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Vulnerable Youth: Federal Mentoring Programs and Issues

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Summary

Youth mentoring refers to a relationship between youth—particularly those most at risk of experiencing negative outcomes in adolescence and adulthood—and the adults who support and guide them. The origin of the modern youth mentoring concept is credited to the efforts of charity groups that formed during the Progressive era of the early 1900s to provide practical assistance to poor and juvenile justice-involved youth, including help with finding employment.

Approximately 4.5 million youth today are involved in formal mentoring relationships through organizations such as Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) of America. Contemporary mentoring programs seek to improve outcomes and reduce risks among vulnerable youth by providing positive role models who regularly meet with the youth in community or school settings. Some programs have broad youth development goals, while others focus more narrowly on a particular outcome. Evaluations of the BBBS program and studies of other mentoring programs demonstrate an association between mentoring and some positive outcomes, but the impact of mentoring and the ability for mentored youth to sustain gains over time are less certain.

There is no single overarching federal policy on mentoring or an entity that coordinates mentoring supports across the federal government. The Federal Mentoring Council had served as a resource on mentoring issues for the federal government from 2006 to 2008 and is no longer active. Currently, the federal government provides funding for mentoring primarily through a grant program with annual appropriations for the program of about $78 million to $90 million in recent years. This grant is administered by the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) within the Office of Justice Programs. Program funding has been used for research and direct mentoring services to select populations of youth, such as those involved or at risk of being involved in the juvenile justice system. Other federal agencies provide or are authorized to support mentoring as one aspect of a larger program. For example, select programs carried out by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) can provide mentoring, among other services. Youth ChalleNGe, an educational and leadership program for at-risk youth administered by the Department of Defense's (DOD's) National Guard, includes mentoring as an aspect of its program. Federal agencies also coordinate on federal mentoring issues.

Two other federal programs—the Mentoring Children of Prisoners (MCP) program and Safe and Drug-Free Schools (SDFS) Mentoring program—provided a significant source of federal funding for mentoring services. However, the programs were short-lived: funding for the MCP program was discontinued beginning with FY2011, and funding for the SDFS program was discontinued beginning with FY2010. The MCP program was created in response to the growing number of children under age 18 with at least one parent incarcerated in a federal or state correctional facility. The program was intended, in part, to reduce the chance that mentored youth would use drugs and skip school. Similarly, the SDFS Mentoring program provided school-based mentoring to reduce school dropout and improve relationships for youth at risk of educational failure and with other risk factors. As part of its FY2010 budget justifications, the Obama Administration had proposed eliminating the program because of an evaluation showing that it did not have an impact on students overall in terms of interpersonal relationships, academic outcomes, and delinquent behaviors.

Issues relevant to the federal role in mentoring include the limitations of research on outcomes for mentored youth, the quality of mentoring programs, and the potential need for additional mentors.

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Introduction

The purpose of contemporary, structured mentoring programs is to reduce risks by supplementing (but not supplanting) a youth's relationship with his or her parents. These programs are administered by mostly adult volunteers who are recruited by youth-serving organizations, faith-based organizations, schools, and after-school programs. Some of these programs have broad youth development goals, while others focus more narrowly on a particular outcome such as reducing gang activity or substance abuse, or improving grades. Research has shown that mentoring programs have been associated with some positive youth outcomes, but that the long-term ability of mentoring to produce particular outcomes and the ability for mentored youth to sustain gains over time are less certain.

Since the mid-1990s, Congress supported mentoring programs for the most vulnerable youth. The Department of Justice's (DOJ's) Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP), the first such program, was implemented in 1994 to provide mentoring services for at-risk youth ages 5 to 20. Although there is no single overarching policy today on mentoring, the federal government has supported multiple mentoring efforts for vulnerable youth since JUMP was discontinued in FY2003. Previously, two mentoring programs—the Mentoring Children of Prisoners (MCP) program and Safe and Drug Free Schools (SDFS) Mentoring program—provided a significant source of federal funding for mentoring services. However, the programs were short-lived: the MCP was administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) from FY2003 through FY2011 and the SDFS program was administered by the Department of Education (ED) from FY2002 through FY2010.

The federal government currently funds mentoring efforts through short-term grants and initiatives, primarily carried out by DOJ. DOJ has allocated funding for multiple initiatives through its Mentoring program, including mentoring for certain vulnerable youth and research on mentoring. In addition, the federal government has provided funding to programs with vulnerable youth that have a strong, but not exclusive, mentoring component. Youth ChalleNGe, an educational and leadership program for at-risk youth administered by the Department of Defense (DOD), helps to engage youth in work and school, and leadership opportunities. Adult mentors assist enrolled youth with their transition from the program for at least one year. Finally, federal agencies coordinate on mentoring issues. The Federal Mentoring Council was created in 2006 to address the ways agencies can combine resources and training and technical assistance to federally administered mentoring programs, and to serve as a clearinghouse on mentoring issues for the federal government. The council has been inactive since 2008.

This report begins with an overview of the goals of mentoring, including a brief discussion on research of structured mentoring programs. The report then describes the evolution of federal policies on mentoring since the early 1990s. The report provides an overview of the federal mentoring initiatives that are currently funded. While additional federal programs and policies authorize funding for mentoring activities, among multiple other activities and services, such programs are not discussed in this report. The report concludes with an overview of issues that may be of interest to Congress. These issues include the limitations of research on outcomes for mentored youth, the quality of mentoring programs, and the potential need for additional mentors.

Overview and Purpose of Mentoring

Mentoring refers to a relationship between two or more individuals in which at least one of those individuals provides guidance to the other. In the context of this report, mentoring refers to the

relationship between a youth and an adult who supports, guides, and assists the youth.[1] Youth can receive mentoring through informal and formal relationships with adults. *Informal* relationships are those that develop from a young person's existing social network of teachers, coaches, and family friends. This report focuses on *formal* mentoring relationships for vulnerable youth. These relationships are cultivated through *structured* programs sponsored by youth-serving organizations, faith-based organizations, schools, and after-school programs. Approximately 4.5 million youth are in structured mentoring relationships.[2] Volunteers in structured programs are recruited from communities, religious organizations, and the workplace, and undergo an intensive screening process. Youth eligible for services through structured mentoring programs are often identified as at "high risk" of certain negative outcomes.[3]

The goal of modern structured mentoring programs is to reduce risks by supplementing, but not replacing, a youth's relationship with his or her parents. Some programs have broad youth development goals, while others focus more narrowly on a particular outcome such as reducing gang activity or substance abuse, or improving grades. Structured mentoring programs are often *community based*, meaning that mentored youth and adults engage in community activities (e.g., going to the museum and the park, playing sports, playing a board game, and spending time together outside of work and school). Other programs are characterized as *school based* because they take place on school grounds or some other set location, like a community center. The co-location of mentoring programs in schools facilitates relationships with teachers, who can meet with mentors and refer youth to the programs.[4] Mentors provide academic assistance and recreational opportunities and expose youth to opportunities that promote their cognitive and emotional development.

