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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 mentoring organizations (e.g., Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, National 4-H Council). 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Mentoring Council was a coordinating body on mentoring issues for the federal government from 2006 to 2008, and is no longer active.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 Department of Justice (DOJ) grant program that has had annual appropriations for the program of about $78 million to $100 million in recent years. This grant is administered by DOJ's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) within the Office of Justice Programs (OJP). 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.

Two former federal programs—the Mentoring Children of Prisoners (MCP) program and Safe and Drug-Free Schools (SDFS) Mentoring program—provided federal support for mentoring services. Funding for the MCP program was discontinued as of FY2011, and funding for the SDFS program was discontinued as of FY2010. The MCP 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.

Issues relevant to the federal role in mentoring include support for a field that has recent but somewhat limited research on effectiveness of mentoring programs, mentored youth, the quality of mentoring programs, and whether more mentoring should be provided in light of a perceived need for more mentors to support at-risk youth.

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Introduction

The purpose of contemporary, structured mentoring programs is to reduce the potential risk of negative outcomes by supplementing (but not supplanting) a youth's relationship with his or her parents. These programs are administered primarily by 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, the federal government has supported mentoring for the most vulnerable youth. The Department of Justice's (DOJ's) Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP), the first such program, operated from FY1994 to FY2003 to provide mentoring services for at-risk youth ages 5 to 20. Subsequently, 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. 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. In addition, federal agencies coordinated on mentoring issues through the Federal Mentoring Council. Created in 2006, the council sought to address the ways agencies can combine resources, training, and technical assistance for federal mentoring programs, and to serve as a clearinghouse on mentoring issues for the federal government. The council has been inactive since 2008.

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 enrolled 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, school, and leadership opportunities. Adult mentors assist youth participants with their transition from the program for at least one year.

This report begins with an overview of the goals of mentoring, including a brief discussion on research on 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 other activities such efforts 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

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

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 being at "high risk" of certain negative outcomes.[3]

The goal of modern structured mentoring programs is to reduce risks for negative outcomes by supplementing, but not replacing, a youth's relationship with his or her parents. 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.[4]

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 America, Chrysler, Procter & Gamble, and the National Urban League. 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.[7]

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*, 4th ed.). This publication describes that "mentoring takes place between young persons (i.e., mentees) and older or more experienced persons (i.e., mentors) who are acting in a non-professional helping capacity to provide relationship-based support that benefits one or more areas of the mentee's development."

[2] MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, *The Mentoring Effect: Young People's Perspectives on the Outcomes and Availability of Mentoring*, January 2014, p. 1 (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 for Mentoring*, 4th Ed.

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

[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*).

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 Department of Justice's 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]

Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, a national organization that promotes mentoring, has published standards for creating and sustaining quality youth mentoring programs. These standards, *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*, were developed by researchers and practitioners and draw from peer-reviewed research about mentoring interventions. The standards are in their 4th edition, and are summarized below.[13]

Standard	Description
1. Recruitment	Recruit appropriate mentors and mentees by realistically describing the program's aims and expected outcomes.
2. Screening	Screen prospective mentors to determine whether they have the time, commitment, and personal qualities to be a safe and effective mentor and screen prospective mentees, and their parents or guardians, about whether they have the time, commitment, and desire to be effectively mentored.
3. Training	Train prospective mentors, mentees, and mentees' parents (or legal guardians or responsible adult) in the basic knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to build an effective and safe mentoring relationship using culturally appropriate language and tools.
4. Matching and Initiation	Match mentors and mentees, and initiate the mentoring relationship using strategies likely to increase the odds that mentoring relationships will endure and be effective.

[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.

[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*, https://clintonwhitehouse3.archives.gov/WH/New/Summit/Opening-day2.html.

[13] MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*, 4th ed.; and DOJ, OJP, OJJDP, National Mentoring Resource Center, *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*.

Standard	Description
5. Monitoring and Support	Monitor mentoring relationship milestones and child safety; and support matches through providing ongoing advice, problem-solving, training, and access to resources for the duration of each relationship.
6. Closure	Facilitate bringing the match to closure in a way that affirms the contributions of the mentor and mentee, and offers them the opportunity to prepare for the closure and assess the experience.

Source: MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*, 4th ed., 2015.

