

# Referring Youth in Juvenile Justice Settings to Mentoring Programs: Effective Strategies and Practices to Improving the Mentoring Experience for At-Risk and High-Risk Youth

## A RESOURCE COMPENDIUM

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# Findings and Implications of the Research

A new study supported by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), U.S. Department of Justice, identifies effective practices and strategies to improve the mentoring experience for at-risk and high-risk youth who are involved in the juvenile justice system. *Researching the Referral Stage of Youth Mentoring in Six Juvenile Justice Settings: An Exploratory Analysis* examines best practices for referring youth to mentoring when they are in certain juvenile justice system settings, including Juvenile Detention, Juvenile Corrections, Juvenile Probation, Delinquency Court, Youth/Teen Court and Dependency Court. As a low-cost delinquency prevention and intervention option that capitalizes on the resources of local communities and caring individuals, mentoring has emerged as a promising delinquency reduction strategy for at-risk or high-risk youth. This research study, which used multiple methods to capture data from mentoring and juvenile justice settings, provides a deeper understanding of how youth are referred to mentoring, challenges faced during the referral process, examples of effective strategies to face the challenges and action steps. The research was conducted by a team that included Global Youth Justice, National Partnership for Juvenile Services, MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership and criminal justice researchers from the University of Texas at San Antonio.

## Statement of the Problem

Research demonstrates that specific mentoring models and programmatic elements can improve young lives and, eventually, adult productivity. Youth who participate in evidence-based mentoring relationships demonstrate better school attendance, a greater likelihood of going on to higher education and a better attitude toward school than non-mentored youth (Jekielek, Moore and Hair, 2002). Moreover, studies of mentoring programs show that mentoring relationships can reduce negative youth behaviors and prevent substance abuse (Jekielek, et. al., Dubois, 2002).

Mentoring also has the capacity to build proactive tendencies (Lerner, 2007) by incorporating positive youth development philosophy, bolstering protective factors and fostering resiliency. Participation in mentoring strengthens positive social attitudes and peer relationships. Mentored children also have more trusting and communicative relationships with their parents (Rhodes, 2002; Rhodes, Spencer, Keller, Liang and Noam, 2006), an important point for youth who have an incarcerated parent because there is “a particular form of grief and loss that comes from having a parent who is alive but unreachable” (Jucovy, 2003,

## Findings and Implications of the Research

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p.22). Mentoring also helps young people deal with shame and the social stigma associated with having an incarcerated parent by offering additional friendship and active support through dedicated, well-prepared mentors (National Crime Prevention Council).

Combating juvenile delinquency is a central focus of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). OJJDP has long been a leader in recognizing that mentoring can positively affect the lives of young people living in high-risk environments. In fact, high-quality mentoring is a proven method for steering youth away from a life course that leads to truancy, delinquency and eventual disconnection from school, work and a satisfying and productive life. It is important to underscore that OJJDP has also been a leader in recognizing that well-designed and well-implemented mentoring can have a tremendous positive impact on a youth's life chances, as well as recognizing that the converse is also true. If mentoring is not done well, it can harm, rather than help, a child (Rhodes, 2002).

Juvenile crime and delinquency in America continues to be a pressing social problem that has serious negative effects on communities, families, the economy and individuals. According to 2009 data compiled by the FBI and analyzed by the Pittsburgh-based National Center for Juvenile Justice on behalf of OJJDP, there are about 1.9 million arrests for persons under the age of 18 each year. This staggering number does not include "apprehensions" of youth who were not officially arrested for a crime, offense and/or violation. It also does not include youth not caught or apprehended. And, the estimated 1.9 million juvenile arrests include many juveniles who were arrested for more than one crime, offense and/or violation.

Of the 1.9 million juvenile arrests in 2009, courts with juvenile jurisdiction disposed of nearly 1.5 million delinquency cases. Meanwhile, the more than 1,000 teen/youth courts in the United States handled in excess of 100,000 cases. Disposition resulted in 1.02 million juvenile court sanctions with 53 percent of those sanctions resulting in court-ordered probation.

Nationally, fewer than 71,000 juvenile offenders were held in residential placement facilities as of February 2010. The public relies on Juvenile Detention facilities (769 nationwide) and Juvenile Corrections facilities (389 nationwide) for safety regarding juvenile offenders, for humane and constitutional conditions of incarceration and for equipping youth with the skills to live peaceful and productive lives. Despite OJJDP's portfolio of data, information and characteristics on juvenile residential facilities, there is limited support and resources to address the critical issues impacting juvenile confinement facilities and to empower practitioners in these settings. These facilities often operate in relative isolation, raising the likelihood of harm to youth, the staff and the public due, in large part, to limited knowledge of and access to existing risk prevention programs and policies.

During the 1980s, 1990s and still today, there is a unifying theory that helps explain why youth turn to delinquency and why they desist or persist in delinquency over time. This "Social Development Model" rests upon two pillars called "risk" and "protection." Bridging the age-old divide in criminology pitting "root causes" theorists (who tend to explain criminality as an inevitable consequence of injustice and inequality in society) and "individual responsibility" adherents (who place all blame for crime at the hands of offenders), "Social Development" focuses on both individual and

environmental variables with proven connections to offending. The debate on the causes of crime continues, as the negative effects of the problem are felt in the community, at school, with peers, in the family and within the individual. Mentoring is considered an approach that provides positive social development for youth. With the appropriate delivery of mentoring services, youth in juvenile justice settings can overcome the risk factors that jeopardize their future of being a successful, productive citizen.

There is a pressing need to undertake research for purposes of developing best practices that will favorably impact the development and design of mentoring services to these “high-risk” youth. Mentoring relationships should be largely voluntary, and most youth and juvenile justice professionals agree mentoring should not be a sanction imposed in the juvenile justice system. Research already tells us that mentoring matches terminated early can and do have a negative impact on the youth being mentored.

This project specifically studied the mentoring “Referral Stage” in order to target greater numbers of juvenile justice system involved youth for appropriate mentoring services. The project design relied heavily on tasks and strategies that will foster new local relationships among mentoring programs and juvenile justice systems/services. This project also examined specific steps in making mentoring referrals, accepting referrals and denying referrals.

## Summary of Key Findings

This section summarizes the main points gleaned from the project research and the resultant 234-page report.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the best practices in identifying and referring youth to mentoring programs across distinct juvenile justice settings?
2. What is the capacity of the mentoring community to support the youth identified for mentoring from six juvenile justice settings?
3. What is the quality of mentoring programs, as defined by alignment with the *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*<sup>TM</sup>, across the juvenile justice settings?
4. What intermediate outcomes are achieved by mentoring throughout the settings?

Each of the key findings listed in the following sections will be labeled according to the research question they address. Key findings are denoted with an RQ1, RQ2, RQ3 or RQ4.

### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE NATIONAL SURVEY

- The survey netted a large sample size (N = 1,197).
- Response rates were incalculable but completion rate within the acceptable range – 64.22 percent.
- All 50 United States were represented by the survey respondents.
- Program respondents hailed from a variety of community types ranging from urban, suburban, rural and tribal communities.

## Findings and Implications of the Research

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- Roughly 60 percent of juvenile justice setting respondents reported that their program utilizes youth mentoring in some capacity (RQ2).
- Nearly 40 percent of mentoring programs serve juvenile justice involved youth (RQ2).
- About half of all juvenile justice settings that utilize mentoring reported that more than 50 percent of referred youth are ultimately placed into mentoring relationships (RQ1 & RQ2).
- Juvenile justice setting respondents reported that their mentoring programs typically make mentor-mentee matches in fewer than 90 days (RQ2 & RQ4).
- The majority of juvenile justice settings reported that they “always” assess youth for their level of risk prior to making a referral to a mentoring program (RQ3).
- The majority of juvenile justice settings reported that between 76 percent and 100 percent of youth are charged with a crime prior to being referred to a mentoring program (RQ1).
- Mentoring is used as a diversionary tactic only about 40 percent of the time (RQ1).
- The vast majority of mentoring programs (~80 percent) utilize individually based mentoring strategies (RQ3).
- The majority of mentoring programs reported that mentors and mentees meet three or more times a month (RQ3 & RQ4).
- More than 90 percent of mentoring programs reported that they “always” perform criminal background checks on their mentors (RQ3).
- Of the six juvenile justice settings analyzed, none appeared to have greater success at placing youth in mentoring relationships (i.e., there is parity in mentoring referral success across the six settings) (RQ2 & RQ4).
- Successful placement and time until a match is made are closely intertwined such that juvenile justice programs that are more successful at placing youth in mentoring tend to refer youth to programs that have shorter waiting lists (RQ1 & RQ4).
- Mentoring programs that appear, on paper at least, to be more professional report more positive outcomes. For instance, programs with longer meeting lengths, greater meeting frequency, and that utilize formal training have youth who succeed more frequently (RQ4).
- Most meetings between mentor and mentee last between one and two hours (RQ4).
- Roughly 75 percent of programs reported that they have utilized match commitments for mentors (RQ4).
- Nearly all programs set goals for mentor/mentee to achieve (RQ4).
- Most programs reported that a majority of their youth achieve the goals set for them (RQ4).

### KEY FINDINGS FROM THE SITE VISITS

- Juvenile justice settings using embedded programs have an easier time matching youth and mentors (RQ1, RQ2, & RQ4).
- Mentoring is overwhelmingly voluntary (RQ3).
- Some sites reported that youth demeanor played a role in the decision to refer — (RQ1 & RQ2).

- Most youth are deemed acceptable for referral, but fewer end up matched — mostly due to voluntary nature of mentoring (RQ2 & RQ4).
- Some sites reported the use of MENTOR's *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*, but most reported that they looked for “evidence-based programs” to partner with for services delivery (RQ3).
- Mentoring is delivered mostly by established programs like BBBS and BGC (RQ3).
- Most mentoring is one-on-one and takes place in community locations (RQ3).
- Intake and assessment of all youth is recommended prior to referral (RQ1).
- Most settings and programs use similar criteria for assessing the acceptability of mentoring (RQ1).
- Common reasons youth are unacceptable: violence, serious mental health, drug use (RQ2 & RQ4).
- External reason youth are not matched: family refusal (RQ2 & RQ4).
- The most pressing obstacle to matching is finding enough suitable mentors — especially for certain demographics like black males (RQ1, RQ2, & RQ4).
- Mentoring tends to be gender-segregated: females mentor females; males mentor males (RQ3).
- Few juvenile justice settings follow-up with youth after referral (RQ4).

## **ADVANTAGES, CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SITE VISITS**

### **Youth Courts**

#### **Advantages:**

- The use of adult mentors, due to single parent or no parent households
- Easily accessible programs (geographic circumstances)
- Operating multiple chemical addiction programs, Alcohol Awareness sessions, direct treatment, and drug/alcohol screening tests and evaluations
- Serving high-risk youth and at-risk youth
- School- and community-based approaches
- Staff well positioned to identify youth for the necessary services

#### **Challenges:**

- Participation is voluntary, difficult in referring youth
- Continued funding
- Some youth arrested may not be residents of the region
- Waiting list
- Negative behavior of parents/legal guardians regarding matching youth with an adult mentor
- Unwillingness by youth and/or parents/guardians to accept mentoring referral

## Findings and Implications of the Research

continued

### **Recommendations:**

- Match support
- Voluntary referrals
- Do not accept youth who are a danger to themselves, mentors or staff.
- Referrals due to mental health issues usually don't work out well.
- Utilization of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and case referral flowcharts
- Utilize mentoring as a wrap-around service —
- Reduce recidivism; improve school attendance; minimize contact with juvenile and/or criminal justice system; improve academic performance, pro-social engagement and employment preparation
- Information gathered at intake should be shared with the Youth/Teen Court jury.
- Allow teen jury to ask questions to determine if mentoring would benefit the youth.
- Deliberating jury should be allowed to make referrals.
- Coordinator should complete all forms needed for a referral.

### ***Dependency Courts***

#### **Advantages:**

- Voluntary Participation
- Relationships built internally and externally with referral sources

- Permanency plan in place/ long-term settings
- Either no waiting list or a very short one
- Staff have very extensive information on the children

#### **Challenges:**

- Unsafe homes — family problems, mental health issues, aggression, significant medical issues
- Child Protective Services (CPS) doesn't have a communication tracking system
- Staff continually change
- Youth lack technology— cell phones and/or computers
- Foster care youth may be transient and often AWOL
- Incomplete referral packets
- Overwhelmed foster parents
- Challenge to match older youth

#### ***Recommendations:***

- One-on-one attention to the child
- Policy not to force a mentor onto a child/youth
- Embedded programs
- Refer all youth as soon as possible.
- Longer duration of a match
- Give youth the opportunity to meet several potential mentors and let them choose.

- Exclusive services for foster care youth
- Determine appropriate hearings for mentor involvement – Review Hearings, Disposition Hearings, Adoption Hearings, etc.
- Conduct intake interviews.
- Formal referral guidelines
- Utilize social media to maintain contact and communication.

### ***Juvenile Detention***

#### **Advantages:**

- Relationship building during period of incarceration due to embedded mentor programs
- Contact within 24 hours of youth post-release
- Maintaining weekly contact to allow youth the opportunity to decide at any point to become actively involved with the mentoring program
- All youth “referred,” thus exposed to activities

#### **Challenges:**

- Post-release youth may change their mind about participating.
- Confidentiality issues make it difficult for staff to access information required in the membership application.
- Difficult to help probation officers understand what youth are appropriate for referral to the Second Chance Program

- Misunderstanding by youth of mentoring culture and programs
- Parent information difficult to access
- Changes in placement

#### ***Recommendations:***

- Utilization of embedded programs
- Make mentoring activities part of the regularly scheduled programming at the detention facility.
- Allow site coordinator to have access to detained youth outside of/in addition to regularly scheduled activities.
- Allow mentoring staff to be involved in regular detention staff meetings.

### ***Juvenile Corrections***

#### **Advantages:**

- One-on-one services
- Self-referrals and voluntary participation have a greater degree of commitment.
- Allowing youth to return and serve as a mentor
- Diverse staff — Utilizing professionals in mental health, social work, community-based services, mentoring and juvenile justice experience
- Provide mentoring approval forms with the intake paperwork.
- Periodic presentations to inform youth of the services

## Findings and Implications of the Research

continued

- Placement considerations to ensure mentorship may continue post-release

### **Challenges:**

- Non-motivated youth
- Maintaining the mentor/youth relationship
- Keeping current contact information for youth
- African-American young males seen as less interested in participating than other races/ethnicities
- A new intake may need to wait between nine and 10 weeks before a referral may be made.
- Youth may be excluded if they engage in disruptive behavior.
- Parent refusal
- Youth may age out of the system before a match can be made.
- Geography — Youth are difficult to follow back to their community due to distance, time and financial constraints.
- Hard to recruit volunteer mentors
- Limited activities youth may participate in while institutionalized
- Orientation programs struggle to prepare mentors.

### **Recommendations:**

- Relationships and trust grounded in research-based programming
- Housing the lead mentoring staff person inside the juvenile justice setting

- Use of a mentoring specialist and master mentor
- Word of mouth recruitment of youth
- Voluntary participation
- Appreciation of volunteers (mentors); showing them how important they are and how their work is appreciated
- Not excluding any youth based on criminal offense
- Relationship building prior to youth's release
- Good communication between juvenile justice and mentoring program staff
- Sustainability plan to continue programs in the absence of grant funds
- Minimum of two years for grant funded programs to institutionalize and start gathering outcome data

### ***Delinquency Courts***

#### ***Advantages:***

- Multiple, diverse formal and informal referral sources
- Referrals with a heavy emphasis on mental health
- Use of Juvenile Review Boards (JRB) operated throughout the city
- More personalized and time sensitive referrals, due to only one referral source
- Embedded mentoring program
- Allowing parental referrals
- After-school oversight

**Challenges:**

- Youth may become more deeply involved with the juvenile justice system to include incarceration.
- Involvement in other mandated support doesn't allow for sufficient time to become involved in a structured mentor relationship.
- Parents/guardians unwilling to accept referral
- Referrals with a dual diagnosis are often excluded if there are sexual, psychological or violent behaviors.
- A lack of willing and trained adult mentors.
- Foster care youth awaiting decisions regarding reunification or termination of parental rights can't be referred.
- Discrepancy between boys and girls who are being diverted from the formal court to the teen court
- Transportation issues
- Gang involvement

**Recommendations:**

- Voluntary referrals
- Mentoring as a "wrap-around" service
- Referring at the front end of the juvenile justice system
- Do not match a youth who may be dangerous to themselves or others
- Use of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
- Allow youth to return as a volunteer.

- Provide law-related education, as well as development opportunities.
- Use of adult and youth mentors
- Policy of "checking your colors" at the door regarding gang colors
- Use of surveillance cameras

**Juvenile Probation****Advantages:**

- Close proximity of staff to courts and juvenile services center
- Referred youth may be walked immediately to an office in the court to complete intake.
- Expedient initiation of services/contact with the youth within 24-72 hours
- Trusting relationships
- Strength-based and participant-driven vetting process
- Youth are given ample time to consider the commitment they are being asked to give.
- Safety has been a non-issue.
- Mentoring services may be court ordered.
- Information sharing
- Services started in between 14 and 30 days without a waiting list.
- Small number of juveniles referred allows for concentrated relationships
- Shared respect and trust by all participants

## Findings and Implications of the Research

continued

- Setting a clear understanding that youth are from the same community

### **Challenges:**

- Parents may refuse to transport youth/ fail to support youth's participation.
- Change of placement can affect the capability to mentor youth.
- Not enough mentors for one-on-one mentoring
- May be a waiting list
- Adversarial relationships between youth and probation staff
- Lack of mental preparedness of the youth
- Unrealistic goal setting
- Youth may live in an unsafe environment.
- Geography — Difficult for youth to maintain residence in the same area during the mentoring process
- Lack of formalized infrastructure/ inconsistency in the referral process
- Risk assessments, needs instruments, interviews or case staffing may not have been used.
- Role of probation officer not clearly defined/ lead to inconsistent support
- Provide youth with information and resources for higher education.
- Engage youth in new pro-social relationships and activities.
- Allow youth to participate after the mentoring commitment.
- Share critical information across systems (agencies).
- Allow youth to serve in a leadership capacity.
- Require all referral sources to adhere to the same referral guidelines.
- Involve a diverse community to demonstrate the community's commitment to the youth.
- Mentor/staff should have a background understanding of the juvenile justice system.
- Reduce "turf issues" by allowing staff and probation officers to work as a team of equals.
- Maintain a mentor relationship for between three and four years (until youth graduates high school).
- Small residential facilities allow for critical insight in screening issues.
- Mentor program should have a central figure (master mentor).
- Use mentors/staff who have made it a life goal to help juveniles.

### **Recommendations:**

- House mentoring staff in the court.
- Provide opportunities to engage the siblings of the referred youth.

## LISTINGS OF SITES VISITED

### Project Partner: Global Youth Justice

Site visits completed: 12

Juvenile justice settings: Delinquency Court, Youth/Teen Court, Dependency Court

(Some sites, as noted below, provided multiple settings.)

