



MENTOR

CAPITOL HILL DAY



Check in - VoterVoice

- MENTOR is launching a new grassroots advocacy program this spring
 - Advocates get points for taking action
 - Come to our workshop on Thursday morning to learn more (*Becoming an Agent of Change by Climbing the Ladder of Advocacy*)
- To check in and earn points, in your web browser, go to mentoring.org/advocacy and select “2024 Capitol Hill Day Training”



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Icebreaker



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Advocacy Message Development and Delivery Training

Caden Fabbi, Policy Director, MENTOR



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Do: have a clear ask!

Policy asks (ideal)	Relationship-building asks
Introduce, vote for, or vote against legislation	Visit people or places in the community that relate to the issue (i.e. a school-based mentoring program celebration; mentoring conference)
Send a letter to a government agency about a specific concern	Write an article for your newsletter or local/national media
Draft or sign onto Dear Colleague Letters (or other formal methods of communication)	Share a message on social media to communicate support for your issue
Help you find and gather information from agencies and research services	Make a speech on the House or Senate floor about the issue
Submit a statement to the official record	Hold a town hall/community meeting on the issue



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Don't: ask for...this.

- Anything related to money or support for their campaign
- A business favor, or something that's not relevant to what you're there to advocate for



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Do: Research your elected officials!

- Access MENTOR's Legislative Scorecard – what do they currently support/not support?
- Special notes documents
- Review talking points for that meeting
- What committee(s) do they sit on? Are they in leadership?
- Connections with their life experience (and those close to them)
- Google their name with key words!
- You'll have time to research later in the training today



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Don't: be a bad example for our young people.

- Taking up all the space
- Don't be a jerk!



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DO: Communicate Persuasively

- Break the ice
 - Connections to mentoring? Connections to the state/district/community?
- Start the meeting by thanking the elected official for something
- Tell a story
 - Tie stories in to the legislation/funding that you're advocating for
- Share outcome data/stories of success and local impact
- Ask what the member's priorities are and tie them in to what you're advocating for, when possible



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The goal of Capitol Hill Day is to increase congressional support for mentoring.

- Specific targets include:
 - Senate Republican sponsor for all bills and priorities
 - Increase the overall number of supporters/co-sponsors for our legislative priorities
 - Identify new congressional champions for mentoring



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There are progressive, conservative, and everything-in-between arguments for youth mentoring.

- Everyone can point to someone in their life who helped to get them to where they are today
- People understand the power and value of relationships
- Mentoring policies get support from all ends of the ideological spectrum



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Increasing federal investment in mentoring will help address the ‘mentoring gap.’

- One in three young people are growing up without a mentor
 - Almost 70% of today’s young people remember a time when they wanted a mentor for support, but didn’t have one
- Mentoring addresses multiple risk and protective factors simultaneously
 - As such, it can help address many different societal issues
- Mentoring has strong public support:
 - Americans give mentors more than 50% of the credit for their life success
 - 83% support government investment in mentoring
 - 88% believe mentoring must be expanded to support the nation’s youth



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Priority 1: Increase funding for the Youth Mentoring Grant.

- The Youth Mentoring Program Grant program, managed by OJJDP, supports the implementation, delivery, and enhancement of evidence-based mentoring services to improve outcomes and ensure that underserved youth have the supports they need to thrive
- The grant funds direct service youth mentoring programs serving youth facing risk and the National Mentoring Resource Center (NMRC)
- In FY23, the grant was funded at \$107 million
 - **House proposed \$107 million for FY24**
 - **Senate proposed \$110 million for FY24**



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Making the ask to increase funding for the Youth Mentoring Grant

THE ASK: Support \$110m in funding for FY24.

THE ASK (House members and Senate Democrats): Sign the Dear Colleague Letter in support of \$130m for FY25.

THE ASK (Senate Republicans): Lead the Dear Colleague Letter in support of \$130m for FY25 with Sen. Blumenthal.

QUESTION TO CONSIDER: How could funding from this grant positively impact the young people in your community?



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Priority 2: Support the Foster Youth Mentoring Act.

