

CRS Report for Congress

Vulnerable Youth: Federal Mentoring Programs and Issues

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Vulnerable Youth: Federal Mentoring Programs and Issues

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 2.5 million youth today are involved in formal mentoring relationships through Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) of America and similar organizations. 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. A 1995 evaluation of the BBBS program and studies of other mentoring programs demonstrate an association between mentoring and some positive youth outcomes, but the effects of mentoring on particular outcomes and the ability for mentored youth to sustain gains over time is less certain.

The current Administration has proposed new federal structured mentoring since FY2001 (though the Administration has also proposed phasing some of these services out beginning in FY2007). Two programs — the Mentoring Children of Prisoners (MCP) program and Safe and Drug Free Schools (SDFS) Mentoring program — provide the primary sources of dedicated federal funding for mentoring services. The Mentoring Children of Prisoners program was created in response to the growing number of children under age 18 with at least one parent who is incarcerated in a federal or state correctional facility. The program is intended, in part, to reduce the chance that mentored youth will use drugs and skip school. Similarly, the Mentoring program (proposed for elimination in FY2007 by the Administration) provides school-based mentoring to reduce school dropout and improve relationships for youth at risk of educational failure and with other risk factors. The Administration has also supported a pilot project, the Mentoring Initiative for System Involved Youth (MISIY), which seeks to identify and expand effective mentoring programs for youth in the juvenile justice or foster care systems (Congress appropriated funds for MISIY only in FY2006). Finally, other federal initiatives support mentoring efforts, including the Federal Mentoring Council and dedicated funding for mentoring organizations like BBBS.

Three bills have been introduced in the 110th Congress that primarily concern mentoring. The Foster Care Mentoring Act (S. 379) seeks to provide additional mentoring services for youth in the foster care system. The Mentoring America's Children Act (H.R. 2611 and S. 1812) would make changes to the SDFS Mentoring program. Issues relevant to the federal role in mentoring include the limitations of research on outcomes for mentored youth, the potential need for additional mentors, grantees' challenges in sustaining funding, and the possible discontinuation of federal mentoring funding. This report will be updated as legislative activity warrants.

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Vulnerable Youth: Federal Mentoring Programs and Issues

Since the mid-1990s, Congress has supported legislation to establish structured mentoring programs for the most vulnerable youth. The Department of Justice's Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP), the first structured federal mentoring program, was implemented in 1994 to provide mentoring services for at-risk youth ages five to 20. 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. 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 effects of mentoring on particular outcomes and the ability for mentored youth to sustain gains over time are less certain.

While there is no single overarching policy today on mentoring, the federal government supports multiple mentoring efforts for vulnerable youth. Since FY2001, Congress has passed legislation to provide mentoring services for three groups of these youth: children of prisoners through the Mentoring Children of Prisoners (MCP) program; children at risk of educational failure, dropping out of school, or involvement in delinquent activities through the Safe and Drug Free Schools (SDFS) Mentoring program; and youth in the foster care and juvenile justice systems through the Mentoring Initiative for System Involved Youth (MISIY). The purpose of the three programs is to improve the outcomes of vulnerable youth across a number of areas, including education, criminal activity, health and safety, and social and emotional development.

The federal government also supports other mentoring efforts. Programs under the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) provide mentoring services, among other supportive activities for youth. In partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), CNCS also leads the Federal Youth Mentoring Council, convened in 2006 to address the ways federal agencies can combine resources and training and technical assistance to federally administered mentoring programs. Further, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in the U.S Department of Justice (DOJ) provides funding for Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America and other mentoring organizations.

This report begins with an overview of the purpose 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 components and funding for each of the three major federal mentoring programs, as well as a discussion of other federal mentoring initiatives that are currently funded. Note that additional federal programs and

policies authorize funding for mentoring activities, among multiple other activities and services.¹ These programs are not discussed in this report. The report concludes with an overview of issues that may be relevant to mentoring legislation in the 110th Congress and any discussions concerning the federal role in mentoring. These issues include the limitations of research on outcomes for mentored youth, the potential need for additional mentors, grantees' challenges in sustaining funding, and the possible discontinuation of federal mentoring funding.

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.² 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. Volunteers in structured programs are recruited from communities, churches, and the workplace, and undergo an intensive screening process. Youth eligible for services through structured mentoring programs are often identified as "high risk" of certain negative outcomes.³

The purpose 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

¹ The White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth, convened in 2003 to identify issues in coordinating federal youth policy, identified approximately 123 federally funded programs administered by 10 agencies with a mentoring component. The task force's final report is available at [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/docs/white_house_task_force.pdf].

² See U.S. General Accounting Office, *Student Mentoring Programs: Education's Monitoring and Information Sharing Could Be Improved*, GAO Report GAO-04-581 (Washington, June 2004), p. 6. (Hereafter referenced GAO, *Student Mentoring Programs*.) After this report was issued, the name of the General Accounting Office was changed to the Government Accountability Office.

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

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 then nascent 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 and largest mentoring organization in the country with over 275,000 youth ages five to 18 served in 5,000 communities.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.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

⁴ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Student Mentoring Programs*, p. 6.

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. (Hereafter referenced as U.S. Department of Justice, *Big Brothers Big Sisters*.)

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

for the workforce.¹⁰ Other early initiatives included the Juvenile Mentoring Program (see below). 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 two million vulnerable youth.¹¹

Characteristics of Successful Mentoring Programs

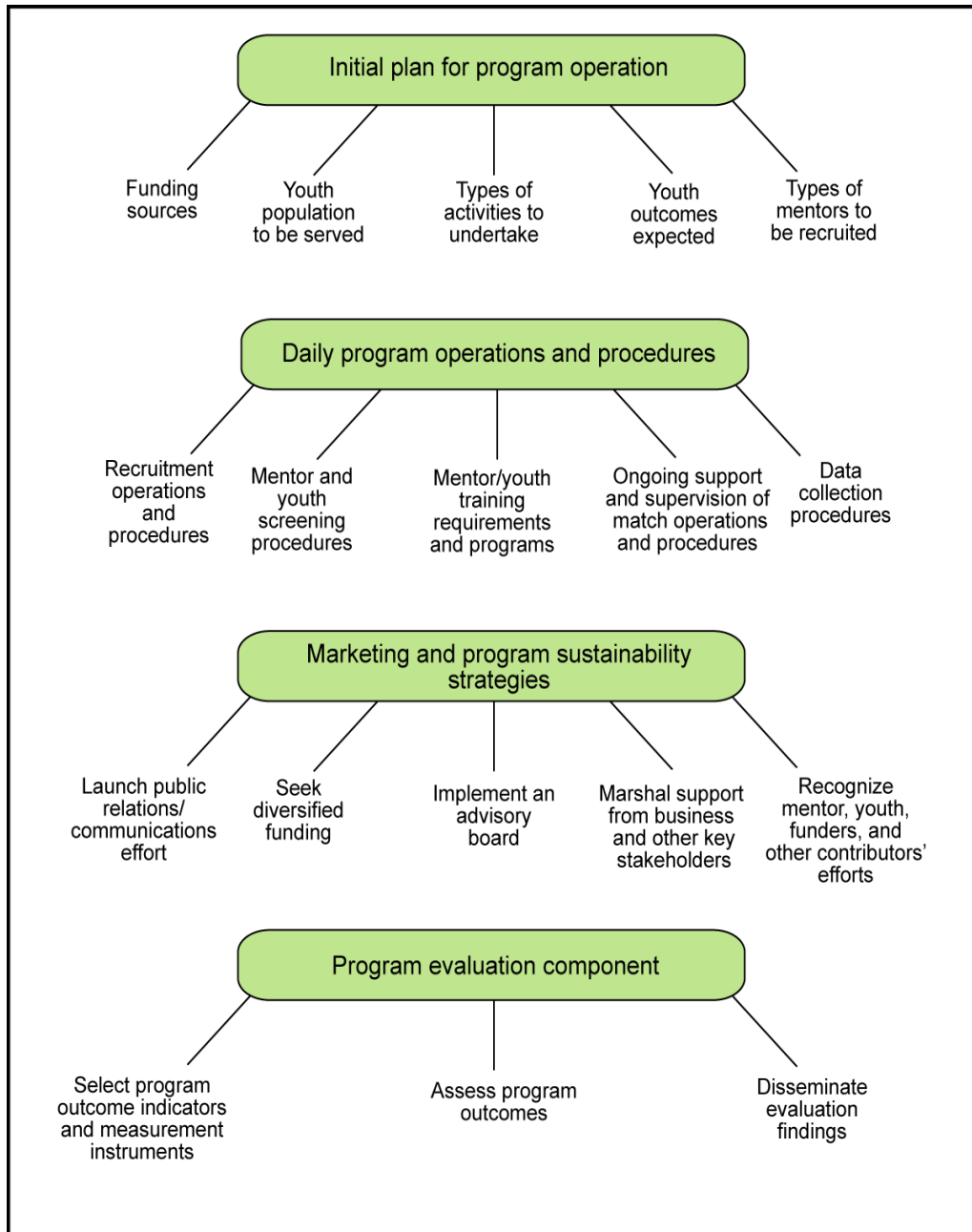
Studies of structured mentoring programs, including those that have received federal funding, indicate that the programs are most successful when they include a strong infrastructure and facilitate caring relationships. Infrastructure refers to a number of activities including identifying the youth population 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.¹² 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). According to the studies, successful 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. **Figure 1** summarizes the elements, policies, and procedures of successful mentoring programs.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 16.

