you ensure that your program practices are sound while developing your staff members' knowledge and ability to meet challenges.

Training and Technical Assistance Organizations

The following nonprofit and for-profit organizations may be able to provide your program with a variety of training, professional development, and program support services.

National Mentoring Center
@ Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
503-275-0135; mentorcenter@nwrel.org
http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring

LEARNS (serving Corporation for National and Community Service programs and members)
800-361-7890; learns@nwrel.org
http://www.nwrel.org/learns

National Mentoring Partnership
703-224-2200; csturtevant@mentoring.org
http://www.mentoring.org

State Mentoring Partnerships
A listing of contact information can be found online at:
http://www.mentoring.org/leaders/partnerships/index.php

Faith and Service Technical Education Network (FASTEN)
434-293-5656
info@centeronfic.org
http://www.fastennetwork.org

EMT Associates and the Center for Applied Research Solutions (CARS)
916-983-6680
http://www.emt.org/

Mentor Consulting Group
(203) 846-9608
drmentor@aol.com
http://www.mentorconsultinggroup.com/

Common Ground Consulting LLC
http://www.consultcommonground.org

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

What training and technical assistance is available to our program's staff, administrators, board members, and volunteers?

Have we identified the local, state, and national mentoring organizations that may be able to provide assistance to our program?

Have we identified areas of our program that we might need assistance in improving? If so, what are they?

Does our program have a resource collection containing research, publications, relevant literature, and contact information for other organizations that can offer us assistance or information?

Does our program encourage program coordinators and other staff to network with other mentoring professionals, researchers, or training providers as a part of ongoing professional development?

Increase Community Awareness of the Program

Building strong, positive community awareness of your program is vital to your long-term success. Everything your program does is tied to the community in which you provide services, from finding appropriate volunteers and attracting youth to developing new partnerships, raising funds, and ensuring long-range stability. Developing a community awareness marketing plan will help you focus on what you want your community to know about your program and why. As with the other planning activities described in this guide, the elements of your marketing plan should include objectives, tasks, timelines, assignment of responsibility and a way to measure the effectiveness of your strategies. The following tips will help you get started, and a number of print and online resources are listed at the end of this section to help you move forward.

Assess your current situation and where you want to be.

Start by asking some key questions about your current reputation, status of your marketing efforts, and what you want to achieve, using your board or a special committee to help you. The answers to these questions will inform the development of a marketing strategy that will effectively meet your needs:

- What is your program's current reputation in the community?
- What are the current ways your community learns about your work?
- What do you want your community awareness program to accomplish? (i.e., increase volunteer recruitment success, develop new partnerships, raise funds)
- What distinguishes your program from others in the community?
- What tools and resources are available to help you implement your plan?

Use a variety of strategies and tools to make your story known. Letting your community know who you are and what you do is the primary reason for launching a marketing plan. You goal is to "sell" your story, your unique set of services and successes that make your community want to be involved. There are a variety of venues and activities you can use to make your story known, including:

- Newsletters to program partners and community members
- Public service announcements
- Outreach to local media
- Having a presence at community events
- Flyers and posters
- Participation on boards, committees, or coalitions with other local youth service organizations

Create a unique image that everyone will recognize. Be sure to develop a "brand" for your program—a logo, color scheme, and descriptive language that makes your program easily identifiable (see the tips on page 78 for advice on creating taglines and other marketing language). These branding elements should be used consistently on everything that goes out from your organization—flyers, business cards, letterhead, e-mails, Web site, media ads—so that you create a consistent visual and verbal association in the mind of your community.

Know your audiences and develop targeted messages for them. Although every program needs a set of broad, generic materials to raise community awareness, developing some targeted messages for specific needs can also be very useful. For example, materials targeted to recruiting college-age volunteers will look very different

Tips for Creating Slogans and Other Marketing Language

"Just do it." "Have it your way." "You're in good hands."

Creating an effective, memorable marketing slogan is not as easy as it may seem. A good slogan is catchy, to the point, and full of meaning, but the process that leads to its creation is anything but simple. Even the most creative people can have difficulty distilling a program's services down to an essential phrase. The following tips can help your program come up with core messages and slogans to build your marketing efforts around.

1 Start with your mission. A program's mission statement is always fertile ground for coming up with slogans and messages. After all, it's the reason your program exists. If explaining that to your audiences doesn't motivate them, what will? Look for key phrasings or sentiments from your mission statement that can be turned into an appeal.

2 Incorporate your goals. Successful marketing always strives toward a specific goal. You may need mentors. You may need male mentors, specifically. You may need some donations, or you may need to replace a $450,000 grant. Those marketing campaigns are going to be very different. So drill down on your needs at the most specific level.

3 Know your target audience. What about your mission is likely to appeal to them? What are the barriers to their involvement? What buttons can you push to achieve the desired result, whether it's volunteer involvement or building community partnerships? Your message must be tailored to your audiences' motivations.

4 Test, test, test. No one comes up with the perfect turn of phrase the first time out. You may need to test your messages, and any accompanying images, on many audiences in order to finally hit the mark. This can be a fun and creative way for friends and family of program staff to participate in the good work of your program.

5 The language should be confident, not cheesy or condescending. This can be a difficult line for youth-serving agencies not to cross. Pay attention to how your messages portray the youth you serve and the services you provide. Your messages should project strength, purpose, and solutions, not dire circumstances and pathos.