1. Lawrenceville, IL (Det./Corrections/Prob./Delinquency Court/Youth/Teen Court/Dependency Court)
2. Knoxville/Kingsport, TN (Delinquency Court, Dependency Court)
3. Mi Casa, Hartford, CT (Delinquency Court)
4. New Bedford, MA (Delinquency Court, Youth/Teen Court)
5. Norfolk, VA (Dependency Court)
6. Saratoga, NY (Dependency Court)
7. Burlington, VT (Dependency Court)
8. San Diego, CA (Dependency Court, Probation)
9. Clarke County, NV (Delinquency Court)
10. East Central, MS (Delinquency Court and Youth/Teen Court)
11. Ponca City, OK (Kay County) (Delinquency Court, Youth/Teen Court, Probation)
12. Albany County, NY (Delinquency Court, Youth/Teen Court, Probation)

### Project Partner: National Partnership for Juvenile Services

Site visits completed: 13

Juvenile justice Settings: Detention, Corrections, Probation

1. Knoxville, TN (Detention)
2. Buffalo, NY (Detention)
3. Portland, ME (Corrections)
4. Manchester, NH (Corrections)
5. Anchorage, AK (Corrections)
6. Wichita, KS (Corrections)
7. South Bend, IN (Corrections)
8. Logansport, IN (Corrections)
9. Claremont, NH (Probation)
10. Seguin, TX (Probation)
11. Kalamazoo, MI (Probation)
12. Knoxville, TN (Probation)
13. Shreveport, LA (Probation)

## LISTING OF STATE MENTORING PARTNERSHIPS

### ARIZONA

Communities In Schools of Arizona  
[www.cisarizona.org](http://www.cisarizona.org)

### CALIFORNIA

#### *(Developing MP)*

CA Center for Youth Development and Health  
Promotion/CA Mentor Foundation

### CONNECTICUT

Governor's Prevention Partnership  
[www.preventionworksct.org](http://www.preventionworksct.org)

### DELAWARE

Delaware Mentoring Council  
[www.delawarementoring.org](http://www.delawarementoring.org)

### FLORIDA

#### *Palm Beach*

Mentor Center of Palm Beach County  
[www.cscppbc.org/mentoring](http://www.cscppbc.org/mentoring)

### INDIANA

Indiana Mentoring Partnership  
[www.iyi.org/indiana-mentoring-partnership.aspx](http://www.iyi.org/indiana-mentoring-partnership.aspx)

### IOWA

Iowa Mentoring Partnership  
[www.iowamentoring.org](http://www.iowamentoring.org)

### KANSAS

Kansas Mentors  
[www.kansasmentors.kansas.gov](http://www.kansasmentors.kansas.gov)

### MAINE

Maine Mentoring Partnership  
[www.jmg.org](http://www.jmg.org)

### MARYLAND

Big Brothers Big Sisters and the  
Maryland Mentoring Partnership  
[www.biglittle.org](http://www.biglittle.org)

### MASSACHUSETTS

Mass Mentoring Partnership  
[www.massmentors.org](http://www.massmentors.org)

### MICHIGAN

Mentor Michigan  
[www.michigan.gov/mentormichigan](http://www.michigan.gov/mentormichigan)

### MINNESOTA

Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota  
[www.mpmn.org](http://www.mpmn.org)

### NEBRASKA

Midlands Mentoring Partnership  
[www.mmpomaha.org](http://www.mmpomaha.org)

### NEW YORK

The Mentoring Partnership of New York  
and Long Island  
[www.mentorkids.org](http://www.mentorkids.org)

### NEW JERSEY

#### *(Developing MP)*

New Jersey Mentoring Partnership

## **NORTH CAROLINA**

Communities In Schools of NC  
[www.ncmentoring.org](http://www.ncmentoring.org)

## **OHIO**

The Mentoring Center of Central Ohio  
[www.mentoringcenterco.org](http://www.mentoringcenterco.org)

## **OREGON**

Oregon Mentors  
[www.oregonmentors.org](http://www.oregonmentors.org)

## **PENNSYLVANIA**

*Philadelphia*  
The Campaign for Mentoring  
[www.uwsepa.org/Volunteer\\_mentoring.asp](http://www.uwsepa.org/Volunteer_mentoring.asp)

*Pittsburgh*  
The Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern  
Pennsylvania  
[www.mentoringpittsburgh.org](http://www.mentoringpittsburgh.org)

## **RHODE ISLAND**

Rhode Island Mentoring Partnership  
[www.mentorRI.org](http://www.mentorRI.org)

## **TENNESSEE**

*Memphis*  
Memphis Grizzlies Charitable Fund  
[www.teamupmemphis.org](http://www.teamupmemphis.org)

## **VERMONT**

Mobius, The Mentoring Movement  
[www.mobiusmentors.org](http://www.mobiusmentors.org)

## **VIRGINIA**

*Richmond*  
Virginia Mentoring Partnership  
[www.vamentoring.org](http://www.vamentoring.org)

*Fairfax*  
Fairfax Partnership for Youth  
[www.mentorfairfax.org](http://www.mentorfairfax.org)

## **WASHINGTON**

Washington State Mentors  
[www.wamentors.org](http://www.wamentors.org)

## **WISCONSIN**

*(Developing MP)*  
Mentor Kenosha & Racine, member of the  
collaborative Midwest Region Mentoring Hub

# RESOURCES

## Training and Technical Assistance Resources

*OJJDP Research Report on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Full Report*

*OJJDP Research Report on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Executive Summary*

*Juvenile Justice Journal on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Special Edition*

Memorandums of Understanding  
Six Resource Guides for Developing MOUs for Juvenile Justice and Mentoring Services

PowerPoint Presentations for  
Six Juvenile Justice Settings and Mentoring

Six Technical Assistance Profiles:  
*Examining the Referral Stage for Mentoring High-Risk Youth*

MENTOR's *Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™, Third Edition*

MENTOR's *Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™ Toolkit – Juvenile Justice Section*

MENTOR's *Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™, Third Edition, Checklist for Mentoring Programs*

**For free, downloadable versions of these resources, visit:**

MENTOR at [http://www.mentoring.org/program\\_resources/Researching\\_the\\_Referral\\_Stage/](http://www.mentoring.org/program_resources/Researching_the_Referral_Stage/);

Global Youth Justice at <http://www.globalyouthjustice.org/Mentoring.html>; and

National Partnership for Juvenile Services at <http://www.npjs.org/highriskyouth.php>

## Websites

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention – Mentoring Resources  
[www.ojjdp.gov/programs/mentoring.html](http://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/mentoring.html)

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention – Model Program Guide/Mentoring  
[www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/progTypesMentoring.aspx](http://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/progTypesMentoring.aspx)

Global Youth Justice Website – Mentoring High Risk Youth Resources  
[www.globalyouthjustice.org/Mentoring.html](http://www.globalyouthjustice.org/Mentoring.html)

National Partnership for Juvenile Services – Mentoring High Risk Youth Resources  
[www.npjs.org/](http://www.npjs.org/)

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership  
[www.mentoring.org/](http://www.mentoring.org/)

Administration for Children, Youth and Families, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services  
[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/acyf/](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/acyf/)

State-by-State Listing of Legislation and Statutes Regarding Juveniles  
[www.ncjj.org/Research\\_Resources/State\\_Profiles.aspx](http://www.ncjj.org/Research_Resources/State_Profiles.aspx)

Big Brother Big Sisters of East TN  
Knoxville, TN, USA  
[bigbrothersbigsistersetn.org/](http://bigbrothersbigsistersetn.org/)

Boys and Girls Clubs of Las Vegas  
Las Vegas, NV, USA  
[www.bgclv.org/index.php](http://www.bgclv.org/index.php)

Juvenile Court and Juvenile Probation  
Choctaw Tribal Court  
Mississippi Band of Indians  
Durant, OK, USA  
[www.choctaw.org/government/court/juvenile.html](http://www.choctaw.org/government/court/juvenile.html)

Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma  
Mentoring Program and Youth Services  
Ponca City, OK, USA  
[www.ponca.com/118837.html](http://www.ponca.com/118837.html)

Team Up Mentoring Program  
Norfolk, VA, USA  
[theupcenter.org/For\\_Adults/mentoring.htm](http://theupcenter.org/For_Adults/mentoring.htm)

Spectrum Mentoring Program  
Burlington, VT, USA  
[www.spectrumvt.org/mentoring-program/](http://www.spectrumvt.org/mentoring-program/)

San Diego Youth Services Mentoring Program  
San Diego, CA, USA  
[www.sdyouthservices.org/site/PageServer?  
pagename=foster](http://www.sdyouthservices.org/site/PageServer?pagename=foster)

Saratoga Mentoring Program  
Catholic Charities of Saratoga  
Saratoga, NY, USA  
[www.saratogamentoring.org/](http://www.saratogamentoring.org/)

Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma – Tribal Court  
Ponca City, OK, USA  
[www.ponca.com/118837.html](http://www.ponca.com/118837.html)

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska  
Anchorage, AK  
[www.bbbsak.org](http://www.bbbsak.org)

Goodwill Industries of Northern New England  
Portland, ME  
[www.goodwillnne.org](http://www.goodwillnne.org)

Northeastern Center  
Kendallville, IN  
[www.necmh.org/bodycfm?lv1=servic&lv2  
=latino](http://www.necmh.org/bodycfm?lv1=servic&lv2=latino)

The Kennedy Center of Louisiana  
Shreveport, LA  
[www.weallwinn.com](http://www.weallwinn.com)

Boys and Girls Club of the Tennessee Valley  
Knoxville, TN  
[ww.bgctnv.org](http://ww.bgctnv.org)

Boys and Girls Club of Buffalo  
Buffalo, NY  
[www.bgcbuffalo.org](http://www.bgcbuffalo.org)

Goodwill Industries of Northern New England  
Portland, ME  
[www.goodwillnne.org](http://www.goodwillnne.org)

SMILES Mentoring Program  
New Bedford, MA, USA  
<http://paaca.org/>

New Bedford Youth Court  
Massachusetts, USA  
<http://paaca.org/>

Choctaw Tribal Teen Court and Mentoring Program  
Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians  
Durant, OK, USA  
[www.choctaw.org/government/court/teen.html](http://www.choctaw.org/government/court/teen.html)

Colonie Youth Court  
Town of Colonie, NY, USA  
[www.colonie.org/police/youthcourt/](http://www.colonie.org/police/youthcourt/)

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Capital Region  
Albany, NY, USA  
[www.bbbs.org/site/c.pwL6KhNWLvH/b.3510415/  
k.7D2D/Big\\_Brothers\\_Big\\_Sisters\\_of\\_the\\_  
Capital\\_Region.htm](http://www.bbbs.org/site/c.pwL6KhNWLvH/b.3510415/k.7D2D/Big_Brothers_Big_Sisters_of_the_Capital_Region.htm)

## GRANT PARTNERS

**Global Youth Justice** proactively champions the global expansion of quality volunteer-driven youth justice and juvenile justice voluntary diversion programs often called youth court, teen court, peer court, student court, peer jury and youth peer panel. Record numbers of volunteer youth (including former juvenile offenders) now serve as jurors, defenders, prosecutors, judges and clerk/bailiffs in local juvenile justice systems on real juvenile crimes, offenses and violations involving their peers. A record 1,407 plus communities around the globe now operate one of these cost-effective programs to reduce the incidence and prevent the escalation of juvenile crime.

If negative peer pressure is a primary factor in leading some youth to commit a crime, offense and/or violation, then positive peer pressure can be harnessed and redirected to become a positive force and lead other youth to adhere to the rule of law and become more productive citizens. These youth justice and juvenile justice voluntary diversion programs harness positive peer pressure and utilize it in a peer judgment setting to help address the anti-social, delinquent, and/or criminal behavior of youth. The “peer judgment” and “positive peer pressure” aspects of these programs are the two primary programmatic elements which separate these youth justice and juvenile justice voluntary diversion programs from all of the others. Log on to [www.GlobalYouthJustice.org](http://www.GlobalYouthJustice.org) for more information.

**MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership** has been the unifying champion for expanded quality youth mentoring in the United States for more than 20 years. In this time, the number of young people in mentoring relationships has grown from 300,000 to three million. MENTOR’s mission is to close the gap

between youth in mentoring relationships and the remaining 15 million young people who want and need a caring adult in their life. MENTOR has galvanized the mentoring movement through a variety of leverage points and across sectors, which includes our national network of affiliated Mentoring Partnerships that drive and fuel an increase in the quality and quantity of mentoring opportunities for America’s young people. We develop and deliver resources to them, provide a public voice for mentoring and promote quality for mentoring through standards, cutting-edge research and state-of-the-art tools so that as many young people as possible can benefit from a safe, quality mentoring experience.

### **National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS)**

is a nonprofit collaboration of four juvenile justice advocacy and service delivery organizations committed to improving the nation’s juvenile justice system by providing specific, results-oriented training and technical assistance. NPJS is the guardian for safety to ensure confined youth are well-treated in secure and non-secure environments; to ensure facility staff are given the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities to improve their overall job performance, increase their level of personal safety, as well as the care of the youth in their charge; and to ensure the overall security of the community. NPJS is an advocate for fairness in the juvenile justice system and works to eliminate racial disparities. The NPJS is comprised of the National Juvenile Detention Association; the National Association of Juvenile Correctional Agencies; the Juvenile Justice Trainers Association; and the Council for Educators of At-Risk and Delinquent Youth. More information about NPJS can be found at [www.npjs.org](http://www.npjs.org).

# APPENDIX

This project was supported by Grant #2010-JU-FX-0118 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication/program/ exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.

# 1

## Delinquency Court and Mentoring Memorandum of Understanding

Researching the  
Referral Stage of  
Youth Mentoring  
in Six Juvenile  
Justice Settings

1

# Overview

## **What is a Memorandum of Understanding?**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is often explained as a document used to describe a common understanding of a working relationship between two (2) or more parties/entities. The document is not as binding as a contract, but it outlines a commitment between the parties/entities to work together collaboratively toward the same purpose or goal(s) and objective(s) and, related to the use of shared work, services and/or resources. A good MOU can foster effective communication between/among partners, increase access to a wide range of resources, strengthen existing and new partnerships and provide a framework for addressing issues of mutual concern.

## **Why is a Memorandum of Understanding Important?**

MOUs build collaborative relationships: The process of negotiating a MOU between a mentoring program and a Juvenile Justice partner can help build a more collaborative working relationship, provide more empathy and a deeper understanding of partner issues, and result in more refined solutions to existing problems.

## **MOUs Identify the Structure for the Partnership**

The MOU provides a structure for a working relationship and clarifies what each of the partners will do to further the collaboration. The MOU identifies the specific resources that will support the partnership and defines how each will be used. In addition, language clarifying the type of staff, scope of work, job descriptions and

provided services help to formalize the partnership. Most importantly, the MOU defines the specific commitments between partners to meet mutually agreed upon goals.

## **Delinquency Court Description**

Delinquency Courts have jurisdiction over juveniles, juvenile delinquents, status offenders and Children and Youth in Need of Supervision. All Juvenile Courts are civil bodies. This means that juveniles cannot acquire a criminal record directly from Delinquency Court actions, where the actions remain confined to the Delinquency Court. The Delinquency Court is most commonly associated with the Juvenile Justice System and juveniles who have committed a crime, offense and/or violation.

## **Mentoring Program Description**

Mentoring involves a non-parental adult who plays an important role in promoting healthy development for youth. There are many mentoring models and even more programmatic differences within the different mentoring models. The goal of mentoring programs is to provide youth with positive adult contact and, thereby, reduce risk factors (e.g., early antisocial behavior, alienation, lack of commitment to school) by enhancing protective factors (e.g., healthy beliefs, opportunities for involvement, and social and material reinforcement for appropriate behavior). Mentors provide youth with personal connectedness, supervision and guidance, skills training, career or cultural enrichment opportunities, a knowledge of spirituality and values and, perhaps most importantly, goals and hope for the future.

## Tips and Strategies for Writing MOUs

### Tip 1

Identify all individuals/entities that will be involved in the MOU agreement and hold a meeting to identify the shared functions, services and/or resources that will support the collaboration. Discuss a plan as to how the parties/entities can and may operate together to deliver services and/or share resources.

### Tip 2

Write out the primary purpose or main goal(s)/objective(s) of the agreement and determine what specific outcomes are expected. The purpose statement can include an identification of the parties involved, as well as the terms and conditions of the agreement. Depending on the style and complexity of the agreement, some documents begin with an opening statement or preamble that introduces the names of the parties/entities that are involved in the agreement.

### Tip 3

Determine a timeline as to when the partnership and agreement will begin and when it will end. Be specific regarding the dates and any other terms determined to be of importance.

**Sample timeline statement:** This agreement will be active from September 1, 2011, to August 31, 2012. It can be amended by mutual agreement at any time during the year. In the event that either party wants to be released from this agreement, 90 days written notice to the other party would be required.

### Tip 4

Write down and determine which organization will be responsible for what pieces of work, services and/or resources.

**Sample partnership responsibility statement:** Each party hereby agrees to the following administrative responsibilities.

- A. Delinquency Court will (list agreements).
- B. Mentoring program will (list agreements).
- C. Delinquency Court and mentoring program will (list agreements).

### Tip 5

Draft the MOU based on the decisions that were made during the meeting, then let all parties review, sign, date and authorize the document.

## MOU Policy and Programmatic Discussion Points

- Discuss referrals of youth from the Delinquency Court who are re-arrested for a subsequent juvenile crime, offense and/or violation after the referral has been made and before the formal mentoring match has taken place.
- Discuss geographic and demographic considerations when making and accepting referrals of Delinquency Court involved youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss referrals of youth from the Delinquency Court within the context of “formal arrests” and/or “informal arrests” and implications on making referrals of such youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss the allowable ages of Delinquency Court involved youth who are eligible for referrals of mentoring services.
- Discuss the characteristics and challenges typically associated with youth who are involved with the Delinquency Court.
- Discuss the differences and/or similarities between the most common Juvenile Justice settings to include: Dependency Court, Delinquency Court, Teen Court/Youth Court diversion program, Juvenile Probation, Juvenile Correctional Facility and Juvenile Detention Facility.
- Discuss the specific individuals who have authority to make referrals of Delinquency Court involved youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss the Delinquency Court hearings within the context of which one(s) are appropriate for making well-informed decisions to refer youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss having an agreed upon formal, written referral policy which takes into consideration a wide range of factors to be discussed and agreed upon between the Delinquency Court and mentoring program.
- Discuss the referral of youth from juvenile diversion/intervention programs who are involved with the Delinquency Court as it relates to the referral of mentoring services.
- Discuss creating a visual referral flowchart for the Delinquency Court and mentoring program, including a wide range of steps from making the referral to match termination, among other actions as related to mentoring Delinquency Court involved youth.
- Discuss referrals within the context of voluntary referrals and/or involuntary referrals of Delinquency Court involved youth for mentoring services.
- Discuss your individualized considerations and requirements for mentoring programs to consider when Delinquency Court youth are referred for mentoring services and for Delinquency Court to consider when making referrals to a mentoring program.
- Discuss all local mentoring programs within the context of various mentoring models and services which may and/or may not be appropriate for Delinquency Court involved youth of varying ages.
- Discuss any statutory and/or legal considerations to consider when Delinquency Court youth are referred for mentoring services.
- Discuss how youth with both Delinquency Court and Dependency involvement will be handled when making referrals of these high-risk youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss match termination and emergency issues within the context of how it will be handled for Delinquency Court involved youth engaged in a current mentoring match.
- Discuss the Delinquency Court Profile and Delinquency Court PowerPoint Presentation listed below under Training and Technical Assistance Resources, in addition to other helpful resources provided on the next page.

## Training and Technical Assistance Resources

### Delinquency Courts and Mentoring Programs

*OJJDP Research Report on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Full Report*

*OJJDP Research Report on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Executive Summary*

*Juvenile Justice Journal on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Special Edition*

Memorandums of Understanding  
Six Resource Guides for Developing MOUs  
for Juvenile Justice and Mentoring Services

PowerPoint Presentations for  
Six Juvenile Justice Settings and Mentoring

Six Technical Assistance Profiles:  
*Examining the Referral Stage for Mentoring High-Risk Youth*

MENTOR's *Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™, Third Edition*

MENTOR's *Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™ Toolkit – Juvenile Justice Section*

MENTOR's *Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™, Third Edition, Checklist for Mentoring Programs*

**For free, downloadable versions of these resources, visit:**

MENTOR at [http://www.mentoring.org/program\\_resources/Researching\\_the\\_Referral\\_Stage/](http://www.mentoring.org/program_resources/Researching_the_Referral_Stage/);

Global Youth Justice at <http://www.globalyouthjustice.org/Mentoring.html>; and

National Partnership for Juvenile Services at <http://www.npjs.org/highriskyouth.php>

### Websites of Interest

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention – Mentoring Resources  
<http://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/mentoring.html>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention – Model Program Guide/Mentoring  
<http://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/progTypesMentoring.aspx>

Global Youth Justice Website – Mentoring High Risk Youth Resources  
<http://www.globalyouthjustice.org/Mentoring.html>

National Partnership for Juvenile Services – Mentoring High Risk Youth Resources  
<http://www.npjs.org/>

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership  
<http://www.mentoring.org/>



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## PROJECT PARTNERS



# 2

## Dependency Court and Mentoring Memorandum of Understanding

Researching the  
Referral Stage of  
Youth Mentoring  
in Six Juvenile  
Justice Settings

2

# Overview

## What is a Memorandum of Understanding?

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is often explained as a document used to describe a common understanding of a working relationship between two (2) or more parties/entities. The document is not as binding as a contract, but it outlines a commitment between the parties/entities to work together collaboratively toward the same purpose or goal(s) and objective(s) and, related to the use of shared work, services and/or resources. A good MOU can foster effective communication between/among partners, increase access to a wide range of resources, strengthen existing and new partnerships and provide a framework for addressing issues of mutual concern.

## Why is a Memorandum of Understanding Important?

MOUs build collaborative relationships: The process of negotiating a MOU between a mentoring program and a Juvenile Justice partner can help build a more collaborative working relationship, provide more empathy and a deeper understanding of partner issues, and result in more refined solutions to existing problems.

## MOUs Identify the Structure for the Partnership

The MOU provides a structure for a working relationship and clarifies what each of the partners will do to further the collaboration. The MOU identifies the specific resources that will support the partnership and defines how each will be used. In addition, language clarifying the type of staff, scope of work, job descriptions, and

provided services help to formalize the partnership. Most importantly, the MOU defines the specific commitments between partners to meet mutually agreed upon goals.

## Dependency Court Description

Dependency Courts involve a juvenile (child/youth), typically in cases of abuse, neglect and mistreatment. Judges determine if allegations of abuse or neglect are sustained by the evidence and, if so, are legally sufficient to support state intervention on behalf of the child. Some youth who appear in the Delinquency Court also appear in the Dependency Court for dual adjudicatory issues. The Dependency Court is most commonly associated with foster care, abuse and neglect issues involving youth younger than 18.

## Mentoring Program Description

Mentoring involves a non-parental adult who plays an important role in promoting healthy development for youth. There are many mentoring models and even more programmatic differences within the models. The goal of mentoring programs is to provide youth with positive adult contact and, thereby, reduce risk factors (e.g., early antisocial behavior, alienation, lack of commitment to school) by enhancing protective factors (e.g., healthy beliefs, opportunities for involvement, and social and material reinforcement for appropriate behavior). Mentors provide youth with personal connectedness, supervision and guidance, skills training, career or cultural enrichment opportunities, a knowledge of spirituality and values and, perhaps most importantly, goals and hope for the future.

## Tips and Strategies for Writing MOUs

Tip

1

Identify all individuals/entities that will be involved in the MOU agreement and hold a meeting to identify the shared functions, services and/or resources that will support the collaboration. Discuss a plan as to how the parties/entities can and may operate together to deliver services and/or share resources.

Tip

2

Write out the primary purpose or main goal(s)/objective(s) of the agreement and determine what specific outcomes are expected. The purpose statement can include an identification of the parties involved, as well as the terms and conditions of the agreement. Depending on the style and complexity of the agreement, some documents begin with an opening statement or preamble that introduces the names of the parties/entities that are involved in the agreement.