¹¹ The Presidents' Summit on America's Future, Remarks at the Presidents' Summit on America's Future, available at [http://clinton3.nara.gov/WH/New/Summit/Remarks_index.html].

¹² See, Jean Baldwin Grossman, ed., *Contemporary Issues in Mentoring, Public/Private Ventures*, p. 6.; Mentor/National Mentoring Partnership, "Elements of Effective Practice," 2nd ed., 2003; and 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. (Hereafter referenced as Rhodes and DuBois, "Understanding and Facilitating the Youth Mentoring Movement").

Figure 1. Elements, Policies, and Procedures of Successful Mentoring Programs



Source: Congressional Research Service, based on Figure 1 in GAO, *Student Mentoring Programs*. This information was originally presented in MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, "Elements of Effective Practices," 2nd ed., 2003.

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.¹³ 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 become 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

Some studies have found that formal mentoring programs in community-based and school-based settings are associated with improved academic and behavioral outcomes for youth, but that the effects of mentoring on particular outcomes and the ability for mentored youth to sustain gains over time is less certain.

Examples of the Positive Effects of Mentoring. A landmark 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 treatment group) against those eligible youth who were randomly selected to remain on a waiting list for mentoring services (the control group). The study found that 18 months after the youth were assigned to their groups, the mentored youth skipped half as many days of school, 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.¹⁴

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 others¹⁵) with an experimental design — meaning that some youth were randomly assigned to get a mentor — found that the outcomes for youth with a mentor were better than outcomes for their counterparts without a mentor.¹⁶ These outcomes included the following:

¹³ Rhodes and DuBois, “Understanding and Facilitating the Youth Mentoring Movement,” p. 9.

¹⁴ 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].

¹⁵ These programs are a sampling of some of the programs profiled.

¹⁶ Susan Jekielek et al., *Mentoring Programs and Youth Development: A Synthesis*, Child Trends, January 2002, available at [http://www.childtrends.org/what_works/clarkwww/]
(continued...)

- *Improved educational outcomes:* Youth in the year-long Across Ages mentoring program showed a gain of more than a week of attended classes. 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. Mentored youth in the BELONG program committed fewer misdemeanors and felonies. 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 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, among other areas, compared to their non-mentored counterparts (randomly selected into the control group).¹⁷

Some Outcomes Do Not Improve or Are Short Lived. Although research has documented some benefits of mentoring, findings from studies of mentoring programs 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.¹⁸ In the Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring evaluation, the nonschool, related outcomes, including substance use and self worth, did not improve.¹⁹ Other research has indicated that mentored youth make

¹⁶ (...continued)
mentor/mentorrrpt.pdf]. (Hereafter reference Jekielek et al., *Mentoring Programs and Youth Development*.)

¹⁷ 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, available at [http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/220_publication.pdf]. (Hereafter referenced as Herrera et al. *Making a Difference in Schools*.)

¹⁸ Jekielek et al., *Mentoring Programs and Youth Development*, p. 15.

¹⁹ Herrera et al. *Making a Difference in Schools*, pp. 37-38.

small gains or do not sustain positive gains over time.²⁰ The 1995 Big Brothers Big Sisters study found that mentored youth and non-mentored youth showed decreased functioning over time, although those in the mentoring group declined more slowly than those in the non-mentoring group. Further, the 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).²¹ 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.²² The remainder of this report provides an overview of the federal role in mentoring and select federal programs, as well as a discussion of mentoring issues.

Current Federal Mentoring Programs

As discussed above, there are currently three primary federal mentoring programs, all of which were created since FY2001:

- Mentoring Children of Prisoners program administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS);
- Safe and Drug Free Schools Mentoring program administered by the U.S. Department of Education (ED); and
- Mentoring Initiative for System-Involved Youth administered by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ).

Table 1 shows the appropriation funding levels since FY2002 for the programs, where applicable.

²⁰ Jean E. Rhodes and David L. DuBois, "Understanding and Facilitating the Youth Mentoring Movement," pp. 3-5.

²¹ Herrera et al. *Making a Difference in Schools*, pp. 47-78.

²² Ibid, pp. iv-v.

**Table 1: Appropriations for
Current Federal Mentoring Programs**
(dollars in millions)

Program	FY2002	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008
Mentoring Children of Prisoners (HHS)	n/a	10.0	49.7	49.6	49.5	49.5	48.6
Safe and Drug Free Schools Mentoring (ED)	17.5	17.4	49.7	49.2	48.8	19.0	48.5
Mentoring Initiative for System Involved Youth (DOJ)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2.6 ^a	n/a	n/a

Source: FY2002 to FY2007 funding data based on information provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Family and Youth Services Bureau; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools; and U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 2007. FY2008 funding data based on U.S. House, Committee on Rules, Joint Explanatory Statement to Accompany FY2008 Consolidated Appropriations Amendment to H.R. 2764, Division G, available at [http://www.rules.house.gov/110_fy08_omni.htm]. President Bush signed H.R. 2764 (P.L. 110-161) into law on December 26, 2007.

- a. Funding for the initiative is authorized under Part G of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. Part G received \$10 million for FY2006, of which \$2.6 was a one-time allocation for the Mentoring Initiative for System Involved Youth. No other DOJ funding source for mentoring is included in this table.

The remainder of this report describes these three programs, other current federal mentoring activities and services, and issues that may arise in any discussions of the federal role in mentoring.

Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)

Overview

The Mentoring Children of Prisoners (MCP) Program was proposed as part of the President's FY2003 budget and was signed into law under the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments of 2001 (enacted in law in 2002 under P.L. 107-133) as Section 439 of the Social Security Act. The program is administered by the Family and Youth Services Bureau in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families. The program funds public or private entities — in areas of high concentrations of children with parents in prison, including urban, rural, and tribal areas — to provide mentoring services to children of prisoners. Mentoring through the MCP is defined as a structured program that matches each eligible child (with the permission of one or both their parents) to a screened and trained adult volunteer who serves as a positive role model to the child. This one-on-one relationship, involving activities based in the community and not primarily on school grounds or the workplace, is intended to improve academic and

behavioral outcomes. Mentors are to supplement existing caring relationships that the child has with his or her parents, teachers, and other adults. The Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-288) expanded the scope of the program by authorizing HHS to enter into a three-year cooperative agreement with a national mentoring support organization to operate a new program that provides vouchers for mentoring services.