Origins of Contemporary Mentoring Programs

The origin of today's structured mentoring programs is credited to the efforts of charity groups that formed during the Progressive Movement of the early 1900s. These groups sought adult volunteers for vulnerable youth—defined at the time as youth who were poor or had become involved in the juvenile court system.[5] These early organizations provided practical assistance to youth, including help with finding employment, and created recreational outlets. The most prominent mentoring organization at the time, Big Brothers (now known as Big Brothers Big Sisters of America), continues today as the oldest mentoring organization in the country.[6]

The contemporary youth mentoring movement began in the late 1980s with the support of foundations and corporations, including Fannie Mae, Commonwealth Fund, United Way of

[1] MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, "Elements of Effective Practice in Mentoring," 4th ed., 2015 (hereinafter, MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, "Elements of Effective Practice in Mentoring").

[2] MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, "The Mentoring Effect: Young People's Perspectives on the Outcomes and Availability of Mentoring," January 2014, http://www.mentoring.org/mentoringeffect/the_mentoring_effect_full_report/ (hereinafter, MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, *The Mentoring Effect: Young People's Perspectives on the Outcomes and Availability of Mentoring*).

[3] For further discussion of risk factors and groups of at-risk youth, see CRS Report RL33975, *Vulnerable Youth: Background and Policies*.

[4] MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, "Elements of Effective Practice in Mentoring."

[5] George L. Beiswinger, *One to One: The Story of the Big Brothers Big Sisters Movement in America*. (Philadelphia: Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, 1985), pp. 15-20.

[6] U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, "OJJDP Helps Big Brothers Big Sisters Celebrate 100th Anniversary," *OJJDP News @ a Glance*, vol. 3, no. 3, May/June 2004, p. 1.

America, Chrysler, Procter & Gamble, and the National Urban League.[7] In addition, nongovernmental organizations such as One to One in Philadelphia and Project RAISE in Baltimore were established by entrepreneurs seeking to expand mentoring services to vulnerable youth.

The federal government has supported structured mentoring programs and initiatives since the beginning of the contemporary mentoring movement. At that time, mentoring was becoming increasingly recognized by the government as a promising strategy to enrich the lives of youth, address the isolation of youth from adult contact, and provide one-to-one support for the most vulnerable youth, particularly those living in poverty.[8] Among the first projects undertaken by the federal government was a youth mentoring initiative in the early 1990s implemented by the newly created Points of Light Foundation, a federally-funded nonprofit organization that promotes volunteering.[9] Then-Secretary of Labor Elizabeth Dole made the case for mentoring as a way to improve the lives of youth and prepare them for the workforce.[10] Other early initiatives included the Juvenile Mentoring Program, or JUMP.[11] The federal government also signaled the importance of mentoring during the 1997 Presidents' Summit, which was convened by the living Presidents (at the time) to pledge their support for policies that assist youth. The Presidents and other national leaders called for adults to volunteer as mentors for over 2 million vulnerable youth.[12]

Characteristics of Successful Mentoring Programs

Studies of structured mentoring programs, including those that have received federal funding, indicate that the programs are most successful when they include a strong infrastructure and facilitate caring relationships. Infrastructure refers to a number of activities including identifying the youth population to be served and the activities to be undertaken, screening and training mentors, supporting and supervising mentoring relationships, collecting data on youth outcomes, and creating sustainability strategies.[13] The mentor screening process provides programs with an opportunity to select those adults most likely to be successful as mentors by seeking volunteers who can keep their time commitments and value the importance of trust. Further, these studies assert that orientation and training ensure youth and mentors share a common understanding of the adult's role and help mentors develop realistic expectations of what they can accomplish.

Ongoing support and supervision of the matches assist mentored pairs in negotiating challenges. Staff can help the pairs maintain a relationship over the desired period (generally a year or more), and assist them in bringing the match to a close in a way that affirms the contributions to the relationship of both the mentor and youth. According to the research literature, successful

[7] Marc Freedman, *The Kindness of Strangers: Mentors, Urban Youth, and the New Volunteerism* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993), p. 5. (Hereinafter, Marc Freedman, *The Kindness of Strangers*.)

[8] U.S. Department of Justice, "Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP) Guidelines," 59 *Federal Register* 3820, July 28, 1994.

[9] Marc Freedman, *The Kindness of Strangers,* p. 4. The Points of Light Foundation is funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

[10] Ibid., p. 16.

[11] DOJ, OJP, OJJDP, *Evaluation of the Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP)*, November 2000.

[12] The Presidents' Summit on America's Future, *Remarks at the Presidents' Summit on America's Future*, http://clinton3.nara.gov/WH/New/Summit/Remarks_index.html.

[13] Jean E. Rhodes and David L. DuBois, "Understanding and Facilitating the Youth Mentoring Movement," Social Policy Report, vol. 20, no. 3 (2006), pp. 8-11. (Hereinafter, Rhodes and DuBois, "Understanding and Facilitating the Youth Mentoring Movement.")

programs are known to employ strategies to retain the support of current funders and garner financial backing from new sources. Finally, the studies demonstrate that successful programs attempt to measure any effects of mentoring services on the participating youth. Programs can then disseminate these findings to potential funders and participants.

Characteristics of Successful Mentoring Relationships

Research on youth mentoring demonstrates that mentoring relationships are likely to promote positive outcomes for youth and avoid harm when they are close, consistent, and enduring.[14] Closeness refers to a bond that forms between the youth and mentor, and has been found to have benefits for the youth. Mentor characteristics—such as prior experience in helping roles or occupations, an ability to appreciate salient socioeconomic and cultural influences, and a sense of efficacy for mentoring youth—appear to facilitate close mentoring relationships. Consistency refers to the amount of time mentors and youth spend together. Regular contact has been linked to positive youth outcomes, and relationships tend to be strong if they last one year or longer. Youth in relationships that lasted less than six months showed declines in functioning relative to their non-mentored peers.