Evaluation of Mentoring Programs

A 2019 meta-analysis assessed findings from 70 mentoring evaluations to determine the effectiveness of one-to-one mentoring programs.[14] The analysis reviewed evaluations, published between 1975 and 2017, 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. 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.[15]

The analysis found that, consistent with earlier research, the programs resulted in modest gains for youth.[16] According to the review, the effect sizes were relatively consistent over time despite growing use of evidence-based practices in mentoring. The review also indicated that programs with mentors with helping experiences or roles also had greater effect sizes than those that did not. Further, the analysis found that the length of the mentoring program was not a significant predictor of outcomes despite program length identified as a useful practice. Another major finding from the review is that there were no differences in outcomes between mentoring programs that were based in schools compared to those that were operated in the community. School-based programs tend to have less of a time commitment and take place on the school campus. According to the review, this limited time commitment may help manage youth expectations and help mentors from becoming burned out. 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. The analysis

[14] Elizabeth B. Raposa et al., "The Effects of Youth Mentoring Programs: A Meta-analysis of Outcome Studies," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, vol. 48, no. 3 (March 2019), pp. 423-443 (hereinafter, Elizabeth B. Raposa et al., "The Effects of Youth Mentoring Programs: A Meta-analysis of Outcome Studies").

[15] 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.

[16] A 2011 analysis assessed findings from 73 mentoring evaluations to determine the effectiveness of mentoring generally. 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) (hereinafter, David L. DuBois et al., "How Effective Are Mentoring Programs for Youth? A Systematic Assessment of the Evidence"). 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).

concludes that further research is needed to better understand which program practices are most effective, for which mentors and youth are such practices most meaningful, and which youth outcomes should be targeted.[17]

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 currently does not have an overarching strategy or coordinated approach to mentoring. The major mentoring program is administered by DOJ.

Department of Justice Mentoring Program

Overview

As noted, 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. Part G authorized 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.[18] 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. The law 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."[19] The report goes on to say that the committee does not discourage mentoring activities under Part C.

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.[20] However, in the years since JUMP's discontinuation, Congress has appropriated mentoring funds under a separate mentoring line

[17] Elizabeth B. Raposa et al., "The Effects of Youth Mentoring Programs: A Meta-analysis of Outcome Studies."

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

[19] 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.

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

item titled "Mentoring Part G," "Mentoring," or "Youth Mentoring Grants"; the line item does not specify under which part of the JJDPA the funding is authorized.[21]

Funding

The JUMP Program ended in FY2003 and Congress resumed funding for a separate DOJ Mentoring program beginning with FY2005. Funding has continuously been provided for the program. **Table 1** shows funding from FY2010 through FY2019. Generally, most of the funding has been used each year to provide direct mentoring services to at-risk youth. The types of mentoring grants funded have varied. For example, in some years funding has focused on certain populations (e.g., youth who are trafficked, foster youth).

Table 1. FY2010-FY2019 Appropriated Funding for the Department of Justice Mentoring Program

(Dollars in millions)

FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019
$100.0	$102.8	$78.0	$84.0	$88.5	$90.0	$90.0	$80.0	$94.0	$95.0

Sources: Congressional budget submission for the Office of Justice Programs, FY2009-FY2011; Department of Defense and Full Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 (P.L. 112-10); Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2012 (P.L. 112-55); Continuing and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013 (P.L. 113-6); Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (P.L. 113-76); Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 113-235); Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 114-113); Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (P.L. 115-31); Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (P.L. 115-141); and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019 (P.L. 116-6). 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.

DOJ has not yet finalized awards funded with the FY2019 appropriation for the DOJ Mentoring program. The FY2018 appropriation totaled $94 million. Of this amount, $77.5 million provided for direct mentoring services; $4.4 million was for the National Mentoring Resource Center and training and technical assistance; $1.5 million was for the grant, Practitioner-Researcher Partnership in Cognitive Behavioral Mentoring; and $10.6 million was used for research and other purposes (management and administration, peer review) within the Office of Justice Programs.[22]

Table 2 summarizes the purpose, goals, and funding levels for the direct service grants that totaled $77.5 million. The table includes funding for mentoring by organizations with programs that have a national presence (National Mentoring Programs), operate in multiple states (Multi-State Mentoring Initiative), or serve specific groups of youth who are at risk (Mentoring Programs for Youth Involved

[21] 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, 2019 (P.L. 116-6).

[22] An additional $49,500 was used for no-year funds carried into FY2019. DOJ, OJP, OJJDP 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. The Practitioner-Researcher Partnership in Cognitive Behavioral Mentoring program seeks to support the development, implementation, and evaluation of innovative mentoring approaches for youth at high risk for delinquency, involvement with the juvenile or criminal justice systems, or victimization and trauma.

in the Juvenile Justice System, Specialized Services and Mentoring for Child and Youth Victims of Sex Trafficking, and Mentoring for Youth Impacted by Opioids).