Purpose. The MCP program was created in response to the growing number of children under age 18 with at least one parent who is incarcerated in a federal or state correctional facility. Between 1991 and 1999, the children-of-prisoners population grew from 936,000 to 1.5 million.²³ Today, an estimated two million children between the ages of four and 18 have a parent in prison or jail.²⁴ Minority youth are overrepresented among the population. Less than 1% of white children have a parent in prison, compared to 7% of African American children and 3% of Hispanic children.²⁵

Studies of children of prisoners show that parental confinement can lead to stress, trauma, and separation problems.²⁶ The living arrangements of these children often change when a parent is imprisoned. Nearly 65% of children of incarcerated mothers must live with another relative and 6% are placed under the care of a foster care agency.²⁷ Children of prisoners also experience more negative outcomes than their counterparts in the general population: they are seven times more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice and adult criminal systems.²⁸ Further, children of prisoners may need to contend with compounding issues, such as poverty and high-crime environments, loss of emotional and financial support provided by the imprisoned parent, and stigmatization by peers and others.

²³ Christopher J. Mumola, *Incarcerated Parents and Their Children*, U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, August 2000, p. 2, available at [<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/iptc.pdf>].

²⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, *The Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program*, Report to Congress, September 12, 2007, p. 3. (Hereafter referenced as *The Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program*, Report to Congress.)

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, *Mentoring Children of Prisoners Assessment*, 2005, available at [<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/expectmore/summary/10003505.2005.html>]. (Hereafter referenced as Office of Management and Budget, *Mentoring Children of Prisoners Assessment*.)

²⁷ Elizabeth Inez Johnson and Jane Waldfogel, *Children of Incarcerated Parents: Cumulative Risk and Children's Living Arrangements*, July 2002, p. 2, available at [http://www.jcpr.org/wpfiles/johnson_waldfogel.pdf].

²⁸ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, *Mentoring Children of Prisoners Competitive Grant Initial Announcement*, p. 4, available at [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/pdf/ACYF_FYSB_Mentoring_Revised_1_28.pdf].

In passing P.L. 107-133, Congress cited the success of the Amachi program²⁹ as a reason for supporting a national program for children of incarcerated parents.³⁰ The Amachi program was developed by Public/Private Ventures and Big Brothers Big Sisters in Southeastern Pennsylvania, in partnership with secular and faith-based organizations to provide mentors to eligible youth of incarcerated parents.

Grantee Requirements. A number of entities may apply for an MCP grant: any state or local government unit, independent school districts, federally recognized American tribal governments, Native American tribal groups (other than federally recognized groups), private nonprofit organizations, and community and faith-based groups. In awarding grants, HHS must consider the qualifications and capacity of the applicants to carry out a mentoring program for children of prisoners; the need for mentoring services in local areas, taking into consideration data on the number of children (and in particular of low-income children) with an incarcerated parent (or parents) in the area; and evidence of consultation with existing youth and family services.³¹ Grant funds are to be expended within one year and are to be used for mentoring services exclusively (i.e., not wraparound services or other social services).³²

Grantees may recruit mentors from the child's family and community, church congregations, religious nonprofit groups, community-based groups, service organizations, Senior Corps, and from the business community. Grantees provide mentor training and criminal background checks, and monitor mentoring relationships. They also evaluate youth outcomes. Grantees are expected to incorporate a message of positive youth development into their programs and coordinate with other organizations to develop a plan that addresses the needs of the entire family.³³ (Positive youth development refers to a philosophy of serving youth that emphasizes youth empowerment and the development of skills and assets that prepare youth for adulthood.)

²⁹ For further information about the Amachi program, see [<http://www.amachimentoring.org/index.html>].

³⁰ U.S. Congress, House Committee on Ways and Means, *Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments*, report to accompany H.R. 2873, 107th Cong., 1st sess., H.Rept. 107-281 (Washington: GPO, 2001), p. 19.

³¹ HHS has given preference to grantees that have demonstrated a need for mentoring services in their areas based on the concentration of children of prisoners who are currently not mentored. Grantee applicants have determined the number of eligible participants by contacting local school systems for student/parent information and/or the Bureau of Prisons. Others have collaborated with child social service programs such as the foster care system and/or their state prisons. Organizations with well-established ministry programs recruited participants as part of their ministry work.

³² Office of Management and Budget, *Mentoring Children of Prisoners Assessment*.

³³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, *Mentoring Children of Prisoners Competitive Grant Announcement*, 2007, pp. 5-6, available at [<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/HHS-2007-ACF-ACYF-CV-0029.html>]. (Hereafter referenced as U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Mentoring Children of Prisoners Competitive Grant Announcement*, 2007).

Mentored Youth and Mentors. Children ages four to 18 (as specified in the MCP grant announcement) are eligible for the program only if their parent is in state or federal prison, although they may continue to receive services if their parent is released from prison during the mentoring relationship; children whose parents are in halfway houses, under supervision, or house arrest are not eligible unless the detention follows a federal or state prison sentence.

Since the creation of the program, through March 2007, the program has served over 57,000 youth in 44 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.³⁴ In FY2006, over 27,500 youth were served by the MCP.³⁵ Nearly 70 MCP programs are administered by the Big Brothers and Big Sisters programs (some of these same programs may receive funding through Department of Justice funds for Big Brothers Big Sisters of America; see below for further discussion).³⁶

Mentors undergo screenings that include in-depth interviews and criminal background checks. They must commit to attending training and meeting with their assigned youth one hour per week for one year. Mentors are not paid for their participation, except for reimbursement for incidental expenses such as food and mileage on a case-by-case basis.

Voucher Demonstration Project

The Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-288) extended funding and authorization for the Mentoring Children of Prisoners program and authorized a demonstration project to test the effectiveness of using vouchers to deliver MCP services more broadly to youth who have not already been matched to a mentor. The law specified that vouchers would be distributed by an organization with considerable experience in mentoring services for children, and in developing program standards for planning and evaluating mentoring programs for children.³⁷

In November 2007, HHS awarded a competitive three-year cooperative agreement grant (which may be renewed for an additional two years) to MENTOR, a national mentoring advocacy group and clearinghouse on mentoring issues, to administer the program.³⁸ According to HHS, MENTOR will spend the first two quarters of the grant developing the infrastructure to deliver the vouchers, and will begin to

³⁴ Six states (Indiana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Utah, and Vermont) do not appear to have programs funded by the MCP grant.

³⁵ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, December 2007.

³⁶ Ibid, June 2007.

³⁷ HHS is required to provide a description of how the organization should ensure collaboration and cooperation with other interested parties, including courts and prisons, with respect to the delivery of mentoring services under the demonstration project.

³⁸ Additional information about the assistance MENTOR is to provide is available at [http://www.mentoring.org/program_staff/mcp_voucher/about_mcp_voucher_project.php].

distribute the vouchers in April 2008.³⁹ In the first year of the demonstration project, MENTOR is to pilot the voucher project in seven geographically diverse targeted communities with high rates of incarceration, crime and/or poverty, rural populations, or areas with American Indian children.⁴⁰ HHS has stated that these targeted efforts are to allow systems to be implemented, reviewed, and adjusted when needed. In years two and three of the demonstration program, the demonstration is to be expanded nationally. In year one, no less than 3,000 vouchers are to be distributed to children and families; in year two, no less than 8,000 vouchers are to be distributed and in year three, no less than 10,000 vouchers are to be distributed.