Tip

3

Determine a timeline as to when the partnership and agreement will begin and when it will end. Be specific regarding the dates and any other terms determined to be of importance.

**Sample timeline statement:** This agreement will be active from September 1, 2011, to August 31, 2012. It can be amended by mutual agreement at any time during the year. In the event that either party wants to be released from this agreement, 90 days written notice to the other party would be required.

Tip

4

Write down and determine which organization will be responsible for what pieces of work, services and/or resources.

**Sample partnership responsibility statement:** Each party hereby agrees to the following administrative responsibilities.

- A. Dependency Court will (list agreements).
- B. Mentoring program will (list agreements).
- C. Dependency Court and mentoring program will (list agreements).

Tip

5

Draft the MOU based on the decisions that were made during the meeting, then let all parties review, sign, date and authorize the document.

## MOU Policy and Programmatic Discussion Points

- Discuss geographic and demographic considerations when making and accepting referrals of Dependency Court involved youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss the allowable ages of Dependency Court involved youth who are eligible for referrals of mentoring services.
- Discuss the characteristics and challenges typically associated with youth who are involved with the Dependency Court.
- Discuss the differences and/or similarities between the most common Juvenile Justice settings to include: Dependency Court, Delinquency Court, Teen Court/Youth Court diversion program, Juvenile Probation, Juvenile Correctional Facility and Juvenile Detention Facility.
- Discuss the specific individuals who have authority to make referrals of Dependency Court involved youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss the numerous Dependency Court hearings within the context of which one(s) are appropriate to making well informed decisions to refer youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss having an agreed upon, formal written referral policy which takes into consideration a wide range of factors to be discussed and agreed upon between the Dependency Court and mentoring program.
- Discuss creating a visual referral flowchart for the Dependency Court and mentoring program, including a wide range of steps from making the referral to match termination, among other actions as related to mentoring Dependency Court involved youth.
- Discuss referrals within the context of voluntary referrals and/or involuntary referrals of Dependency Court involved youth for mentoring services.
- Discuss your individualized considerations and requirements for mentoring programs to consider when Dependency Court youth are referred for mentoring services and for Dependency Court to consider when making referrals to a mentoring program.
- Discuss all local mentoring programs within the context of various mentoring models and services which may and/or may not be appropriate for Dependency Court involved youth of varying ages.
- Discuss any statutory and/or legal considerations to consider when Dependency Court youth are referred for mentoring services.
- Discuss how youth with both Dependency Court and Delinquency Court involvement will be handled when making referrals of these high-risk youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss match termination and emergency issues within the context of how it will be handled for Dependency Court involved youth engaged in a current mentoring match.
- Discuss the Dependency Court Profile and Dependency Court PowerPoint Presentation listed below under Training and Technical Assistance Resources, in addition to other helpful resources provided on the next page.

## Training and Technical Assistance Resources

### Dependency Courts and Mentoring Programs

*OJJDP Research Report on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Full Report*

*OJJDP Research Report on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Executive Summary*

*Juvenile Justice Journal on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Special Edition*

Memorandums of Understanding  
Six Resource Guides for Developing MOUs  
for Juvenile Justice and Mentoring Services

PowerPoint Presentations for  
Six Juvenile Justice Settings and Mentoring

Six Technical Assistance Profiles:  
*Examining the Referral Stage for Mentoring High-Risk Youth*

MENTOR's *Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™, Third Edition*

MENTOR's *Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™ Toolkit – Juvenile Justice Section*

MENTOR's *Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™, Third Edition, Checklist for Mentoring Programs*

**For free, downloadable versions of these resources, visit:**

MENTOR at [http://www.mentoring.org/program\\_resources/Researching\\_the\\_Referral\\_Stage/](http://www.mentoring.org/program_resources/Researching_the_Referral_Stage/); Global Youth Justice at <http://www.globalyouthjustice.org/Mentoring.html>; and

National Partnership for Juvenile Services at <http://www.npjs.org/highriskyouth.php>

### Websites of Interest

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention – Mentoring Resources  
<http://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/mentoring.html>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention – Model Program Guide/Mentoring  
<http://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/progTypesMentoring.aspx>

Global Youth Justice Website – Mentoring High Risk Youth Resources  
<http://www.globalyouthjustice.org/Mentoring.html>

National Partnership for Juvenile Services – Mentoring High Risk Youth Resources  
<http://www.npjs.org/>

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership  
<http://www.mentoring.org/>



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## PROJECT PARTNERS



# 3

## Teen Court/Youth Court Programs and Mentoring Memorandum of Understanding

Researching the  
Referral Stage of  
Youth Mentoring  
in Six Juvenile  
Justice Settings

3

# Overview

## What is a Memorandum of Understanding?

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is often explained as a document used to describe a common understanding of a working relationship between two (2) or more parties/entities. It is not as binding as a contract, but it outlines a commitment to work together collaboratively toward the same purpose or goal(s) and objective(s) and, related to the use of shared work, services and/or resources. A good MOU can foster effective communication between/among partners, increase access to a wide range of resources, strengthen existing and new partnerships and provide a framework for addressing issues of mutual concern.

## Why is a Memorandum of Understanding Important?

MOUs build collaborative relationships: The process of negotiating a MOU between a mentoring program and a Juvenile Justice partner can help build a more collaborative working relationship, provide more empathy and a deeper understanding of partner issues, and result in more refined solutions to problems.

## MOUs Identify the Structure for the Partnership

The MOU provides a structure for a working relationship and clarifies what each of the partners will do to further the collaboration. The MOU identifies the specific resources that will support the partnership and defines how each will be used. In addition, language clarifying the type of staff, scope of work, job descriptions, and provided services help to formalize the partnership. Most importantly, the MOU defines the specific

commitments between partners to meet mutually agreed upon goals.

## Teen Court/Youth Court Program Description

These are Juvenile Justice diversion programs in which juveniles are sentenced by their peers for minor crimes, offenses and/or violations. These juvenile diversion programs are administered on a local level by law enforcement agencies, probation departments, delinquency courts, schools and local nonprofit organizations. These programs offer communities an opportunity to provide immediate consequences for primarily first-time juvenile offenders, and they also offer important civic, service and volunteer opportunities for volunteer youth who serve as judges, defenders, prosecutors, clerks and jurors.

## Mentoring Program Description

Mentoring involves a non-parental adult who plays an important role in promoting healthy development for youth. There are many mentoring models and even more programmatic differences within the different mentoring models. The goal of mentoring programs is to provide youth with positive adult contact and, thereby, reduce risk factors (e.g., early antisocial behavior, alienation, lack of commitment to school) by enhancing protective factors (e.g., healthy beliefs, opportunities for involvement, and social and material reinforcement for appropriate behavior). Mentors provide youth with personal connectedness, supervision and guidance, skills training, career or cultural enrichment opportunities, a knowledge of spirituality and values and, perhaps most importantly, goals and hope for the future.

## Tips and Strategies for Writing MOUs

### Tip 1

Identify all individuals/entities that will be involved in the MOU agreement and hold a meeting to identify the shared functions, services and/or resources that will support the collaboration. Discuss a plan as to how the parties/entities can and may operate together to deliver services and/or share resources.

### Tip 2

Write out the primary purpose or main goal(s)/objective(s) of the agreement and determine what specific outcomes are expected. The purpose statement can include an identification of the parties involved, as well as the terms and conditions of the agreement. Depending on the style and complexity of the agreement, some documents begin with an opening statement or preamble that introduces the names of the parties/entities that are involved in the agreement.

### Tip 3

Determine a timeline as to when the partnership and agreement will begin and when it will end. Be specific regarding the dates and any other terms determined to be of importance.

**Sample timeline statement:** This agreement will be active from September 1, 2011, to August 31, 2012. It can be amended by mutual agreement at any time during the year. In the event that either party wants to be released from this agreement, 90 days written notice to the other party would be required.

### Tip 4

Write down and determine which organization will be responsible for what pieces of work, services and/or resources.

**Sample partnership responsibility statement:** Each party hereby agrees to the following administrative responsibilities.

- A. Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Program will (list agreements).
- B. Mentoring program will (list agreements).
- C. Teen Court/Youth Court and mentoring program will (list agreements).

### Tip 5

Draft the MOU based on the decisions that were made during the meeting, then let all parties review, sign, date and authorize the document.

## MOU Policy and Programmatic Discussion Points

- Discuss how Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Programs are operated by a wide range of agencies and organizations to include public and private entities and how this relates to referrals of these youth to mentoring programs.
- Discuss geographic and demographic considerations when making and accepting referrals of Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Program involved youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss the allowable ages of Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion involved youth who are eligible for referrals of mentoring services.
- Discuss the characteristics and challenges typically associated with youth who are involved with the Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Program.
- Discuss the differences and/or similarities between the most common Juvenile Justice settings to include: Dependency Court, Delinquency Court, Teen Court/Youth Court diversion program, Juvenile Probation, Juvenile Correctional Facility and Juvenile Detention Facility.
- Discuss the specific individuals who have authority to make referrals of Teen/Youth Court Diversion Program involved youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss the high-risk youth referral sources of origin for Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Programs within the context of statutes, laws and/or other programmatic and policy implications when referring youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss referrals of youth from Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Programs who are re-arrested for a subsequent juvenile crime, offense and/or violation after the referral has been made and before the formal mentoring match has taken place.
- Discuss referrals of youth from Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Programs within the context of “formal attestations” and/or “informal arrests” and implications on making referrals of such youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss having an agreed upon, formal written referral policy which takes into consideration a wide range of factors to be discussed and agreed upon between a Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Program and mentoring program.
- Discuss creating a visual referral flowchart for the Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Program and mentoring program, including a wide range of steps from making the referral to match termination, among other actions as related to mentoring Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Programs involved youth.
- Discuss how referrals of youth from Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Programs can include youth who are juvenile offenders and/or youth volunteers who are former offenders within the context of making referrals of these youth for mentoring services.
- Discuss referrals within the context of voluntary referrals and/or involuntary referrals of Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Program involved youth for mentoring services.
- Discuss your individualized considerations and requirements for mentoring programs to consider when Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Program youth are referred for mentoring services and for Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Program to consider when making referrals to a mentoring program.
- Discuss all local mentoring programs within the context of various mentoring models and services which may and/or may not be appropriate for Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Program involved youth of varying ages.

## MOU Policy and Programmatic Discussion Points

Continued

- Discuss any statutory and/or legal considerations to consider when Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Program youth are referred for mentoring services.
- Discuss how youth with Dependency Court, Delinquency Court and Teen Court/Youth Diversion Program involvement will be handled when making referrals of these high-risk youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss how to handle match termination and emergency issues for Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Program involved youth engaged in a current mentoring match.
- Discuss the Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Program Profile and PowerPoint Presentation listed below under Training and Technical Assistance Resources, in addition to other helpful resources provided below.

## Training and Technical Assistance Resources

Teen/Youth Courts and Mentoring Programs

*OJJDP Research Report on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Full Report*

*OJJDP Research Report on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Executive Summary*

*Juvenile Justice Journal on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Special Edition*

Memorandums of Understanding  
Six Resource Guides for Developing MOUs for Juvenile Justice and Mentoring Services

PowerPoint Presentations for  
Six Juvenile Justice Settings and Mentoring

Six Technical Assistance Profiles:  
*Examining the Referral Stage for Mentoring High-Risk Youth*

MENTOR's *Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™, Third Edition*

MENTOR's *Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™* Toolkit – Juvenile Justice Section

MENTOR's *Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™, Third Edition, Checklist for Mentoring Programs*

**For free, downloadable versions of these resources, visit:**

MENTOR at [http://www.mentoring.org/program\\_resources/Researching\\_the\\_Referral\\_Stage/](http://www.mentoring.org/program_resources/Researching_the_Referral_Stage/);

Global Youth Justice at <http://www.globalyouthjustice.org/Mentoring.html>; and

National Partnership for Juvenile Services at <http://www.npjs.org/highriskyouth.php>

### Websites of Interest

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention – Mentoring Resources  
<http://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/mentoring.html>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention – Model Program Guide/Mentoring  
<http://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/progTypesMentoring.aspx>

Global Youth Justice Website – Mentoring High Risk Youth Resources  
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National Partnership for Juvenile Services – Mentoring High Risk Youth Resources  
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## PROJECT PARTNERS



# 4

## Juvenile Corrections and Mentoring Memorandum of Understanding

Researching the  
Referral Stage of  
Youth Mentoring  
in Six Juvenile  
Justice Settings

4

# Overview

## What is a Memorandum of Understanding?

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is often explained as a document used to describe a common understanding of a working relationship between two (2) or more parties/entities. The document is not as binding as a contract, but it outlines a commitment between the parties/entities to work together collaboratively toward the same purpose or goal(s) and objective(s) and, related to the use of shared work, services and/or resources. A good MOU can foster effective communication between/among partners, increase access to a wide range of resources, strengthen existing and new partnerships and provide a framework for addressing issues of mutual concern.

## Why is a Memorandum of Understanding Important?

MOUs build collaborative relationships: The process of negotiating a MOU between a mentoring program and a Juvenile Justice partner can help build a more collaborative working relationship, provide more empathy and a deeper understanding of partner issues, and result in more refined solutions to existing problems.

## MOUs Identify the Structure for the Partnership

The MOU provides a structure for a working relationship and clarifies what each of the partners will do to further the collaboration. The MOU identifies the specific resources that will support the partnership and defines how

each will be used. In addition, language clarifying the type of staff, scope of work, job descriptions, and provided services help to formalize the partnership. Most importantly, the MOU defines the specific commitments between partners to meet mutually agreed upon goals.

## Juvenile Corrections Description

This is a secure facility that has physical features that restricts the movement of adjudicated delinquent juveniles who are held in the facility as the delinquency court's disposition. Corrections (Juvenile) is often described as long term out-of-home placement in comparison to Detention (Juvenile).

## Mentoring Program Description

Mentoring involves a non-parental adult who plays an important role in promoting healthy development for youth. There are many mentoring models and even more programmatic differences within the different mentoring models. The goal of mentoring programs is to provide youth with positive adult contact and, thereby, reduce risk factors (e.g., early antisocial behavior, alienation, lack of commitment to school) by enhancing protective factors (e.g., healthy beliefs, opportunities for involvement, and social and material reinforcement for appropriate behavior). Mentors provide youth with personal connectedness, supervision and guidance, skills training, career or cultural enrichment opportunities, a knowledge of spirituality and values and, perhaps most importantly, goals and hope for the future.

## Tips and Strategies for Writing MOUs

### Tip 1

Identify all individuals/entities that will be involved in the MOU agreement and hold a meeting to identify the shared functions, services and/or resources that will support the collaboration. Discuss a plan as to how the parties/entities can and may operate together to deliver services and/or share resources.

### Tip 2

Write out the primary purpose or main goal(s)/objective(s) of the agreement and determine what specific outcomes are expected. The purpose statement can include an identification of the parties involved, as well as the terms and conditions of the agreement. Depending on the style and complexity of the agreement, some documents begin with an opening statement or preamble that introduces the names of the parties/entities that are involved in the agreement.

### Tip 3

Determine a timeline as to when the partnership and agreement will begin and when it will end. Be specific regarding the dates and any other terms determined to be of importance.

**Sample timeline statement:** This agreement will be active from September 1, 2011, to August 31, 2012. It can be amended by mutual agreement at any time during the year. In the event that either party wants to be released from this agreement, 90 days written notice to the other party would be required.

### Tip 4

Write down and determine which organization will be responsible for what pieces of work, services and/or resources.

**Sample partnership responsibility statement:** Each party hereby agrees to the following administrative responsibilities.

- A. The Juvenile Corrections facility will (list agreements).
- B. Mentoring program will (list agreements).
- C. The Juvenile Corrections facility and mentoring program will (list agreements).

### Tip 5

Draft the MOU based on the decisions that were made during the meeting, then let all parties review, sign, date and authorize the document.

## MOU Policy and Programmatic Discussion Points

- Discuss geographic and demographic considerations when making and accepting referrals of Juvenile Corrections involved youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss the allowable ages of Juvenile Corrections involved youth who are eligible for referrals of mentoring services.
- Discuss the characteristics and challenges typically associated with youth who are involved with Juvenile Corrections.
- Discuss the differences and/or similarities between the most common Juvenile Justice settings to include: Dependency Court, Delinquency Court, Teen Court/Youth Court diversion program, Juvenile Probation, Juvenile Corrections Facility and Juvenile Detention Facility.
- Discuss the specific individuals who have authority to make referrals of Juvenile Corrections involved youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss the admission/screening process to Juvenile Corrections and which staff may be most appropriate for making well-informed decisions to refer youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss having an agreed upon, formal written referral policy which takes into consideration a wide range of factors to be discussed and agreed upon between the Juvenile Corrections Facility and mentoring program.
- Discuss creating a visual referral flowchart for the Juvenile Corrections and mentoring program, including a wide range of steps from making the referral to match termination, among other actions as related to mentoring Juvenile Corrections involved youth.
- Discuss referrals within the context of voluntary referrals and/or involuntary referrals of Juvenile Corrections involved youth for mentoring services.
- Discuss your individualized considerations and requirements for mentoring programs to consider when Juvenile Corrections youth are referred for mentoring services and for Juvenile Corrections to consider when making referrals to a mentoring program.
- Discuss all local mentoring programs within the context of various mentoring models and services which may and/or may not be appropriate for Juvenile Corrections involved youth of varying ages.
- Discuss any statutory and/or legal considerations to consider when Juvenile Corrections youth are referred for mentoring services.
- Discuss how youth with Juvenile Corrections involvement will be handled when making referrals of these high-risk youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss match termination and emergency issues within the context of how it will be handled for Juvenile Corrections involved youth engaged in a current mentoring match.
- Discuss the Juvenile Corrections Profile and Juvenile Corrections PowerPoint Presentation listed below under Training and Technical Assistance Resources, in addition to other helpful resources provided on the next page.

## Training and Technical Assistance Resources

### Juvenile Corrections and Mentoring Programs

*OJJDP Research Report on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Full Report*

*OJJDP Research Report on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Executive Summary*

*Juvenile Justice Journal on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Special Edition*

Memorandums of Understanding  
Six Resource Guides for Developing MOUs for Juvenile Justice and Mentoring Services

PowerPoint Presentations for  
Six Juvenile Justice Settings and Mentoring

Six Technical Assistance Profiles:  
*Examining the Referral Stage for Mentoring High-Risk Youth*

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## PROJECT PARTNERS



# 5

## Juvenile Detention and Mentoring Memorandum of Understanding

Researching the  
Referral Stage of  
Youth Mentoring  
in Six Juvenile  
Justice Settings

5

# Overview

## What is a Memorandum of Understanding?

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is often explained as a document used to describe a common understanding of a working relationship between two (2) or more parties/entities. The document is not as binding as a contract, but it outlines a commitment between the parties/entities to work together collaboratively toward the same purpose or goal(s) and objective(s) and, related to the use of shared work, services and/or resources. A good MOU can foster effective communication between/among partners, increase access to a wide range of resources, strengthen existing and new partnerships and provide a framework for addressing issues of mutual concern.

## Why is a Memorandum of Understanding Important?

MOUs build collaborative relationships: The process of negotiating a MOU between a mentoring program and a Juvenile Justice partner can help build a more collaborative working relationship, provide more empathy and a deeper understanding of partner issues, and result in more refined solutions to existing problems.

## MOUs Identify the Structure for the Partnership

The MOU provides a structure for a working relationship and clarifies what each of the partners will do to further the collaboration. The MOU identifies the specific resources that will support the partnership and defines how each will be used. In addition, language clarifying the type of staff, scope of work, job descriptions, and

provided services help to formalize the partnership. Most importantly, the MOU defines the specific commitments between partners to meet mutually agreed upon goals.

## Juvenile Detention Description

This is a legally-authorized temporary secure custody of juveniles who are accused of illegal conduct subject to the jurisdiction of the court and who require a restricted environment for their own or the community's protection while pending legal action. Detention (Juvenile) is often described as short-term, immediate, out-of-home placement in comparison to Corrections (Juvenile). Some, not all of the youth in Detention (Juvenile) are transferred to a Corrections Facility (Juvenile) based on a finding of guilt and the discretion of the court.

## Mentoring Program Description

Mentoring involves a non-parental adult who plays an important role in promoting healthy development for youth. There are many mentoring models and even more programmatic differences within the different mentoring models. The goal of mentoring programs is to provide youth with positive adult contact and, thereby, reduce risk factors (e.g., early antisocial behavior, alienation, lack of commitment to school) by enhancing protective factors (e.g., healthy beliefs, opportunities for involvement, and social and material reinforcement for appropriate behavior). Mentors provide youth with personal connectedness, supervision and guidance, skills training, career or cultural enrichment opportunities, a knowledge of spirituality and values and, perhaps most importantly, goals and hope for the future.

## Tips and Strategies for Writing MOUs

### Tip 1

Identify all individuals/entities that will be involved in the MOU agreement and hold a meeting to identify the shared functions, services and/or resources that will support the collaboration. Discuss a plan as to how the parties/entities can and may operate together to deliver services and/or share resources.

### Tip 2

Write out the primary purpose or main goal(s)/objective(s) of the agreement and determine what specific outcomes are expected. The purpose statement can include an identification of the parties involved, as well as the terms and conditions of the agreement. Depending on the style and complexity of the agreement, some documents begin with an opening statement or preamble that introduces the names of the parties/entities that are involved in the agreement.

### Tip 3

Determine a timeline as to when the partnership and agreement will begin and when it will end. Be specific regarding the dates and any other terms determined to be of importance.

