

The Benefits of Youth Mentoring

This document provides an overview of the myriad positive outcomes associated with youth mentoring programs. The talking points below can help communicate the evidence-based value of expanding quality mentoring programs. For additional resources and information to help inform your messaging, visit [MENTOR's issue-specific resources page](#).



Mentoring relationships bring people together and help create healthier and more connected communities. As one of our founders, Bill Russell, stated: “There’s no such thing as somebody else’s children.”

What is “The Mentoring Gap”?

- 1 in 3 young people in the U.S. will reach the age of 19 without having a mentor of any kind. This is the mentoring gap in the United States. The mission of the mentoring movement is to expand public and private investment in programs to ensure every young person has at least one trusting relationship with an adult in their life.

Why Does Mentoring Matter?

- Mentoring is one of the few prevention and intervention strategies that can effectively address multiple risk and protective factors simultaneously. As such, mentoring is a unique and innovative tactic that can be a part of solutions to some of the country’s biggest problems:
 - **Community Violence Intervention:** Mentoring can help young people heal and can help youth who have engaged or are at-risk of being offenders of violence by providing them with role models who can support positive behavior and outcomes.
 - **Education:** Young people facing risk of not completing high school but who had a mentor are more likely to enroll in college, participate in extracurricular activities, hold a leadership position, and volunteer. Further, school-based mentoring programs have been found to have a positive impact on a variety of outcomes, including truancy and absenteeism, scholastic efficacy, school-related misconduct, and peer support.
 - **Foster and Disadvantaged Youth:** Mentoring foster youth can have a positive impact on many factors, including mental health, educational attainment, peer relationships, employment, and housing stability.
 - **Identity Development:** Mentoring disadvantaged youth (i.e. BIPOC, LGBTQ+, youth with disabilities) helps build positive identity, confront challenges they may face, and display improved mental health and social-emotional well-being.
 - **Mental Health:** Mentoring programs have a meaningful impact on mental health, including improving depressive symptoms and interpersonal relationships, and reducing stress experienced by their parents.
 - **Military-Connected Youth:** Mentoring offers a practical approach to supporting military youth and their families, and has previously been shown to improve academic performance and decrease symptoms of depression, while improving social support and parental ratings of stress in the home.

- **Rural Youth:** Low-income rural youth report some of the lowest rates of mentoring of any demographic group in the country. This presents an important directive for expansion, as studies show many acute benefits to young people in rural communities.
- **Workforce:** Mentors help young people set career goals and connect them with industry professionals to train for and find jobs. Mentoring relationships within workplaces support outcomes like promotion, wage increases, career planning and stability, and employee satisfaction.

What Does Mentoring Look Like?

- **Mentoring programs are operated by many different organizations and agencies.** 79 percent of youth mentoring agencies are nonprofits, 9 percent are K-12 schools or districts, 3 percent are government agencies, 3 percent are higher education institutions, and the remaining 6 percent are religious institutions, for-profits, healthcare facilities, and others.
- **Mentoring programs do a lot with a little.** The typical mentoring program has a small staff and limited funds. The average mentoring program budget is \$153,465. However, half of programs have a budget under \$50,000 (two-thirds of programs are under \$100,000).
- **The average cost-per-youth served across programs is \$1,695 a year.** However, as the percentage of youths with higher needs in a program increases, so does the average cost. As the cost-per-youth increases, so does the quality of services offered including increased pre and post-match training and more match support.
- **Mentoring programs face challenges.** In a recent survey conducted by MENTOR, 47 percent of mentoring programs responded that mentor recruitment was a challenge followed by 44 percent reporting that fundraising was a challenge. Mentoring programs need both human capital and funding to close the mentoring gap.
- **Mentoring programs have different program goals.** Mentoring program goals vary based on the organization but some of the most common goals are supporting life and social skills, providing positive youth development, academic enrichment, career exploration, leadership development and college access.

What Do Americans Think About Mentoring?

- Americans agree that mentoring relationships are powerful tools for connection and are critical to our country's future. **More than 80 percent of adults support government investment in mentoring, and more than two-thirds are already mentoring or willing to consider it.**

Who is MENTOR?

MENTOR is the unifying champion for expanding quality youth mentoring in the United States. For 30 years, MENTOR has served the mentoring field by providing a public voice, developing and delivering resources to programs nationwide, and promoting quality mentoring through standards, cutting-edge research, and state of the art tools. MENTOR's mission is to increase the quality and quantity of mentoring relationships for America's young people, and to close the mentoring gap. It drives investment into high impact mentoring programs through advocacy and public awareness, while working collaboratively with the private, public, and nonprofit sectors. MENTOR carries out this work with its nationwide network of Affiliates, who provide training and technical assistance through the [National Mentoring Resource Center](https://www.mentoring.org).