As required by law, MENTOR is not to provide direct mentoring services. HHS reports that the organization will coordinate with national networks for re-entry and incarcerated families, caregiver support networks, school districts, social service agencies, and faith- and community-based organizations to identify children to participate in the program. Families and caregivers are to be directed to a national call center to enroll in the voucher program, and are to be provided with a mentoring information packet that corresponds to the family's stated preferences and provides mentoring options in their community. The voucher for mentoring services is included in the packet and contains an identification code. (This identifier becomes the primary means of data collection and system management for the voucher demonstration project.) The families redeem the vouchers at organizations deemed to be quality providers of mentoring services.

MENTOR is to conduct an advertising campaign to encourage mentoring programs to become certified as "quality providers" (allowing them to receive MCP vouchers). MENTOR, in consultation with FYSB, is required to identify quality standards for these providers, including, at minimum, criminal background checks of mentors. It must also monitor and oversee delivery of mentoring services. To be eligible for voucher funding, mentoring organizations must demonstrate that significant mentoring services can be provided for an eligible child and that after the voucher expires, they can continue providing such services through non-federal resources. For those organizations with general MCP grants, they must exhaust these funds before receiving funds through the voucher project.

Funding and Grant Awards

The MCP program, including the voucher component, is authorized to receive "such sums as may be necessary" for every year through FY2011. Funding for the general grant program is distributed on a competitive basis to eligible applicants for up to three years. The size of the average grant is \$186,245 for each year of the

³⁹ Based on information provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Families and Youth Services Bureau, October 2007.

⁴⁰ Ibid, December 2007. Receipt of a voucher is not counted for purposes of determining eligibility of federal or federally supported assistance for the child's family.

three-year period, with grants ranging from \$26,000 to \$2 million per year.⁴¹ (Some of these organizations make sub-awards to other organizations for mentoring services.) Grantees are required to provide a nonfederal share or match of at least 25% of the total project budget in the first and second years of the project, rising to 50% in the third year.

Funding may not be awarded to the national mentoring support organization (i.e., MENTOR for FY2008 to FY2010) to distribute the vouchers unless \$25 million in program appropriations is first available for site-based grants. If funding is available, the organization is to receive up to \$5 million in the first year of the cooperative agreement, \$10 million in the second year, and \$15 million in the third year. The organization's administrative expenditures for the demonstration project may not exceed 10% of the amount awarded. Individual vouchers of up to \$1,000 can be awarded on behalf of an individual child to redeem for mentoring services.⁴²

The MCP program received initial funding of \$10 million in FY2003 and has been funded at approximately \$50 million in each year since then. **Table 2** shows the level of funding for the program and the number of general grants and vouchers awarded since FY2003, where applicable.

**Table 2: Mentoring Children of Prisoners:
Funding and Grant and Voucher Awards, FY2003-FY2008**
(dollars in millions)

	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008
Funding Appropriated	10.0	49.7	49.6	49.5	49.5	48.6
New Grants Awarded	52	169	0	76	144	0
Grants In Progress	n/a	52	221	169	220	220
Vouchers Awarded	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8,000 expected

Source: FY2002 to FY2007 funding data based on information provided by the U.S. Health and Human Services, Family and Youth Services Bureau, 2007. FY2008 funding data based on U.S. House, Committee on Rules, Joint Explanatory Statement to Accompany FY2008 Consolidated Appropriations Amendment to H.R. 2764, Division G, available at [http://www.rules.house.gov/110_fy08_omni.htm]. President Bush signed H.R. 2764 (P.L. 110-161) into law on December 26, 2007.

⁴¹ *The Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program*, Report to Congress, p. 1.

⁴² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Mentoring Children of Prisoners Competitive Grant Announcement*, 2007.

Program Performance and Oversight

Of all MCP funds, 4% must be set aside for research, evaluation, and technical assistance related to site-based and voucher-related mentoring services.⁴³

Research. HHS collects caseload demographics and characteristics from grantee progress reports and from an online data collection instrument, administered by HHS, and used by grantees to input caseload data. This information allows HHS to assess the average number of days that a child is on the waitlist for a mentor, the number of hours that the child met with their mentor over the course of a reporting period, the average number of hours in pre-training/orientation and post-training that mentors received, and the number of staff contacts with mentors to address mentor skills or critical issues. **Table A-1**, in the appendix, displays demographics and characteristics for youth enrolled in the program in FY2006.

In 2006, HHS introduced the Relationship Quality Survey Instrument (RQI) to assess the dynamics of the mentor/mentored youth relationship. The RQI seeks information from youth ages nine and above engaged in long-term (i.e., minimum of nine months by the time the survey is administered in July of each year) mentoring relationships. The survey asks the youth about their satisfaction with the relationship, the extent to which mentors have helped them cope with their problems, how happy the youth feel when they are with their mentors, and whether there is evidence of trust in the mentoring relationship.⁴⁴ According to HHS, research has demonstrated that answers to the questions are predictive of the psychological and academic benefits of mentoring.

Evaluations. Pursuant to the original legislation (P.L. 107-133) authorizing the MCP, HHS was required to evaluate the program and submit its findings to Congress no later than April 15, 2005 (see below). The reauthorizing legislation (P.L. 109-288) requires the Secretary to evaluate the voucher demonstration project. The evaluation of the project is to be submitted to the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee no later than 90 days after the end of the second fiscal year the project is conducted. The report is to include the number of children who received vouchers for mentoring services and any conclusions regarding the use of vouchers to deliver mentoring services to children of prisoners. In addition to the evaluations, HHS is required to submit to Congress, within 12 months after the reauthorizing legislation was passed (i.e., September 28, 2007), a report that includes the following: 1) the characteristics of the funded general MCP programs; 2) the plan for implementing the voucher demonstration project; 3) a description of the outcome-based evaluation of the programs, and how the evaluation has been expanded to include an evaluation of the demonstration project; and 4) the date HHS will submit the final report on the evaluation to Congress.

⁴³ The percentage of funds set aside for this purpose was increased from 2.5% to 4% under P.L. 109-288.

⁴⁴ Department of Health and Human Services, *Mentoring Children of Prisoners Competitive Grant Announcement*, 2007, p. 7.

In response to some of these legislative requirements, HHS subcontracted with Abt Associates to conduct process and outcome evaluations of the general mentoring program. A report about the features of the program was submitted to Congress on September 12, 2007. The report discusses the general program's design, strategy, implementation, current operation status, and characteristics. The outcome evaluation has not yet been completed, as required by P.L. 107-133, but survey instruments have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), grantee sites have been selected, and participating grantee staff have received training on administering the surveys. This evaluation is to measure child baseline characteristics and status in a sample of the program's caseload when a mentoring match is first formed. Outcomes are to be measured in a follow-up survey of participating youth 12 to 15 months following the baseline survey. The results are to be matched, through a data sharing agreement, against similar at-risk youth who served as controls in the recent evaluation of the Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring program (discussed above). (Abt plans to use consistent definitions and other methods to make valid comparisons between the groups.) The evaluation is to assess the operational design of the program as well as child outcomes, including attitude towards and performance in school; relationships with parents, peers, and teachers; self-esteem; and engagement in risky behaviors, including alcohol and drug use. Findings from the evaluation of the general program are likely to be available during FY2010.

As required by P.L. 109-288, an evaluation of the voucher component is in the planning stages and according to HHS, will attempt to use the same methodology and definitions as the general mentoring program, to the extent practicable, given the program design. HHS is to produce an interim report, sometime in calendar year 2008, on the status of the voucher component of the program.