**Sample timeline statement:** This agreement will be active from September 1, 2011, to August 31, 2012. It can be amended by mutual agreement at any time during the year. In the event that either party wants to be released from this agreement, 90 days written notice to the other party would be required.

### Tip 4

Write down and determine which organization will be responsible for what pieces of work, services and/or resources.

**Sample partnership responsibility statement:** Each party hereby agrees to the following administrative responsibilities.

- A. The Juvenile Detention Center will (list agreements).
- B. Mentoring program will (list agreements).
- C. The Juvenile Detention Center and mentoring program will (list agreements).

### Tip 5

Draft the MOU based on the decisions that were made during the meeting, then let all parties review, sign, date and authorize the document.

## MOU Policy and Programmatic Discussion Points

- Discuss geographic and demographic considerations when making and accepting referrals of Juvenile Detention involved youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss the allowable ages of Juvenile Detention involved youth who are eligible for referrals of mentoring services.
- Discuss the characteristics and challenges typically associated with youth who are involved with Juvenile Detention.
- Discuss the differences and/or similarities between the most common Juvenile Justice settings to include: Dependency Court, Delinquency Court, Teen Court/Youth Court diversion program, Juvenile Probation, Juvenile Corrections Facility and Juvenile Detention Facility.
- Discuss the specific individuals who have authority to make referrals of Juvenile Detention involved youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss the admission/screening process to Juvenile Detention and which staff may be most appropriate for making well-informed decisions to refer youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss having an agreed upon formal written referral policy which takes into consideration a wide range of factors to be discussed and agreed upon between the Juvenile Detention Center and mentoring program.
- Discuss creating a visual referral flowchart for the Juvenile Detention and mentoring program, including a wide range of steps from making the referral to match termination, among other actions as related to mentoring Juvenile Detention involved youth.
- Discuss referrals within the context of voluntary referrals and/or involuntary referrals of Juvenile Detention involved youth for mentoring services.
- Discuss your individualized considerations and requirements for mentoring programs to consider when Juvenile Detention youth are referred for mentoring services and for Juvenile Detention to consider when making referrals to a mentoring program.
- Discuss all local mentoring programs within the context of various mentoring models and services which may and/or may not be appropriate for Juvenile Detention involved youth of varying ages.
- Discuss any statutory and/or legal considerations to take in to consideration when Juvenile Detention youth are referred for mentoring services.
- Discuss how youth with Juvenile Detention involvement will be handled when making referrals of these high-risk youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss match termination and emergency issues within the context of how it will be handled for Juvenile Detention involved youth engaged in a current mentoring match.
- Discuss the Juvenile Detention Profile and Juvenile Detention PowerPoint Presentation listed below under Training and Technical Assistance Resources, in addition to other helpful resources provided on the next page.

## Training and Technical Assistance Resources

### Juvenile Detention and Mentoring Programs

*OJJDP Research Report on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Full Report*

*OJJDP Research Report on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Executive Summary*

*Juvenile Justice Journal on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Special Edition*

Memorandums of Understanding  
Six Resource Guides for Developing MOUs for Juvenile Justice and Mentoring Services

PowerPoint Presentations for  
Six Juvenile Justice Settings and Mentoring

Six Technical Assistance Profiles:  
*Examining the Referral Stage for Mentoring High-Risk Youth*

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### Websites of Interest

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## PROJECT PARTNERS



# 6

## Juvenile Probation and Mentoring Memorandum of Understanding

Researching the  
Referral Stage of  
Youth Mentoring  
in Six Juvenile  
Justice Settings

6

# Overview

## **What is a Memorandum of Understanding/MOU?**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is often explained as a document used to describe a common understanding of a working relationship between two (2) or more parties/entities. The document is not as binding as a contract, but it outlines a commitment between the parties/entities to work together collaboratively toward the same purpose or goal(s) and objective(s) and, related to the use of shared work, services and/or resources. A good MOU can foster effective communication between/among partners, increase access to a wide range of resources, strengthen existing and new partnerships and provide a framework for addressing issues of mutual concern.

## **Why is a Memorandum of Understanding/MOU Important?**

MOUs build collaborative relationships: The process of negotiating a MOU between a mentoring program and a Juvenile Justice partner can help build a more collaborative working relationship, provide more empathy and a deeper understanding of partner issues, and result in more refined solutions to existing problems.

## **MOUs Identify the Structure for the Partnership**

The MOU provides a structure for a working relationship and clarifies what each of the partners will do to further the collaboration. The MOU identifies the specific resources that will support the partnership and defines how each

will be used. In addition, language clarifying the type of staff, scope of work, job descriptions, and provided services help to formalize the partnership. Most importantly, the MOU defines the specific commitments between partners to meet mutually agreed upon goals.

## **Juvenile Probation Description**

This is a sentence not involving confinement that imposes conditions and retains authority in sentencing court to modify conditions of sentence or resentence of the juvenile offender for probation violations. Counties and cities often elect to have Juvenile Probation operate within an independent Probation agency, or Juvenile Probation will operate under the jurisdiction of the Delinquency Court.

## **Mentoring Program Description**

Mentoring involves a non-parental adult who plays an important role in promoting healthy development for youth. There are many mentoring models and even more programmatic differences within the different mentoring models. The goal of mentoring programs is to provide youth with positive adult contact and, thereby, reduce risk factors (e.g., early antisocial behavior, alienation, lack of commitment to school) by enhancing protective factors (e.g., healthy beliefs, opportunities for involvement, and social and material reinforcement for appropriate behavior). Mentors provide youth with personal connectedness, supervision and guidance, skills training, career or cultural enrichment opportunities, a knowledge of spirituality and values and, perhaps most importantly, goals and hope for the future.

## Tips and Strategies for Writing MOUs

### Tip 1

Identify all individuals/entities that will be involved in the MOU agreement and hold a meeting to identify the shared functions, services and/or resources that will support the collaboration. Discuss a plan as to how the parties/entities can and may operate together to deliver services and/or share resources.

### Tip 2

Write out the primary purpose or main goal(s)/objective(s) of the agreement and determine what specific outcomes are expected. The purpose statement can include an identification of the parties involved, as well as the terms and conditions of the agreement. Depending on the style and complexity of the agreement, some documents begin with an opening statement or preamble that introduces the names of the parties/entities that are involved in the agreement.

### Tip 3

Determine a timeline as to when the partnership and agreement will begin and when it will end. Be specific regarding the dates and any other terms determined to be of importance.

**Sample timeline statement:** This agreement will be active from September 1, 2011, to August 31, 2012. It can be amended by mutual agreement at any time during the year. In the event that either party wants to be released from this agreement, 90 days written notice to the other party would be required.

### Tip 4

Write down and determine which organization will be responsible for what pieces of work, services and/or resources.

**Sample partnership responsibility statement:** Each party hereby agrees to the following administrative responsibilities.

- A. Juvenile Probation will (list agreements).
- B. Mentoring program will (list agreements).
- C. The Juvenile Probation and mentoring program will (list agreements).

### Tip 5

Draft the MOU based on the decisions that were made during the meeting, then let all parties review, sign, date and authorize the document.

## MOU Policy and Programmatic Discussion Points

- Discuss geographic and demographic considerations when making and accepting referrals of Juvenile Probation involved youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss the allowable ages of Juvenile Probation involved youth who are eligible for referrals of mentoring services.
- Discuss the characteristics and challenges typically associated with youth who are involved with Juvenile Probation.
- Discuss the differences and/or similarities between the most common Juvenile Justice settings to include: Dependency Court, Delinquency Court, Teen Court/Youth Court diversion program, Juvenile Probation, Juvenile Corrections Facility and Juvenile Detention Facility.
- Discuss the specific individuals who have authority to make referrals of Juvenile Probation involved youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss the admission/screening process to Juvenile Probation and which staff may be most appropriate for making well-informed decisions to refer youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss having an agreed upon, formal written referral policy which takes into consideration a wide range of factors to be discussed and agreed upon between the Juvenile Probation and mentoring program.
- Discuss creating a visual referral flowchart for the Juvenile Probation and mentoring program, including a wide range of steps from making the referral to match termination, among other actions as related to mentoring Juvenile Probation involved youth.
- Discuss referrals within the context of voluntary referrals and/or involuntary referrals of Juvenile Probation involved youth for mentoring services.
- Discuss your individualized considerations and requirements for mentoring programs to consider when Juvenile Probation youth are referred for mentoring services and for Juvenile Probation to consider when making referrals to a mentoring program.
- Discuss all local mentoring programs within the context of various mentoring models and services which may and/or may not be appropriate for Juvenile Probation involved youth of varying ages.
- Discuss any statutory and/or legal considerations to take in to consideration when Juvenile Probation youth are referred for mentoring services.
- Discuss how youth with Juvenile Probation involvement will be handled when making referrals of these high-risk youth for the delivery of mentoring services.
- Discuss match termination and emergency issues within the context of how it will be handled for Juvenile Probation involved youth engaged in a current mentoring match.
- Discuss the Juvenile Probation Profile and Juvenile Probation PowerPoint Presentation listed below under Training and Technical Assistance Resources, in addition to other helpful resources provided on the next page.

## Training and Technical Assistance Resources

### Juvenile Probation and Mentoring Programs

*OJJDP Research Report on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Full Report*

*OJJDP Research Report on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Executive Summary*

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### Websites of Interest

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## PROJECT PARTNERS



## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROFILE**

Examining the Referral Stage for Mentoring High-Risk Youth  
In Six Different Juvenile Justice Settings

Dependency Court, Delinquency Court, Juvenile Detention, Juvenile Corrections,  
Juvenile Probation and Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Programs

# Delinquency Court and Mentoring

## THE REFERRAL STAGE

Written by:  
Scott Bernard Peterson





# Delinquency Court and Mentoring

Delinquency Courts have jurisdiction over juveniles, juvenile delinquents, status offenders and Children and Youth in Need of Supervision. All Juvenile Courts are civil bodies. This means that juveniles cannot acquire a criminal record directly from Delinquency Court actions, where the actions remain confined to the Delinquency Court. The Delinquency Court is most commonly associated with the Juvenile Justice System and juveniles who have committed a crime, offense and/or violation.

## **Mentoring Program Description**

Mentoring involves a non-parental adult who plays an important role in promoting healthy development for youth. There are many mentoring models and even more programmatic differences within the different mentoring models. The goal of mentoring programs is to provide youth with positive adult contact and, thereby, reduce risk factors (e.g., early antisocial behavior, alienation, lack of commitment to school) by enhancing protective factors (e.g., healthy beliefs, opportunities for involvement, and social and material reinforcement for appropriate behavior). Mentors provide youth with personal connectedness, supervision and guidance, skills training, career or cultural enrichment opportunities, a knowledge of spirituality and values and, perhaps most importantly, goals and hope for the future.

## **Geographic and Demographic Characteristics**

Referrals of Delinquency Court involved youth for the delivery of local mentoring services are often made and/or approved by governmental agencies representing county and state level jurisdictions, and, therefore, it is important for mentoring and Delinquency Court staff to discuss geographic barriers when making and accepting referrals of Delinquency Court involved youth.

## Possible Challenges of Youth Involved with the Delinquency Court (Ages 6-18)

### Individual

- Antisocial/delinquent beliefs
- General delinquency involvement
- High alcohol/drug use
- Lack of guilt and empathy
- Physical violence/aggression
- Violent victimization

### Family

- Delinquent/gang-involved siblings
- Lack of orderly and structured activities within the family
- Parental use of physical punishment/harsh and/or erratic discipline practices
- Poor parental supervision (control, monitoring and child management)

### School

- Frequent truancy/absences/suspensions; expelled from school; dropping out of school
- Low academic aspirations
- Low school attachment/bonding/motivation/commitment
- Poor school attitude/performance; academic failure
- Poor student-teacher relations
- Poorly defined rules and expectations for appropriate conduct
- Poorly organized and functioning schools/inadequate school climate/negative labeling by teachers

### Peer

- Association with antisocial/aggressive/delinquent peers; high peer delinquency
- Association with gang-involved peers/relatives
- Peer rejection

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Referring Delinquency Court Youth to Mentoring Programs

#### **What is the difference between a Dependency Court, Delinquency Court and a Teen Court/Youth Court program?**

The Delinquency Court is most commonly associated with the Juvenile Justice System and juveniles who have committed a crime, offense and/or violation. The Dependency Court is most commonly associated with foster care, abuse and neglect issues involving youth younger than 18 years of age. Teen Court/Youth Court diversion programs are juvenile justice diversion programs and are administered on a local level by law enforcement agencies, probation departments, Delinquency Courts, schools and nonprofit organizations.

#### **Who refers youth in Delinquency Courts to mentoring programs?**

The point of referral for the delivery of mentoring services in Delinquency Courts is rarely at the time of arrest or apprehension by a law enforcement agency. A juvenile formally arrested by a law enforcement agency is most often referred to the Probation Department or the Delinquency Court. In some jurisdictions, Juvenile Probation Departments are under the authority of Adult Probation, and in other jurisdictions, Juvenile Probation is under the authority of the Delinquency Court. In Delinquency Courts and Juvenile Probation, referrals for mentoring services are made by probation officers, judges, magistrates, social workers, public defenders and other adults in various positions with the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Juveniles formally and informally arrested are often referred to juvenile diversion programs or mandated community service organizations, among other placements. These referrals of juveniles for disposition and adjudication are directly from a law enforcement agency with formal approval from the judiciary and/or senior elected public official. Examples range from Teen Court/Youth Court diversion programs to Juvenile Review Boards.

Juveniles referred to these placements include those formally arrested and involved with the Delinquency Court and other juveniles not formally arrested, pending successful completion of imposed sanctions.

The Juvenile Review Board process is an approximately one-hour group meeting to determine placements, referrals, service needs and/or mandated community services sanctions. Participants in the Juvenile Review Board include the youthful offender, parent(s), guardian(s), adult volunteers (typically between six and eight) and often staff from a local mentoring program. A similar approach called “Family Group Conferencing” is utilized in the Dependency Court and “Circle Sentencing” is often utilized in Native American and Alaskan Native Tribes. Referral for mentoring services is a recommendation and not mandatory, although referrals are strongly encouraged. Formal referrals from mentoring services are made by the adult coordinator in charge of the Juvenile Review Board.

#### **What is an embedded program and how is it important to a successful mentoring program in a Delinquency Court setting?**

An embedded mentoring program within a Delinquency Court is most often one which is directly operated by the Delinquency Court and/or the Delinquency Court contracts out for the delivery of mentoring services to a public or private entity, while maintaining administrative authority. Delinquency Court embedded mentoring programs are operational on a local municipal level – not a state level. Embedded Delinquency Court mentoring programs may also be operated by the municipality in a Youth Bureau, Youth Services and/or other related public agency.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

continued

Embedded mentoring programs also exist in Delinquency Court diversion programs such as Juvenile Review Boards. Juvenile Review Boards are often municipal-operated mechanisms to divert Delinquency Court youth with no previous court history who have committed minor delinquent acts or whose behavior at home or school (e.g., running away or defying school rules) indicates they are at risk of delinquency.

### **How are strong mentoring relationships formed between mentoring programs and the Delinquency Court?**

Delinquency Courts and mentoring programs benefit from having an agreed upon, formal written referral policy which takes in to consideration a wide range of factors to be discussed and agreed upon to include:

- (1) Referrals of juveniles for the delivery of mentoring services is voluntary and not a mandated Delinquency Court imposed sanction;
- (2) Referrals of Delinquency Court involved youth should not proceed to a formal mentoring match until the final determination of any pending charges in the Delinquency Court are determined;
- (3) Mentoring programs need to be realistic and specific with Delinquency Court staff regarding long waiting lists and relatively accurate assessments of when these high-risk youth referrals will be placed in mentoring relationships;
- (4) Confidentiality and information sharing release forms and policies need to be agreed upon and adhered to;
- (5) Mentoring programs offering specific training for adults matched with high-risk youth benefits the mentored youth and the adult mentor;
- (6) Delinquency Courts and mentoring programs each need to come up with their own policies regarding making and accepting referrals of

higher-risk Delinquency Court youth who are more likely to be a danger to themselves and/or someone else; and

- (7) Mentoring programs and Dependency Court staff need to discuss types of mentoring services offered by a local mentoring program(s) and what type of mentoring service is age appropriate and individualized based on need(s).

A Memorandum of Understanding and a Case Referral Flow-Chart delineate important roles and steps which foster a more favorable working relationship between the Delinquency Court and the mentoring program(s).

### **Are nonembedded mentoring programs successful in working with Delinquency Court youth?**

More often than not, private organizations are the entity operating and providing mentoring services to the Delinquency Court, rather than the Delinquency Court operating an embedded mentoring program. These private organizations can be successful on a number of fronts with regard to delivering mentoring services to high-risk youth in the Delinquency Court. There are a wide range of administrative and operational factors to consider which will result in successful or unsuccessful referral to mentoring services.

Flow-Charts and/or Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) around making and accepting referrals support stronger and longer lasting working relationships between Delinquency Courts and mentoring programs. Mentoring programs with a specific or sole focus on serving Delinquency Court involved youth are purposely better equipped to handle a wide range of issues associated with the Juvenile Justice System.

### **Were youth in Delinquency Courts willing to participate in mentoring programs?**

Delinquency Court involved high-risk youth participate in mentoring programs. Referrals

of high-risk youth participating in mentoring matches began as referrals from the Delinquency Court and/or another entity legally operating on behalf of the Delinquency Court – such as Juvenile Probation, Juvenile Review Boards and Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Programs, among others. The Delinquency Court has no legal authority for mandating high-risk youth be matched with an adult mentor. This is different from the Dependency Court, as it often acts as the legal custodian of high-risk youth, and therefore can act in the best interests of the youth, or include the delivery of mentoring services. Mentoring services are primarily viewed as a wrap-around service.

### **What are the primary considerations for mentoring programs when Delinquency Court youth are referred for mentoring services?**

The Delinquency Court handles cases involving high-risk youth who have committed one (1) or more crimes, offenses and/or violations. Some youth appearing in a Delinquency Court may have had no prior contact with the Delinquency Court, whereas other youth are likely more serious, violent and chronic juvenile offenders.

Referrals of youth from a juvenile diversion program may or may not have been formally arrested. Only formal arrests of juveniles will be referred by the Delinquency Court. Informal arrests include the apprehension of juveniles who are most often referred to diversion programs from a law enforcement agency, such as the Police Department or Sheriff's Department. It is important to examine internal operational and administrative policies as they relate to informal and/or formal referrals of Delinquency Court and Diversion high-risk youth.

Specialized recruitment, training, screening and matching of adults to serve as mentors for a high-risk youth from the Delinquency Court benefit both the adult mentor and the youth mentee. Recruitment can be targeted to adults interested in working with high-risk youth for a wide variety of reasons. High-risk youth from the Delinquency Court often present a unique set of challenges which require specialized training for adults volunteering to serve as a mentor

for these youth. While background checks should always be mandatory, additional screening to include interviews and other tactics can be deployed to reduce match termination rates.

Referrals need to be assessed for dual adjudicatory issues when looking at referrals from the Dependency Court, as additional information is often necessary before approving a referral for the delivery of mentoring services. Often, the same judge for Dependency Court issues is the same judge for Delinquency Court issues and, therefore, accessing dual adjudicatory issues is more manageable.

### **Are there any Delinquency Court statutory requirements related to mentoring?**

Staff in Delinquency Courts and mentoring programs seeking to refer high-risk Delinquency Court involved youth for mentoring services are often under a time frame of between 90 and 120 days to make referrals for mentoring services. State statutes vary with regard to the mandatory time frame for adjudication of juveniles. This time frame can and does vary based on judicial discretion and other factors, such as dual adjudicatory issues where abuse and neglect is paramount. Formal actions can be put into place to extend this time frame, but that often only takes place with a subsequent offense and/or unsuccessful compliance with the approved imposed sentence.

In Dependency Courts, if a youth is removed from their home and placed in the custody of the state, a judge with jurisdiction and oversight of that youth can make a mandatory referral of mentoring services. In Delinquency Courts, a youth may not be mandated to comply with accepting a referral for mentoring services, as most often these youth are not under the care of the state. Mentoring programs seeking to identify high-risk Delinquency Court involved youth should consider their state's statutory time frame for juveniles to be adjudicated and identify point(s) of contact within the Delinquency Court process. A website listing State-by-State Juvenile Justice Legislation is included at the bottom of this Technical Assistance Bulletin under website links.

## WHAT'S WORKING: Examples of Effective Strategies

Identifying juveniles referred to local community-based diversion programs for possible mentoring services is one effective strategy. An example is the Juvenile Review Board, which is operated in community-based nonprofit organizations, often found in local municipal buildings which are geographically situated to increase community participation in the Juvenile Review Board and to accommodate transportation needs of the youthful offenders and their parent(s)/guardian(s). As a result of this close working relationship, Juvenile Review Boards receive more referrals of high-risk and at-risk youth, to include referrals for mentoring programs. Juvenile Review Boards often operate as an early intervention program of the Delinquency Court, and more often than not, there is no formal arrest if the juvenile completes the imposed sanction of the Juvenile Review Board.

These early intervention programs often divert youth from the formal juvenile justice system. They are an effective strategy with regards to identifying youth who are exhibiting early anti-social, delinquent and/or criminal behavior and significantly increase quality time

and attention to identifying a wide range of risk factors, and respond to these with specific wrap-around-services, such as the delivery of mentoring services. Teen Court diversion programs are another example of a Juvenile Justice System intervention program successfully working with local mentoring programs. A Teen Court/Youth Court diversion program and mentoring program profile is listed below under Training and Technical Assistance Resources.