6 Examples of strong slogans include:

- Making a difference through mentoring
- Mentors improve learning, lives, and communities
- Mentoring: When just being yourself can change the future

7 The following sample recruitment slogans were submitted on the National Mentoring Center's MentorExchange listserv in June 2006 as part of a discussion on effective messaging. Try and guess the motivations these messages are appealing to and the specific program goals they may be addressing:

- We're looking for a few good MEN-tors.
- Share what you know. Mentor a child.
- Use your skills. Share your talents. Be a mentor.
- To the world you may be just one person, but to one person you just may be the world.
- Mentor one child, change two lives.
- We are all in this together.
- They need what you know.
- MENTORS find that little moments are MAJESTIC!
- Helping kids rise to their full potential in literacy, learning, and life.
- Real men are doing it. Are you that man?—Mentor a child today!
- See a man, become a man.
- Display your strengths, by showing a child you care!
- Give a little, gain a lot—Become a mentor.
- Ignite the flame—Become a mentor.
- Be the example, not the warning—Become a mentor.
- Unleash potential—Become a mentor.
- Brighten the spirit—Become a mentor.
- Put the men back in mentoring.
- Inspire possibilities, be a mentor!
- Been there? Done that? Pass it on and become a mentor.

Adapted, with permission, from Mentoring Resource Center, 2006.

than those directed to a group of businesspeople. Similarly, informing the general public about your services may require a different approach than presenting the details of your program to a school board or funding source. Think about the key groups you want to reach with your community awareness activities and how your marketing tools can best be used to reach them.

Sample Marketing Plan

The following pages illustrate a simplified marketing plan for a fictional community-based mentoring program called Nearwest Mentoring Program. The program is just getting started and serves disadvantaged youth 14–18 with a focus on career exploration. Career/life planning, school engagement, and asset building are formal components of the program.

In this example, marketing strategies were developed across three categories of activities: promotional, personal contact, and public relations. Advertising was not deemed affordable in this start-up year but will be evaluated as strong opportunities present themselves. Marketing activities are currently focused on mentor recruitment and will be continuous throughout the year. Additional emphasis will be placed on developing personal contacts, delivering presentations, and building media relationships in the community. Board members and mentor volunteers will be engaged in this activity to the extent possible.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

What is our program's reputation in the community?

How are we assessing the community's perceptions of our program (focus groups, community surveys, etc.)?

What type of media and community outreach are we, or should we be, engaged in?

Have we developed a consistent and identifiable brand for your program?

Have we identified the strengths and selling points of our organization?

Have we developed a written marketing plan that describes our objectives and activities and assigns responsibilities?

What resources in our community are available to help us communicate our message and promote our program?

Is there anything that our program is particularly known for? What is our "niche"?

Do we have resources or in-kind donations that will support our marketing strategy?

SAMPLE
Nearwest Mentoring Program 2008 Marketing Plan

Mission Statement

To instill a strong sense of life and career planning in Nearwest youth, 14–18 years old, by providing them with a career-minded adult friend and role model.

Marketing/Recruitment Goal

Attract, screen, train, and match 30 career-minded mentors with Nearwest youth in 2008.

Target Audience

- Primary: Professional adults employed by the area's eight largest corporations
- Secondary: Recently (fewer than five years) retired professionals

Positioning Statement

Nearwest Mentoring Program makes a lifelong impact on the lives of youths by developing life/career planning skills and building strong internal and external assets including citizenship, integrity, and responsibility.

Marketing/Recruitment Strategies

Promotional Activities

- Develop and place program brochures and flyers throughout the community— weekly
- Distribute newsletter—quarterly
- Secure display tables at local events—as available
- Develop program Web site—continuous

Personal Contact

- Hold mentor orientation sessions—monthly
- Develop and deliver professional program presentations—one to two per month
- Make targeted contact with various community businesses, professional and service associations, senior and retirement centers—three to four per month
- Attend chamber meetings, informal gatherings, special lunches—monthly or more often
- Attend all board meetings; update board and solicit recruitment assistance—monthly
- Develop and deploy recruitment drives involving board members, mentors—semi-annually