PART Evaluation. As part of the FY2005 budget process, the MCP program was evaluated by the Performance Assessment Rating Tool (PART), an instrument developed by the current Administration to examine the performance of certain programs across federal agencies. The PART evaluation assessed the MCP's purpose and design, strategic planning, management, and results/accountability. While the program received maximum scores for these first three measurements, it was rated as "Results Not Demonstrated" because the program performance data to assess results had only recently begun to be collected from grantees. In addition, the program also did not meet its mentor match goal. (By FY2006, the program was targeted to make 69,000 matches to date, but instead, approximately 40,000 youth had been matched. By FY2007, however, over 70,400 matches had been created.⁴⁵) According to HHS, mentor match targets were not met because many MCP grantees had never previously received a federal grant and/or were new and formed specifically to operate the grant.⁴⁶ In its 2007 Report to Congress, HHS stated that

⁴⁵ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, December 2007.

⁴⁶ *The Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program*, Report to Congress, p. 11.

it has taken steps to improve the number of matches, such as conducting site visits to grantees.⁴⁷

Training and Technical Assistance. HHS has contracted with Dare Mighty Things (DMT) to serve as the training and technical assistance provider for the program. DMT conducts a needs assessment for MCP grantees, and organizes an annual national conference for all MCP grantees and multiregional workshops throughout the year. DMT also conducts up to 100 days of site visits and provides on-site assistance as needed by phone and email.⁴⁸ Through its newsletters, DMT conveys important federal information, a mentor/mentored youth of the month highlight, funding opportunities, and general mentoring information.⁴⁹

In addition to the assistance provided by DMT, the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development at the University of Oklahoma (the contractor for FYSB on select child welfare issues and the Runaway and Homeless Youth program) is developing a peer-to-peer monitoring tool that is to allow for grantees to join federal staff on visits to other grantees to monitor compliance with the legislative intent of the program and to encourage cross-fertilization of ideas between peer mentoring professionals.⁵⁰ If the peer reviewers determine that technical assistance is needed (or is requested by an organization), DMT is to be notified and develop a plan for delivering services.

Finally, HHS staff provide direct assistance to grantees.⁵¹ Program specialists assist grantees in grant management, service delivery planning, program start-up and implementation, reporting, and building partnerships. HHS staff monitor grantee activities and oversee detailed quarterly narrative and financial information. The staff also facilitates transfers of promising practices from experienced to less experienced grantees.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, June 2007.

⁴⁹ Based on correspondence with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, July 2007. See also *Case Study: Supporting a Government Agency, Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program* on the DMT website, [http://www.daremightythings.com/company/casestudy/MCP%20052507_v2.pdf].

⁵⁰ This on-site monitoring tool is to be similar to one that has been used by FYSB's Runaway and Homeless Youth program for the past twenty years. Based on correspondence with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, October 2007.

⁵¹ *The Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program*, Report to Congress, p. 8.

Safe and Drug Free Schools Mentoring Program (U.S. Department of Education)

Overview

The Safe and Drug Free Schools (SDFS) program was enacted as Title IV-A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1994 (P.L. 103-382) in response to concerns about increased school violence and drug use among school-aged youth. The program awards funding to states to support activities that promote school safety. In 2001 (P.L. 107-110), the No Child Left Behind Act reauthorized and amended ESEA, and enacted a school-based mentoring program under the SDFS program.⁵²

The SDFS Mentoring program is administered by the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools in the U.S. Department of Education, and provides grants to establish and support mentoring programs that are school based. School-based mentoring refers to mentoring activities that are closely coordinated with school (i.e., involve teachers, counselors, and other school staff who identify and refer students for mentoring services) and assist youth with improving their academic achievement, reducing disciplinary referrals, and increasing their bonding to school.⁵³ Generally, mentored youth are paired with one adult⁵⁴ who serves as a positive role model and provides the child with academic assistance (e.g., tutoring, helping with homework, learning a game like chess, developing computer skills), exposure to new experiences that promote positive youth development (e.g., attending concerts and plays, visiting colleges, shadowing mentor at his/her job), and recreational opportunities (e.g., playing sports, creating arts and crafts projects, attending professional sports games).⁵⁵ According to a June 2004 GAO report of the program, many of these mentoring activities are carried out on school grounds, but some activities take place in the community and in the workplace.⁵⁶

Purpose. The mentoring program targets children with the greatest need, defined as those children at risk of educational failure or dropping out of school, involved with criminal or delinquent activities, or who lack strong positive role

⁵² The SDFS program supports two major grant programs — one for states and one for national programs. The mentoring program is authorized under the national programs grant. For further information, see CRS Report RL33980, *School and Campus Safety Programs and Requirements in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and Higher Education Act*, by Rebecca R. Skinner and Gail McCallion.

⁵³ U.S. Department of Education, “Notice of Final Priorities, Requirements, and Selection Criteria Under the Mentoring Program,” 69 *Federal Register* 30794, May 28, 2004. (Hereafter referenced as U.S. Department of Education, “Notice of Final Priorities.”)

⁵⁴ In a 2004 GAO analysis of the 121 SDFS Mentoring Program grantees who received awards in FY2002, 75% provided one-to-one mentoring only; 22% provided both one-to-one mentoring and group mentoring; and 3% provided group mentoring only.

⁵⁵ GAO, *Student Mentoring Programs*, p. 17.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

models. The purpose of the program is to provide school-based mentoring programs that improve academic outcomes, improve interpersonal relationships, and reduce involvement in delinquency and gang involvement.

Grantee Requirements. The Secretary of the Department of Education is authorized to award competitive grants to three entities to carry out the SDFS Mentoring program: (1) local education agencies (LEAs); (2) nonprofit community-based organizations (CBOs), including faith-based groups; and (3) partnerships between LEAs and CBOs. The Secretary prioritizes grant applications that propose a school-based mentoring program, provide high quality background checks and technical assistance, and serve children with greatest need living in particular areas.

In applying for grants, an eligible entity must provide information on the children for which the grant is sought; a description of the method to match children with mentors based on the needs of the children; information on how the entity will recruit, screen, and provide training to mentors; information on the system for managing and monitoring information related to the program's background checks of mentors and procedures for matching children to mentors. Grantees must also make assurances that no mentor will be matched with so many children that the assignment will undermine the mentor's ability to be an effective mentor or the mentor's ability to establish a close relationship (i.e., a one-to-one relationship, where practicable), with each mentored child. Further, grantees must assure that the mentoring program will provide children with certain supports (i.e., emotional, academic, and exposure to new experiences) and assign a new mentor if the relationship between the original mentor and the child is not beneficial to the child.

Mentored Youth and Mentors. As noted above, the SDFS Mentoring program targets children with the greatest need. In awarding grants, the Secretary is to prioritize entities that serve children in grades four to eight with greatest need living in rural areas, high-crime areas, or troubled home environments *or* who attend schools with violence problems.⁵⁷ The Department of Education does not aggregate demographic and other data on youth participants, and therefore, the number and characteristics of youth that have been served by the program is unknown.⁵⁸

Mentors may be a responsible adult, a postsecondary school student, or a secondary school student. While the Department of Education does not mandate a set amount of hours that mentors and students must meet, it advises that programs require at least one hour each week.⁵⁹ Mentors are screened using appropriate reference checks, child and domestic abuse record checks, and criminal background checks; and receive training and support in mentoring. Mentors are uncompensated.

⁵⁷ U.S. Department of Education, "Notice of Final Priorities."

⁵⁸ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, October 2007.

⁵⁹ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, July 2007.

Funding and Grant Awards

The mentoring program is one component of the Safe and Drug Free Schools program. The SDFS program has two funding streams: one for state grants awarded by formula and another for discretionary national grants. The SDFS mentoring program is funded through the national grants component.⁶⁰ The program has received about \$17 million to \$49 million each year since grants were first awarded in FY2002. The average amount awarded for the most recent grant cycle to each grantee was \$176,900 per year.⁶¹ There is no match requirement and grantees are ineligible to apply for subsequent SDFS mentoring grants if they are currently receiving funds through the program (though they may apply for other Department of Education grants for which they are eligible).⁶² **Table 3** shows the amount of funding appropriated for the program and the number of grants awarded.