Providing adult mentors with additional and ongoing training to improve their ability to be a more effective mentor for a high-risk youth from the Delinquency Court has resulted in longer and stronger relationships. Adult staff from the Delinquency Court and mentoring program have a greater confidence in these adult mentors having a higher level of preparedness in their role as a mentor. Mentoring programs with a specific and/or sole purpose of serving youth from the Delinquency Court have an advantageous level of knowledge, skill and ability in providing effective mentoring services for a wide range of high-risk youth involved with the Juvenile Justice System, which often leads to stronger relationships between mentoring programs and the Delinquency Court.

## CHALLENGES AND ACTION STEPS

**Challenge #1:** More than 90 percent of all high-risk youth formally involved with the Juvenile Justice System are not removed from their home for any period of time beyond being detained during the apprehension and formal arrest. The involvement of these high-risk youth with the Delinquency Court is usually three (3) or four (4) months at the maximum. Often, these high-risk youth are arrested by law enforcement, and they do not appear before the

Delinquency Court or Juvenile Probation for two (2) more months, leaving only between one (1) and two (2) months for a judge or probation officer to make a referral for mentoring services.

**Action Step** – *Making a “referral” for mentoring services is often the only task and role a Delinquency Court judge or Juvenile Probation officer will assume. It is critical for local mentoring*

## CHALLENGES AND ACTION STEPS

continued

*programs to establish and maintain positive working relationships with these individuals. Mentoring programs are well served to not accept referrals of high-risk youth from the Delinquency Court, if that referral will be placed on a long waiting list, as this will considerably decrease future referrals from the Delinquency Court. Mentoring programs should establish avenues for communicating the duration of time it will take for Dependency Court referred high-risk youth will be placed in a mentoring match.*

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**Challenge #2:** Referrals of high-risk youth from the Delinquency Court are re-arrested and/or incarcerated for a subsequent juvenile crime, offense and/or violation after the mentoring match has been finalized and the mentoring relationship has begun.

**Action Step** – *Mentoring programs should establish operational and administrative procedures for handling matched high-risk youth from the Dependency Court who are re-arrested and/or incarcerated. This is especially critical when a high-risk youth is arrested in another jurisdiction and there is a second, different Dependency Court. The subsequent arrest could be of a very serious nature which may require match termination. This second arrest may also result in the high-risk youth being placed in a Juvenile Detention or Juvenile Correctional Facility – making it difficult or not possible to continue with the match. In some cases, mentoring programs will be able to continue with the mentoring match, and they will just need to communicate with additional contacts as they relate to any subsequent offense.*

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**Challenge #3:** Delinquency Courts, Tribal Juvenile Courts and mentoring programs all reported that minority males comprise the highest percentage of referrals of high-risk youth for mentoring services.

This poses a challenge in many mentoring programs, as there are even longer waiting lists for male mentors in comparison to female mentors.

**Action Step** – *A group mentoring approach can be the sole type of mentoring offered and/or group mentoring can take place until a one-to-one adult mentor is matched with these high-risk minority male referrals. Mentoring programs can also undertake targeted recruitment efforts to attract more male mentors. Some mentoring programs contact former male mentors and request that they again volunteer as a mentor.*

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**Challenge #4:** Youth with dual adjudicatory issues include those who are involved with both the Dependency Court and Delinquency Court. This presents a unique and not uncommon set of obstacles. Dual adjudicatory status can exist at the point of referral for mentoring services and/or after a formal match has been made.

**Action Step #4** – *Mentoring programs and Delinquency Courts can reduce match disruption and/or termination by not referring or accepting Delinquency Court involved youth who have dual adjudicatory status – unless the mentoring program is well equipped to understand the complexities involved with youth who have dual adjudicatory status. Dependency Court issues tend to take precedence over Delinquency Court issues, and it is usually not more than a four (4)-month period where dual adjudicatory status exists, but the mere fact that a youth has this classification raises a red flag. Some referrals are made and accepted if the mentoring program has a long waiting list; this has shown to be a proactive approach to the referral being involved with either the Delinquency or Dependency Court, not both at the time of making the match.*

## TERMS AND DEFINITIONS IN THE DELINQUENCY COURT

**Adjudication Hearing** — the hearing at which the Juvenile Delinquency Court judge/judicial officer determines that a juvenile is responsible for the offense that has been filed.

**At-Risk and High-Risk Youth** — The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) defines “at-risk” youth as those with high levels of risk in their family, home, communities and social environments to such a degree that it could lead to educational failure, dropping out of school or involvement in juvenile delinquency and gang-related offenses. OJJDP defines “high-risk” youth as those with present or past juvenile justice involvement.

**Blended Sentencing** — the imposition of both juvenile and adult sentences concurrently by the Juvenile Delinquency Court under certain circumstances.

**Caretaker or Physical Custodian** — a person who has physical custody but not legal custody of a youth, such as a foster parent, placement facility or relative without legal custody.

**Delinquent Youth** — a minor who has committed an act, which under the laws of the jurisdiction would be a crime if committed by an adult.

**Detention Hearing** — the first Juvenile Delinquency Court hearing regarding an alleged delinquent youth who was placed in detention at the time the affidavit and petition were filed or at the time the youth was arrested on a warrant.

**Diversion (Juvenile)** — In less serious offenses, and if agreed to by the youth and parent/guardian, the case is handled through non-judicial alternative services.

**Dual Adjudicatory** — a Delinquency Court designation for an abused, neglected or dependent youth who is also a delinquent youth and vice versa.

**Graduated Sanctions/Responses** — an accountability-based, graduated series of sanctions and incentives, combined with treatment and services, applicable to youth within the Juvenile Justice System.

**Judicial Officer** — a lawyer appointed by a Juvenile Delinquency judge to hear Juvenile Delinquency petitions. May be referred to as Commissioner, Magistrate, Master, Referee or Hearing Officer.

**Juvenile** — a youth under the age of majority. The recommended age is usually eighteen (18) and younger.

**Legal Guardian** — an adult who is not the biological parent, or a state or licensed children and youth agency, who has been given legal authority by a court to provide care and custody of a child/youth.

**Needs Assessment** — one tool in the Structured Decision-Making process. It identifies the offender’s specific needs and provides part of the foundation for the case plan.

**Petition** — the document that specifies the violation of law and state statute number described in the affidavit that the youth is alleged to have committed. A probable cause statement or affidavit, usually filed by the police, accompanies the petition.

**Post-Disposition Review** — hearings held after the Juvenile Delinquency Court has ordered probation, treatment services, support services or placement to ensure that the youth, parents, probation, treatment and service providers are following through with the court ordered and/or court supported plan.

**Recidivism Rates** — There are three (3) common rates of recidivism used frequently in the Juvenile Justice and Criminal Justice Systems. They include: 1) re-arrest; 2) conviction; and 3) incarceration. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) considers recidivism rates to be empirically logical using a scientific and random assignment approach which is three (3) years post adjudication.

**Status Offender** — a juvenile who has committed an offense that would not be considered an offense if committed by an adult (i.e truancy, runaway, etc.).

**Summons** — the document provided to an alleged delinquent youth and parents/legal guardians that orders them to appear before the Delinquency Court at a specific date and time to respond to a specific alleged violation of the law.

**Waiver (or Waive Jurisdiction)** — refers to the transfer of a youth from Juvenile Delinquency Court to Criminal Court. Also referred to as “certification,” “transfer” and “relinquishment.”

**Warrant** — an order for the arrest of a youth on an alleged law violation or failure to appear at court. Also referred to as “writ,” “capias” or “take into custody.”

**Wrap-Around Services** — a method of service delivery highlighted by commitment to create services on a “one youth at a time” basis to support normalized and inclusive options for the youth with complex needs. Wrap-around interventions create a youth and family team composed of the people who know the youth best to design an individualized plan.

**Written Findings and Orders** — the document that records the decisions made by the court at the delinquency hearing, which is distributed to legal parties and key participants at the end of the each Juvenile Delinquency Court hearing.

**Youth Justice** — These rapidly expanding juvenile justice diversion programs are often referred to as Youth Court, Teen Court, Peer Court, Student Court and Youth Peer Panel.

## TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

*OJJDP Research Report on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Full Report*

*OJJDP Research Report on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Executive Summary*

*Juvenile Justice Journal on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Special Edition*

Memorandums of Understanding  
Six Resource Guides for Developing MOUs  
for Juvenile Justice and Mentoring Services

PowerPoint Presentations for  
Six Juvenile Justice Settings and Mentoring

Six Technical Assistance Profiles:  
*Examining the Referral Stage for Mentoring High-Risk Youth*

*MENTOR's Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™, Third Edition*

*MENTOR's Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™ Toolkit – Juvenile Justice Section*

*MENTOR's Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™, Third Edition, Checklist for Mentoring Programs*

**For free, downloadable versions of these resources, visit:**

MENTOR at [http://www.mentoring.org/program\\_resources/Researching\\_the\\_Referral\\_Stage/](http://www.mentoring.org/program_resources/Researching_the_Referral_Stage/);

Global Youth Justice at  
<http://www.globalyouthjustice.org/Mentoring.html>;  
and

National Partnership for Juvenile Services  
at <http://www.npjs.org/highriskyouth.php>

## WEBSITES OF INTEREST

Big Brother Big Sisters of East TN  
Knoxville, TN, USA

<http://bigbrothersbigsistersetn.org/>

San Diego Youth Services Mentoring Program  
San Diego, CA, USA

[http://www.sdyouthservices.org/site/  
PageServer?pagename=foster](http://www.sdyouthservices.org/site/PageServer?pagename=foster)

Boys and Girls Clubs of Las Vegas  
Las Vegas, NV, USA

<http://www.bgclv.org/index.php>

Juvenile Court and Juvenile Probation  
Choctaw Tribal Court

Mississippi Band of Indians

Durant, OK, USA

[http://www.choctaw.org/government/court/  
juvenile.html](http://www.choctaw.org/government/court/juvenile.html)

Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma  
Mentoring Program and Youth Services  
Ponca City, OK, USA

<http://www.ponca.com/118837.html>

Global Youth Justice Website – Mentoring  
High Risk Youth Resources

[http://www.globalyouthjustice.org/Mentoring.  
html](http://www.globalyouthjustice.org/Mentoring.html)

National Partnership for Juvenile Services –  
Mentoring High Risk Youth Resources

<http://www.npjs.org/>

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership

<http://www.mentoring.org/>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency  
Prevention – Mentoring Resources

<http://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/mentoring.html>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency  
Prevention – Model Program Guide/Mentoring

[http://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/progTypesMentoring.  
aspx](http://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/progTypesMentoring.aspx)

Administration for Children, Youth and Families,  
U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/acyf/>

State-by-State Listing of Legislation and Statutes  
Regarding Juveniles

[http://www.ncjj.org/Research\\_Resources/State\\_  
Profiles.aspx](http://www.ncjj.org/Research_Resources/State_Profiles.aspx)

**NOTES**



# 1

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## PROJECT PARTNERS



## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROFILE**

Examining the Referral Stage for Mentoring High-Risk Youth  
In Six Different Juvenile Justice Settings

Dependency Court, Delinquency Court, Juvenile Detention, Juvenile Corrections,  
Juvenile Probation and Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Programs

# Dependency Court and Mentoring

## THE REFERRAL STAGE

Written by:  
Scott Bernard Peterson

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# Dependency Court and Mentoring

Dependency Courts involve a juvenile (child/youth), typically in cases of abuse, neglect and mistreatment. Dependency Court judges are charged with determining if allegations of abuse or neglect are sustained by the evidence and, if so, are legally sufficient to support state intervention on behalf of the child. Some youth who appear in the Delinquency Court also appear in the Dependency Court at the same time for dual adjudicatory issues. The Dependency Court is most commonly associated with foster care, abuse and neglect issues involving youth younger than eighteen (18) years of age.

## **Mentoring Program Description**

Mentoring involves a non-parental adult who plays an important role in promoting healthy development for youth. There are many mentoring models and even more programmatic differences within the different mentoring models. The goal of mentoring programs is to provide youth with positive adult contact and, thereby, reduce risk factors (e.g., early antisocial behavior, alienation, lack of commitment to school) by enhancing protective factors (e.g., healthy beliefs, opportunities for involvement and social and material reinforcement for appropriate behavior). Mentors provide youth with personal connectedness, supervision and guidance, skills training, career or cultural enrichment opportunities, a knowledge of spirituality and values and, perhaps most importantly, goals and hope for the future.

## **Geographic and Demographic Characteristics**

Referrals of Dependency Court involved youth for the delivery of local mentoring services are often made by and/or approved by governmental agencies representing county and state level jurisdictions, and, therefore, it is important for mentoring and Dependency Court staff to discuss geographic barriers when making and accepting referrals of Dependency Court involved youth.

## Possible Challenges of Youth Involved with the Dependency Court (Ages 0-18)

### Individual

- Conduct disorders (authority conflict/rebellious/stubborn/disruptive/antisocial)
- General delinquency involvement

### Family

- Antisocial parents
- Child maltreatment (abuse or neglect)
- Family history of problem behavior/criminal involvement
- Family poverty/low family socioeconomic status
- Family violence (child maltreatment, partner violence, conflict)
- High parental stress/maternal depression
- Parental criminality
- Parental use of physical punishment/harsh and/or erratic discipline practices
- Poor parental supervision (control, monitoring and child management)
- Poor parent-child relations or communication

### School

- Poor school performance; academic failure
- Low academic aspirations

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Referring Dependency Court Youth to Mentoring Programs

#### **What is the difference between a Dependency Court, Delinquency Court and a Teen Court/Youth Court program?**

The Delinquency Court is most commonly associated with the Juvenile Justice System and juveniles who have committed a crime, offense and/or violation. The Dependency Court is most commonly associated with foster care, abuse and neglect issues involving youth younger than 18 years of age. Teen Court/Youth Court diversion programs are juvenile justice diversion programs and are administered on a local level by law enforcement agencies, probation departments, Delinquency Courts, schools and nonprofit organizations.

#### **Who refers youth in Dependency Courts to mentoring programs?**

Dependency Court involved youth are often referred to mentoring services by adult staff representing local and state Departments of Health and Human Services, Departments of Children and Family Services, Dependency and Family Courts, Judicial Districts, Court Appointed Special Advocates Associations and nonprofit organizations that are legally granted authority and designated to act in the best interests of youth in the Dependency Court. Most often these nonprofit organizations have a residential component for Dependency Court involved youth. Emergency Group Foster Care Facilities and Homeless Youth Shelters are two (2) examples of nonprofit organizations legally designated to care for the high-risk youth.

Specific adult staff making the referrals of Dependency Court involved youth are often employed as social workers, case managers, court appointed special advocates, judges (to include magistrates), legal guardians, temporary guardians, foster care parents, parent(s), guardian ad litem(s), child care workers and residence counselors.

The Juvenile Review Board process is an approximately one-hour group meeting to determine placements, referrals, service needs and/or mandated community services sanctions. Participants in the Juvenile Review Board include the youthful offender, parent(s), guardian(s), adult volunteers (typically between six and eight) and often staff from a local mentoring program. A similar approach called “Family Group Conferencing” is utilized in the Dependency Court and “Circle Sentencing” is often utilized in Native American and Alaskan Native Tribes. Referral for mentoring services is a recommendation and not mandatory, although referrals are strongly encouraged. Formal referrals from mentoring services are made by the adult coordinator in charge of the Juvenile Review Board.

#### **What is an embedded program and how is it important to a successful mentoring program in a Dependency Court setting?**

An embedded mentoring program within a Dependency Court is one which is directly operated by the Dependency Court and/or the Dependency Court contracts out for the delivery of mentoring services to a public or private entity, while maintaining administrative authority. Dependency Court embedded mentoring programs are operational on a local municipal level, not a state level.

A Dependency Court embedded mentoring program benefits from multiple points of referral for mentoring services within the largely uniform Dependency Court hearings to include:

- (1) Permanency Planning Hearings;
- (2) Preliminary Protective Hearings;
- (3) Termination of Parental Rights (TPR);
- (4) Adjudication Hearings;

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

continued

- (5) Disposition Hearings;
- (6) Review Hearings; and
- (7) Adoption Hearings.

The Dependency Court is able to control internal referrals for mentoring services, which benefits the high-risk youth not being placed on a long waiting list for a mentor.

Family group conferencing is an increasingly common Dependency Court improvement practice and not a hearing. Family group conferencing involves a wide range of adults in the lives of Dependency Court involved youth, in addition to Dependency Court staff. Family group conferencing lends itself very well to discussions regarding making a referral for mentoring services for high-risk youth, as well as the determination to make the delivery of mentoring services part of the permanency plan, to include when concurrent planning is taking place within the Dependency Court. Embedded mentoring programs benefit considerably from this approach, as mentoring staff are part of the family group conferencing discussions.

Embedded mentoring programs also only make referrals internally and, therefore, they can avoid long waiting lists and the negative connotations associated with that situation. This is especially important for older age youth, as it is essential to get them an adult mentor as soon as possible, so they can establish a strong relationship with their adult mentor before aging out of foster care. Embedded mentoring programs also benefit from the increased contact with the Dependency Court youth and the adult mentor involved in the mentoring relationship.

### **How are strong mentoring relationships formed between mentoring programs and the Dependency Court?**

Dependency Courts and mentoring programs benefit from having an agreed upon, formal written referral

policy which takes in to consideration a wide range of factors to be discussed and agreed upon to include:

- (1) Only parent(s) and legal guardians can make referrals;
- (2) Referrals of Dependency Court involved youth need to be in a relatively stable home or other placement setting to help avoid the negative impact of early match termination;
- (3) Realistic time frames from the time of referral to the time a “mentoring match” needs to be discussed;
- (4) Once a referral is made from the Dependency Court, it is important to have the primary contact person identified, to include notifications regarding changes in that primary contact person; and
- (5) Dependency Courts and mentoring programs each need to come up with their own policies regarding making and accepting referrals of higher-risk Dependency Court youth who are more likely to be a danger to themselves and/or someone else.

A Memorandum of Understanding and a Case Referral Flow-Chart delineate important roles and steps which foster a more favorable working relationship between the Delinquency Court and the mentoring program(s).

### **Are nonembedded mentoring programs successful in working with Dependency Court youth?**

More often than not, private organizations are the entity operating and providing mentoring services to the Dependency Court, rather than the Dependency Court operating an embedded mentoring program. These private organizations can be successful on a number of fronts with regard to delivering mentoring services to high-risk youth in the Dependency Court. There are a wide range of administrative and

operational factors to consider which will result in successful or unsuccessful working relationships.

Flow-Charts and/or Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) around making and accepting referrals support stronger and longer lasting working relationships between Dependency Courts and mentoring programs. Mentoring programs with a specific or sole focus on serving Dependency Court involved youth are purposely better equipped to handle a wide range of issues associated with the Child Welfare System. Positive working relationships among the professionals working for the Dependency Court and the mentoring programs are essential for effective mentoring services to be delivered to these high-risk youth.

### **Were youth in Dependency Courts willing to participate in mentoring programs?**

Dependency Court involved youth can range in age from birth to age eighteen (18). The majority of these youth reside with one (1) or more parent(s)/guardian(s) or these youth have been removed from the care of their parent(s)/guardian(s) and are placed in immediate, short-term and/or long-term care placements under the care of the state. Dependency Court involved youth in the care of the state are overseen by a judge in collaboration with a Child and Family Services Department. If the judge directs the social worker to secure mentoring services for a nine (9) year old youth in the custody of the state, the judge is acting in a parental capacity, and the referral is NOT voluntary.

More often than not, the referral for mentoring services is voluntary, and especially with youth who are fifteen (15) and older. However, it is important to recognize that mentoring can be mandatory in the Dependency Court if the judge has determined a mentoring relationship with a responsible adult is in the best interest of the Dependency Court involved youth. Mentoring programs make their own determination if they will accept mandatory referrals of these high-risk youth for mentoring services, even if the youth does not want such a referral. More often than not, adult professionals in mentoring programs

will support the decision of the judge, who is acting in the best interest of the youth.

### **What are the primary considerations for mentoring programs when Dependency Court youth are referred for mentoring services?**

The Dependency Court handles cases involving children who subjected to abuse and neglect; children with custodial issues; termination of parental rights; and children in foster care to include those with entrustment agreements.

Referrals of high-risk youth for mentoring services from the Delinquency Court and/or another entity legally operating on behalf of the Delinquency Court are voluntary referrals. The Delinquency Court has no legal authority for mandating high-risk youth be matched with an adult mentor. This is different from the Dependency Court, as it often acts as the legal custodian of high-risk youth, and therefore can act in the best interest of the youth, to include the delivery of mentoring services.

Referrals need to be assessed for dual adjudicatory issues when looking at referrals from the Dependency Court, as additional information is often necessary before approving a referral for the delivery of mentoring services. Often, the same judge for Dependency Court issues is the same judge for Delinquency Court issues and, therefore, accessing dual adjudicatory issues is not as difficult as it may appear.

Specialized recruitment, training, screening and matching of adults to serve as mentors for a high-risk youth from the Delinquency Court benefit both the adult mentor and the youth mentee. Recruitment can be targeted to adults interested in working with high-risk youth for a wide variety of reasons. High-risk youth from the Delinquency Court often present a unique set of challenges which require specialized training for adults volunteering to serve as a mentor. While background checks should always be mandatory, additional screening to include interviews and other tactics can be deployed to reduce match termination rates.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

continued

### **Are there any Dependency Court statutory requirements related to mentoring?**

Yes. United States Public Law 105-89 passed November 19, 1997, requires a permanency plan be put in place no later than 12 months after a youth enters the Dependency Court for purposes of promoting the adoption and improved delivery of services and care for foster care youth. This public law helps promote stability for foster care youth. The Dependency Court hearings and

related treatment and permanency hearings lend themselves to the inclusion of an adult mentor in the life of a foster care youth. The “referral stage” for the delivery of mentoring services for foster care youth is well informed at these required permanency hearings and becomes part of the permanency plan for youth involved with the Dependency Court. Public Law 105-89 requires judicial approval of the permanency plan.