Public Relations

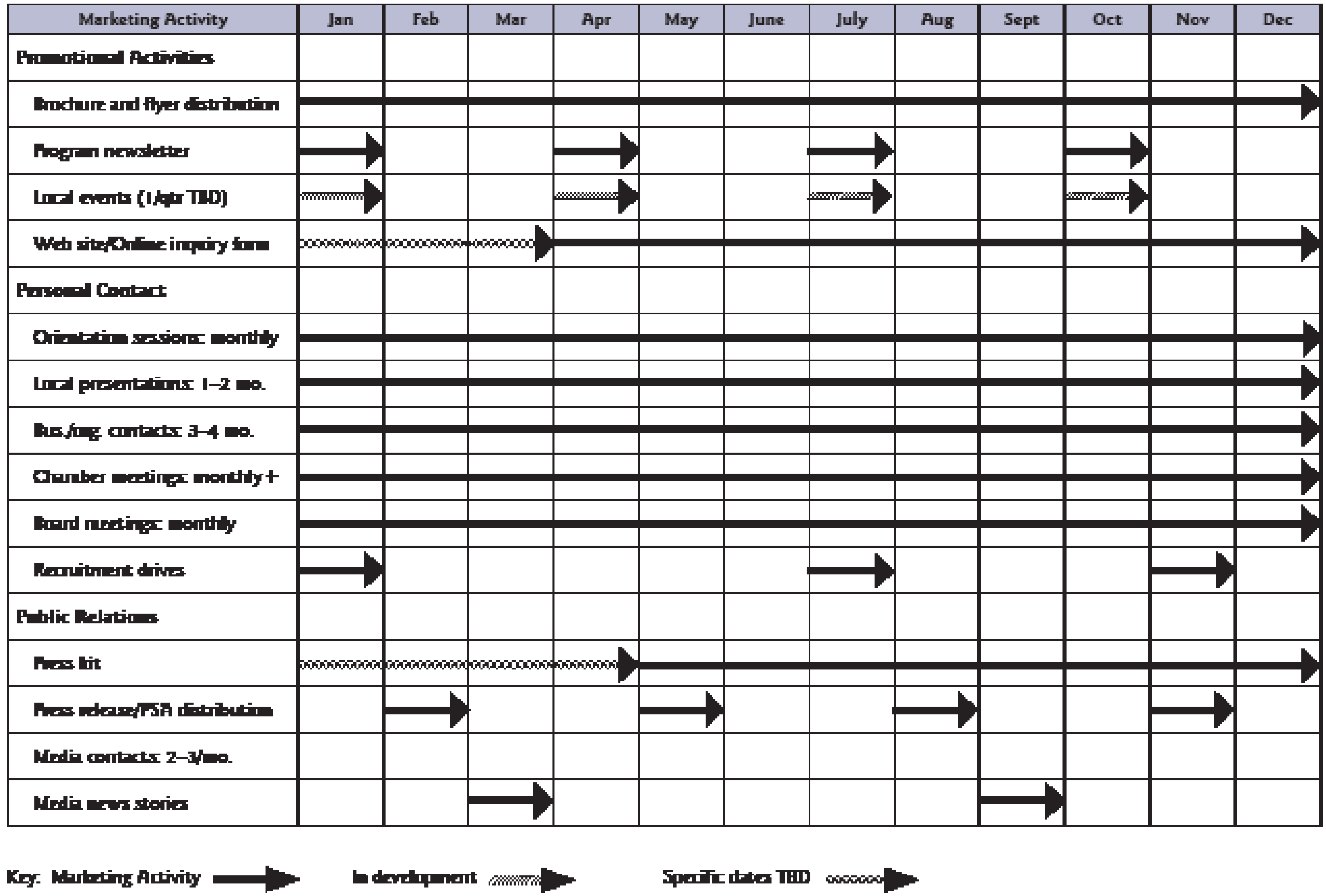
- Develop press kit—program story, brochure, press releases
- Distribute press release and PSA to local media—quarterly or as needed
- Build media relationships—minimum two to three contacts per month
- Develop and distribute success or need stories to the media—semi-annually

Budget Summary

Marketing Activity	Budget	Pct. Total
Brochures, flyers, printed materials	$1,500	38%
Newsletters	1,000	25%
Promotional activities – Misc.	500	12%
Press Kit	300	8%
Chamber membership	200	5%
Miscellaneous	500	12%
Total	$4,000	100%

SAMPLE

Marketing Timeline



WORKSHEET
Creating a Positioning Statement

A positioning statement can help clarify your services in the public's mind by separating you conceptually from other, perhaps competing, services.

Part I: With other program stakeholders, generate words and phrases for the following questions that reflect how you want your program to be perceived by your target audience.

1. Our program is unique because ____.

2. We do ____________________________ better than any other mentoring program.

3. Our desired image and reputation is ____.

Part II: Prioritize and determine the top responses to each. Using the words and phrases you have listed above, either draft a positioning statement using your own format, or use the template provided below as a starting point.

When I volunteer as a mentor in the ____________________________ program, I will (feel, gain, experience, or contribute):

____ (benefit #1)

____ (benefit #2)

____ (benefit #3)

because:

____ (program trait #1)

____ (program trait #2)

____ (program trait #3)

Finished Examples:

Nearwest Mentoring Program makes a lifelong impact on the lives of youths by developing life/career planning skills and building strong internal and external assets including citizenship, integrity, and responsibility.

Central County Volunteer Association is the best source for understanding our community's crucial social needs and connecting talented volunteers to the needs of high-impact social programs and projects.

Adapted, with permission, from Ballasy, 2003.

Use Evaluation Data for Program Enhancement

As discussed in the previous section, evaluation is a necessary program activity that can yield many benefits if done well. The results of your evaluation should be the driving force behind changes you make to your program over time, as well as a primary source for informing funders and the larger community about your program's achievements. Quality mentoring organizations put their evaluation results to work in many areas of their program, helping staff and leadership make programmatic improvements and showcase positive results to the larger community. Here are some key areas in which evaluation results can prove invaluable:

Improved service delivery to mentors and youth. The quality of the activities and services you provide are measured by your process evaluation. Take the time to review process indicators to see if there are changes that should be made to improve your operating procedures or methods of service delivery. If 75 percent of your mentors say that they felt inadequately trained prior to being matched, then it is certainly time to revisit both the amount and content of the pre-match training they receive. If 60 percent of your youth say that it is difficult to contact your staff, you may need to look at staffing patterns and your procedure for supervising matches. And if the majority of your mentees say that they are unhappy with their mentor, then it is high time to revisit your matching procedure. If your overall results are positive, make sure that you reinforce what's working and build on your successes.

Improved outcomes for youth. Outcome data on your program is not only a way to discover if your program is working or not. It's also an important tool to help you make changes that can improve those outcomes. For example, your program has three goals: reduced gang activity, substance abuse, and dropouts. Your evaluation shows that your mentees are less involved in gangs and are not dropping out of school, but their use of alcohol and marijuana has not changed. Since one of your objectives is not being met, focusing on improving that outcome means that your time and energy are being spent in the right area. In this example, your program might consider providing training for youth on substance abuse, develop referral resources to substance abuse counseling services, or train mentors on talking about drugs and alcohol with their mentees. (Note: If your program is involved in a formal study that requires you to retain your program model over time, you may have to hold off on making significant changes in your model until the study is concluded.)