Except for those focused on victims of sex trafficking, the grants have the same general requirements. Grantees are directed to tailor services to the needs of the identified at-risk or high-risk target populations. Grants must use one or more enhancements to improve access to, and impact of, mentoring services. Further, such enhancements should align with the *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*, which, as discussed previously, focus on best practices in supporting and sustaining mentoring programs and relationships.[23] Mentoring can include one-on-one, group, peer, or a combination of such services for youth, and services can take place in multiple types of settings such as schools and community-based programs. Grantees are expected to address how they will engage with families of youth as part of their mentoring program.

Table 2. Grants for Mentoring Services Awarded Under the Department of Justice Mentoring Program, FY2018

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 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 community violence 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 parents on active military duty, children of incarcerated parents, youth with disabilities, youth with opioid/substance abuse problems, and youth in rural communities.	Eligible entities include national organizations, which are those that have active chapters or subgrantees in at least 45 states.	6 awards	$44,000,000
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 are to provide mentoring to youth who are at-risk or high-risk for involvement in the juvenile justice system, as previously described. Eligible entities are encouraged to serve American Indian and Alaska Native youth both on and off reservations; children of parents on active military duty; children of incarcerated parents; youth with opioid/substance abuse problems; youth with disabilities; and youth in rural communities. Mentoring programs targeting these are directed to highlight how the anticipated services would best support the unique needs of these populations, such as key partnerships or specialized curricula.	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.	9 awards	$19,200,000
Mentoring Programs for	This grant seeks to support youth mentoring organizations that have partnerships with a juvenile	Eligible entities include private organizations	9 awards	$4,431,698

[23] MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*, 4th ed.

Mentoring Grant	Description	Entities Eligible to Apply	Number of Grantees	Total Amount of Funding
Youth Involved in the Juvenile Justice System (Category 3 of Mentoring Opportunities for Youth Initiative)	justice agency. The grant targets mentoring services to youth who are screened as being low risk to public safety by a juvenile justice agency as part of an overall diversion approach. It is intended to be a resource for probation officers for youth on their caseload who are in need of, and most appropriate for, diversion services. This may include youth who have been adjudicated as part of their probation or community supervision, but is not for youth returning from residential placement. Grantees are encouraged to target services to youth with opioid/substance abuse problems and youth in rural communities. Grantees are encouraged to target mentoring services that incorporate opportunities for youth and law enforcement engagement, such as using law enforcement personnel as mentors or creating activities where youth can have positive interactions with law enforcement agencies.	(nonprofit organizations and for-profit organizations, including tribal nonprofit and for-profit organizations) that have operated an established mentoring program for at least one year and have a demonstrated partnership (via a memorandum of understanding) with a juvenile justice agency (public agency legally responsible for handling juvenile crime and delinquency in a state, tribe, city, or county).		
Mentoring Strategies for Youth Impacted by Opioids, Project Sites (Category 4 of Mentoring Opportunities for Youth Initiative)	This grant seeks to support youth mentoring organizations that have partnerships with a substance abuse treatment agency. The grant targets mentoring services as part of a prevention, treatment, and supportive approach for youth impacted by opioids, and youth at risk for using opioids (i.e., presence of individual, family, and community risk factors for substance abuse), and youth who family members who are currently using or have used opioids. The goal of the mentoring (and supportive services) is to prevent youth from using opioids in the first place, ensure youth who have used are successful in their recovery efforts, and provide support and guidance to youth whose family members are currently using or have used. This can include a variety of practices, including, but not limited to, those informed by research on cognitive behavioral, contingency management, or any 12-step interventions. According to DOJ, priority is to be given to applicants that target youth in rural communities.	Eligible entities include private organizations (nonprofit organizations and for-profit organizations, including tribal nonprofit and for-profit organizations) that have operated an established mentoring program for at least one year and have a demonstrated partnership (via a memorandum of understanding) with a public or private substance abuse treatment agency.	7 awards	$3,450,000