## WHAT'S WORKING: Examples of Effective Strategies

Providing adult mentors with additional and ongoing training to improve their ability to be a more effective mentor for a high-risk youth from the Dependency Court has resulted in longer and stronger relationships. Adult staff from the Dependency Court and mentoring program also have a greater confidence with regard to these adult mentors having a higher level of preparedness in their role as a mentor.

Mentoring programs with a specific and/or sole purpose of serving youth from the

Dependency Court have an advantageous level of knowledge, skill and ability in providing effective mentoring services for a wide range of high-risk youth involved with the Dependency Court. This specialized focus often includes mentoring programs hiring child welfare social workers and case managers who are able to navigate the requirements and systematic limitations of working with the Dependency Court, which often leads to stronger relationships between mentoring programs and the Dependency Court.

## CHALLENGES AND ACTION STEPS

**Challenge #1:** Dependency Court involved youth tend to be a more transient population by choice and not by choice. This often serves as a barrier for long-term effective mentoring relationships which can yield favorable results in the life of a youth in the Dependency Court.

**Action Step** – *Dependency Court and mentoring program staff deal with this by largely only referring and accepting Dependency Court involved youth who are in longer-term placements – to the extent that this can be determined given the fluid nature of youth in the Dependency Court.*

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**Challenge #2:** Dependency Court youth age out of the Foster Care System at age eighteen (18) and often self-terminate the mentoring match upon turning eighteen (18).

**Action Step** – *Mentoring programs and the Dependency Court often do not make or accept referrals of high-risk youth for mentoring services above age sixteen (16) or seventeen (17). Often, referrals of Dependency Court involved youth ages sixteen (16) and older are referred for career-type models of mentoring services.*

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**Challenge #3:** Youth with dual adjudicatory issues include those who are involved with both the Dependency Court and Delinquency Court. This presents a unique and not uncommon set of obstacles. Dual adjudicatory status can exist at the point of referral for mentoring services and/or after a formal match has been made.

**Action Step** – *Mentoring programs and Dependency Courts can reduce match disruption and/or termination by not referring or accepting Dependency Court involved youth who have dual adjudicatory status. Dependency Court issues tend to take precedence over Delinquency Court issues, and it is usually not more than a four (4) month period where dual adjudicatory status exists. Some referrals are made and accepted if the mentoring program has a long waiting list, as this has shown to be a proactive approach to expedite mentoring matches.*

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**Challenge #4:** Dependency Court involved youth referred to mentoring programs often have communication problems which interfere with the referral and match process. Dependency Court involved youth rarely have access to a computer or cell phone, and even when they do, it is often only for a short period of time. Communication is essential for the mentoring program and an adult mentor to contact the Dependency Court involved youth.

**Action Step #4** – *Some mentoring programs have secured funding and donations to provide Dependency Court involved youth with prepaid cell phones that are limited to making and receiving phone calls only. Mentoring programs provide the adult mentors of these Dependency Court involved youth with additional prepaid phone cards to give their mentors during their match time together. This also allows these high-risk youth to call their adult mentor should they need to communicate with them and/or for other purposes.*

## TERMS AND DEFINITIONS IN THE DEPENDENCY COURT

**Adoption and Safe Families Act (PL 105-89)** — federal legislation passed in 1997 that focused on safety issues as related to reunification, required safety issues as related to unification, required permanency time frames, and speeding the process of planning and finding permanent homes within 12 months. This legislation strives to improve conditions and more future outcomes for youth lingering in the Foster Care System and aging out of the Foster Care System.

**At-Risk and High-Risk Youth** — The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) defines “at-risk” youth as those with high levels of risk in their family, home, communities and social environments to such a degree that it could lead to educational failure, dropping out of school or involvement in juvenile delinquency and gang-related offenses. OJJDP defines “high-risk” youth as those with present or past juvenile justice involvement.

**Caretaker or Physical Custodian** — a person who has physical custody but not legal custody of a youth, such as a foster parent, placement facility or relative without legal custody.

**Dependent Youth** — the term used by some jurisdictions to describe a young person subject to the jurisdictions of the court because of child abuse, neglect or lack of proper care.

**Dual Adjudicatory** — a Delinquency Court designation for an abused, neglected or dependent youth who is also a delinquent youth and vice versa.

**Family Group Conferencing** — a process involving the engagement of immediate and extended family members and close friends to meet with a trained a facilitator and design solutions for a youth, which they agree to implement to resolve a problem. Although this method is more common in the Dependency Court, it is also used in the Delinquency Court.

**Juvenile** — a youth under the age of majority. The recommended age is usually eighteen (18) and younger.

**Legal Guardian** — an adult who is not the biological parent, or a state or licensed children and youth agency, who has been given legal authority by a court to provide care and custody of a child/youth.

**Needs Assessment** — one tool in the structured decision making process. It identifies the offender’s specific needs and provides part of the foundation for the case plan.

**Petition** — the document that specifies the violation of law and state statute number described in the affidavit that the youth is alleged to have committed. A probable cause statement or affidavit, usually filed by the police, accompanies the petition.

**Wrap-Around Services** — a method of service delivery highlighted by commitment to create services on a “one youth at a time” basis to support normalized and inclusive options for the youth with complex needs. Wrap-around interventions create a youth and family team composed of the people who know the youth best to design an individualized plan.

**Written Findings and Orders** — the document that records the decisions made by the court at the delinquency hearing, which is distributed to legal parties and key participants at the end of the each Juvenile Delinquency Court hearing.

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Six Resource Guides for Developing MOUs  
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*MENTOR's Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™, Third Edition*

*MENTOR's Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™ Toolkit – Juvenile Justice Section*

*MENTOR's Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™, Third Edition, Checklist for Mentoring Programs*

**For free, downloadable versions of these resources, visit:**

MENTOR at [http://www.mentoring.org/program\\_resources/Researching\\_the\\_Referral\\_Stage/](http://www.mentoring.org/program_resources/Researching_the_Referral_Stage/);

Global Youth Justice at <http://www.globalyouthjustice.org/Mentoring.html>; and

National Partnership for Juvenile Services at <http://www.npjs.org/highriskyouth.php>

## WEBSITES OF INTEREST

Team Up Mentoring Program  
Norfolk, VA, USA  
[http://theupcenter.org/For\\_Adults/mentoring.htm](http://theupcenter.org/For_Adults/mentoring.htm)

Spectrum Mentoring Program  
Burlington, VT, USA  
<http://www.spectrumvt.org/mentoring-program/>

San Diego Youth Services Mentoring Program  
San Diego, CA, USA  
[http://www.sdyouthservices.org/site/  
PageServer?pagename=foster](http://www.sdyouthservices.org/site/PageServer?pagename=foster)

Saratoga Mentoring Program  
Catholic Charities of Saratoga  
Saratoga, NY, USA  
<http://www.saratogamentoring.org/>

Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma  
Mentoring Program and Youth Services  
Ponca City, OK, USA  
<http://www.ponca.com/118837.html>

Global Youth Justice Website –  
Mentoring High Risk Youth Resources  
<http://www.globalyouthjustice.org/Mentoring.html>

National Partnership for Juvenile Services –  
Mentoring High Risk Youth Resources  
<http://www.npjs.org/>

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership  
<http://www.mentoring.org/>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency  
Prevention – Mentoring Resources  
<http://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/mentoring.html>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency  
Prevention – Model Program Guide/Mentoring  
<http://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/progTypesMentoring.aspx>

Administration for Children, Youth and Families,  
U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services  
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/acyf/>

State-by-State Listing of Legislation and Statutes  
Regarding Juveniles  
[http://www.ncjj.org/Research\\_Resources/State\\_  
Profiles.aspx](http://www.ncjj.org/Research_Resources/State_Profiles.aspx)

## NOTES

**NOTES**



# 2

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## PROJECT PARTNERS



## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROFILE**

Examining the Referral Stage for Mentoring High-Risk Youth  
In Six Different Juvenile Justice Settings

Dependency Court, Delinquency Court, Juvenile Detention, Juvenile Corrections,  
Juvenile Probation and Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Programs

# Teen/Youth Court Programs and Mentoring

## THE REFERRAL STAGE



Written by:  
Scott Bernard Peterson



# Teen/Youth Court Programs and Mentoring

Teen/Youth Court Programs are Juvenile Justice diversion programs in which juveniles are sentenced by their peers for minor crimes, offenses and/or violations. These juvenile diversion programs are administered on a local level by law enforcement agencies, probation departments, delinquency courts, schools and local nonprofit organizations. They offer communities an opportunity to provide immediate consequences for primarily first-time-offending juveniles, and they also offer important civic, service and volunteer opportunities for volunteer youth who serve as judges, defenders, prosecutors, clerks and jurors.

## **Mentoring Program Description**

Mentoring involves a non-parental adult who plays an important role in promoting healthy development for youth. There are many mentoring models and even more programmatic differences within the different mentoring models. The goal of mentoring programs is to provide youth with positive adult contact and, thereby, reduce risk factors (e.g., early antisocial behavior, alienation, lack of commitment to school) by enhancing protective factors (e.g., healthy beliefs, opportunities for involvement and social and material reinforcement for appropriate behavior). Mentors provide youth with personal connectedness, supervision and guidance, skills training, career or cultural enrichment opportunities, a knowledge of spirituality and values and, perhaps most importantly, goals and hope for the future.

## **Geographic and Demographic Characteristics**

Referrals of Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Program involved youth for the delivery of local mentoring services are primarily made and/or approved by community-based organizations, schools and/or governmental agencies to include Police Departments, Probation Departments and Delinquency Courts. Therefore, it is important for mentoring and Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Program staff to discuss geographic barriers when making and accepting referrals of Dependency Court involved youth.

## Possible Challenges of Youth Involved with Teen Court/ Youth Court Diversion Programs (Ages 6-18)

### Individual

- Primarily first time offenders
- Antisocial/delinquent beliefs
- General delinquency involvement
- Low to moderate alcohol/drug use
- Lack of guilt and empathy
- Physical violence/aggression
- Low-level crimes, violations and offenses

### Family

- Delinquent/gang-involved siblings
- Lack of orderly and structured activities within the family
- Parental use of physical punishment/harsh and/or erratic discipline practices
- Poor parental supervision (control, monitoring and child management)
- Poor parent-child relations or communication

### School

- Moderate truancy/absences/suspensions
- Low academic aspirations
- Low school attachment/bonding/motivation/commitment to school
- Poor school attitude/performance; academic failure
- Poor student-teacher relations
- Poorly defined rules and expectations for appropriate conduct
- Poorly organized and functioning schools/inadequate school climate/negative labeling by teachers

### Peer

- Association with antisocial/aggressive/delinquent peers
- Peer rejection
- Lack of involvement with peers in group settings

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Referring Teen Court/Youth Court to Mentoring Programs

#### **Dependency Court, Delinquency Court and a Teen Court/Youth Court program?**

The Delinquency Court is most commonly associated with the Juvenile Justice System and juveniles who have committed a crime, offense and/or violation. The Dependency Court is most commonly associated with foster care, abuse, and neglect issues involving youth younger than 18 years of age. Teen Court/Youth Court diversion programs are juvenile justice diversion programs and are administered on a local level by law enforcement agencies, probation departments, delinquency courts, schools and nonprofit organizations.

#### **Who refers youth in Teen Court/Youth Court to mentoring?**

Teen Court/Youth Court diversion programs are operated by a wide range of agencies and organizations to include public and private entities. More often than not, a Teen Court/Youth Court diversion program is a collaborative approach among two (2) or more agencies and organizations. Therefore, multiple sources can and do make referrals for the delivery of mentoring services for high-risk youth and youth volunteers involved with local Teen Court/Youth Court diversion programs.

Youthful offenders and youth volunteers involved with a local Teen Court/Youth Court diversion program are referred to mentoring programs by agencies and organizations to include:

- (1) Delinquency Courts;
- (2) Juvenile and Adult Probation Departments;
- (3) Police Departments;
- (4) Sheriff and State Police Departments;
- (5) Community-Based and NonProfit Organizations;
- (6) Youth Bureaus;

- (7) Administrative Office of the Courts;
- (8) Elementary, Junior-High and High Schools; and
- (9) Traffic and Adult Court.

Individuals from these referral sources making voluntary referrals for mentoring services included:

- (1) Teen Court/Youth Court adult coordinators and directors;
- (2) Delinquency Court judges and magistrates;
- (3) Probation Officers;
- (4) Police Officers;
- (5) Youth Services Specialists;
- (6) Social Workers and Case Managers;
- (7) School Officials and Administrators;
- (8) Court Clerks;
- (9) Public Defenders; and
- (10) Volunteer Youth Juries in local Teen Court/Youth Court diversion programs under the guidance of authorized adults.

#### **What is an embedded program and how is it important to a successful mentoring program in a Teen Court/Youth Court program setting?**

An embedded mentoring program within a Teen Court/Youth Court diversion program is most often one which is directly operated by the Teen Court/Youth Court diversion program. Teen Court/Youth Court embedded mentoring programs operate on a local municipal level, not a state level.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

continued

Embedded mentoring programs in a Teen Court/ Youth Court diversion programs may be operated by the municipality in a Youth Bureau, Youth Services and/or other related public agency. The majority of embedded mentoring programs take place when a local nonprofit community-based organization operates both a mentoring program and Teen Court/ Youth Court diversion program in addition to other programs and services.

### **How are strong mentoring relationships formed between mentoring Programs and Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Programs?**

Memorandums of Understanding and a Referral Flowchart delineating administrative and operational referral policies and practices foster a favorable and long term working relationship between Teen Court/ Youth Court diversion programs and mentoring programs. A well written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) can foster effective communication between/among partners, increase access to a wide range of resources, strengthen existing and new partnerships and provide a framework for addressing issues of mutual concern.

The MOU provides structure for the working relationship and clarifies what each of the partners will do to further the collaboration. The MOU identifies the specific resources that will support the partnership and defines how each will be used. In addition, language clarifying the type of staff, scope of work, job descriptions, types of referrals and provided services help to formalize the partnership. Most importantly, the MOU defines the specific commitments between partners to meet mutually agreed upon goals.

### **Are non-embedded mentoring programs successful in working with Teen Court/ Youth Court youth?**

Yes, a formal intake process takes place with the youthful offender, parent(s) or guardian(s) and the adult program director in most Teen Court/Youth Court diversion programs. When youth are referred to one of these diversion programs, the youthful offender and their parent(s) or guardian(s) have usually been processed initially by a juvenile intake officer. During these intake and processing meetings with Police Departments and a Teen Court/Youth Court diversion program, the youthful offender is offered a referral for mentoring services in a non-embedded mentoring program.

If the Teen Court/Youth Court diversion program is Probation-Based or Delinquency Court-Based, similar intake meetings take place and referrals are made to a non-embedded mentoring program. Referrals to non-embedded mentoring programs for these high-risk youth are viewed as a wrap-around service. Non-embedded mentoring programs are also well served to notify all referral sources about any waiting lists. Referral sources will often stop making referrals if a waiting list is more than three (3) months.

### **Were youth in Teen Court/Youth Court programs willing to participate in mentoring programs?**

Teen Court/Youth Court diversion program high-risk youth are willing to voluntarily participate in mentoring programs. Teen Court/Youth Court diversion programs, like the Delinquency Court, have no legal authority for mandating high-risk youth be matched with an adult mentor. This is different from the Dependency Court, as it often acts as the legal custodian of high-risk youth, and therefore can act in the best interest of the youth,

to include the delivery of mentoring services. Mentoring services are primarily viewed as a wrap-around service and embraced by the Juvenile Justice System in that context.

### **What are the primary considerations for mentoring programs when Teen Court/ Youth Court diversion program high-risk youth are referred for mentoring services?**

Youthful offenders are offered the opportunity to voluntarily proceed in a local Teen Court/Youth Court diversion program if they are a first time juvenile offender, they admit guilt and they agree to proceed for purposes of addressing their anti-social, delinquent and/or criminal behavior. Referrals are primarily first time juvenile offenders who have committed a crime, offense and/or violation.

Match support was identified as a primary programmatic element which can be enhanced to address some of the more challenging youth — especially “high-risk” youth involved with the Juvenile Justice System and Teen Court/Youth Court diversion programs. Some mentoring programs have elected to not accept referrals of youthful offenders who are dangerous to themselves and/or the adult mentors and staff. High-risk youth with documented, serious mental health issues were identified as a type of referral for mentoring services that do not usually work out well. Voluntary willingness of the parent(s) and guardian(s) to allow their child to engage in a “mentoring match” is required for accepting a referral for mentoring services and making a mentoring match.

### **Are there Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Program statutory requirements related to mentoring?**

Teen Court/Youth Court diversion programs primarily adjudicate low-level youthful offenders who would otherwise proceed in the formal Juvenile Justice System. Statutory requirements are only relevant for formally arrested juveniles and non-formal (or pending) arrests which become formal arrests if

the juvenile offender does not complete their peer imposed sanction in a local Teen Court/Youth Court diversion program.

Therefore, staff in local Teen Court/Youth Court diversion programs and mentoring programs seeking to refer high-risk youth for mentoring services are often under a time frame of between 90 and 120 days to make referrals for mentoring services. State statutes vary with regard to the mandatory time frame for adjudication of juveniles. This time frame can and does vary based on judicial discretion and other factors, such as dual adjudicatory issues where abuse and neglect are paramount. Formal actions can be put into place to extend this time frame, but that often only takes place with a subsequent offense and/or unsuccessful compliance with the approved imposed sentence.

Mentoring programs seeking to identify high-risk Delinquency Court involved youth should consider their state’s statutory time frame for juveniles to be adjudicated and identify point(s) of contact within the Juvenile Justice System and Teen Court/Youth Court diversion programs. A website listing State-by-State Juvenile Justice Legislation is included at the bottom of this Technical Assistance Bulletin under website links.

## WHAT'S WORKING: Examples of Effective Strategies

The point of “referral” for high-risk youth in Teen Court/Youth Court diversion programs for mentoring services is most often an early step in a system of graduated sanctions in the Juvenile Justice System and usually occurs no later than thirty (30) days after the arrest (formal and informal). The “point of referral” can be at any point during the Teen Court/Youth Court diversion process, from the intake meeting to the completion of the peer imposed sanction, and most often not longer than 120 days after the point of arrest (formal and informal).

Referrals of high-risk youth involved with local Teen Court/Youth Court diversion programs are voluntary. Referrals for mentoring services from the youth peer juries

are recommendations and often encouraged by the adult coordinator of a Teen Court/Youth Court diversion program. Mentoring should not be utilized as a mandatory sanction imposed by the Teen Court/Youth Court diversion programs. The willingness of parent(s), guardian(s) and youthful offender(s) to engage in a “mentoring match” is required for accepting and making a mentoring match.

A Memorandum of Understanding and a Case Referral Flowchart delineating important programmatic steps fosters a more favorable working relationship between the Teen Court/Youth Court diversion programs and the mentoring programs.

## CHALLENGES AND ACTION STEPS

**Challenge #1:** Mentoring programs have challenges identifying the appropriate organizations and agencies authorized to make referral of high-risk youth involved with local Teen Court diversion programs, also referred to as Youth Court, Peer Court, Student Court and Youth Peer Jury. A wide range of public and private agencies and organizations in a local community are involved with the operation of one of these diversion programs, and it can be confusing to find out who is administratively in charge.

**Action Step** – *Identify all of the individuals and entities that will be involved in the targeting high-risk youth in local Teen Court/Youth Court diversion programs. Hold a meeting to identify the shared functions, services and/or resources that will support the collaboration. Discuss a plan as to how the parties/entities can and may operate together to deliver mentoring services.*

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**Challenge #2:** High-risk youth referred from the Delinquency Court are re-arrested and/or incarcerated for a subsequent juvenile crime, offense and/or violation after the mentoring match has been finalized and the mentoring relationship has begun.

**Action Step** – *Mentoring programs should establish operational and administrative procedures for handling matched high-risk youth from the Dependency Court who are re-arrested and/or incarcerated. This is especially critical when a high-risk youth is arrested in another jurisdiction*

*and there is a second, different Dependency Court. The subsequent arrest could be of a very serious nature which may require match termination. This second arrest may also result in the high-risk youth being placed in a Juvenile Detention or Juvenile Correctional Facility, making it difficult or not possible to continue with the match. In some cases, mentoring programs will be able to continue with the mentoring match, and they will just need to communicate with additional contacts as they relate to any subsequent offense.*

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**Challenge #3:** Youth with dual adjudicatory issues include those who are involved with both the Dependency Court and Delinquency Court. This presents a unique and not uncommon set of obstacles. Dual adjudicatory status can exist at the point of referral for mentoring services and/or after a formal match has been made.

**Action Step** – *Mentoring programs and Dependency Courts can reduce match disruption and/or termination by not referring or accepting Dependency Court involved youth who have dual adjudicatory status. Dependency Court issues tend to take precedence over Delinquency Court issues, and it is usually not more than a four (4) month period where dual adjudicatory status exists. Some referrals are made and accepted if the mentoring program has a long waiting list, as this has shown to be a proactive approach to expedite mentoring matches.*

## TERMS AND DEFINITIONS IN TEEN/YOUTH COURT

**Adjudication Hearing** — the hearing at which the Juvenile Delinquency Court judge/judicial officer determines that a juvenile is responsible for the offense that has been filed.