Evaluation of Mentoring Programs

A 2011 analysis assessed findings from 73 mentoring evaluations to determine the effectiveness of mentoring generally.[15] The analysis reviewed evaluations, published between 1999 and 2010,[16] of mentoring programs that were intended to promote positive youth outcomes through relationships between children and youth under age 18 and adults (or older youth) serving as mentors. The analysis examined programs that used various formats and strategies—including those that used paid mentors, older mentors, and group formats—and took place for a relatively brief period (e.g., a few months) through a longer period. Each of the evaluations included a comparison group of youth who were not mentored. In some programs, the youth were randomly assigned to participate in the comparison group, while in other programs the comparison group consisted of youth who did not participate in the mentoring program. There is wide consensus that using random assignment allows researchers to best estimate the impact of an intervention such as mentoring.[17]

The researchers found that overall, the programs resulted in modest gains for youth. According to the analysis, the programs tended to have positive effects on outcomes across multiple categories,

[14] Ibid., p. 9.

[15] David L. DuBois et al., "How Effective Are Mentoring Programs for Youth? A Systematic Assessment of the Evidence," *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, vol. 12, no. 2 (2011), http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.707.5128&rep=rep1&type=pdf (hereinafter, DuBois et al., "How Effective Are Mentoring Programs for Youth? A Systematic Assessment of the Evidence").

[16] An earlier analysis assessed findings from 55 evaluations of youth mentoring programs that had been published through 1998. See David L. DuBois et al., "Effectiveness of Mentoring Programs: A Meta-Analytical Review," *American Journal of Community Psychology*, vol. 30, no. 2 (2002).

[17] Random assignment involves assigning individuals to two groups—an intervention group and a control group—using a random process (e.g., a lottery) to compare outcomes across these groups. Under ideal conditions, this can help to explain whether an intervention, like abstinence education, is effective because youth in both the program and control groups were similar in all respects except for their access to the program. Quasi-experimental designs refer to studies that attempt to estimate a treatment's impact on a group of subjects, but, in contrast to random assignment designs, they do not have random assignment to treatment and control groups. Some quasi-experiments are controlled studies (i.e., with a control group), but others lack a control group.

including academics and education, attitudes and motivation, social skills and interpersonal relationships, and psychological and emotional status, among other categories. Seven of the studies included follow-up assessment of youth outcomes after they had completed the program, with an average follow-up period of about two years. The studies showed an enduring positive effect of participating in the programs that were evaluated. Further, the analysis pointed to factors that influence the effectiveness of mentoring programs. These include whether (1) participating youth have preexisting difficulties, such as delinquent behavior, or are exposed to significant environmental risk (not defined, but presumably referring to the home and community in which the youth resides); (2) programs serve greater proportions of males; (3) mentors' educational or occupational backgrounds are well matched to the goals of the program; (4) mentors and youth are paired based on mutual interests, such as career interests; and (5) mentors serve as advocates and teachers to provide guidance to youth and to help ensure their overall welfare.[18]

The analysis ultimately found that a broad range of mentoring programs can benefit youth across a number of domains. At the same time, it raised other considerations. For example, few evaluations assessed key outcomes that are of interest to policymakers, such as educational attainment, juvenile offending, and obesity prevention. In addition, few evaluations addressed whether youth sustained the gains they made in the program at later points in their development. The researchers point out that despite the positive effect of the programs overall, the effect is small.[19]

Examples of the Positive Effects of Mentoring

Some studies have shown strong gains for youth who are mentored. A study in 1995 of the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America program compared outcomes of eligible youth who were randomly selected to receive mentoring services. The study found that 18 months after the youth were assigned to their groups, the mentored youth skipped half as many days of school. In addition, the mentored youth were 46% less likely than their control group counterparts to use drugs, 27% less likely to initiate alcohol use, and almost one-third less likely to hit someone.[20]

A 2002 review of studies of major community-based programs (the 1995 Big Brothers Big Sisters evaluation and evaluations of Across Ages, Project BELONG, and Buddy System, among others)[21] with an experimental design found that certain outcomes for youth with a mentor were better than outcomes for their counterparts without a mentor.[22] These outcomes included the following:

- *Improved educational outcomes:* Youth in the year-long Across Ages mentoring program showed a gain of more than a week of class attendance. Evaluations of the program also showed that mentored youth had better attitudes toward school than non-mentored youth.
- *Reduction in some negative behaviors:* All studies that examined delinquency showed evidence of reducing some, but not all, of the tracked negative behaviors.

[18] DuBois et al., "How Effective Are Mentoring Programs for Youth? A Systematic Assessment of the Evidence."

[19] Ibid.

[20] Joseph P. Tierney and Jean Baldwin Grossman, with Nancy L. Resch, *Making A Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters,* Public/Private Ventures, reissued September 2000, https://www.issuelab.org/resource/making-a-difference-an-impact-study-of-big-brothers-big-sisters-re-issue-of-1995-study.html.

[21] These programs are a sampling of some of the programs profiled.

[22] Susan Jekielek et al., *Mentoring Programs and Youth Development: A Synthesis*, Child Trends, January 2002, http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2002/08/mentorrpt.pdf. (Hereinafter, Jekielek et al., *Mentoring Programs and Youth Development.)*

Mentored youth in the BELONG program committed fewer misdemeanors and felonies than non-mentored youth. In the Buddy System program, youth with a prior history of criminal behavior were less likely to commit a major offense compared to their non-mentored counterparts with a prior history.

- *Improved social and emotional development:* Youth in the Across Ages program had significantly more positive attitudes toward the elderly, the future, and helping behaviors than non-mentored youth. Participants in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program felt that they trusted their parents more and communicated better with them, compared to their non-mentored peers.