Mentoring Grant	Description	Entities Eligible to Apply	Number of Grantees	Total Amount of Funding
Statewide and Regional Mentoring Initiative Strategies for Youth Impacted by Opioids (Category 5 of Mentoring Opportunities for Youth Initiative)	This grant seeks to help build the capacity of mentoring programs throughout the country to help youth impacted by opioids (as described in Category 4) who are under the age of 18. This may include states providing subgrants to mentoring organizations in particular regions (especially rural communities), tribes supporting mentoring organizations operating throughout a reservation, and national organizations funding chapters or sub-recipients in specific regions of the country (especially rural community) with demonstrated high levels of opioid abuse. This can include a variety of practices, including, but not limited to, those informed by research on cognitive behavioral, contingency management, or any 12-step interventions. According to DOJ, priority is to be given to applicants that target youth in rural communities.	Eligible entities include national organizations (as defined in Category 1) states, territories, and federally recognized tribes.	5 awards	$6,250,000
Specialized Services and Mentoring for Child and Youth Victims of Sex Trafficking[a]	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 (CSEC), including children who are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents. In addition, the grant seeks to implement or enhance baseline training and provide ongoing development and support for mentors. Examples of CSEC include child sex trafficking, child sex tourism, commercial production of child pornography, and online transmission of live video of a child engaged in sexual activity in exchange for anything of value.	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	$197,944
Total Funding				**$77,529,642**

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) correspondence with the Department of Justice, April 2019 and review of grant announcements and grant awards for FY2018 at U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, "Funding Resource Center," http://ojp.gov/funding/.

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 $1,344,636.

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[24] 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).[25] SeniorCorps, through its RSVP and Foster Grandparents programs, provides mentoring to children and youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, including children of prisoners.

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.[26] 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 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. CNS also 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.[27] See **Table 3** for annual appropriations from FY2010 through FY2019. DOL is using the increased appropriation for FY2018 to expand its Job ChalleNGe pilot program, originally funded with Department of Labor funds, to provide court-involved youth with vocational education.[28]

[24] 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.

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

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

[27] Jennie W. Wenger, Louay Constant, and Linda Cottrell, National Guard *Youth ChalleNGe Program Progress in 2016-2017,* Rand Corporation, August 2018. (Hereinafter, Jennie W. Wenger, Louay Constant, and Linda Cottrell, National Guard *Youth ChalleNGe Program Progress in 2016-2017.*)

[28] Letter from Matthew P. Dubois, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserve Integration), to MG Kevin McNeely, Chief, National Guard Bureau, "Implementation of the Job Challenge program," June 21, 2018.

Table 3. Appropriated Funding for the Youth ChalleNGe Program, FY2010-FY2019

(Dollars in millions)

FY2010	FY2011	F2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019
$106.6	$115.0	$125.0	$125.0	$125.0	$134.4	$150.0	$155.0	$180.0	$181.0

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) correspondence with the Department of Defense, April 2019.

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.[29] 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.

Phases of Youth ChalleNGe

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, just over 70% of graduates in 2017 and 2018 went on to additional education, work, military service, or a combination of these activities.[30]

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.[31]

Mentors must be at least 21 years old, of the same gender as the youth (unless otherwise approved by the director of the program), within reasonable geographic proximity, and undergo a background check. 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 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.[32] Mentors report each month during the post-residential phase about the cadets' placement activities, progress toward achieving

[29] Louay Constant et al., National Guard *Youth ChalleNGe Program Progress in 2017-2018,* RAND, National Defense Research Institute Forces and Resources Policy Center, January 2019.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Dan Bloom, Alissa Gardenhire-Crooks, and Conrad Mandsager, *Reengaging High School Dropouts: Early Results of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program*, MDRC, February 2009.

[32] Ibid.

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.

Evaluation Activities

MDRC, a social policy research organization, evaluated Youth ChalleNGe beginning in 2005 at 12 locations.[33] 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.[34] MDRC issued reports after each survey wave. The final report found that at the three-year mark, youth enrolled in Youth ChalleNGe were significantly more likely to have earned a GED (but not necessarily a high school diploma), to have earned any college credit, to be employed, to have higher earnings, and to be working.[35] Although the earlier reports found positive impacts on criminal justice involvement and health, these impacts faded over time. 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[36] or had tried illegal drugs other than marijuana.

The study found that the mentoring component was unevenly implemented across sites. It noted that the cadets and families did not take the process seriously or did not have a strong pool of candidates from which to identify a mentor. Further, some mentors received little training. The study went on say that "while mentors may provide vital emotional support to young people, they may not have the practical expertise and connections to help them find good jobs and succeed in college."[37]

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 to determine how the program impacts both individuals and communities.[38] RAND separately conducted a cost-benefit analysis of the program between 2005 and 2008.[39] This analysis looked at 10 ChalleNGe sites in 10 states. This report concluded that the program 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%.