- This bipartisan bill provides \$50 million in grants to establish or expand local mentoring programs that serve foster youth and former foster youth
 - Funding could provide evidence-backed training to volunteer mentors, help recruit and screen, and compensate mentors
 - The bill would give a grant preference to those that include youth voice in program design
- Studies prove that mentoring services for foster youth are effective interventions that have a positive impact on a wide range of factors, including:
 - Mental health, educational functioning and attainment, and life satisfaction
 - In the short-term, employment, housing stability, and more



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Making the ask to support the Foster Youth Mentoring Act

THE ASK (House and Senate Democrats): Co-sponsor the Foster Youth Mentoring Act

THE ASK (Senate Republicans): Introduce the Foster Youth Mentoring Act with Sen. Brown

QUESTION TO CONSIDER: How might funding from this legislation support the most vulnerable youth in your community?



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Priority 3: Support the Youth Workforce Readiness Act.

- Bipartisan, bicameral bill that would create a grant program to support local youth-serving partnerships that provide workforce development programming
- Young people are urgently seeking opportunities to develop the skills & knowledge they need to navigate to a high-quality career
 - Out-of-school time orgs can provide high quality mentors, who guide young people through what they're learning
- Addresses the skills gap that has been exacerbated by COVID-19



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Making the ask to support the Youth Workforce Readiness Act

THE ASK: Co-sponsor the Youth Workforce Readiness Act.

QUESTION TO CONSIDER: How could funding for innovative partnerships between out-of-school time orgs, mentoring programs, and employers positively impact the youth in your community?



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Priority 4: Support the Mentoring to Succeed Act.

- Bicameral bill that would create a grant program in the Department of Education to support school-based mentoring programs at high-need schools for youth facing risk
- Focus on violence intervention and trauma-informed practices and strategies
- Supports public-private partnerships to help prepare young people for college and/or the workforce
- The bill would give a grant preference to those that include youth voice in program design



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Making the ask to support the Mentoring to Succeed Act

THE ASK: Co-sponsor the Mentoring to Succeed Act.

QUESTION TO CONSIDER: How could expanding these types of programs positively impact the youth in your community?



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Priority 5: Support the Transition to Success Mentoring Act.

- Creates a new grant program at the Department of Education to support school-community partnerships to identify and mentor students transitioning between middle and high school who are facing risk of dropping out
- Grantees assign an academic success coach/mentor to qualified students to help improve their school engagement and plan for success
- The bill would give a grant preference to those that include youth voice in program design



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The Ask: Transition to Success Mentoring Act

THE ASK: Co-sponsor the Transition to Success Mentoring Act.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: How could expanding these types of programs positively impact the youth in your community?



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Try a relationship-building ask: Join the Youth Mentoring Caucus.

The bipartisan Youth Mentoring Caucus works to close the ‘mentoring gap’ and build sustained congressional support for the national mentoring movement. This is the easiest way to demonstrate support for and stay aware of mentoring advocacy opportunities.

THE ASK: Join the Youth Mentoring Caucus (House).

THE ASK: Start the Youth Mentoring Caucus (Senate).



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Try a relationship-building ask: Support National Mentoring Month.

National Mentoring Month is when we celebrate the power of relationships and work to increase public awareness of mentoring, in addition to recruiting individuals to mentor and advocate for institutions to integrate quality mentoring.

THE ASK: Co-sponsor the National Mentoring Month resolution and share a public statement in support of mentoring.



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Crafting your pitch

- Questions to consider:
 - What positive outcomes have resulted from your programming?
 - If you had the resources, how would you expand your program/services? How would this support more youth in your community?
 - What are the biggest obstacles your program currently faces? How can this meeting help address those problems?
 - YOU are the expert!

Use youth-centered language.
It's always about the kids!



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Always be prepared to respond to the opposition

- Identify potential opponents
- Research and think about why they might oppose your ideas
- Be prepared with responses to the question of who opposes your ideas



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Additional Resources

- 2024 Capitol Hill Day Policy Priorities
 - Sent ahead of time to Congressional offices
- Special information documents
- Instructions on using the legislative scorecard
- Capitol Hill Day Meeting Checklist
- MENTOR's Capitol Hill Day, Legislation, Public Funding, and Advocacy Resources webpages
- Link to Action Center and legislative scorecard
- Social media template
- ...and more!