Similarly, a 2007 study of Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring programs, with adults serving as mentors, demonstrated some positive results. This study—among the most rigorous scientific evaluations of a school-based mentoring program—found that mentored youth (randomly selected into the treatment group) made improvements in their first year in overall academic performance, feeling more competent about school, and skipping school less, among other areas, compared to their non-mentored counterparts (randomly selected into the control group).[23]

Some Outcomes Do Not Improve or Are Short-Lived

Although research has documented some benefits of mentoring, findings from some studies show that mentoring is limited in improving all youth outcomes. The 2002 review of mentoring program evaluations found that programs did not always make a strong improvement in grades and that some negative behaviors—stealing or damaging property within the last year—were unaffected by whether the youth was in a mentoring program.[24] In the 2007 Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring evaluation, the non-school related outcomes, including substance use and self-worth, did not improve.[25]

Research has also indicated that mentored youth make small gains or do not sustain positive gains over time.[26] The 2007 Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring evaluation found that, in the second year of the program, none of the academic gains were maintained (however, mentored youth were less likely to skip school, and more likely to feel that they would start and finish college).[27] The evaluation also pointed to weaknesses in the program's design, such as high attrition (due likely to the transitioning for some youth to middle school, or high school), limited contact with mentors and youth over the summer, and delays in beginning the program at the start of the school year.[28] A 2008 study of Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring that used high school students as mentors and drew on data used for the 2007 study, found that while the mentored students experienced gains on some outcomes, the improvements were not sustained for students who ended their involvement in the program after one school year (the minimum time commitment).[29] Similarly, an evaluation of the discontinued federal school-based mentoring

[23] Carla Herrera et al., *Making a Difference in Schools: The Big Brothers Big Sisters School-Based Mentoring Impact Study*, Public/Private Ventures, August 2007, pp. 34-35, http://files.bigsister.org/file/Making-a-Difference-in-Schools.pdf. (Hereinafter, Carla Herrera et al., *Making a Difference in Schools*.)

[24] Jekielek et al., *Mentoring Programs and Youth Development*, p. 15.

[25] Carla Herrera et al., *Making a Difference in Schools*, pp. 37-38.

[26] Jean E. Rhodes and David L. DuBois, "Understanding and Facilitating the Youth Mentoring Movement," pp. 3-5.

[27] Carla Herrera et al., *Making a Difference in Schools*, pp. 47-78.

[28] Ibid., pp. iv-v.

[29] Carla Herrera et al., *High School Students as Mentors: Findings from the Big Brothers Big Sisters School-Based*

program (funded from FY2002 through FY2009) demonstrated that the program did not have an impact on students overall in terms of interpersonal relationships, academic outcomes, and delinquent behaviors.[30]

The remainder of this report provides an overview of federal efforts to support mentoring, as well as a discussion of mentoring issues. The federal government does not have an overarching strategy or coordinated approach to mentoring, and the major mentoring program is administered by DOJ.

Department of Justice Mentoring Program

Overview

As noted previously, DOJ is the first federal department to have funded a structured mentoring program. The 1992 amendments (P.L. 102-586) to the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) added Part G to the act, authorizing the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to establish a mentoring program, which came to be known as the Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP). The program was created in response to the perception that youth in high-crime areas would benefit from one-on-one adult relationships.[31] The objectives of JUMP were to reduce juvenile delinquent behavior and improve scholastic performance, with an emphasis on reducing school dropout. From FY1994 through FY2003, Congress appropriated a total of $104 million to the program. Annual funding ranged from $4 million to $15.8 million.

JUMP was repealed by the 21st Century Department of Justice Appropriations Authorization Act (P.L. 107-273). This law incorporated the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 2001 (H.R. 1900) from the 107th Congress, which eliminated several juvenile justice programs, including Part G (Mentoring), and replaced it with a block grant program under a new Part C (Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Block Grant Program, to be used for activities designed to prevent juvenile delinquency). The act also created a new Part E (Developing, Testing, and Demonstrating Promising New Initiatives and Programs). According to the accompanying report for H.R. 1900, the relatively small amount of funding appropriated for JUMP may have been a factor in its elimination. The report states: "In creating this block grant, the [Senate Judiciary] Committee has eliminated separate categorical programs under current law.... Funding for the Part E—State Challenge Activities and Part G—Mentoring Program received minimal funding."[32] The report goes on to say that the committee does not discourage mentoring activities under Part C.

Mentoring Impact Study, Public/Private Ventures, September 2008, http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_1149.pdf.

[30] Lawrence Bernstein et al., *Impact Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education's Student Mentoring Program Final Report*, Abt Associates, March 2009, http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20094047/. (Hereinafter, Lawrence Bernstein et al., *Impact Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education's Student Mentoring Program Final Report*.)

[31] Sen. Frank R. Lautenberg, "Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Authorization Act," remarks in the Senate, *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 138 (October 7, 1992).

[32] U.S. Congress, House Committee on Education and the Workforce, *Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 2001*, report to accompany H.R. 1900, 107th Cong., 1st sess. H.Rept. 107-203 (Washington; GPO, 2001), p. 31. An evaluation of JUMP found that the program did not recruit the desired number of mentors, that many of the relationships appeared to have ended prematurely, and that some youth outcomes did not improve. Nonetheless, the results of the evaluation do not appear to have been a factor in eliminating the program.

After the JUMP program was discontinued with the end of FY2003, the Bush Administration requested funding for mentoring under Part C and Part E of the JJDPA.[33] However, in the years since JUMP's discontinuation, Congress has appropriated mentoring funds under a separate mentoring line item titled "Mentoring Part G," "Mentoring," or "Mentoring Grants"; the line item does not specify under which part of the JJDPA the funding is authorized.[34]

Funding

The JUMP Program ended in FY2003 and Congress resumed funding for DOJ mentoring in FY2005. **Table 1**shows funding from FY2008 through FY2017; Congress has provided $70.0 million to $102.8 million annually in these years.

Table 1. FY2008-FY2017 Appropriated Funding for the Department of Justice Mentoring Program

(Dollars in millions)

FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017
$70.0	$80.0	$100.0	$102.8	$78.0	$84.0	$88.5	$90.0	$90.0	$80.0

Source: Congressional budget submission for the Office of Justice Programs, FY2008-FY2011; FY2011 funding data is based on Department of Defense and Full Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 (P.L. 112-10); FY2012 is funding based on Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2012 (P.L. 112-55); FY2013 funding based on the Continuing and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013 (P.L. 113-6). Appropriations include rescissions where applicable, and the FY2013 appropriation includes the amount sequestered as required under the terms of the Budget Control Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-25) and the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-177), as amended. FY2014 funding based House Committee on Rules, 113th Cong., 2nd sess., Committee Print 113-32 to the Senate Amendment to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (H.R. 3547), which was enacted as P.L. 113-76. FY2015 funding based on the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 113-235). FY2016 funding based on the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 114-113). FY2017 funding is based on the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (P.L. 115-31).