In the FY2007 and FY2008 budget justifications, the President proposed no funding for the program, on the basis that it has met its objectives. Congress has continued to support the program and has appropriated \$48.5 million for FY2008.

⁶⁰ State grants are awarded to states based on a formula that incorporates poverty and population factors. States must use 93% of their allocation to make formula grants to local educational agencies (LEAs) based on poverty factors and each LEA's share of student enrollment in public and private nonprofit elementary and secondary schools. National grants are used primarily for a variety of discretionary programs designed to prevent drug abuse and violence in elementary and secondary schools. For further information, see CRS Report RL33980, *School and Campus Safety Programs and Requirements in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and Higher Education Act*, by Rebecca R. Skinner and Gail McCallion.

⁶¹ Based on correspondence with U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, October 2007.

⁶² Based on correspondence with U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, December 2007. Also, see U.S. Department of Education, "Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools: Notice of Final Eligibility Requirement," 71 *Federal Register* 70369, December 4, 2006.

**Table 3: Safe and Drug Free Schools Mentoring Program:
Funding and Grant Awards, FY2002-FY2008**
(dollars in millions)

	FY2002	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008
Funding Appropriated	17.5	17.4	49.7	49.2	48.8	19.0	48.5
New Grants Awarded	122	0	163	90	0	170	175-200 expected
Grants In Progress	n/a	122	122	163	90	90	260

Source: FY2002 to FY2007 funding data based on information provided by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, 2007. FY2008 funding data based on U.S. House, Committee on Rules, Joint Explanatory Statement to Accompany FY2008 Consolidated Appropriations Amendment to H.R. 2764, Division G, available at [http://www.rules.house.gov/110_fy08_omni.htm]. President Bush signed H.R. 2764 (P.L. 110-161) into law on December 26, 2007.

Program Performance and Oversight

The No Child Left Behind Act does not specify whether or how the SDFS mentoring program is to be monitored and evaluated, or how grantees are to receive technical assistance and support. However, regulations promulgated in March 2004 specify that grant applicants must include in their application an assurance that they will (1) establish clear, measurable performance goals; and (2) collect and report to ED data related to the established Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) performance indicators for the mentoring program's grant competition.⁶³ The Department of Education requires grantees to provide an evaluation of their program at the end of the three-year grant period. Further, ED has established three performance measures for assessing the effectiveness of the mentoring program: (1) the percentage of mentor-youth matches that are sustained for a period of twelve months; (2) the percentage of mentored students who demonstrate improvement in core academic subjects as measured by grade point average after 12 months; and (3) the percentage of mentored students who have unexcused absences from school. The grant length is three years; therefore, the program's performance measures serve as both annual and long-term performance measures.⁶⁴ Data on these outcomes are not available.

Evaluation. In 2004, GAO conducted a study of the program and made three recommendations to the Department of Education to facilitate monitoring and evaluation of the program: (1) explore ways to facilitate the sharing of successful practices and lessons learned among grantees, (2) ensure that the agency uses grantees' single audit reports, and (3) undertake a national study of the program's

⁶³ U.S. Department of Education, "Notice of Final Priorities."

⁶⁴ Based on correspondence with U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, July 2007.

outcomes.⁶⁵ (This second recommendation refers to audit reports of grantees that provide information on weaknesses related to grantee financial management, internal control, and compliance issues; these reports are available through the Office of Management and Budget's Federal Auditing Clearinghouse.) In response to GAO's first recommendation, the Department of Education has developed an electronic listserve to promote communication among grantees. To ensure that the agency monitors single audit reports, the agency began to provide a comprehensive training to grant monitors (of the audit reports) to assist them access the information. In addition, the agency added a requirement to the grant monitoring procedures that directs staff to review audit findings at least annually.

Finally, in response to GAO's third recommendation, the Department of Education has subcontracted with Abt Associates to conduct process and outcome evaluations. To conduct the process evaluation, data on the nature of mentoring program services are to be collected through a survey of the program grantees and mentors to provide context for the outcome evaluation and to provide information to the agency about how the program can improve. According to ED, the outcome evaluation will use a randomized control trial with a sample size of approximately 2,600 students.⁶⁶ Data are being collected for the student sample on school engagement, academic performance, dropping out of school, the quality of interpersonal relationships, and involvement with high-risk and delinquent behaviors. To measure program impact, student surveys and student school records are to be collected both at baseline and at the end of the school year. ED expects the findings to be available in 2008.

Training and Technical Assistance. In 2004, the Department of Education awarded a performance-based contract to EMT Associates, Inc., to operate the Mentoring Program Resource Training and Technical Assistance Center until 2009.⁶⁷ The purpose of this center is to ensure that programs funded under the mentoring program receive assistance, as appropriate, in the management and implementation of their projects. Grantees receive assistance with (1) training to ensure that they are using high-quality, evidence-based programs; (2) identifying gaps and weaknesses in their program design; and (3) collaborating with other organizations; and (4) planning for program sustainability.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ GAO, *Student Mentoring Programs*.

⁶⁶ Approximately half of this sample is to be randomly assigned to be matched with a mentor. The study uses a non-random sample of 33 mentoring grantees, meaning that Abt is to select certain grantee organizations for the study. According to ED, many programs could not support a study that randomly assigns students to mentoring. According to ED, the agency will spend \$5.6 million for the national evaluation. Funding began in FY2005 and extends through FY2008. Based on correspondence with U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, July 2007.

⁶⁷ Funding for training and technical assistance is approximately \$5.5 million from FY2004 through FY2008. Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, July 2007.

⁶⁸ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, October 2007.

Department of Education staff also provide needed assistance to grantees. Mechanisms to assist grantees include a post-award call to ensure that grantees understand established outcomes and to offer technical assistance, semiannual calls to grantees to determine the implementation process and issues and to provide technical assistance, reviews of annual grantee performance reports to determine successes and needed corrective action, monitoring of expenditure rates to determine if grants were expended at an appropriate rate, and visits to a limited number of grantees (for example, the Department visited three sites in FY2003).⁶⁹

Mentoring Initiative for System-Involved Youth (U.S. Department of Justice)

Overview

As noted above, the Department of Justice is the first federal agency 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.⁷⁰ 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 (\$4 million to \$15.8 million each year) to the program.

JUMP was repealed by the 21st Century Department of Justice Appropriations Authorization Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-273). This law incorporated the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 2001 (H.R. 1900), which eliminated several juvenile justice programs, including Part G (Mentoring), and replaced it with a block grant program under 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 D (Research, Evaluation, Technical Assistance and Training) and a new Part E (Developing, Testing, and Demonstrating Promising New Initiatives and Programs). According to the accompanying report for H.R. 1900, the small amount of funding 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

⁶⁹ This process is described in greater detail in GAO, *Student Mentoring Programs*, pp. 24-26.

⁷⁰ Sen. Frank R. Lautenberg, “Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Authorization Act,” remarks in the Senate, *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 138 (October 7, 1992).

funding.”⁷¹ ⁷² The report goes on to say that the Committee does not discourage mentoring activities under the new block grant program.⁷³

Since the JUMP program was discontinued, the Administration has requested funding for mentoring under Part C (Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Block Grant Program) and Part E (Developing, Testing, and Demonstrating Promising New Initiatives and Programs), which can fund mentoring demonstration projects.⁷⁴ However, Congress has appropriated mentoring funds under a separate mentoring line item for FY2005 through FY2007 (no mentoring funds were appropriated for FY2004); the line item does not specify under which part of the JJDP the funding is authorized.⁷⁵ The Department of Justice has interpreted the appropriations language as requiring the agency to allocate funds pursuant to old Part G.⁷⁶

All DOJ mentoring activities are coordinated through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Pursuant to the mentoring line item, OJJDP has allocated funding for mentoring initiatives. For FY2006, OJJDP proposed a new juvenile mentoring project, the Mentoring Initiative for System Involved Youth (MISIY), to provide mentoring to youth involved in the juvenile justice system or foster care, or juvenile offenders re-entering the community.⁷⁷ Congress appropriated \$10 million for mentoring (under the mentoring line item) that fiscal year, with approximately \$2.6 million for the MISIY program and the balance for specific set asides for jurisdictions and other organizations that support youth mentoring, including Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (see page 31 for further discussion of DOJ’s other mentoring efforts).