[33] 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.

[34] MDRC, "Evaluation of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program. The treatment group includes 68% of program group members who went on to enroll in Youth ChalleNGe and the 33% who did not enroll.

[35] 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.

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

[37] Megan Millenky et al., *Staying on Course: Three-Year Results of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Evaluation*, MDRC, June 2011.

[38] Jennie W. Wenger, Louay Constant, and Linda Cottrell, National Guard *Youth ChalleNGe Program Progress in 2016-2017*, Chapter 3.

[39] Francisco Perez-Arce et al., *A Cost-Benefit Analysis of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program*, Rand Corporation, 2012.

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.

Research on Mentoring

The Department of Justice has increasingly focused on mentoring research through the DOJ Mentoring program. More specifically, the program has supported

- the DOJ National Mentoring Resource Center, which reviews research on the effectiveness of mentoring programs, among other activities;
- three major demonstration programs that promote partnerships between practitioners and researchers; and
- evaluation of innovative approaches to mentoring, including through grants for Mentoring Best Practices Research, High-Risk Youth Mentoring Research, and Mentoring Research Partners program.[40]

Evaluations of some mentoring programs have shown positive findings.[41] A 2019 analysis of assessed findings from 70 mentoring programs found modest effects for youth at risk of a range of psychosocial and academic problems across several outcome areas. Further, mentoring programs serving more boys tend to produce larger effects and school- and community-based mentoring programs seem to produce similar effects. Still, the study concluded that despite the positive effect of the programs overall, the effect is small.[42] The researchers posit that effect sizes may grow as programs use evidence-based practices that are more targeted, "rather than relying on a relatively low-intensity, nonspecific approach with uneven adherence to practices that are research-informed."[43] A 2010 analysis of three major school-based mentoring programs, including the former federal Safe and Drug Free Schools (SDFS) mentoring program, suggests that the effects of three programs were small but in a range that "makes their interpretation subject to underlying perspectives and priorities."[44] In other words, some stakeholders may have reason to be skeptical of the findings from mentoring programs, while others may argue that these findings are promising and should lead to further efforts to improve mentoring interventions.

Another potential research issue is that long-term influence of mentoring for youth is unknown. No study appears to address issues around how well youth transition to adulthood, such as whether they attend college or secure employment. The 2019 analysis of multiple mentoring programs noted that only 11 studies included follow-up assessments of the mentored youth.[45] Further, some studies of mentoring programs have shown that some gains made by mentored youth, compared to their non-

[40] DOJ, OJP, OJDP, "Program Summary: Mentoring," https://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/ProgSummary.asp?pi=54. This website also lists the mentoring-related studies that have been supported through the DOJ Mentoring program.

[41] 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.")

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

[43] Elizabeth B. Raposa et al., "The Effects of Youth Mentoring Programs: A Meta-analysis of Outcome Studies."

[44] 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).

[45] Elizabeth B. Raposa et al., "The Effects of Youth Mentoring Programs: A Meta-analysis of Outcome Studies."

mentored counterparts, were short-lived and that mentored youth did not improve in certain areas.[46] Still, these improvements, albeit temporary and limited to certain outcomes, may be a worthwhile public policy goal.

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.[47] These programs have different formats and serve specific populations of youth. For example, in FY2018, DOJ provided funding to mentoring organizations that serve youth who are victims of sex trafficking, 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.[48]

Gap in Mentoring Services

MENTOR: A National Mentoring Partnership, a national mentoring organization, estimated that 9.4 million at-risk youth need a mentor.[49] Recruiting and retaining volunteers appears to be a major challenge for mentoring organizations, including those funded through federal mentoring programs.[50] 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.[51] Similarly, HHS reported 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.[52] Research on mentor recruitment and retention is scant, but the broader literature on volunteerism suggest that mentoring organizations should engage in recruitment strategies that provide clear expectations and practices related to serving as a mentor.[53]

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.[54] Recent efforts to recruit

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

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

[48] MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*, 4th ed.; and Elizabeth B. Raposa et al., "The Effects of Youth Mentoring Programs: A Meta-analysis of Outcome Studies."

[49] 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*.

[50] Arthur A. 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.

[51] 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.

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

[53] MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*, 4th ed.

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

volunteers to mentor vulnerable populations have been under way, as evidenced by DOJ mentoring grants in recent years for selected youth populations.

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