FY2017

The FY2017 appropriation for the DOJ Mentoring program totaled $80 million. Of this amount, $66.4 million was available for the program, and another $13.6 million was used for other purposes within the Office of Justice Programs (management and administration, peer review, research set-aside, and tribal set-aside). The program funds were used as follows: $61.7 million for grants to provide mentoring services to youth; $778,503 for research activities; and $4.0 million for training and technical assistance, including the Mentoring Resource Center.[35] **Table 2** summarizes the purpose, goals, and funding levels for the grants that totaled $61.7 million. The table includes funding for mentoring by organizations with programs that have a national

[33] See, for example, U.S. Department of Justice, *2007 Congressional Authorization and Budget Submission*, p. 141.

[34] See, for example, House Committee on Appropriations, Making Appropriations for Science, the Departments of State, Justice, and Commerce, and Related Agencies for the Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2006, and for Other Purposes, report to accompany H.R. 2862, 109th Cong., 2nd sess., CP-3 (Washington: GPO, 2006); and Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (P.L. 115-31).

[35] The U.S. Department of Justice, through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, provides funding to MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership to operate the National Mentoring Resource Center. The goal of the center is to improve the quality and effectiveness of mentoring across the country by supporting youth mentoring practitioners. The center provides mentoring tools, program and training materials, and information. In addition to accessing online resources, mentoring programs can apply for no-cost training and technical assistance to support them in incorporating evidence-based practices. DOJ has provided funding for the center since FY2013.

presence (National Mentoring Programs), operate in multiple states (Multi-State Mentoring Initiative), operate locally in collaboration with other mentoring providers (Collaborative Mentoring Programs), or serve specific groups of youth who are at risk (Mentoring for Child Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Domestic Sex Trafficking Program and Practitioner-Researcher Partnership in Cognitive Behavioral Mentoring Program).

Table 2. Grants for Mentoring Services Awarded Under the Department of Justice Mentoring Program, FY2017

Mentoring Grant	Description	Entities Eligible to Apply	Number of Grantees	Total Amount of Funding
National Mentoring Programs (Category 1 of Mentoring Opportunities for Youth Initiative)	This grant seeks to support national organizations that provide mentoring services (one-to-one, group, and peer mentoring) throughout the country. The entities are to serve "at-risk" and "high-risk youth," which include those youth who are most likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system because they have certain predictive or correlative characteristics; are already involved in the juvenile justice system; and/or reside in environments that have high rates of parental incarceration and other risk factors. Eligible entities must also have a plan to serve American Indian and Alaska Native youth both on and off reservations. Entities are encouraged to target mentoring services to children of parents on active military duty; children of incarcerated parents; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth; youth with disabilities; and youth in rural communities. Eligible entities must use one or more enhancements of services to improve the access to and impact of mentoring services.	Eligible entities include national organizations, which are those that have active chapters or subgrantees in at least 45 states.	4 awards	$37,750,000
Multi-State Mentoring Initiative (Category 2 of Mentoring Opportunities for Youth Initiative)	This grant seeks to support organizations that have mentoring programs (one-to-one, group, and peer mentoring) in multiple states. Eligible entities provide mentoring to youth who are at-risk or high-risk for involvement in the juvenile justice system. Entities are encouraged to target mentoring services to American Indian and Alaska Native youth; children of parents on active military duty; children of incarcerated parents; LGBTQ youth; youth with disabilities; and youth in rural communities. Eligible entities must use one or more enhancements of services to improve the access to and impact of mentoring services.	Eligible entities include multi-state organizations, defined as organizations that have operated an established mentoring program for at least three years and have active chapters or subgrantees in at least five states but no more than 45 states.	12 awards	$19,052,596
Collaborative Mentoring Programs (Category 3 of Mentoring Opportunities for Youth Initiative)	This grant seeks to support a collaborative of mentoring organizations that provide mentoring (one-to-one, group, and peer mentoring) in at least one location. The organizations must all implement the same program design. Organizations must ensure that no individual will receive duplicative services from more than one member of the collaborative. Eligible entities must initiate mentoring services for youth who are age 17 or younger, and include those at-risk or high-risk for involvement in the juvenile justice system youth (see definitions above). Eligible entities must use one or more enhancements of services to improve the access to and impact of mentoring services.	A collaborative of three to five mentoring organizations. Organizations that operate in multiple states may participate. Each mentoring organization within the collaborative must already have been in operation at least one year when they submit the application.	4 awards	$3,981,008

Mentoring Grant	Description	Entities Eligible to Apply	Number of Grantees	Total Amount of Funding
Mentoring Project Sites (Category 1 of the Mentoring for Child Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Domestic Sex Trafficking Program)	This grant seeks to assist organizations in developing or enhancing their mentoring capacity, facilitating outreach efforts, and increasing the availability of direct services to child victims (under age 18) of commercial sexual exploitation, including children who are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents.	Eligible entities include states, territories, units of local government (including federally recognized tribal governments), nonprofit and for-profit organizations (including those that are tribal), and institutions of higher education (including tribal institutions of higher education).	3 awards	$388,838[a]
Practitioner-Researcher Partnership in Cognitive Behavioral Mentoring Program	This grant seeks to support the development and implementation of innovative mentoring (one-to-one, group, and peer mentoring) that incorporates practices informed by the research on cognitive behavioral interventions and techniques for high-risk youth for delinquency. High-risk youth are those whose individual, familial, and environmental risks and/or criminogenic needs make them more likely to engage in delinquent activities, offend, and/or reoffend. (Criminogenic refers to causing or likely to cause criminal behavior.) Cognitive behavioral interventions include psychotherapeutic approaches that focus on a person's thinking, moods, and feelings to be more adaptive and healthy, and on a person's actions to change unhealthy behavior patterns.	Eligible entities include states, territories, units of local government (including federally recognized tribal governments), nonprofit and for-profit organizations (including those that are tribal), and institutions of higher education (including tribal institutions of higher education).	2 awards	$497,500
Total Funding				***$61,669,942***

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) correspondence with the Department of Justice, December 2017 and review of grant announcements and grant awards for FY2017 at U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, "Funding Resource Center," http://ojp.gov/funding/.