⁷¹ 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.

⁷² 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.

⁷³ The Department of Justice did not request that these funds be discontinued. According to the agency, no letters or budget justifications advocating for these funds to be discontinued were submitted to Congress. Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, November 2007.

⁷⁴ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, March 2006 and U.S. Department of Justice, *2007 Congressional Authorization and Budget Submission*, p. 141.

⁷⁵ 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).

⁷⁶ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, November 2007.

⁷⁷ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, *FY2005 Budget Justifications*.

Grantees

Entities eligible to apply for MISIY funds include public agencies (state agencies, units of local government, public universities and colleges, and tribal governments) and private organizations (including secular and nonprofit, faith-based groups).⁷⁸ The initiative awarded four mentoring grants of \$1.6 million total, to be used over a four-year period (FY2006 to FY2009).⁷⁹ (See below for a discussion on the \$1 million in funding for the training and technical assistance provider and the organization conducting the evaluation.) Grantees are not required to provide a match.

The four grantees are nonprofit, youth-serving organizations, and the City of Chicago. (As part of its grant requirements, the City of Chicago was to develop a pilot mentoring program that sub-contracts with community-based organizations.) Each of the organizations is required to meet performance standards that focus on building protective factors (e.g., youth are to gain at least two responsible nonparent adults in their life that support them, experience improved self esteem, and develop better relationships with their families and peers) and improving school outcomes (e.g., greater attendance, higher reading and math scores, and fewer behavior referrals). The four MISIY grantees are described below.

- *The Boys and Girls Aid Society's Mentor Portland* program in Portland, Oregon provides mentoring to youth ages 10 to 14 who are in the foster care system or have an incarcerated parent. With its MISIY grant, the organization is implementing a mentoring program for 136 youth in foster care that focuses on one-on-one and team-based mentoring in the community. The youth are to be referred primarily by the Oregon Department of Human Services. Each mentoring pair is to be placed on a team with six other pairs. In addition to meeting with their mentors, youth are expected to attend monthly team activities and community events, and attend a weekend camp with their mentor.⁸⁰
- *Lutheran Family Services of Virginia's Mentor Match* in Roanoke, Virginia, provides one-on-one, community-based mentoring to youth ages 8 to 18 in foster care and the juvenile justice system. With the MISIY grant, the organization anticipates serving 140 additional

⁷⁸ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, "Application for Funding: Mentoring Initiative for System Involved Youth," available at [<http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/grants/solicitations/06mentoringinitiative.pdf>]. (Hereafter referenced as U.S. Department of Justice, "Application for Funding: Mentoring Initiative for System Involved Youth.")

⁷⁹ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, "OJJDP Awards Foster Mentoring for System Involved Youth," available at [<http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/enews/07juvjust/070123.html>].

⁸⁰ The Boys and Girls Aid Society's Mentor Portland, Grant Application for Mentoring Initiative for System Involved Youth, provided to the Congressional Research Service by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, September 2007.

youth by 2010. Youth are to be recruited through established relationships with the local juvenile court system, the local social services agency, and Lutheran Family Services. The program is to include the following: (1) therapeutic mentoring for children in treatment foster care provided by mentors employed by Lutheran Family Services, involving structured recreation and goal setting, and open dialogue about emotions and problems or other topics; (2) therapeutic mentoring for court-involved youth provided by mentors who work with the juvenile justice system; (3) non-therapeutic mentoring for foster care children provided by volunteers; and (4) a volunteer mentor pilot project for system-involved youth provided by volunteers trained in therapeutic mentoring.⁸¹

- *The City of Chicago, Department of Children and Youth Services*, is using its MISIY funds to support four community-based organizations that provide mentoring to adolescent males who are involved in the juvenile justice system or are at risk for entering the system. These organizations include Agape, Southwest Youth Collaborative, Uchlich Children's Advocacy network, and Building with Books. Youth are to enter the program in 8th to 10th grade and are eligible to remain in the program through the 12th grade. Participants are to be walk-ins or be referred by the Chicago Juvenile Intervention Support Center (JICS), Cook County State's Attorneys Office, and the Cook County Juvenile Probation Department. Each youth is to receive a case manager and service referrals, and is to be assigned a mentor (known as a youth advocate) to help them overcome obstacles to successful enrollment and completion of JICS programs and to achieve regular attendance in the appropriate school program. The MISIY program anticipates assisting youth develop an individual plan to ensure that they are connected to work and/or school.⁸²
- *The Mentoring Center* in Oakland, California, serves youth re-entering the community from the Alameda County juvenile residential rehabilitation facility. The organization is using its MISIY funds to develop the Camp Sweeney Transformative Mentoring Program with the long-term goal of reducing re-arrest and re-commitment rates among 240 youth ages 15 to 18. Youth in the program are to participate in: (1) group mentoring and a group counseling program that focuses on behavior change through weekly curriculum-based cognitive behavior sessions; (2) pre-release individual mentoring and case management provided by a case

⁸¹ Lutheran Family Services of Virginia, Grant Application for Mentoring Initiative for System Involved Youth, provided to the Congressional Research Service by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, September 2007.

⁸² City of Chicago, Grant Application for Mentoring Initiative for System Involved Youth, provided to the Congressional Research Service by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, September 2007.

manager that focuses on identifying the needs and services for the youth; and (3) post-release mentoring. The individual mentoring is to be provided through the program's case manager.⁸³

Evaluations

OJJDP awarded a four-year grant of approximately \$500,000 to the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation in FY2006 to conduct process and outcome evaluations of the program.⁸⁴ The process evaluation is to document how the selected mentoring sites adapt mentoring approaches (e.g., individual, group mentoring, counseling); how the programs and/or strategies are being implemented for the target populations; and how these types of mentoring approaches and strategies could impact outcomes for mentoring.⁸⁵ The evaluator is also to gather data from the grantees, through annual site visits and telephone interviews, to inform best practices in the mentoring field. These data are to be shared with the training and technical assistance provider.

The outcome evaluation is underway and the first wave of data collection was reported to OJJDP by the end of calendar year 2007. The evaluation measures youth behaviors and their school performance at intake into their respective programs, three months after youth are matched with mentors, and nine months after they are matched. Measured outcomes include short-term outcomes (i.e., quality of match), intermediate outcomes (i.e., academic self-esteem, aggression and violence, delinquency, and substance use), and long-term outcomes (i.e., improved academic performance, involvement with the juvenile justice system, and stability in the foster care system). These data are to be aggregated and compared across the four grant recipients. The data are also to be analyzed in sub-groups, based on race and ethnicity, gender, age, type of participant (foster care youth, juvenile justice youth, or both), and the individual grantee.⁸⁶

The outcome evaluation includes a treatment group — those youth who are in the mentoring programs — and a control group made up of youth who either agree to be on a waiting list for at least six months or are in a local geographic area not

⁸³ The Mentoring Center, Grant Application for Mentoring Initiative for System Involved Youth, provided to the Congressional Research Service by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, September 2007.

⁸⁴ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, "Application for Evaluation of Mentoring Initiative for System Involved Youth," available at [<http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/grants/solicitations/06mentoringeval.pdf>].