Enhanced marketing of the program. As previously noted, your evaluation data tell your program's story—one that is invaluable to your efforts to promote your program in the community. If your evaluation shows that you are making a positive impact on the youth in your program, then by all means, share that information!

Positive program outcomes can enhance your volunteer recruitment efforts tremendously. Prospective volunteers will be more willing to join your program if they know your mentoring relationships are proving to make a difference. They may also be swayed by the fact that 90 percent of your volunteers said that they were "very satisfied" by the level of support and encouragement they received from your staff. So be sure to use evaluation-generated statistics, graphs, and quotes from mentors and mentees when designing marketing materials, recruiting volunteers, or making community presentations.

Fundraising and sustainability. Having positive evaluation results will make it easier for your program to attract new resources. Funding agencies often want to see demonstrated results before investing in a mentoring program. Building evaluation results into your grant proposals and presentations to potential funders shows that your program is well-designed, effective, and worth funding.

Your evaluation results can also help keep *current* funding. Being able to show that your program is meeting benchmarks may save you from budget cuts if your school or parent organization must decrease services.

Increased community partnerships. Your evaluation results can also help in building new partnerships with other organizations and individuals in your community. Being able to demonstrate your program's effectiveness can lead to new partnerships that allow you to expand or enhance your services. Let key stakeholders and community organizations know how well you are doing and see if your current successes can translate into new collaborations that will further improve your program.

Celebrate your success!

There is no greater reward to the hard work of your program staff, volunteers, mentors, and youth than to see that their efforts are making a difference. Building recognition events around positive youth outcomes will go a long way toward motivating and energizing all the individuals involved in your program.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

How can we use our positive evaluation results to enhance our program?

Are we using our demonstrated successes to improve our volunteer recruitment, marketing, and fundraising capabilities?

How can we use our negative evaluation results to implement changes?

Are we being honest with ourselves about the outcomes of our evaluation?

But what if the results are less than great? . . .

The whole point of conducting an evaluation is to determine what it is you are doing well and what services can be improved. Nothing can be more discouraging to a program than an evaluation that shows breakdowns in processes or outcomes. But it is important that your program be honest with itself about its evaluation results. Don't inflate your numbers to make it seem like your program is having more of an impact than it really is. This will set up unreasonable expectations in the community and among your stakeholders.

While you should certainly highlight the areas where your program is proving to be most successful, be sure to take a long look at areas where the program is coming up short. Use your previous failures to improve the program's future. Always keep in mind that your program is about helping youth. If those positive outcomes are truly not there, it's time to implement some changes. But if you can utilize your positive evaluation results to your advantage, while improving your program operations based on areas you have found to be weak, then you are using your evaluation findings properly. Effective programs are always striving for improvement, even while touting their successes.

Collaborate With Other Local Youth-Serving Organizations

Youth need access to a wide variety of support services and opportunities to reach their potential. Even the most intensive mentoring programs are only one piece of the larger spectrum of programs and services needed by, and offered to, a community's young people. For a mentoring program to be truly effective in assisting youth, it must actively collaborate and network with other youth-serving organizations.

These informal collaborations extend your program beyond your formal relationships with community partners. Informal collaboration with other youth service providers integrates your program into the community network of services seeking to improve the health, education, and welfare of youth of the community. By collaborating with this network of service providers, mentoring programs can develop new interagency program efforts, influence local public policy, and expand the resource and fundraising base for the long-term sustainability of the program.

Perhaps the most important outcome of collaboration is enhanced access to needed services for your mentees and their families. Some youth participating in mentoring programs will face serious challenges and difficult circumstances that are beyond what your mentors and agency can provide. If your program is networked in the community and has established collaborations, it will be much easier to refer youth and their families to other services that can augment the mentoring relationships you are providing. This creates a more comprehensive web of services and ensures that your youth are getting assistance across all their areas of need.

The Value of Community Coalitions

Youth-oriented advisory groups or community coalitions already exist in many communities. Often these interagency groups are sponsored by local health or social service departments, schools, or possibly a local United Way or volunteer center. These coalitions usually welcome new partners. Your participation can go a long way toward making your program an integral part of the network of services that exist for youth in your community.

In the absence of an existing coalition, your agency might consider organizing one. The process would include the now-familiar steps of conducting a needs assessment and informational interviews with other agencies. This will allow your program to better understand the needs, goals, and objectives of other community organizations and discuss how a broad youth coalition could benefit all the agencies involved. By understanding the needs of potential collaborators, you can begin to look for common ground that can translate into an agenda for collaboration. Community coalitions often begin as simply a forum for information exchange. As these coalitions mature they begin to tackle issues such as coordinating services, developing joint programming efforts, and conducting campaigns to educate the community and policymakers about the needs of youth.

While participating in community coalitions may seem tangential to your mentoring program, the benefits of strong community involvement will become apparent over time. Through effective collaboration, all the agencies involved become more efficient, strengthen their internal capacity, and find support that will help sustain their efforts.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Does our program have a specific plan to reach out to local youth service organizations?

Are we part of local family- and youth-oriented community coalitions?

Are we able to take the lead in starting a community coalition if one does not exist?

What information from our initial needs assessment can inform our community partnerships?

Have we visited other agencies in our community and do we understand what other youth services are available locally? Have other potential partners visited us?

