



Mentoring Connector: 3 National Standards

3 National Standards?

The 3 National Standards are derived from MENTOR National's cornerstone publication, the *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring, Fourth Edition* and were designed to ensure that programs in the Mentoring Connector are quality organizations. A program applying to be listed in the Connector must meet all 3 National Standards before being approved. Programs that do not meet one or more of the standards are still eligible to be listed in the Connector, and a MENTOR staff member will work with the program to help them meet all standards.

(1) Background Checks

Programs must conduct criminal history record checks on all mentors 18 years of age and older that might interact with minors (17 and under). If the program cannot guarantee this, they are not allowed into the Mentoring Connector. The only instances where programs may choose not to complete background checks on all mentors are the following:

- (a) School-based, peer-to-peer mentoring programs, in which students under 18 may be serving as mentors
- (b) Programs in which mentors only interact with mentees 18 years of age and older

While criminal record checks are required by MENTOR, the type of record check and how they are used to make decisions remains at the discretion of the program. For example, programs are at liberty to perform record checks at the national, state, or county level, or a combination of all three.



(1) Background Checks Cont.

Additional forms of relevant background checks may also be conducted, such as sex offender registry lookups, driving record checks, employment references, etc., or any other applicable background checks that can speak to an applicant's safety and suitability to serve at a program. Ultimately, it is at the discretion of the program to determine an applicant's eligibility criteria and to decide who is accepted as a mentor (e.g., finding a past criminal record may not be an automatic disqualifier for individuals to serve at a program).

(2) Training For Mentors

Programs must offer and adequately describe the training they provide to incoming mentors in order to be listed on the Mentoring Connector. Mentoring research suggests that well-trained mentors are more likely to be confident and effective in their role, and are less likely to abandon their mentoring relationships. By supporting mentors with training, you are improving the chances that a mentee is matched with an engaged mentor.

(3) Minimum Match Commitment

Programs must commit to matching mentors and mentees in a thoughtful process that sets guidelines around the expected minimum frequency and duration of the match (e.g., twice a month for an hour each meeting), as well as the overall time commitment of mentor-mentee engagements (e.g., an 11-month time commitment). While MENTOR requires that programs clearly define the match commitment expectations, the length of the match commitment itself is determined by programs.

Need help?

Reach out to your local Affiliate or connector@mentoring.org. Thank you for your continued partnership!