

Support Bipartisan Request for Youth Mentoring Funds in FY22

Deadline: COB Tuesday, April 27th

Add your boss [HERE](#)

Current Signers: Reps. Langevin, Feenstra

Dear Colleague:

We invite you to sign the letter below requesting at least **\$120 million for the Youth Mentoring Program** under the Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in the FY22 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

Many young people throughout our nation face personal and academic challenges that prevent them from achieving their goals. They deserve the opportunity to succeed, and caring adult mentors can provide them the guidance and support they need to develop into the next generation of leaders.

Mentoring is a critical evidence-based intervention and prevention strategy for some of our most vulnerable youth. At-risk youth with mentors are less likely to skip school and more likely to enroll in college and maintain positive attitudes and social relationships. The funds from the Youth Mentoring Programs support the implementation, delivery and enhancement of high-quality mentoring services to improve outcomes for at-risk or underserved youth. It is the only mentoring-specific federal funding source, and without this investment, we face a serious gap in our approach to education, juvenile justice, and other supports for young people.

We hope that you will join us in supporting expanded opportunities for all young people. **Please fill out this [FORM](#) by COB Tuesday, April 27th** to sign on, and contact Nick Pennington with Congressman Langevin at nick.pennington@mail.house.gov or Jeff Tomkowitz with Congressman Feenstra at Jeff.Tomkowitz@mail.house.gov with any questions.

Sincerely,

JIM LANGEVIN

Member of Congress

RANDY FEENSTRA

Member of Congress

Dear Chairman Cartwright and Ranking Member Aderholt:

We are writing to express our strong support for the Youth Mentoring Grant program managed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). As you develop the Fiscal Year 2022 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we respectfully request at least \$120 million in funding for this important program, which is the only mentoring-specific line item in the federal budget. The Youth Mentoring Grant supports the implementation, delivery, and enhancement of evidence-based mentoring services to improve outcomes and ensure that at-risk and underserved youth have the supports they need to thrive academically, personally, and professionally.

Youth mentoring is an evidence-based intervention that enhances life outcomes for young people and mentors. It is a powerful strategy to reduce the number of youth disconnected from school and work, increase social and economic mobility, and create a more productive and prosperous nation. A recent meta-analysis found that mentoring, across all studies included, had a positive effect on all youth outcomes included in the research. Unfortunately, one in three young people in the United States will not have a mentor at some point in their childhood, constituting a “mentoring gap” that demonstrates the need for collaborative investment in mentoring services. Disadvantaged youth in particular are more likely to turn to formal programs to access highly impactful mentors; in the United States, of the young people served by mentoring programs, 51 percent are low-income, 36 percent are academically at-risk, 14 percent are first generation to go to college, and 8 percent have incarcerated parents or family members.

In addition to keeping youth from entering the juvenile justice system, quality early interventions like mentoring often divert youth from engaging in repeat criminal offenses; for example, youth who meet regularly with their mentors are also 46 percent less likely than their peers to start using illegal drugs. Recent research funded by OJJDP found that mentoring programs potentially provide a benefit of three times the public expenditure, for every day in jail that program participants avoid. It is important to note, however, that programs that serve more children with adverse child experiences require additional funding. A recent study showed that in programs where 90% of mentees were pregnant or parenting, the average cost-per-youth increased nearly \$2,500. In the same study, programs where 90% of mentees were in foster care saw an increased cost-per-youth of over \$1,000. As programs continue to support as many young people with the highest need as possible, funding for the Youth Mentoring Grant program must increase.

Mentorship additionally promotes positive social development and behaviors in young people. With youth in America facing serious challenges related to substance abuse, mental health, and the effects of trauma—all exacerbated by the long-term effects of the COVID-19 lockdown and pandemic – a trusting relationship with an adult can help them manage these complex and difficult issues. For example, research has proven that mentoring can also be an effective mitigation strategy to address absenteeism and other difficulties preventing students from succeeding academically. Young people who meet regularly with their mentors are 52 percent less likely than their peers to skip class and generally maintain better attitudes towards school. In fact, youth who face opportunity gaps but had a mentor are 55 percent more likely to plan to enroll in college, 130 percent more likely to hold a leadership position, and have a higher rate of pursuit of employment from program entry to discharge. That’s because many mentoring programs support students by focusing on specific topics like academic achievement, career exploration, college access, leadership development, life skills, resiliency, civic engagement and family support. These proven positive outcomes happen because mentors prepare young people for higher education and careers by introducing youth to resources they weren’t familiar with, helping them set career goals, and even using their personal contacts to help connect them to industries they did not previously have access to.

Mentoring provides a young person at risk of engaging in negative behaviors with powerful tools to help them grow, develop, and connect to social and economic opportunities. Despite the clear benefits, the average mentoring program has 63 young people on their waitlist - a challenge that can be addressed through investment in these programs. Funding for the Youth Mentoring Grant Program grant helps close the mentoring gap and create more meaningful relationships that help put youth on a track to academic, personal, and professional success.

We respectfully request at least \$120 million in funding for the Youth Mentoring Grant program, which will save federal dollars over the long-term by reducing rates of incarceration, bolstering student academic achievement, and enabling positive health and psychosocial outcomes for young people.

Thank you for your consideration of this critical request to support our at-risk youth.

Sincerely,