March 18, 2020

The Honorable José Serrano
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Approriators:

We write to thank you for your ongoing support of our nation’s most at-risk and vulnerable young people through the Part G Youth Mentoring Program. This important program supports youth serving organizations throughout the country as they provide our nation’s young people with caring adult mentors during some of the most challenging times in their lives. Mentoring supports positive outcomes, including social development, academic achievement, and improved self-confidence among at-risk young people.¹ Collectively, we call on Appropriators to invest in the future of our young people by funding the program at $120 million in the Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) bill.

Mentoring can be an effective prevention and intervention-based strategy for young people that decreases chronic absenteeism and youth violence, and increases critical-thinking, problem solving and other skills that support academic and workforce achievement, as well as life goal attainment. Unfortunately, the available funding fails to address the needs of communities and organizations that support the healthy, positive development of our young people. The bipartisan leadership on the Commerce, Justice and Science Subcommittees have always demonstrated strong support for the needs of our young people and for quality practices in youth mentoring. We hope that we can count on you to continue this support in FY21.

Mentoring has a positive effect on students who are at-risk of falling off track. Those young people who meet regularly with their mentors are 52 percent less likely than their peers to skip a day of school and youth with recurring behavioral problems who have a

mentor maintain better attitudes towards school.\textsuperscript{2} Evaluations of mentoring programs report significant increases among youth in self-confidence, self-efficacy and a positive attitude about their futures. Unfortunately, 1 in 3 young people in the United States reaches the age of 19 without having a mentor of any kind. This number includes 9 million at-risk youth who are missing out on the critical support and connections that mentoring can provide.\textsuperscript{3}

Increasingly, mentoring is being utilized as a means of addressing national challenges. As communities across the country struggle with the effects of opioid misuse and abuse, mentoring programs have responded accordingly. When strategically integrated into initiatives, mentoring strengthens efforts to prevent drug and other substance abuse, supports young people experiencing opioid addiction in their families, and promotes healthy decision-making, positive behaviors, resiliency and strong futures.

Research on youth mentoring demonstrates that, at a minimum, for every dollar invested in quality mentoring programs there is a return of at least three dollars.\textsuperscript{4} This positive return on investment reflects projected increases in lifetime earnings gained by leading at-risk youth down the path towards becoming productive adults. It also derives from dollars saved through reduced juvenile delinquency and crime, improved school attendance, increased high school graduation rates, and lowered risk of youth involvement in unsafe and costly behaviors such as drug and alcohol use. Congress should be confident that mentoring represents a sound investment grounded in quality and evidence-based practices.

As a diverse group of organizations we recognize the importance of the Youth Mentoring Program grant and the impact that it has on creating safe and strong communities. We respectfully urge you to support these critical efforts by approving $120 million for the program in the FY21 funding bill.

We appreciate your attention to a critical issue that affects all our nation’s young people. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require additional information.

Sincerely,

A World Fit For Kids!
Afterschool Alliance
After-School All-Stars
Amachi, Inc.
America SCORES
America's Promise Alliance
Big Brothers Big Sisters of America


\textsuperscript{3} Bruce and Bridgeland, \textit{The Mentoring Effect: Young People’s Perspectives on the Outcomes and Availability of Mentoring}.

Big Buddy Program
Boys & Girls Clubs of America
Center for Supportive Schools
College Mentors for Kids
Communities In Schools, National Office
Compeer
Eluna
Encore.org
First Focus Campaign for Children
Friends of the Children
Girls Inc.
Goodwill Industries International, Inc.
Institute for Educational Leadership
MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership
National 4-H Council
National Association of Police Athletic/Activities Leagues, Inc.
National Disability Mentoring Coalition
National Organization of Concerned Black Men, Inc.
National Recreation and Park Association
National Urban League
Silver Lining Mentoring
Sisters Circle
US Dream Academy
YMCA of the USA
Year Up, Inc.
Youth Collaboratory
YouthBuild USA

CC: Chairwoman Nita Lowey, House Appropriations Committee
Chairman Richard Shelby, Senate Appropriations Committee
Ranking Member Kay Granger, House Appropriations Committee
Ranking Member Patrick Leahy, Senate Appropriations Committee
Members of the House and Senate Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies
Subcommittees