Have we invited representatives from other organizations to be on our advisory council or board of directors?

Resources That Can Assist With the Components in This Section

Applicable titles in the Hamilton Fish Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities series (available online at: **http://www.hamfish.org**

Sustainability Planning and Resource Development for Youth Mentoring Programs

Generic Mentoring Program Policy and Procedure Manual

Resource Development Planning & Sustainability

Developing a sustainability plan for Weed & Seed sites (Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs)
http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/pub/pdf/ncj210462.pdf

Effective Capacity Building in Nonprofit Organizations (Venture Philanthropy Partners)
http://www.dol.gov/cfbci/tlc/docs/SustainabilityLibrary_SectionD_1/Mckinsey-fullreport.pdf

The Road to Sustainability: Sustainability Workbook (National Center for Community Education)
http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/sustain.pdf

Show Us the Money! Fundraising for Mentoring Programs (EMT Group)
http://www.emt.org/userfiles/ShowUsSeries3.pdf

Sustaining Program Viability (EMT Group)
http://www.emt.org/userfiles/SustainingViability.pdf

Program Marketing

All About Marketing (Free Management Library)
http://www.managementhelp.org/mrktng/mrktng.htm

Evaluating Effective Marketing Materials (Senior Tech Center)
http://seniortechcenter.org/desktop_publishing/effective_mkt_materials.php

Marketing and Media Outreach [NMC Bulletin] (National Mentoring Center)
http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/pdf/v2n1.pdf

Marketing Toolkit for Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools Mentoring Programs (Mentoring Resource Center)
http://www.edmentoring.org/toolkit/

Marketing Your Mentoring Program (MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership)
http://www.mentoring.org/program_staff/marketing_your_program/marketing_your_mentoring_program.php

Strategic Marketing Plan Template (Senior Tech Center)
http://seniortechcenter.org/desktop_publishing/mkt_plan_template.php

Why Bad Ads Happen to Good Causes and How to Ensure They Won't Happen to Yours (Cause Communications)
http://www.agoodmanonline.com/bad_ads_good_causes/index.html

Additional online resources to assist with the components in this section can be found on the National Mentoring Center Web site at: http://nwrel.org/mentoring/

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Appendix

Checklist of Program Progress

Sample Timeline for New Mentoring Programs

Recommended Reading

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Checklist of Program Progress

As your program starts to build a solid foundation based on the information in this guide, you may find this checklist helpful in gauging your progress. Each heading mirrors the key program components described in the guide, with items listed that help you measure how well your program has implemented them. While not all the items will exactly reflect your program's unique structure, design, and focus, all of them are important steps to building a quality mentoring program that is safe and effective.

If your program is already well established, you can use the checklist to assess your current strengths and challenges. Every program has opportunities for improvement, and this checklist offers a comprehensive tool for you and your board to regularly review your program and find out where additional work is needed.

I. Starting your new program

Assessing the need for mentoring in your community

- ☐ Our program has conducted a community needs assessment.
- ☐ Our community assessment identifies youth needs and issues, who provides services, and what the service gaps are in the continuum of youth services.
- ☐ The results of the needs assessment are incorporated into our program planning and design.

Developing an advisory committee and enlisting board support

- ☐ Our program has an advisory council or steering committee that includes a variety of community stakeholders, agency staff, and other interested individuals.
- ☐ Our advisory group understands their role in developing our mentoring program.
- ☐ Our board of directors or other governance body supports our goals and is involved in our planning.
- ☐ Our board and advisory group receive regular updates on our progress in planning and implementing our program.

Strong knowledge of mentoring and youth development research

- ☐ Our staff, board, and advisory committee members have a solid understanding of youth mentoring research and best practices.
- ☐ We have used mentoring research and other supporting literature in the design and implementation of our program.
- ☐ We understand the basic principles of youth development and how to incorporate them into our mentoring program.
- ☐ We have researched effective practices in working with specific target populations we plan to serve and have incorporated this knowledge into our program design.

Developing a mission statement, vision, and logic model that is a road map for implementing our program

- ☐ Our program has developed a clear, appropriate mission that has been agreed upon by our advisory committee and/or board and communicated to all stakeholders.
- ☐ Our program uses our mission statement to guide the development of goals, objectives, activities, and program practices.
- ☐ Our program has developed a logic model that clearly describes our program design, including measurable goals, activities, and outcomes.
- ☐ Our program design meets the requirements of our funding sources.
- ☐ We have developed a realistic implementation timeline that reflects the scope of work planned and covers all major phases of program start-up.

Effective collaboration with partner organizations

- ☐ Our program has developed formal partnerships with organizations that will help us implement our mentoring program model.
- ☐ Written Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) have been signed with all partners that document mutual obligations, fiscal commitments, and roles and responsibilities.
- ☐ We have identified a designated contact person at each partner organization and regularly communicate with this person.
    - ☐ Our program has a process for handling situations in which a partner is not fulfilling its agreed-upon obligations under the MOU.
    - ☐ Our program regularly updates partners as to the progress of the program and the fulfillment of roles and responsibilities.

II. Designing quality mentoring services

Volunteer recruitment

- ☐ Our program has developed a written recruitment plan, which includes:
  - ☐ Goals for recruitment
  - ☐ Potential sources of targeted volunteers
  - ☐ A timeline of scheduled activities
  - ☐ Designation of program staff responsible for recruitment activities
  - ☐ Budget for recruitment efforts
- ☐ We have a written mentor "job description" that is used in our recruitment efforts.
- ☐ Our program tailors its recruitment "pitch" to target specific audiences.
- ☐ Our program incorporates a variety of recruitment strategies to find quality volunteers
- ☐ Our program draws on the talents and resources of our staff, board, volunteers, and community partners to recruit mentors.
- ☐ Our recruitment plan is regularly reviewed and revised.

