

Youth Mentoring Legislative Agenda

113th Congress



Research shows that youth who participate in mentoring relationships experience a multitude of positive benefits. In the U.S. today, 18 million youth want or need mentors to help them reach their full potential. Yet, only three million are in formal mentoring relationships. This leaves 15 million young Americans needing mentors, comprising the nation's "mentoring gap."

[MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership](#) is the unifying champion for expanding quality mentoring relationships for America's young people. MENTOR drives investment of time and money in high-impact mentoring and promotes quality mentoring through the development and delivery of standards, cutting-edge research, state-of-the-art tools, and leadership in policy and public awareness.

MENTOR carries out this work in collaboration with a network of local *Mentoring Partnerships* and more than **5,000 mentoring programs and volunteer centers** throughout the country, serving more than **three million children** in all **50 states**. MENTOR works to ensure our youngest citizens have the support they need through mentoring relationships to succeed at home, school and, ultimately, work. Research shows that mentoring programs following best practices create mentor/mentee matches that last longer and are closer, which leads to stronger outcomes for mentored youth. Practices critical to high-quality mentoring include hiring and training staff in mentoring best practices; recruiting, screening and training volunteers; matching children with suitable mentors; providing oversight of mentoring relationships; and evaluating outcomes for mentored children.

The following legislative priorities will help youth mentoring programs run high-quality programs and serve more young people.

- 1. Support funding for Juvenile Mentoring grants in the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.** We ask Congress to provide: \$100 million for youth mentoring grants to be distributed to local, regional and national mentoring programs through a fair, open, transparent and competitive process.
- 2. Co-sponsor the Child Protection Improvements Act.** Soon to be reintroduced by Reps. Adam Schiff (D-CA), Mike Rogers (R-MI) and John Conyers (D-MI), as well as Senators Charles Schumer (D-NY) and Orrin Hatch (R-UT), this bill will allow youth-serving organizations access to nationwide FBI fingerprint searches in a timely and affordable manner. It is based on the successful PROTECT Act pilot. More than 100,000 background checks were performed during the pilot, and 6.1 percent of potential volunteers had criminal records of concern—including serious offenses like rape, murder and child sexual abuse. And, 41 percent of those with negative results had criminal records from a state other than where they were applying. Currently, organizations are often unable to access criminal records outside of their state or must do so at a high cost through private agencies.
- 3. Support the inclusion of mentoring in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).** We want to improve the availability and quality of federal grant support for mentoring and tie it more closely with the important role mentors play in improving a young person's academic standing and learning environment. Mentoring has a proven impact on school attendance, relationships with adults, school connectedness and achievement. In the past, grants have helped local mentoring organizations start or expand school-based and out-of-school mentoring programs for youth of the greatest need living in rural areas, high-crime areas or troubled-home environments.
- 4. Become a champion for youth mentoring.** The mentoring movement needs leaders and champions in Congress to be able to close the mentoring gap. Express your support and belief in mentoring:
 - Join the bipartisan House Mentoring Caucus (co-chaired by Reps. Davis, McCollum and Rogers).
 - Support commemorations of National Mentoring Month each January.