**At-Risk and High-Risk Youth** — The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) defines “at-risk” youth as those with high levels of risk in their family, home, communities and social environments to such a degree that it could lead to educational failure, dropping out of school or involvement in juvenile delinquency and gang-related offenses. OJJDP defines “high-risk” youth as those with present or past juvenile justice involvement.

**Caretaker or Physical Custodian** — a person who has physical custody but not legal custody of a youth, such as a foster parent, placement facility or relative without legal custody.

**Delinquent Youth** — a minor who has committed an act, which under the laws of the jurisdiction would be a crime if committed by an adult.

**Disposition Hearing** — the hearing at which the Delinquency Court makes orders regarding the consequences an adjudicated youth receives as a result of the law violation.

**Diversions (Juvenile)** — In less serious offenses, and if agreed to by the youth and parent/guardian, the case is handled through non-judicial alternative services.

**Graduated Sanctions/Responses** — an accountability-based, graduated series of sanctions and incentives, combined with treatment and services, applicable to youth within the Juvenile Justice System.

**Juvenile** — a youth under the age of majority. The recommended age is usually eighteen (18) and younger.

**Legal Guardian** — an adult who is not the biological parent, or a state or licensed children and youth agency, who has been given legal authority by a court to provide care and custody of a child/youth.

**Needs Assessment** — one tool in the Structured Decision-Making process. It identifies the offender’s specific needs and provides part of the foundation for the case plan.

**Petition** — the document that specifies the violation of law and state statute number described in the affidavit that the youth is alleged to have committed. A probable cause statement or affidavit, usually filed by the police, accompanies the petition.

**Post-Disposition Review** — hearings held after the Juvenile Delinquency Court has ordered probation, treatment services, support services, or placement to ensure that the youth, parents, probation, treatment and service providers are following through with the court ordered and/or court supported plan.

**Recidivism Rates** — There are three (3) common rates of recidivism used frequently in the Juvenile Justice and Criminal Justice Systems. They include: 1) re-arrest; 2) conviction and 3) incarceration. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) considers recidivism rates to be empirically logical using a scientific and random assignment approach which is three (3) years post adjudication.

**Status Offender** — a juvenile who has committed an offense that would not be considered an offense if committed by an adult (i.e truancy, runaway, etc.).

**Summons** — the document provided to an alleged delinquent youth and parents/legal guardians that orders them to appear before the Delinquency Court at a specific date and time to respond to a specific alleged violation of the law.

**Waiver (or Waive Jurisdiction)** — refers to the transfer of a youth from Juvenile Delinquency Court to Criminal Court. Also referred to as “certification,” “transfer” and “relinquishment.”

**Warrant** — an order for the arrest of a youth on an alleged law violation or failure to appear at court. Also referred to as “writ,” “capias” or “take into custody.”

**Wrap-Around Services** — a method of service delivery highlighted by commitment to create services on a “one youth at a time” basis to support normalized and inclusive options for the youth with

complex needs. Wrap-around interventions create a youth and family team composed of the people who know the youth best to design an individualized plan.

**Written Findings and Orders** — the document that records the decisions made by the court at the delinquency hearing, which is distributed to legal parties and key participants at the end of the each Juvenile Delinquency Court hearing.

**Youth Justice** — These rapidly expanding juvenile justice diversion programs are often referred to as Youth Court, Teen Court, Peer Court, Student Court and Youth Peer Panel.

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*Examining the Referral Stage for Mentoring High-Risk Youth*

MENTOR's *Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™, Third Edition*

MENTOR's *Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™* Toolkit — Juvenile Justice Section

MENTOR's *Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™, Third Edition, Checklist for Mentoring Programs*

**For free, downloadable versions of these resources, visit:**

MENTOR at [http://www.mentoring.org/program\\_resources/Researching\\_the\\_Referral\\_Stage/](http://www.mentoring.org/program_resources/Researching_the_Referral_Stage/);

Global Youth Justice at <http://www.globalyouthjustice.org/Mentoring.html>; and

National Partnership for Juvenile Services at <http://www.npjs.org/highriskyouth.php>

## WEBSITES OF INTEREST

SMILES Mentoring Program

New Bedford, MA, USA

<http://paaca.org/>

New Bedford Youth Court

Massachusetts, USA

<http://paaca.org/>

Choctaw Tribal Teen Court and  
Mentoring Program

Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians

Durant, OK, USA

[http://www.choctaw.org/government/court/  
teen.html](http://www.choctaw.org/government/court/teen.html)

Colonie Youth Court

Town of Colonie, NY, USA

<http://www.colonie.org/police/youthcourt/>

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Capital Region

Albany, NY, USA

[http://www.bbbs.org/site/c.pwL6KhNWLvH/  
b.3510415/k.7D2D/Big\\_Brothers\\_Big\\_Sisters\\_  
of\\_the\\_Capital\\_Region.htm](http://www.bbbs.org/site/c.pwL6KhNWLvH/b.3510415/k.7D2D/Big_Brothers_Big_Sisters_of_the_Capital_Region.htm)

Global Youth Justice Website –

Mentoring High Risk Youth Resources

<http://www.globalyouthjustice.org/Mentoring.html>

National Partnership for Juvenile Services –

Mentoring High Risk Youth Resources

<http://www.npjs.org/>

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership

<http://www.mentoring.org/>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency

Prevention – Mentoring Resources

<http://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/mentoring.html>

State-by-State Listing of Legislation and Statutes

Regarding Juveniles

[http://www.ncjj.org/Research\\_Resources/State\\_  
Profiles.aspx](http://www.ncjj.org/Research_Resources/State_Profiles.aspx)

## NOTES

**NOTES**



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## PROJECT PARTNERS



## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROFILE**

Examining the Referral Stage for Mentoring High-Risk Youth  
In Six Different Juvenile Justice Settings

Dependency Court, Delinquency Court, Juvenile Detention, Juvenile Corrections,  
Juvenile Probation and Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Programs

# Juvenile Corrections and Mentoring

## THE REFERRAL STAGE

Written by:  
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# Juvenile Corrections and Mentoring

Juvenile Corrections is considered to be a high-security residential facility that provides for the long-term and safe custody of juveniles who have been adjudicated (i.e. sentenced) by the court for having committed a felony or multiple misdemeanors. In most cases, a youth's time in a Juvenile Corrections setting is long term (months to years) because they have been adjudicated by the court system as having committed a crime. Juvenile Corrections may be publicly or privately funded and operated. The continuum of services provided to youth in Juvenile Corrections is determined by state statute and, at a minimum, should include services, such as treatment plans, that address immediate and/or acute needs in the educational, mental, physical, emotional and social development of juveniles.

## **Mentoring Program Description**

Mentoring involves a non-parental adult who plays an important role in promoting healthy development for youth. There are many mentoring models and even more programmatic differences within the different mentoring models. The goal of mentoring programs is to provide youth with positive adult contact and, thereby, reduce risk factors (e.g., early antisocial behavior, alienation, lack of commitment to school) by enhancing protective factors (e.g., healthy beliefs, opportunities for involvement, and social and material reinforcement for appropriate behavior). Mentors provide youth with personal connectedness, supervision and guidance, skills training, career or cultural enrichment opportunities, a knowledge of spirituality and values and, perhaps most importantly, goals and hope for the future.

## **Geographic and Demographic Characteristics**

On average, most states only operate between two (2) and three (3) Juvenile Corrections facilities that are typically located in rural geographic regions of that state. Juvenile Corrections facilities are generally gender specific. The minimum and maximum ages of youth served in Juvenile Corrections are guided by statute. Typical minimum and maximum ages are 10 and 18 years respectively, although some states are now defining juveniles as anyone as old as 23. Some facilities only house the high-end criminal youth, such as murderers and sex offenders. Offenses that youth in corrections are charged with range from property crimes (e.g. burglary, auto theft, drug possession and selling) to person-on-person crimes (e.g. assault, sex offenses and murder).

## Possible Challenges Facing Youth Involved with Juvenile Corrections

The overarching goal of mentoring youth in the juvenile justice system is to build and strengthen youth assets. When dealing with youth in this setting, one should be cognizant of potential challenges:

### Individual

- Conduct disorders (authority conflict/rebellious/stubborn/disruptive/antisocial)
- General delinquency involvement
- Mental health issues (including substance abuse)
- Unmet medical and dental needs

### Family

- Mental disorders/antisocial parents
- Family history of problem behavior/criminal involvement
- Family poverty/low family socioeconomic status
- Family violence (child maltreatment, partner violence, conflict)
- Family stress
- Parent criminality
- Parental use of physical punishment/harsh and/or erratic discipline practices
- Poor parental supervision (control, monitoring, and child management)
- Poor parent-child relations or communication

### School

- Poor school attendance
- Poor school performance; academic failure
- Learning disorders

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Juvenile Corrections Youth to Mentoring

#### What is the difference between a detention center and a correctional center?

In the process of conducting initial contacts for potential site visits, project staff learned that there was some confusion among mentoring programs about the difference between Juvenile Detention and Juvenile Corrections' settings.

- Detention is used primarily for juveniles who are awaiting action of the court or transfer to a Juvenile Corrections facility.
- The average length of stay in detention is usually less than 21 days with the majority of youth staying 72 hours or less.
- Some detention centers have specialized programs so that juveniles may stay as long as six months, serving a sentence that the judge has imposed.
- Juvenile Corrections centers house juveniles who have been committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice by a judge. These youth have been found to have committed a felony or multiple misdemeanors.
- Unless committed by the judge on a determinate commitment, juveniles cannot remain in a Juvenile Corrections center longer than 36 months on an indeterminate commitment (*term imposed after conviction for a crime which does not state a specific period of time or release date, but a range of time only, such as "between five and 10 years"*).

#### Who refers youth in Juvenile Corrections to mentoring?

- For corrections settings where a mentoring program is embedded and is part of the facility's programmatic offerings, the process for making referrals for mentoring during incarceration was in most cases handled by a Facility Classification Team (or Treatment Team). These teams generally

included an MSW, licensed clinical mental health counselors, master's level clinician, a juvenile probation and parole officer, a residential supervisor, treatment supervisor, reentry caseworker, unit supervisor, and case management supervisor. In optimal circumstances, the team would also include a master mentor or mentor specialist (titles varied by location). Additionally, the team would include mentoring as a component of the youth's Individual Service Plan (ISP).

- Other programs operated on the belief that all youth are good candidates for a mentor, presented mentoring program information to all youth and then operated on a self-referral process where the youth would request to participate in the program. The program coordinator/mentoring specialist would then identify a match and oversee the mentoring relationship.
- For embedded programs being managed by the corrections setting, involvement of corrections facility staff in providing and/or supporting mentoring or other services ended with the youth's release from that facility based on potential liability issues of having staff leaving the facility to work with youth in the community.
- The processes for making referrals for mentoring post-incarceration included mentoring program staff:
  - Discussing the needs and circumstances of detained youth with the Classification/Treatment Team throughout the youth's incarceration and/or following an Individual Service Plan (ISP) developed by the team when the youth enters into the setting.
  - Ensuring the youth's accessibility to a mentor post-release; then beginning the mentoring process at least six (6) weeks before release to the community (some locations preferred

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

continued

longer mentoring access prior to release; a Big Brothers Big Sisters program in Anchorage preferred 16 weeks).

- Identifying predominant support persons in the youth's life, particularly in connection with other risk factors for the youth.

### **What is an embedded program and how is it important to a successful mentoring program in a Juvenile Corrections setting?**

- An embedded mentoring program functions completely within the Juvenile Corrections facility. Mentoring staff have office space in the facility, participate in staff meetings, interact with youth in programmatic settings and are viewed as important members of the team by line staff, as well as facility leadership.
- The embedded mentoring programs provided daily group sessions that lasted between one and two hours per session for all incarcerated youth.
- Curricula were used that focus on character/leadership, education/career, health/life skills, the arts and sports/fitness/recreation.
- In most settings, professionally trained mentoring staff delivered the one-to-one, group and team-based mentoring services during and post-incarceration. The aforementioned was deemed ideal and appeared to be most successful. Other programs operated with volunteer mentors who sometimes found that they could not handle the multiple challenges presented by an incarcerated youth.

### **How are strong relationships formed between Juvenile Corrections settings and mentoring programs?**

- Staff with the local mentoring program approached leadership at the corrections facility about operating an embedded mentoring program in the facility. Sometimes, approval for program involvement had to be garnered from the state level leadership who oversee the entire state's corrections program (e.g. Indiana Department of Corrections).
- The primary mentoring program staff should have a solid understanding of the juvenile justice system in general, the function of Juvenile Corrections and the type of at-risk/high-risk youth served in this setting in order to lend credibility to their discussions with facility leadership about implementing a program.
- Mentoring program staff should be included in training provided by the corrections facility related to working with youth in a secure setting.

### **Are non-embedded mentoring programs successful in working with Juvenile Corrections youth?**

- A non-embedded mentoring program suffers from the lack of regular presence and interaction among mentoring staff and facility staff and leadership, as well as with the detained youth. These programs are shown not to be as valued or understood by corrections staff and youth as those programs that are embedded.

### **Were youth in Juvenile Corrections willing to participate in mentoring programs?**

- In settings where there was no requirement to attend the mentor programming, it was rare that a youth would choose not to attend. Often, a youth may exhibit fear or doubt about wanting to be involved, but when exposed to the program offerings, participating in the first meeting or two, and talking one-on-one with the mentoring specialist, then the youth became comfortable and almost always became or stayed involved in the program.
- In settings where mentoring activities were incorporated into the facility's programming, youth were expected to participate.
- In all instances, continued participation in the mentoring program post-incarceration was voluntary and at the discretion of the mentoring program.

### **What are the post-release mentoring considerations for Juvenile Corrections youth?**

- Age is a primary consideration as youth may age out of the system before a match can be made or without sufficient time for mentoring services to be provided.
- Participation in the community-based mentoring program is for as long as the youth is eligible and chooses to participate in mentoring. This can sometimes be challenging if the parents refuse to allow the youth to be involved.
- Youth in the juvenile justice system tend to be transient, so maintaining regular frequent contact is important and may be challenging.

- In general, Juvenile Corrections facilities are regionally located in states, so a youth may be many miles from their home community while incarcerated, complicating the development and maintenance of a mentoring relationship in the youth's home area.
- The characteristics of juvenile justice involved youth also pose a challenge in that these youth have struggled to find success in other interpersonal relationships and in school, community-based youth serving programs, etc.
- Some juvenile justice involved youth have a harder time developing the kinds of relationships necessary for mentoring to be effective, i.e. developing trust, making a commitment, etc.
- One-to-one mentoring post-release should typically be one hour each week and should take place at various safe locations in the community.
- The one-to-one mentoring match commitment should be for at least one year.

### **Are there any statutory requirements related to mentoring?**

- Related to the mentoring program, there were no statutory requirements to be met either during or post-incarceration.

## WHAT'S WORKING: Examples of Effective Strategies

### Embedded Mentoring Program

- Mentoring program activities were embedded in the program schedule at the corrections facility. As a result, all youth incarcerated there were “referred” to the mentoring program. This situation ensured that all youth had the opportunity to be exposed to mentoring activities.
- Since the mentoring program was embedded in the corrections facility, there was an opportunity for mentoring staff to build relationships with detained youth during their incarceration. This relationship building during incarceration helped the youth:
  - Begin to make a connection with the mentoring program and its staff before their release from corrections.
  - Be more likely to have an interest in being referred to and participating in post-incarceration mentoring.
  - Have a sufficient period of mentoring services before release, which would subsequently help the youth during their reentry to the community.

- Offering mentoring programming inside the corrections facility provided youth with an opportunity to understand what services they might receive from the mentoring program after their release from detention.
- Having the mentoring program embedded at the Juvenile Corrections facility allowed the mentoring program staff to build relationships and trust with juvenile justice staff that contributed to the level of information available to the mentoring program about the issues and needs of detained youth prior to their release.

### Post-Release

Mentoring staff contacting detained youth within 24 hours of their release from confinement supported the maintenance of an ongoing connection with these youth post-release.

## CHALLENGES AND ACTION STEPS

The long-term nature of the Juvenile Corrections setting provides a more favorable time period for implementing a formal mentoring program. The findings suggested that mentoring in these settings is often provided by community- or evidence-based mentoring programs with experience in conducting effective mentoring and coordinating matches. However, with the Juvenile Corrections setting, one is confronted with some of the more challenging, high-risk youth anywhere in the juvenile justice system. These are youth who have committed felonies or multiple misdemeanors, youth who typically have a violent or substance abusing history and youth who often have mental health problems.

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**Challenge #1:** Due to confidentiality requirements, mentoring program staff often found it difficult to access information required by the mentoring program, including parent contact information, until after the youth's discharge from corrections.

**Action Step** – *An expectation should be set by mentoring staff for youth indicating an interest in participating in post-incarceration mentoring services to provide contact information for his/her parent(s)/ caregiver(s) as soon as possible.*

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**Challenge #2:** Despite the relationship building that takes place while youth are incarcerated, after release from corrections the young person could change his/her mind about participating in the post-incarceration mentoring program.

**Action Step** – *An investment by mentoring program staff in building relationships with the youth's parent(s)/caregiver(s), both during and after the youth's incarceration, may serve to provide a support system for encouraging the youth's ongoing participation in mentoring. In addition, making a mentoring match at least six (6) months before discharge increases the likelihood of the relationship sustaining upon reentry to community.*

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**Challenge #3:** Changes in the young person's placement can negatively affect the ability of the mentoring program to continue to serve these youth post-incarceration.

**Action Step** – *There is likely little that may be done to anticipate or mitigate the impact of this situation.*

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**Challenge #4:** Poor parent/child relationships at times kept parent(s) from supporting the young person's participation in mentoring programming post-incarceration.

**Action Step #4** – *Mentoring programming for youth involved in the juvenile justice system may be most effective when accompanied by parenting education and support services. These services may be offered as either part of the mentoring program or as a referral for service.*

## TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

**Adjudicated** — a court ruling of guilt or innocence.

**At-Risk and High-Risk Youth** — The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) defines “at-risk” youth as those with high levels of risk in their family, home, communities and social environments to such a degree that it could lead to educational failure, dropping out of school or involvement in juvenile delinquency and gang-related offenses. OJJDP defines “high-risk” youth as those with present or past juvenile justice involvement.

**Caretaker or Physical Custodian** — a person who has physical custody but not legal custody of a youth, such as a foster parent, placement facility or relative without legal custody.

**Dual Adjudicatory** — a Delinquency Court designation for an abused, neglected or dependent youth who is also a delinquent youth and vice versa.

**Embedded Program** — a program that is housed inside the juvenile justice setting either by being developed by the juvenile justice setting or by being implemented by an outside mentoring program.

**Individual Service Plan (ISP)** — a focused plan for addressing any number of issues that a youth may have. Generally, a similar term is commonly used in public education to aid youth with learning difficulties. While the same may be true in Juvenile Corrections, the ISP may include issues for staff to consider when working with the youth in any program.

**Juvenile** — a youth under the age of majority. The recommended age is usually eighteen (18) and younger.

**Legal Guardian** — an adult who is not the biological parent, or a state or licensed children and youth agency, who has been given legal authority by a court to provide care and custody of a child/youth.

**Needs Assessment** — one tool in the Structured Decision-Making process. It identifies the offender’s specific needs and provides part of the foundation for the case plan.

**Petition** — the document that specifies the violation of law and state statute number described in the affidavit that the youth is alleged to have committed. A probable cause statement or affidavit, usually filed by the police, accompanies the petition.

**Pre-Adjudication** — the period between arrest and a court ruling on guilt or innocence.

**Wrap-Around Services** — a method of service delivery highlighted by commitment to create services on a “one youth at a time” basis to support normalized and inclusive options for the youth with complex needs. Wrap-around interventions create a youth and family team composed of the people who know the youth best to design an individualized plan.

## TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

*OJJDP Research Report on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Full Report*

*OJJDP Research Report on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Executive Summary*

*Juvenile Justice Journal on Referring High Risk Youth for Mentoring Services – Special Edition*

Memorandums of Understanding  
Six Resource Guides for Developing MOUs  
for Juvenile Justice and Mentoring Services

PowerPoint Presentations for  
Six Juvenile Justice Settings and Mentoring

Six Technical Assistance Profiles:  
*Examining the Referral Stage for Mentoring High-Risk Youth*

*MENTOR's Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™, Third Edition*

*MENTOR's Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™ Toolkit – Juvenile Justice Section*

*MENTOR's Elements of Effective Practice For Mentoring™, Third Edition, Checklist for Mentoring Programs*

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Global Youth Justice at  
<http://www.globalyouthjustice.org/Mentoring.html>;  
and

National Partnership for Juvenile Services  
at <http://www.npjs.org/highriskyouth.php>

## WEBSITES OF INTEREST

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska  
Anchorage, AK  
<http://www.bbbsak.org>

Goodwill Industries of Northern New England  
Portland, ME  
<http://www.goodwillnne.org>

Northeastern Center  
Kendallville, IN  
<http://www.necmh.org/body.cfm?lvl1=servic&lvl2=latino>

The Kennedy Center of Louisiana  
Shreveport, LA  
<http://www.weallwinn.com>

Global Youth Justice Website – Mentoring High  
Risk Youth Resources  
<http://www.globalyouthjustice.org/Mentoring.html>

National Partnership for Juvenile Services –  
Mentoring High Risk Youth Resources  
<http://www.npjs.org/>

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership  
<http://www.mentoring.org/>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency  
Prevention – Mentoring Resources  
<http://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/mentoring.html>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency  
Prevention – Model Program Guide/Mentoring  
<http://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/progTypesMentoring.aspx>

Administration for Children, Youth and Families,  
U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services  
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/acyf/>

State-by-State Listing of Legislation and Statutes  
Regarding Juveniles  
[http://www.ncjj.org/Research\\_Resources/State\\_Profiles.aspx](http://www.ncjj.org/Research_Resources/State_Profiles.aspx)

## NOTES

**NOTES**



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## PROJECT PARTNERS



## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROFILE**

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In Six Different Juvenile Justice Settings

Dependency Court, Delinquency Court, Juvenile Detention, Juvenile Corrections,  
Juvenile Probation and Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Programs

# Juvenile Detention and Mentoring

## THE REFERRAL STAGE

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# Juvenile Detention and Mentoring

Juvenile Detention is considered to be a secure residential facility that provides for the temporary and safe custody of juveniles whose alleged conduct is subject to court jurisdiction and who require a restricted environment for their own and the community's protection while awaiting a hearing, pending disposition, awaiting a placement or pending a return to a previous placement. In most cases, a youth's time in a Juvenile Detention setting is short-term (72 hours or less). Juvenile Detention may be publicly or privately funded and operated. The continuum of services provided to youth in Juvenile Detention is determined by the jurisdiction/private entity operating the facility and, at a minimum, should include services that address immediate and/or acute needs in the educational, mental, physical, emotional and social development of juveniles.