Initial orientation for prospective mentors and mentees

- ☐ Our program provides an initial orientation for prospective mentors and mentees.
- ☐ Our initial orientation includes:
  - ☐ The program's history, mission, and positive outcomes for youth.
  - ☐ The qualifications, responsibilities, and obligations of participating in the program
  - ☐ We track who participates in orientations and have a written procedure for timely follow-up with participants.
- ☐ We have a procedure for providing program information and orientation to parents/guardians of prospective mentees

Established mentor/mentee intake procedures

- ☐ Our program has a step-by-step written intake procedure for both volunteers and youth.
- ☐ Copies of these procedures are kept in our program's policy and procedure manual.
- ☐ The steps of the procedure are clearly explained to volunteers and youth at several points.
- ☐ We have an established tracking system for volunteers and youth as they move through the steps of the intake procedure.
- ☐ Our procedures balance a customer service approach with sound risk management practices.
- ☐ Our intake procedures are regularly reviewed and revised as needed.

Appropriate mentor screening procedures

- ☐ Our program has written policies and procedures for eligibility and screening.
- ☐ Our mentor job description clearly outlines the mentor's responsibilities and minimum requirements and is used as part of our initial screening.
- ☐ Our minimum screening requirements are:
  - ☐ Written application that gathers the initial information needed to determine basic eligibility and suitability
  - ☐ Reference checks from multiple sources and a system for recording results
  - ☐ Face-to-face interview using standardized procedures and questions
  - ☐ Criminal background check that is thorough and complete
- ☐ We have a written list of disqualifying events and mitigating circumstances that mirrors our eligibility policies.
- ☐ Our screening process gathers information regarding dependability, suitability, motivations, and other factors that may affect their ability to be a mentor.
- ☐ Staff receive training in mentor screening and interviewing techniques

Pre-match training for all new mentors and mentees

- ☐ Our program has a written training curriculum for both mentors and mentees
- ☐ Staff or outside experts providing training to mentors and mentees have the skills needed to deliver quality training.
- ☐ Our curriculum addresses the following topics:
  - ☐ Program history, mission, and goals
  - ☐ Program policies and procedures
  - ☐ Mentor and mentee roles
  - ☐ Strategies for beginning the match
  - ☐ Communication skills
  - ☐ Diversity issues
  - ☐ Youth development
  - ☐ Crisis management
  - ☐ Networks of support

- ☐ Child abuse reporting
- ☐ Other topics needed for our program

☐ Post-training evaluations are obtained and used to improve training.

☐ Our program invites outside experts from the community to provide training on specific topics.

Established matching procedure

☐ Our program has a step-by-step written matching procedure that is followed by all staff members who are making matches.

☐ We have developed a list of relevant, weighted matching criteria

☐ Our matching procedure puts the needs of the child first.

☐ Mentor and mentee files include applications, reference checks, interview responses, and other information that assist staff in making an appropriate match.

☐ Our matching process includes a role for the parent or guardian.

☐ Our program prepares mentors and mentees for meeting each other.

☐ The initial meeting between matches is structured, with clear goals and objectives.

Established procedure for monitoring matches

☐ Our program has a step-by-step written procedure for monitoring matches.

☐ Our procedure includes a regular timeline for when check-ins will be made with mentors, mentees, and parents.

☐ Our program uses a standard list of questions to ask during check-ins to ensure that basic information is collected.

☐ We have identified staff members who are responsible for monitoring matches and have provided them with any training they need.

☐ Program staff members are aware of other community resources and support systems that can help with problems outside the scope of our program.

☐ Our program has tracking tools and an accessible record-keeping system that keeps track of the progress of the match.

☐ Our program has a procedure in place for dealing with grievances, communication issues, and other problems that are revealed throughout the monitoring process.

Support, ongoing training, and recognition for volunteers

☐ Our program offers frequent ongoing training opportunities for our mentors.

☐ Our program uses feedback from mentors and mentees to determine the content and scope of ongoing training activities.

☐ Participants in training sessions fill out evaluations that are used to improve the program's training efforts.

☐ Our program provides mentors with resources, staff involvement, and other types of personalized support on a case-by-case basis.

☐ Mentors can participate in a facilitated support group or other support systems.

☐ Our program regularly recognizes and thanks mentors in a variety of meaningful ways.

Established match closure procedure

☐ Our program has step-by-step written procedures for deciding when and how to terminate a match before its predetermined end date.

☐ Our program has written closure procedures that address the many different reasons why a match may end.

☐ Our procedures provide support and assistance to the youth, the volunteer, and parents/guardians regardless of how the match ends.

☐ Our program informs mentors, youth, and the youth's family about our policy regarding future contact. This policy is outlined in a written contract that is signed by all parties at the time of closure.

Design and implementation of local program evaluation

☐ Our program has established a plan for evaluating our processes and outcomes that is based on our program's logic model.

☐ We have identified the specific data to collect that will show progress toward our desired outcomes.

☐ Our evaluation plan incorporates or supplements the evaluation requirements of our funding sources.

☐ Our program has determined whether to use an outside evaluator or internal staff.

☐ We have established a timeline for conducting the evaluation.

☐ Our evaluation is being implemented and we are collecting and analyzing evaluation data.