Notes: FY2017 appropriations for the DOJ mentoring program were $80 million. Of this amount, $66.4 million was available for the program and another $13.6 million was used for other purposes within the Office of Justice Programs (management and administration, peer review, research set-aside, and tribal set-aside). The program funds were used as follows: $61.2 million for grants to provide mentoring services (one-on-one, peer, and group); $778,503 for research activities; and $4.0 million for training and technical assistance, including the Mentoring Resource Center.

a. The Mentoring for Child Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Domestic Sex Trafficking program also received additional DOJ funding from the Missing and Exploited Children's program, for a total funding level of $1,349,999.

Corporation for National and Community Service

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNS) is an independent federal agency that administers programs to support volunteer services. CNS is authorized by two statutes: the National and Community Service Act (NCSA, P.L. 101-610) of 1990, as amended, and the Domestic Volunteer Service Act (DVSA, P.L. 93-113) of 1973, as amended. Though CNS does not administer a program explicitly for mentoring, the agency has provided funding for mentoring, among other purposes, through two of its volunteer organizations, AmeriCorps[36] and SeniorCorps. AmeriCorps members serve directly as mentors (through the AmeriCorps State and National program) or focus their efforts on building the capacity of mentoring organizations to increase the number of children they serve (through the AmeriCorps Vista program).[37] SeniorCorps, through its RSVP and Foster Grandparents programs, provides mentoring to children and youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, including children of prisoners. CNS also leads federal efforts to promote National Mentoring Month, which is intended to raise awareness of mentoring, recruit individuals to mentor, and promote the growth of mentoring by recruiting organizations to engage their constituents in mentoring.

The Serve America Act (P.L. 111-13), which amended NCSA and DVSA, authorizes funding for programs in which mentoring is a permissible activity, among several other activities.[38] For example, the law provides that AmeriCorps can fund new programs—including the Education Corps, Clean Energy Services Corps, and Veterans Corps—that can be used for mentoring, among other activities. In addition, the law authorizes the program to fund initiatives that seek to expand the number of mentors for disadvantaged youth, as defined under the act.

Separately, CNS hosts a website (http://www.nationalservice.gov/mentor) to connect potential mentors with mentoring programs. The website is operated by the nonprofit organization MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership.

Youth ChalleNGe Program

The Youth ChalleNGe Program is a quasi-military training program administered by the Army National Guard to improve outcomes for youth who have dropped out of school or have been expelled. Mentoring is a major and required component of the program. Youth ChalleNGe was established as a pilot program under the National Defense Authorization Act for FY1993 (P.L. 102-484), and Congress permanently authorized the program under the National Defense Authorization Act for FY1998 (P.L. 105-85). Congress has since provided an annual appropriation for the program as part of the Department of Defense authorization acts. Currently, 40 sites operate in 29 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.[39] See **Table 3** for further funding information.

[36] This program is authorized under Title I-C of DVSA as the National Service Trust Program and is also known as AmeriCorps State and National Grants Program or AmeriCorps.

[37] Corporation for National and Community Service, "National Service and Mentoring," March 2015.

[38] For further information about the law, see CRS Report RL33931, *The Corporation for National and Community Service: Overview of Programs and Funding*.

[39] Jennie W. Wenger et al., National Guard *Youth ChalleNGe Program Progress in 2015-2016*, Rand Corporation, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1848.html. (Hereinafter, Jennie W. Wenger et al., National Guard *Youth ChalleNGe Program Progress in 2015-2016*.)

Table 3. Appropriated Funding for the Youth ChalleNGe Program, FY2008-FY2017

(Dollars in millions)

FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	F2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017
$83.1	94.6	$106.6	$115.0	$125.0	$125.0	$125.0	$134.4	$150.0	$155.0

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) correspondence with the Department of Defense, November 2017.

Youth are eligible for the ChalleNGe program if they are ages 16 to 18 and enroll prior to their 19th birthday; have dropped out of school or been expelled; are unemployed; are not currently on parole or probation for anything other than juvenile status offenses and not serving time or awaiting sentencing; and are drug free. In recent years, nearly 9,000 cadets (students) have graduated annually.[40] The program consists of three phases: a two-week pre-program residential phase where applicants are assessed to determine their potential for completing the program; a 20-week residential phase; and a 12-month post-residential phase.

During the residential phase, cadets work toward their high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED) and develop life-coping, job, and leadership skills. They also participate in activities to improve their physical well-being, and they engage in community service. Youth develop a "Post-Residential Action Plan (P-RAP)" that sets forth their goals, as well as the tasks and objectives to meet those goals. The post-residential phase begins when graduates return to their communities, continue in higher education, or enter the military. The goal of this phase is for graduates to build on the gains made during the residential phase and to continue to develop and implement their P-RAP. Within six months of graduation, nearly three-quarters of graduates in 2015 went on to additional education, work, military service, or a combination of these activities.[41]

A core component of the post-residential phase is mentoring in which a cadet works with a mentor to meet his or her goals set forth in the P-RAP. Parents and youth are asked to nominate at least one prospective mentor prior to acceptance into the program. They are advised to identify an individual who is respected by the youth and would be a good role model. Cadets tend to know their mentors before enrolling in the program; however, members of an applicant's immediate family or household and ChalleNGe staff members and their spouses are not eligible to become mentors. By week 13 of the residential phase, and prior to the formal matching of a cadet and a mentor, programs are required to use a National Guard-approved curriculum to train the mentors and the cadets for their roles and responsibilities during the formal mentoring relationship.[42]

Mentors must be at least 21 years old, of the same gender as the youth (unless otherwise approved by the director of the program), and within reasonable geographic proximity. Mentors must also undergo a background check that includes two reference checks, an interview, and a criminal background investigation. In some programs, the mentors are required to initiate the background investigation and have the results provided to the program prior to their acceptance as a mentor. Mentors and cadets begin weekly contact during the last two months of the residential phase and maintain monthly contacts during the post-residential phase. They are encouraged to participate

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Dan Bloom, Alissa Gardenhire-Crooks, and Conrad Mandsager, *Reengaging High School Dropouts: Early Results of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program*, MDRC, February 2009, https://www.mdrc.org/project/evaluation-national-guard-youth-challenge-program#related-content.

in community service activities or job placement activities. Although the program prefers that the pair meet in person, contact may be made by telephone calls or letters.[43]

Mentors report each month during the post-residential phase about the cadets' placement activities, progress toward achieving their goals, and the activities associated with the mentoring relationship. Some programs also require the cadets to report monthly about their progress. At the end of the post-residential phase, an exit interview is conducted between program staff and the mentor, and the match is formally concluded.