## **Mentoring Program Description**

Mentoring involves a non-parental adult who plays an important role in promoting healthy development for youth. There are many mentoring models and even more programmatic differences within the different mentoring models. The goal of mentoring programs is to provide youth with positive adult contact and, thereby, reduce risk factors (e.g., early antisocial behavior, alienation, lack of commitment to school) by enhancing protective factors (e.g., healthy beliefs, opportunities for involvement, and social and material reinforcement for appropriate behavior). Mentors provide youth with personal connectedness, supervision and guidance, skills training, career or cultural enrichment opportunities, a knowledge of spirituality and values and, perhaps most importantly, goals and hope for the future.

## **Geographic and Demographic Characteristics**

Juvenile Detention facilities may be located in communities large and small, rural and urban across the country. Because not all communities have a Juvenile Detention center, facilities often serve a regional area. Juvenile Detention facilities may be co-ed or gender specific. The minimum and maximum ages of youth served in Juvenile Detention are jurisdiction specific and guided by statute. Some facilities may choose to serve an age group that is even more narrow than that allowed by statute. Typical minimum and maximum ages are 10 and 18 years respectively. Offenses that youth in detention are charged with range from runaway, a status offense, to murder.

## Possible Challenges Facing Youth Involved with Juvenile Detention

The overarching goal of mentoring youth in the juvenile justice system is to build and strengthen youth assets. When dealing with youth in this setting, one should be cognizant of potential challenges:

### Individual

- Conduct disorders (authority conflict/rebellious/stubborn/disruptive/antisocial)
- General delinquency involvement
- Mental health issues (including substance abuse)
- Unmet medical and dental needs

### Family

- Mental disorders/antisocial parents
- Family history of problem behavior/criminal involvement
- Family poverty/low family socioeconomic status
- Family violence (child maltreatment, partner violence, conflict)
- Family stress
- Parent criminality
- Parental use of physical punishment/harsh and/or erratic discipline practices
- Poor parental supervision (control, monitoring, and child management)
- Poor parent-child relations or communication

### School

- Poor school attendance
- Poor school performance; academic failure
- Learning disorders

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Juvenile Detention Youth to Mentoring

#### **What is the difference between a detention center and a correctional center?**

In the process of conducting initial contacts for potential site visits, project staff learned that there was some confusion among mentoring programs about the difference between Juvenile Detention and Juvenile Corrections' settings.

- Detention is used primarily for juveniles who are awaiting action of the court or transfer to a Juvenile Corrections facility.
- The average length of stay in detention is usually less than 21 days with the majority of youth staying 72 hours or less.
- Some detention centers have specialized programs so that juveniles may stay as long as six months, serving a sentence that the judge has imposed.
- Juvenile Corrections centers house juveniles who have been committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice by a judge. These youth have been found to have committed a felony or multiple misdemeanors.
- Unless committed by the judge on a determinate commitment, juveniles cannot remain in a Juvenile Corrections center longer than 36 months on an indeterminate commitment.

#### **Who refers youth in Juvenile Detention to mentoring?**

- For detention settings where a mentoring program is embedded and is part of the facility's programmatic offerings, the process for making referrals for mentoring during incarceration was the juvenile court by virtue of the judge ordering the youth to detention.
- Without an embedded program, there was little evidence of a formalized mentoring process for Juvenile Detention settings given the short-term nature of incarceration. In some instances,

Juvenile Detention line staff workers informally fit the role of mentor/role model to a particular young person during their brief confinement.

- Involvement of detention facility staff in providing and/or supporting mentoring or other services ended with the youth's release from that facility.
- The processes for making referrals for mentoring post-incarceration included mentoring program staff:
  - Discussing the needs and circumstances of detained youth with appropriate detention staff throughout the youth's incarceration.
  - Ensuring the youth's accessibility to a mentor post-release.
  - Completing an intake interview with the youth and contacting an appropriate family member(s)/caregiver(s) to ensure parent/caregiver support.

#### **What is an embedded program and how is it important to a successful mentoring program in a Juvenile Detention setting?**

- An embedded mentoring program functions completely within the Juvenile Detention facility. Mentoring staff have office space in the facility, participate in staff meetings, interact with youth in programmatic settings and are viewed as important members of the team by line staff, as well as facility leadership.
- The embedded mentoring programs provided daily group sessions that lasted between one and two hours per session for all detained youth.
- Curricula were used that focus on character/leadership, education/career, health/life skills, the arts and sports/fitness/recreation.
- Professionally trained mentoring staff delivered the one-to-one, group and team-based mentoring services during and post-detention.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

continued

### **How are strong relationships formed between Juvenile Detention settings and mentoring programs?**

- In the case of the identified detention sites, staff with the local mentoring program approached leadership at the detention facility about operating an embedded mentoring program in the facility.
- The primary mentoring program staff should have a solid understanding of the juvenile justice system in general, the function of Juvenile Detention and the type of at-risk/high-risk youth served in this setting in order to lend credibility to their discussions with facility leadership about implementing a program.
- Mentoring program staff should be included in training provided by the detention facility related to working with youth in a secure setting.

### **Are non-embedded mentoring programs successful in working with Juvenile Detention youth?**

- A non-embedded mentoring program suffers from the lack of regular presence and interaction among mentoring staff and facility staff and leadership, as well as with the detained youth. These programs are shown not to be as valued or understood by detention staff and youth as those programs that are embedded.

### **Were youth in Juvenile Detention willing to participate in mentoring programs?**

- In settings where there was no requirement to attend the mentor programming, it was rare that a youth would choose not to attend. In settings where mentoring activities were incorporated into the facility's programming, youth were expected to participate.
- The greatest challenge for participation is the short-term nature of detention. At best, a mentoring program may only make brief contact

with many youth during their confinement. In these cases, the mentoring staff should be prepared to explain the value of the program, encourage the youth to participate post-release and gather the appropriate contact information for the youth, as well as for their parent(s)/caregiver(s).

- In all instances, continued participation in the mentoring program post-incarceration was voluntary and at the mentoring program's discretion.

### **What are the post-release mentoring considerations for Juvenile Detention youth?**

- Participation in the community-based mentoring program is for as long as the youth is eligible and chooses to participate in mentoring.
- Youth in the juvenile justice system tend to be transient, so maintaining regular frequent contact is important and may be challenging.
- In states that operate regionalized Juvenile Detention centers, a youth may be many miles from their home community, complicating the development and maintenance of a mentoring relationship in the youth's home area.
- One-to-one mentoring post-release should typically be one hour each week and should take place at various safe locations in the community.
- The one-to-one mentoring match commitment should be for at least one year.
- For youth adjudicated from short-term detention to a long-term sentence in a Juvenile Corrections facility, consideration might be given to waiting for the offender to be moved to the corrections setting before implementing mentoring services.

### **Are there any statutory requirements related to mentoring?**

- Related to the mentoring program, there were no statutory requirements to be met either during or post-incarceration.

## WHAT'S WORKING: Examples of Effective Strategies

### Embedded Mentoring Program

- Mentoring program activities were embedded in the program schedule at the detention facility. As a result, all youth incarcerated there were “referred” to the mentoring program. This situation ensured that all youth had the opportunity to be exposed to mentoring activities.
- Since the mentoring program was embedded in the detention facility, there was an opportunity for mentoring staff to build relationships with detained youth during their incarceration. This relationship building during incarceration helped the youth:
  - Begin to make a connection with the mentoring program and its staff before their release from detention.
  - Be more likely to have an interest in being referred to and participating in post-incarceration mentoring.
- Offering mentoring programming inside the detention facility provided youth with an opportunity to understand what services they might receive from the mentoring program after their release from detention.
- Having the mentoring program embedded at the Juvenile Detention facility allowed the mentoring program staff to build relationships and trust with juvenile justice staff that contributed to the level of information available to the mentoring program about the issues and needs of detained youth before their release from detention.

### Post-Release

Mentoring staff contacting detained youth within 24 hours of their release from detention supported the maintenance of an ongoing connection with these youth post-release.

## CHALLENGES AND ACTION STEPS

The short-term nature of the Juvenile Detention setting provides some challenging barriers in implementing a formal mentoring program. Anecdotally, the findings suggested that mentoring in these settings is often provided by individuals, typically from a faith-based organization, visiting the Juvenile Detention facility on a semi-regular basis rather than by staff from a community- or evidence-based mentoring program.

**Challenge #1:** Due to confidentiality requirements, mentoring program staff often found it difficult to access information required by the mentoring program, including parent contact information, until after the youth's discharge from detention.

**Action Step** – *An expectation should be set by mentoring staff for youth indicating an interest in participating in post-incarceration mentoring services to provide contact information for his/her parent(s)/ caregiver(s) as soon as possible..*

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**Challenge #2:** Despite the relationship building that takes place while youth are incarcerated, after release from detention the young person could change his/her mind about participating in the post-incarceration mentoring program.

**Action Step** – *An investment by mentoring program staff in building relationships with the youth's parent(s)/caregiver(s), both during and after the youth's incarceration, may serve to provide a support system for encouraging the youth's ongoing participation in mentoring.*

**Challenge #3:** Changes in the young person's placement can negatively affect the ability of the mentoring program to continue to serve these youth post-incarceration.

**Action Step** – *There is likely little that may be done to anticipate or mitigate the impact of this situation.*

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**Challenge #4:** Poor parent/child relationships at times kept parent(s) from supporting the young person's participation in mentoring programming post-incarceration.

**Action Step #4** – *Mentoring programming for youth involved in the juvenile justice system may be most effective when accompanied by parenting education and support services. These services may be offered as either part of the mentoring program or as a referral for service.*

## TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

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**At-Risk and High-Risk Youth** — The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) defines “at-risk” youth as those with high levels of risk in their family, home, communities and social environments to such a degree that it could lead to educational failure, dropping out of school or involvement in juvenile delinquency and gang-related offenses. OJJDP defines “high-risk” youth as those with present or past juvenile justice involvement.

**Caretaker or Physical Custodian** — a person who has physical custody but not legal custody of a youth, such as a foster parent, placement facility or relative without legal custody.

**Dual Adjudicatory** — a Delinquency Court designation for an abused, neglected or dependent youth who is also a delinquent youth and vice versa.

**Embedded Program** — a program that is housed inside the juvenile justice setting either by being developed by the juvenile justice setting or by being implemented by an outside mentoring program.

**Individual Service Plan (ISP)** — a focused plan for addressing any number of issues that a youth may have. Generally, a similar term is commonly used in public education to aid youth with learning difficulties. While the same may be true in Juvenile Corrections, the ISP may include issues for staff to consider when working with the youth in any program.

**Juvenile** — a youth under the age of majority. The recommended age is usually eighteen (18) and younger.

**Legal Guardian** — an adult who is not the biological parent, or a state or licensed children and youth agency, who has been given legal authority by a court to provide care and custody of a child/youth.

**Needs Assessment** — one tool in the Structured Decision-Making process. It identifies the offender’s specific needs and provides part of the foundation for the case plan.

**Petition** — the document that specifies the violation of law and state statute number described in the affidavit that the youth is alleged to have committed. A probable cause statement or affidavit, usually filed by the police, accompanies the petition.

**Pre-Adjudication** — the period between arrest and a court ruling on guilt or innocence.

**Wrap-Around Services** — a method of service delivery highlighted by commitment to create services on a “one youth at a time” basis to support normalized and inclusive options for the youth with complex needs. Wrap-around interventions create a youth and family team composed of the people who know the youth best to design an individualized plan.

## TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

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MENTOR at [http://www.mentoring.org/program\\_resources/Researching\\_the\\_Referral\\_Stage/](http://www.mentoring.org/program_resources/Researching_the_Referral_Stage/);

Global Youth Justice at <http://www.globalyouthjustice.org/Mentoring.html>; and

National Partnership for Juvenile Services at <http://www.npjs.org/highriskyouth.php>

## WEBSITES OF INTEREST

Boys and Girls Club of the Tennessee Valley  
Knoxville, TN

<http://www.bgctnv.org>

Boys and Girls Club of Buffalo  
Buffalo, NY

<http://www.bgcbuffalo.org>

Goodwill Industries of Northern New England  
Portland, ME

<http://www.goodwillnne.org>

Global Youth Justice Website – Mentoring  
High Risk Youth Resources

<http://www.globalyouthjustice.org/Mentoring.html>

National Partnership for Juvenile Services –  
Mentoring High Risk Youth Resources

<http://www.npjs.org/>

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership

<http://www.mentoring.org/>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention –  
Mentoring Resources

<http://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/mentoring.html>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention –  
Model Program Guide/Mentoring

<http://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/progTypesMentoring.aspx>

Administration for Children, Youth and Families,  
U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/acyf/>

State-by-State Listing of Legislation and Statutes  
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## NOTES

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**NOTES**



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## PROJECT PARTNERS



## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROFILE**

Examining the Referral Stage for Mentoring High-Risk Youth  
In Six Different Juvenile Justice Settings

Dependency Court, Delinquency Court, Juvenile Detention, Juvenile Corrections,  
Juvenile Probation and Teen Court/Youth Court Diversion Programs

# Juvenile Probation and Mentoring

## THE REFERRAL STAGE

Written by:  
Michael A. Jones  
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# Juvenile Probation and Mentoring

The function of Juvenile Probation is to provide supervision and monitoring to youth under the jurisdiction of the court and ensure that youth on probation comply with all court orders. Juvenile Probation officers have the ability, through the pre-dispositional investigation/interview process, to identify the services and supports a young person and his/her family may need. The probation officer is then in the unique position of being able to make whatever referrals are appropriate to meet these needs, including referrals for mentoring. In addition to serving as a sanction for adjudicated youth, Juvenile Probation may be used as a way of diverting status and first-time juvenile offenders from the court system. Direction, guidance and rehabilitation services are provided to youth on probation and their families in an effort to encourage and support behavior considered to be appropriate by the court and the community. Rehabilitative services are provided by the probation officer(s) and/or community-based providers.

## **Mentoring Program Description**

Mentoring involves a non-parental adult who plays an important role in promoting healthy development for youth. There are many mentoring models and even more programmatic differences within the different mentoring models. The goal of mentoring programs is to provide youth with positive adult contact and, thereby, reduce risk factors (e.g., early antisocial behavior, alienation, lack of commitment to school) by enhancing protective factors (e.g., healthy beliefs, opportunities for involvement, and social and material reinforcement for appropriate behavior). Mentors provide youth with personal connectedness, supervision and guidance, skills training, career or cultural enrichment opportunities, a knowledge of spirituality and values and, perhaps most importantly, goals and hope for the future.

## **Geographic and Demographic Characteristics**

Juvenile Probation is a community-based corrections program that exists in all 50 of the United States. The minimum and maximum ages offenders are considered to be “juveniles” are jurisdiction specific and guided by statute. Typical minimum and maximum ages are 10 and 18 years respectively. Youth placed on probation are often under-educated and may have limited access to information about opportunities available to them. Referrals of youth for probation tend to be more heavily male than female, as is true for the majority of juvenile justice services.

## Possible Challenges Facing Youth Involved with Juvenile Probation

The overarching goal of mentoring youth in the juvenile justice system is to build and strengthen youth assets. When dealing with youth in this setting, one should be cognizant of potential challenges:

### Individual

- Conduct disorders (authority conflict/rebellious/stubborn/disruptive/antisocial)
- General delinquency involvement
- Mental health issues (including substance abuse)
- Unmet medical and dental needs

### Family

- Mental disorders/antisocial parents
- Family history of problem behavior/criminal involvement
- Family poverty/low family socioeconomic status
- Family violence (child maltreatment, partner violence, conflict)
- Family stress
- Parent criminality
- Parental use of physical punishment/harsh and/or erratic discipline practices
- Poor parental supervision (control, monitoring, and child management)
- Poor parent-child relations or communication

### School

- Poor school attendance
- Poor school performance; academic failure
- Learning disorders

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Considerations for Referring Juvenile Probation Youth to Mentoring

#### What makes a youth on probation appropriate for a referral for mentoring?

- Determinations about the appropriateness of a youth on probation for referral to mentoring are made on a case-by-case basis and include consideration of the following:
  - Needs of the youth and the family, in particular youth who need a parental figure or caring adult.
  - Offense with which the youth is charged.
  - Length of the youth's probation.
  - Commitment of the youth and family to the mentoring process/program.
- Youth charged with violent and/or sex offenses are often not considered appropriate for referrals for mentoring services.
- Referrals for mentoring may be formal and part of the youth's adjudication or informal with participation in mentoring encouraged by the probation officer.

#### Who is authorized to refer a youth on probation for mentoring services?

- Any Juvenile Probation officer may refer a youth on his/her caseload for mentoring services.
- In some jurisdictions, the Juvenile Court judge may refer a youth on probation to mentoring services.

#### What is the process probation officers use for referring a youth for mentoring?

- The process typically begins with the pre-disposition investigation/interview (PDI) through which the probation officer gathers information about the youth, the youth's family

and community connections, the offense, educational history, etc., and determines the specific needs of the youth and family.

- How referrals are made depends on whether the probation officer selects from a number of mentoring programs to which they may refer youth or one specific mentoring program that provides these services for probation youth.
  - Referrals made to community-based mentoring programs require that youth and family members complete whatever paperwork and processes are required for intake into that program, and intake decisions are made at the discretion of mentoring program staff.
  - Referrals of youth to a specific mentoring program that works directly with probation department staff may involve mentoring program staff attending probation department meetings where cases are staffed and the decision to refer for mentoring will be made jointly.

#### Were youth on probation willing to participate in mentoring programming?

- A requirement for the referral of a youth to mentoring program is willingness and a commitment to participate in mentoring by both the youth and his/her family.
  - Formal referrals to mentoring programming become part of the court order for services.
- In cases where the youth and/or family's commitment to mentoring is questionable, the probation officer may encourage or "strongly recommend" participation in a mentoring program.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

continued

### **What is the role of the probation officer once the referral to a mentoring program is made?**

- Probation officers ensure that referred youth are complying with all the conditions of probation, including participation in court ordered mentoring.
- Mentoring program staff contact the probation officer as needed to share and discuss concerns about the individual needs of youth, as well as

to provide the probation officer with information about the youth's progress.

### **Are there any statutory requirements related to mentoring?**

Related to the mentoring program and Juvenile Probation, there were no statutory requirements to be met.

## WHAT'S WORKING: Examples of Effective Strategies

### **Probation Officer Relationships with Mentoring Program Staff**

- Probation officers working in close partnership with mentoring program staff is key in terms of the youth's successful referral for mentoring services and the youth and family's willingness to participate in mentoring programming.
- Immediate contact by probation staff with mentoring program staff regarding the referral is significant.
- Regular contact between probation officers and mentoring program staff is important.

### **On-site Mentoring Program Staff Office**

- In some jurisdictions, mentoring program staff had office space in the juvenile court or probation office.
- Sharing space supported the development and maintenance of collegial relationships between probation and mentoring staff.
- Sharing space supported the ability of court or probation staff to walk referred youth and families to the mentoring program staff office where the intake process could begin immediately.

## CHALLENGES AND ACTION STEPS

**Challenge #1:** For many youth on probation, there are poor family relationships that may keep family members from supporting the youth's participation in a mentoring program.

☛ **Action Step** – *When mentoring services would appear to be of benefit to a youth on probation, the Juvenile Probation officer should consider court ordering these. An investment by mentoring program staff in building relationships with the youth's parent(s)/caregiver(s) may serve to provide a support system for encouraging the youth's ongoing participation in mentoring. It may also be beneficial to order parenting education and other support services in conjunction with mentoring.*

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**Challenge #2:** The time it takes for a youth and his/her mentor to form a bond is variable. If the appropriate bond is not formed before the youth's probation ends, it is unlikely the mentoring relationship will be sustained post-probation.

☛ **Action Step** – *Prior to making a referral for mentoring, consideration should be given to the term of the youth's probation and whether this timeframe is conducive to the development of an effective bond between the youth and the mentor.*

**Challenge #3:** Changes in the young person's placement can negatively affect the ability of the mentoring program to continue to serve these youth, particularly if the placement is outside the community served by the mentoring program.

☛ **Action Step** – *A youth for whom a change in placement is imminent should not be referred for mentoring services. If the change in placement was not planned, there is likely little that may be done to mitigate the impact of this situation.*

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**Challenge #4:** Some mentoring programs are not able to recruit enough mentors to support referred youth and, therefore, have a waiting list.

☛ **Action Step #4** – *Referrals of youth on probation should be made only to mentoring programs with available mentors in order to avoid having these youth placed on what may be a lengthy and long-term waiting list.*

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