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Practicing your Pitch

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ACTIVITY 1: Make the Ask

- Write down a sentence making your ‘pitch’ for a bill you care about with one supporting reason/data point.
 - Ex.: The Foster Youth Mentoring Act could benefit my program because we’ve wanted to expand our services to work with foster youth, but haven’t had the resources
 - Ex.: I’d like Senator Jones to support increasing funding for the OJJDP Youth Mentoring Grant because it could help my program shorten our waitlist



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ACTIVITY 2: Connecting your personal story

These questions can help shape your story:

- Why did you become an advocate for this issue?
- How does this issue affect you?
- Do you have friends, family, clients, customers, or colleagues with compelling stories that you can lift up/share?
- **Example: I decided to become an advocate for mentoring because I personally experienced how a school-based mentoring program helped get me on track academically and eventually become the first in my family to enroll in college. My mentor helped me to gain positive outlets, connections, and motivation to stay engaged. I want to be able to give to others the relationships that helped get me to where I am today. Unfortunately, my program has a waitlist; if you increase funding for this program, more organizations like mine would have an opportunity to access funding. That's why I support increasing funding for the Youth Mentoring Grant.**



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Reminders for Tomorrow!



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Capitol Hill Day Agenda

Wednesday, January 24

- Trolleys will start picking up advocates to take the Hill starting at 8am
- Capitol Hill Day Kickoff @ 10 AM in the Capitol Visitor's Center Auditorium – with special guests, breakfast, and more!
- Congressional Meetings
 - Appointments have been scheduled between 11 AM and 4 PM Eastern
 - Most participants have 3 meetings (1 Representative, 2 Senators)
 - Some meetings are very full – and some are just one person
- Opening reception: 4-6pm in Senate Hart Building, Room 902



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Before your meetings...

- Do your research!
- Look over relevant documents and talking points
- Check the app for meeting times and locations, then make a plan with your teammates
- Check in to your meeting early, if possible
- Join the Capitol Hill Day Kickoff – tomorrow at 10am!



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During your meetings...

- Introduce yourselves
- Don't shy away from chit chat but be mindful of time
- Make your pitch and tell your story
- Listen to how the staff/legislator responds; take notes
- Get a commitment when possible
- Promise to follow up with your contact information and materials
- Allow time for questions (both directions)

Don't forget to take a photo!



#MentoringSummit



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After your meetings...

- Send a thank you note to the Member or staff via the app
 - Personalize it!
 - At least one per team
- Post on social media (templates available in the app)
- Follow up immediately after meeting with any promised information
 - Again 2-3 weeks after that to check in on commitments

and, most importantly...



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Feedback – it's really important!

- We require at least one feedback survey form from each Congressional meeting
- Be as detailed as possible!
- Please use the feedback form provided in the app – you can find it in the same place where your meeting information is stored
- Provide useful feedback:
 - “Meeting went well” is not helpful
 - “The member expressed interest in this bill, and was not interested in this bill for this reason...”



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Planning and Preparation



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“There are two types of groups I meet with...ones that come prepared I listen to them. Ones that don’t come prepared...they listen to me.”



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Over the next hour...

- Folders will be passed out to advocates (ONE PER MEETING)
- State team photos
- Take time to plan and organize for each of your meetings
- Once you're finished planning, pick up your Hill Day t-shirts on the way out



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Preparing for Capitol Hill Day

Get together with you're the other advocates from your meeting(s) and discuss the following logistics...

- Who will kick off which meeting?
- Who will take the lead on each legislative ask?
- When/where will you meet up for each meeting?

Work together to think about effective messages, specific to your elected official...

- Look over special notes documents and other resources
- What committees/leadership positions does the member have?
- Are there others from the same party in their state who support these asks?



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Preparing for Capitol Hill Day

Meeting goals

- What are the three most important points we must get across?
- What personal experiences can we convey to illustrate impact?
- What data or research can we present – national, state, regional, local – that can display impact of this issue?
- Specifically, what do we want to get out of this meeting?



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