III. Sustaining Your Program Through Organizational Capacity

Written policy and procedure manual

- ☐ Our program has developed a written policy and procedure manual.
- ☐ Our policy and procedure manual covers all aspects of program operation and provides guidance to staff on how to handle particular situations.
- ☐ All program policies are approved by our board of directors and/or advisory council.
- ☐ Our program provides an orientation for new staff on contents of the policy and procedure manual.
- ☐ Copies of our policy and procedure manual are easily accessible for all program staff.
- ☐ Our program has a process in place to regularly review and revise the policy and procedure manual.

Implement a resource development plan

- ☐ Our program has formed a resource development committee that includes members of our board, volunteers, advisory council members, and program staff who have skills and experience needed to carry out its work.
- ☐ Our resource development committee has conducted an assessment of our program's internal assets and resources.
- ☐ Our committee has assessed current and potential external resources that can help us reach our funding goals.
- ☐ A written resource development plan has been developed based on our assessment of internal and external assets and resources.
- ☐ Our plan has clear goals, objectives, strategies, and timelines that are reasonable and appropriate for our program.
- ☐ In the development of our plan, the committee considered several different scenarios that could change our course of action.
- ☐ Our plan assigns clear roles and responsibilities related to our resource development.
- ☐ Our plan has been approved by our board of directors or other governing body and has their support and involvement in implementing its goals and objectives.
- ☐ Our plan includes has a system to track progress and to revise it as needed.

Qualified and trained staff

- ☐ Our program has developed job descriptions for all positions, which include minimum qualifications for knowledge, skills, and experience.
- ☐ Our program requires program coordinators to have prior experience or knowledge of youth mentoring, youth development, volunteer management, or other relevant areas.
- ☐ Staff recruitment methods are designed to give our program a wide, diverse selection of candidates.
- ☐ Our program screens applicants for both suitability to the position and issues of safety and liability.
- ☐ Our program prepares new staff members by providing indepth orientation and training.
- ☐ Employees have written staff development plans that establish annual goals and are reviewed regularly as part of performance evaluation.
- ☐ Ongoing staff development opportunities are provided to staff, including networking and peer support, formal training workshops, regular check-ins with supervisor, and access to in-house and online resources.

Access to training and technical assistance services

- ☐ Our program is aware of local, state, and national training and technical assistance resources.
- ☐ Our program has identified areas of need, as well as the training and technical assistance providers that can address those needs.
- ☐ Our program has developed an in-house resource collection of mentoring research, how-to guides, and other relevant resources.
- ☐ Our program encourages staff to network with other mentoring professionals and receive necessary training as part of ongoing staff development.

Community awareness of the program

- ☐ Our program has a written plan that provides a clear set of goals, objectives, and activities to foster positive community awareness of our program.
- ☐ We have developed and use a variety of methods to assess the community's awareness and perceptions of our program.
- ☐ Our program has identified the strengths and selling points of our program.
- ☐ Our program has created a brand identity to increase our visibility in the community.
- ☐ We have developed a marketing plan that increases community awareness through:
    - ☐ Print/radio/television/Web media
    - ☐ Newsletters to partners and key community members

- ☐ Flyers and brochures
- ☐ Appearances and presentations at local events
- ☐ Testimonies from current mentors
- ☐ Networking through key community contacts

Use of evaluation data for program enhancement

- ☐ Our program uses evaluation results to improve our internal systems.
- ☐ Our program uses evaluation results to improve and enhance outcomes for youth.
- ☐ Our board of directors and community stakeholders receive information on our evaluation results.
- ☐ Evaluation results are used in marketing the program to prospective volunteers and community partners.
- ☐ Evaluation results are used to increase the funding and sustainability of the program.

Collaboration and networking with other local youth-serving organizations

- ☐ We know about the services that are available to youth and families in our community.
- ☐ Our program has established informal partnerships with other youth service providers in the community.
- ☐ Our program is part of, or has taken a leadership role in developing, a community coalition.
- ☐ We regularly refer youth and their families to other services in the community for assistance with needs that are outside the scope of our program.
- ☐ We have invited representatives from other youth service agencies to be on our advisory council and/or board of directors.

SAMPLE
Timeline for New Mentoring Programs

If your program is just starting out, this chart provides you with a rough timeline of when your program should begin implementing many of the best practices and program components outlined in this guide. Because of the wide variety of designs and structures in mentoring programs, you may have many of these pieces in place already, may prioritize some of them differently, or find that some of these components do not apply to the way your program is structured. This chart is meant to be a generic outline of what the first year, and beyond, might look like for your program.

0–3 MONTHS: INITIAL PLANNING

- Review youth mentoring research and literature.
- Obtain support from existing Board of Directors to proceed with planning (if applicable).
- Form an advisory council or steering committee to guide program development activities.
- Conduct community needs assessment.
- Develop a mission statement, vision, and logic model for your program.
- Begin designing the program's structure and operational procedures.
- Determine basic infrastructure, staffing, and initial funding needs and how you will meet them.
- Begin establishing formal and informal partnerships with community organizations and key stakeholders.
- Have all former partners sign an MOU clarifying mutual goals and responsibilities.
- Begin networking with other local, regional, and national mentoring agencies and technical assistance providers.