Youth ChalleNGe was evaluated by Manpower Development Research Corporation (MDRC), a social policy research organization. The evaluation began in 2005, when 12 state ChalleNGe sites agreed to participate in the evaluation.[44] The evaluation used a random assignment research design, whereby youth were randomly selected to receive the treatment (i.e., to participate in the program) or to a control group that did not participate in the program. The results of the evaluation are based on a survey administered about nine months, 21 months, and three years after the members of the program and control groups entered the study.[45]

MDRC issued reports after each survey wave. The reports issued following the first two waves found that youth in the program group had higher education attainment and a stronger work history than the control group. The report issued following the third wave showed that these favorable outcomes persisted at the three-year mark. Those who enrolled in Youth ChalleNGe were significantly more likely to have earned a GED (but not necessarily a high school diploma),[46] to have earned any college credit, to be employed, to have higher earnings, and to be working. Although the earlier reports found positive impacts on criminal justice involvement and health, these impacts faded over time. At the three-year survey, about half of youth in both the program and control groups reported ever having been arrested and about two-thirds of each group reported being in good or excellent health. Further, on some outcomes, there were few statistically significant differences between the treatment and control groups or the outcomes were worse for the treatment group, including that that they were more likely to not use birth control[47] or had tried illegal drugs other than marijuana.

The RAND Corporation, a nonprofit policy think tank, is examining the extent to which the ChalleNGe program can develop metrics to measure longer-term outcomes—beyond three years—to determine how the program impacts both individuals and communities.[48] RAND separately conducted a cost-benefit analysis of the program between 2005 and 2008.[49] This analysis looked at 10 ChalleNGe sites in 10 states. This report concluded that the program

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[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid; Megan Millenky, Dan Bloom, and Colleen Dillon, Making the Transition: Interim Results of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Evaluation, May 2010; and Megan Millenky et al., Staying on Course: Three-Year Results of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Evaluation, June 2011. All of the reports are available at https://www.mdrc.org/project/evaluation-national-guard-youth-challenge-program#related-content.

[45] The treatment group includes 68% of program group members who went on to enroll in Youth ChalleNGe and the 33% who did not enroll.

[46] During the time the evaluation was conducted, most programs helped participants prepare for the GED exam, but a few of them offered a high school diploma.

[47] Those who reported never using birth control did not match closely with those who are married or living with a partner.

[48] Jennie W. Wenger et al., National Guard *Youth ChalleNGe Program Progress in 2015-2016.*

[49] Francisco Perez-Arce, Louay Constant, David S. Loughran, and Lynn A. Karoly, *A Cost-Benefit Analysis of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program,* Rand Corporation, 2012, http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR1193.html.

generates labor market earnings and other benefits of $2.66 for every dollar expended on the program and an estimated return on investment of 166%.

Federal Issues in Mentoring

Issues that may be relevant to any discussions around the federal role in mentoring include the limitations of research on outcomes for mentored youth and the potential need for additional mentors, particularly for vulnerable populations.

Limitations of Research on Mentoring

A few positive evaluations of mentoring programs may provide justification for federal support of these programs.[50] The study of community-based mentoring programs at select Big Brothers and Big Sisters chapters found that mentored youth were less likely than their non-mentored counterparts to use drugs and alcohol, hit someone, and skip school, among other outcomes.[51] The evaluation of the Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring program found similar results for mentored youth. Nonetheless, findings from these and other studies show that mentoring did not improve some academic and other tracked outcomes.

The long-term influence of mentoring for youth is unknown. The 1995 study tracked youth for 18 months, which is among the longest periods of time mentored youth have been studied. No study appears to address issues around how well youth transition to adulthood, such as whether they attend college or secure employment. Further, studies of mentoring programs have shown that some gains made by mentored youth, compared to their non-mentored counterparts, were short-lived and that mentored youth did not improve in certain areas. Still, these improvements, albeit temporary and limited to certain outcomes, may be a worthwhile public policy goal.

A related issue is the design of mentoring evaluations. For example, concerns have been raised about the methodology used in the evaluation of the federal Safe and Drug-Free Schools mentoring program. One concern was that grantees were not randomly selected. As noted, random selection can help researchers determine whether an intervention, such as mentoring, leads to any differences in outcomes between those who receive the intervention and those who do not. Grantees involved in the study "reported being less focused on improving students' academic outcomes and on teaching risk avoidance" than grantees generally, even though these domains were the focus of the evaluation.[52] The grantees selected for the evaluation were more likely to serve females and more Asian, Latino, and Pacific Islander students but fewer white students than grantees overall. The grantees were also more likely to be school districts, compared to nonprofit or community-based organizations. They also tended to have more years of experience running school mentoring and serving more students. These differences may in fact have led to outcomes that were not representative of the entire pool of grantees nationally.

[50] Gary Walker, "Youth Mentoring and Public Policy," in David L. Dubois and Michael J. Karcher, eds., *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2005), pp. 510-512. (Hereinafter, Gary Walker, "Youth Mentoring and Public Policy.")

[51] Joseph P. Tierney and Jean Baldwin Grossman, with Nancy L. Resch, *Making A Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters,* Public/Private Ventures, reissued September 2000, available online at http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/111_publication.pdf.

[52] Lawrence Bernstein et al., *Impact Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education's Student Mentoring Program Final Report,* p. xvii.

