

How to Engage Your Mayor and Position Them for a Mayor for Mentoring Nomination

Mayors have enormous influence, visibility, and decision-making power that can directly impact the success and reach of youth mentoring programs in their city's borders. Building a strong working relationship with your mayor now can yield immediate benefits and long-term champions – especially if they advance to higher office.

Below are a few key steps to take to begin or strengthen your working relationship with your mayor and prepare them to be a true Mayor for Mentoring.

Do Your Homework

- Learn about your mayor's priorities. Review their website, social media, recent speeches, budget priorities, and media coverage.
- Identify existing connections. See if your board, staff, or program supporters already know the mayor or their staff.
- Map alignment. Note where youth mentoring connects to their priorities and focus. For example, workforce development, education, mental health, healthy opportunities for city youth, etc.

Make Contact

- **Start with a warm introduction.** If possible, go through a mutual connection.
- **Send a short briefing.** Include:
 - 1–2-page overview of your program's impact in the city (*odds are you already have something like this that you share with key potential funders*)
 - Key stats (youth served, number of mentors, outcomes, waitlist information)
 - Stories that make the case for *more* mentoring
- **Request a meeting** to share how mentoring supports city goals and to explore collaboration opportunities.

Show the Mayor the Impact

- Invite them to:
 - Visit a mentoring program in action
 - Attend a mentor-mentee event
 - Attend a new mentor training event
 - Speak at a community celebration, mentor recruitment drive, or fundraiser
- Share data on:
 - Reduced youth risk factors
 - Improved academic and career readiness
 - Volunteer engagement and economic benefits
 - If applicable, share how your program's work aligns with the mayor/city's efforts (e.g., youth violence reduction, improved school attendance rates, etc.)

Position Them for Nomination

To be eligible for **Mayors for Mentoring**, a mayor should:

- Be a current mayor, deputy or lieutenant mayor (or your city's title equivalents)
- Publicly champion mentoring (website, speeches, initiatives, budget line items, etc.)
- Recognize [National Mentoring Month](#) each January

Encourage them to:

- Offer **paid volunteer leave** for city employees who mentor
- Issue a **public mentoring challenge** to increase the number of volunteer mentors and clear mentoring program waitlists
- Use **convening power** to connect mentoring programs with businesses and civil leaders
- Share mentoring success stories in official communications

Make the Ask

- Once you see visible signs of commitment from the mayor and their office:
 1. Share the **Mayors for Mentoring** nomination criteria
 2. Let them know you'd like to nominate them
 3. Frame it as a recognition of leadership, not an obligation

Keep the Relationship Going

- Provide quarterly updates on your program's impact
- Invite them to key events
- Share stories of how their support is making a difference

You mayor's platform can amplify mentoring, inspire volunteers, attract resources, and build a stronger community. Nominating them is not just an honor – it's a partnership that benefits young people for years to come.

Have questions? Contact Abbie Evans at MENTOR: aevans@mentoring.org