3 MONTHS – 6 MONTHS: DEVELOP YOUR PROGRAM

- Hire a program coordinator and other key staff.
- Provide any necessary training for new staff to ensure that they have necessary skills.
- Begin developing your policy and procedure manual.
- Start planning for program evaluation.
- Begin developing a targeted volunteer recruitment plan.
- Develop volunteer applications and other necessary forms.
- Establish procedures for conducting background checks, applicant interviews, and other steps in the volunteer intake and screening process.
- Develop plans for identifying and receiving referrals of youth to be served.
- Develop mentor, youth, and parent/guardian orientation and pre-match training materials.
- Develop procedures for monitoring matches and supporting volunteers.
- Implement first steps of your volunteer recruitment plan by doing presentations for prospective groups of mentors, launching marketing campaign, and accepting applications.

6 MONTHS – 9 MONTHS: BEGIN IMPLEMENTING SERVICES

- Begin active recruitment and intake of youth into the program.
- Begin delivering orientation sessions for prospective mentors and youth.
- Start accepting mentor applications.
- Conduct background checks, interviews, and other screening procedures for volunteer applicants.
- Conduct pre-match training for approved mentors and youth.
- Begin making matches between mentors and youth.
- Begin program evaluation activities.
- Review program staffing and resource needs.

9 MONTHS – ONE YEAR: SOLIDIFY YOUR PROGRAM

- Continue to recruit mentors and youth.
- Revise and update recruitment strategy as needed.
- Review policies and procedures and update policy and procedures manual as needed.
- Supervise mentor/mentee matches using established monitoring procedures.
- Begin providing ongoing training and support for mentors and youth.
- Establish a resource development committee.
- Begin to develop a broad community awareness and marketing plan.
- Continue collecting evaluation data; ensure that data are being properly entered.
- Inform stakeholders, partners, and other interested parties of the progress of the program.
- Review program progress to this point and see if the program's mission, goals, and objectives are being met.
- Access training and technical assistance as needed.
- Review program staffing and resource needs.

ONE YEAR AND BEYOND: SUSTAINING YOUR QUALITY PROGRAM

- Build and maintain informal community partnerships.
- Implement broad community awareness and marketing strategies.
- Implement a resource development plan featuring multiple approaches for long-term financial sustainability.
- Continue to recruit, screen, train, match, monitor, and support program participants.
- Provide recognition of volunteers.
- Revise policies, procedures, volunteer recruitment, and training materials as needed.
- Review staff development needs and offer training or other support for staff as needed.
- Compile initial evaluation findings.
- Analyze program operations and outcome objectives based on initial evaluation findings.
- Access training and technical assistance services from local, state, or national mentoring organizations.
- Keep agency board of directors and program advisory council informed and engaged in program activities.
- Continue to review program staffing and resource needs.

Recommended Reading

From the Hamilton Fish Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities series (available online at: **http://www.hamfish.org)**

Generic Mentoring Program Policy and Procedure Manual

The ABCs of School-Based Mentoring

Training New Mentors

Building Relationships: A Guide for New Mentors

Sustainability Planning and Resource Development for Youth Mentoring Programs

Other Titles From the National Mentoring Center

Marketing for the Recruitment of Mentors: A Guide to Finding and Attracting Volunteers
http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/pdf/marketing.pdf

Measuring the Quality of Mentor Youth Relationships: A Tool for Mentoring Programs
http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/pdf/packeight.pdf

Mentoring Program Development: A Start-Up Toolkit
http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/pdf/startup_toolkit.pdf

Supporting Mentors
http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/pdf/packsix.pdf

Training New Mentees: A Manual for Preparing Youth in Mentoring Programs
http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/pdf/training_new_mentees.pdf

Other titles, such as the *Strengthening Mentoring Programs Training Curriculum* and back issues of the *NMC Bulletin*, can also be downloaded at:
http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/nmc_pubs.php

Select Titles from the Mentoring Resource Center (a project of the NMC)

Making the Grade: A Guide to Incorporating Academic Achievement Into Mentoring Programs and Relationships
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/making_the_grade.pdf

The U.S. Department of Education Mentoring Program's Guide to Screening and Background Checks
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/screening.pdf

Going the Distance: A Guide to Building Lasting Relationships in Mentoring Programs
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/going_the_distance.pdf

Preparing Participants for Mentoring: The U.S. Department of Education Mentoring Program's Guide to Initial Training of Volunteers, Youth, and Parents
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/training.pdf

Effective Mentor Recruitment: Getting Organized, Getting Results
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/recruitment.pdf

Ongoing Training for Mentors: 12 Interactive Sessions for U.S. Department of Education Mentoring Programs
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/ongoing_training.pdf

Building a Sustainable Mentoring Program: A Framework for Resource Development Planning
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/sustainability.pdf

Guide to Mentoring for Parents and Guardians
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/parent_handbook.doc

Marketing Toolkit for Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools Mentoring Programs
http://www.edmentoring.org/toolkit/

The Guide to Key Mentoring Research
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/ws2_supplement1.pdf

Frequently Asked Questions About Research and Evaluation
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/ws2_supplement2.pdf

Key Mentoring Research Resources

Bauldry, S. (2006). *Positive support: Mentoring and depression among high-risk youth.* Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures
http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/202_publication.pdf

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http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/180_publication.pdf

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http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/153_publication.pdf

Herrera, C., Snipe, C. L., & McClanahan, W. S. (2000). *Mentoring school-age children: Relationship development in community-based and school-based programs*. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.
http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/34_publication.pdf

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http://www.childtrends.org/files/MentoringSynthesisFINAL2.6.02Jan.pdf

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http://www.srcd.org/documents/publications/spr/20-3_youth_mentoring.pdf

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http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/111_publication.pdf

More useful mentoring research articles can be found in Dr. Jean Rhodes' "Research Corner" on the MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership Web site at:
http://www.mentoring.org/program_staff/index.php?cid=63

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