Further, some mentored youth in the SDFS mentoring program did not receive certain services that were tied to the outcomes of the study. For example, 43% of the mentored students reported working frequently with their mentors on academics while 21% never worked on academics. Still, it is unclear whether school-based mentoring programs should be tasked with improving both academic outcomes and certain other outcomes, like reducing involvement in gangs and other risky behaviors.[53] Another possible limitation of the SDFS mentoring evaluation was its design. Although the SDFS mentoring evaluation used random assignment, whereby youth were randomly assigned to the treatment (i.e., SDFS mentoring) or the control group (no SDFS mentoring), over one-third of the control group received mentoring, either from the SDFS grantee or from other organizations in the community. This finding raises questions about the extent to which the evaluation could have assessed the true effects of the program, since the outcomes for the control group may have been influenced by the participation of some of the youth in mentoring programs. According to the study, this may have "led to some dilution of the impacts on students compared to expectations."[54]

The program delivery for the SDFS mentoring program also did not appear to have adhered to certain established best practices in mentoring, such as matches that lasted one year or more and ongoing training for mentoring. The average length of the mentoring relationship for students surveyed was 5.8 months, and on average, students were not assigned their mentor until about five weeks after they were randomly assigned to the treatment group.[55] Ongoing training did not appear to be widely available. Approximately 41% of mentors reported that ongoing training was available after they begun meeting regularly with their students.[56] This is in contrast to recommendations by researchers in mentoring that mentors receive support and ongoing training after matches have been established.[57] Still, nearly all mentors received pre-match training or orientation and talked with their program supervisor about how things were going with their mentoring relationship. Most mentors (62.3%) reported having access to social workers or staff when they needed support.

In a similar vein, one of the researchers of the SDFS mentoring evaluation raised questions about the extent of technical assistance available to grantees about implementing the program: "The legislation ... and the program guidance ... said to focus on the academic and social needs of students. Beyond that, there weren't any prescriptive protocols for how people were going to conduct their mentoring activities, or how they were going to supervise their mentors, or how they were going to train their mentors."[58] Nonetheless, the Department of Education (ED) reported that training and technical assistance was provided by a contractor and ED staff.

A 2010 analysis of three major school-based mentoring programs, including the SDFS mentoring program, suggests that the effects of these programs are small but are in a range that "makes their interpretation subject to underlying perspectives and priorities."[59] Similarly, a 2011 analysis

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[53] Jen Russell, "School-Based Mentoring Needs a Friend," *Youth Today*, June 1, 2009. (Hereinafter, Jen Russell, "School-Based Mentoring Needs a Friend.")

[54] Lawrence Bernstein et al., *Impact Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education's Student Mentoring Program Final Report*, p. 92.

[55] Evaluations of other school-based mentoring programs have reported similar findings.

[56] Lawrence Bernstein et al., *Impact Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education's Student Mentoring Program Final Report*, p. 47.

[57] MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, "Elements of Effective Practice in Mentoring."

[58] Jen Russell, "School-Based Mentoring Needs a Friend."

[59] Mark E. Wheeler, Thomas E. Keller, David L. DuBois, "Review of Three Recent Randomized Trials of School-Based Mentoring: Making Sense of Mixed Findings," *Social Policy Report*, vol. 24, no. 3 (2010).

assessed findings from 73 mentoring programs and found that despite the positive effect of the programs overall, the effect is small.[60] In other words, some stakeholders may have reason to be skeptical of the findings from the SDFS mentoring program and other mentoring programs, while others may argue that these findings are promising and should lead to further efforts to improve mentoring interventions.

Focusing on Quality of Programs

The number of mentoring programs appears to have grown in recent years, likely due to a variety of reasons, including federal attention to mentoring as an intervention for at-risk youth and promising associations between mentoring and multiple outcomes.[61] These programs have different formats and serve specific populations of youth. For example, in FY2017, DOJ provided funding to mentoring organizations that serve youth who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation, or are at risk of such victimization.

In light of this perceived expansion, researchers and other stakeholders caution that administrators should carefully implement mentoring programs while adhering to core practices of effective mentoring that have been informed by research.[62] The Obama and Trump Administrations have allocated funding for grants to research on mentoring for at-risk youth.

Gap in Mentoring Services

MENTOR: A National Mentoring Partnership, a national mentoring organization, estimated that 9.4 million young people who are at-risk youth need a mentor.[63] Recruiting and retaining volunteers appears to be a major challenge for mentoring organizations, including those funded through federal mentoring programs.[64] In its 2004 report of the Safe and Drug Free Schools Mentoring program, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that new grantees had more difficulty than established grantees in recruiting and supporting mentors.[65] Similarly, HHS reports that some mentors in organizations that received Mentoring Children of Prisoners' funding (which was funded from FY2003 through FY2010) had dropped out before being matched with a youth because of the time and energy commitment mentoring entails.[66] While research on mentor recruitment and retention is nascent, it reveals that mentoring organizations tend to attract individuals who are middle aged, educated, and have children in their household, and that word of mouth is among the top strategies for recruiting new volunteers.[67] Further,

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[60] DuBois et al., "How Effective Are Mentoring Programs for Youth? A Systematic Assessment of the Evidence."

[61] Ibid., pp. 59-60.

[62] MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, "Elements of Effective Practice in Mentoring."

[63] This definition of "at risk" encompasses youth, who, when they were in middle or high school had any of the following risk factors: incarcerated parent or guardian, regular absenteeism, poor academic performance, behavioral problems in school, delinquency, teenage pregnancy, or homelessness. See MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, *The Mentoring Effect: Young People's Perspectives on the Outcomes and Availability of Mentoring*.

[64] Arthur Astukas and Chris Tanti, "Recruiting and Sustaining Volunteer Mentors," in David L. Dubois and Michael J. Karcher, eds., *Handbook of Youth Mentoring*, (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2005), p. 245. (Hereinafter, Arthur Astukas and Chris Tanti, "Recruiting and Sustaining Volunteer Mentors.")

[65] Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Student Mentoring Programs: Education's Monitoring and Information Sharing Could be Improve,* GAO-04-581, June 25, 2004. GAO was then known as the General Accounting Office.

[66] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Report to Congress: The Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program,* September 2007.

[67] Arthur Astukas and Chris Tanti, "Recruiting and Sustaining Volunteer Mentors," pp. 235-249.

individuals are likely to remain in formal mentoring programs if they feel adequately prepared to serve as mentors. According to the research on mentoring, retention may be high when programs continually monitor mentoring relationships for effectiveness and respond to the needs of mentors.

A related issue is that the mentoring gap may be wider for special populations. Mentoring programs primarily serve youth ages 9 through 11 who come to the attention of a parent or teacher, rather than the most at-risk populations, which include, but are not limited to, older youth, runaway and homeless youth, and youth in foster care or the juvenile justice system.[68] Recent efforts to recruit volunteers to mentor vulnerable populations have been under way, as evidenced by DOJ mentoring grants in recent years for selected youth populations. Nonetheless, potential mentors may still be discouraged from working with youth facing serious personal difficulties and challenges in their communities.

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[68] Gary Walker, "Youth Mentoring and Public Policy," pp. 509-510.