⁸⁵ The process evaluation involves the monthly collection of data on the date of each mentoring and related activity, duration of each activity, the type of activity (e.g., recreational, academic), location of activity (e.g., at mentoring agency, school), structure of activity (e.g., face to face, by phone), and whether the activity was conducted one-on-one or in a group. These data are to be submitted by each of the four grant recipients electronically.

⁸⁶ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, November 2007.

served by the grant recipient. The same demographic and survey data is collected from youth in the control group (except they are not be asked for information about the quality of their match) and are to be compared to the data from the treatment group.

According to OJJDP, the Administration will await results from the evaluation prior to determining whether the program should be expanded.⁸⁷

Training and Technical Assistance

The Education Development Center (EDC) was awarded a two-year grant of approximately \$500,000 in FY2006 to provide training and technical support to the grantees.^{88 89} To date, EDC had conducted telephone pre-assessments and in-depth assessments of all grantees to determine what type of assistance is needed, as well as on-site and off-site training. EDC has also researched and created a literature review containing resources related to mentoring system-involved youth; created two technical assistance briefs on mentor recruitment and retention; and identified a series of teleconferences targeted to the specific needs of grantees, including one that focuses on recruiting African American male mentors to their programs, among other types of assistance.⁹⁰ EDC is working with the grant recipients to develop their plans for becoming financially sustainable.

Other Federal Mentoring Support

In addition to the three primary mentoring programs, the federal government supports other mentoring initiatives, administered by CNCS, HHS, and DOJ.⁹¹

Funding Provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service

The Corporation for National and Community Service is an independent federal agency that administers programs to support volunteer services, including

⁸⁷ Ibid, September 2007.

⁸⁸ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, "Application for Training and Technical Assistance for Mentoring Initiative for System Involved Youth," available at [<http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/grants/solicitations/ttamentoring06.pdf>].

⁸⁹ IN FY2007, EDC received a supplement of \$197,446.

⁹⁰ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, September 2007.

⁹¹ This section is not exhaustive of the mentoring services that may be available through other federal programs and initiatives. See, for example, Executive Office of the President, *White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth Final Report*, October 2003, pp. 165-179, available online at [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/docs/white_house_task_force.pdf].

volunteering. CNCS is authorized by two statutes: the National and Community Service Act (P.L. 101-610) of 1990, as amended, and the Domestic Volunteer Service Act (P.L. 93-113) of 1973, as amended. The agency has provided mentoring through two of its volunteer organizations, AmeriCorps and SeniorCorps. In FY2005, CNCS devoted more than \$250 million to support approximately 400,000 youth, including 16,000 children of prisoners, through mentoring, tutoring, and related services.⁹² (The amount of funding for mentoring alone cannot be disaggregated.⁹³) CNCS has also partnered with MENTOR, the mentoring advocacy group, in an effort to match three million youth with mentors by 2010.⁹⁴ The campaign has also secured commitments from corporate and foundation partners for funding to support mentoring programs.

America's Promise. America's Promise, a national nonprofit children's advocacy organization, was formed after the Presidents' Summit for America's Future was convened in Philadelphia in 1997.⁹⁵ The organization promotes five "commitments" (or factors) that attendees at the summit determined to be essential for the success of young people. One of the factors was caring adults who are actively involved in a child's life, such as mentors, parents, teachers, and coaches.⁹⁶ America's Promise has promoted mentoring, and the organization is funded through a combination of federal and private funds. The Corporation for National and Community Service has provided some funding. In FY2006, Congress appropriated \$5 million for the organization from the CNCS budget.⁹⁷ (Congress did not appropriate funds in FY2007 and FY2008.)

⁹² Corporation for National & Community Service, *Issue Brief: National Service and Mentoring*, available at [http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/06_0503_mentoring_issue_brief.pdf].

⁹³ Based on correspondence with the Corporation for National and Community Service, December 2007.

⁹⁴ Corporation for National and Community Service, "Cross-Sector Leaders Unveil Major New Plan to Close Mentoring Gap," press release, May 3, 2006, available at [http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov/about_usafc/newsroom/announcements_dynamic.asp?ID=1299]. (Hereafter referenced as Corporation for National and Community Service, "Close Mentoring Gap.")

⁹⁵ The five surviving Presidents (at that time) convened the summit to mobilize Americans in all sectors to ensure that all youth have adequate resources to assist them in leading healthy, productive lives.

⁹⁶ The organization's 2006 report, *Every Child, Every Promise: A Report on America's Young People*, correlated the presence of the five commitments in young people's lives with success in adolescence and adulthood. The report concluded that children who have at least four of the five commitments are more likely to be academically successful, civically engaged, and socially competent, regardless of their race or family income. The report is available online at [http://www.americaspromise.org/uploadedFiles/AmericasPromise/Our_Work/Strategic_Initiatives/Every_Child_Every_Promise/EC-EP_Documents/MAIN%20REPORT%20DRAFT%2011.1.pdf].

⁹⁷ U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, *Making Appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies for the Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2006, and for Other Purposes*, report to accompany H.R. 3010, 109th Cong., 2nd sess., H.Rept. 109-337 (Washington: GPO, 2006), p. 41.

Federal Mentoring Council

The chief executive officer of CNCS and the Commissioner of HHS's Family and Youth Services Bureau chair the Federal Mentoring Council ("Council"), which is comprised of the leadership teams of eight federal agencies with multiple youth-focused programs.⁹⁸ The Council was created in 2006 to address the ways these agencies can combine resources and training and technical assistance to federally administered mentoring programs, and to serve as a clearinghouse on federal mentoring.⁹⁹ The Council was funded in FY2007 through CNCS, the Department of Education, and the Department of Health and Human Services; CNCS has pledged to continue funding the initiative in FY2008.¹⁰⁰ (The current director of the initiative is funded in FY2008 through the CNCS budget.) A national working group comprised of leading mentoring experts and practitioners (including the chief executive officers of MENTOR, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, the Boys and Girls Club, and America's Promise, among others) advises and shares effective mentoring practices with the Council.¹⁰¹

Since the Council was convened, it has met quarterly to identify federal programs with mentoring components, and training and technical assistance resources for mentoring organizations, which is to be posted on a CNCS-sponsored website; to develop a common set of criteria and broad description of mentoring that can be used across agencies; and to explore how agencies can collaborate in research on youth mentoring.¹⁰² The Council has held a public forum on mentoring and is now developing a mentoring initiative for young people aging out of foster care tentatively known as the Foster Youth Mentoring Campaign.¹⁰³ CNCS anticipates announcing funding for the initiative in January 2008 and beginning to pair mentors and youth in March 2008. The campaign is working to recruit federal employees to

⁹⁸ These leadership teams also serve on the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention ("Coordinating Council"), established by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-415) and administered by the Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The Council's primary functions are to coordinate federal programs and policies concerning juvenile delinquency prevention, unaccompanied juveniles, and missing and exploited children. The Council is led by the Administrator of OJJDP. The Federal Mentoring Council consults with the Coordinating Council.

⁹⁹ U.S. Department of Justice, Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Minutes from the Quarterly Meeting on November 30, 2006, p. 10, available at [<http://www.juvenilecouncil.gov/meetings.html>].

¹⁰⁰ Based on correspondence with the Corporation for National and Community Service, December 2007.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, September 14, 2007, meeting, available at [http://www.juvenilecouncil.gov/materials/2007_09/MeetingSummary%209-14-07-ed.doc].

¹⁰³ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, April 2007.

serve as mentors. The initiative is to incorporate the recommendations of the White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth, including strategies to assist foster youth as they transition to adulthood. Finally, the Council is drafting an Executive Order on mentoring, which would promote mentoring across agencies, including engaging federal employees as mentors.

Funding Provided by the Department of Justice

Since JUMP was discontinued in FY2003, through FY2007, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has awarded more than \$31 million total in funding to support mentoring programs across the country (no funds were appropriated for mentoring programs through the DOJ budget in FY2004).¹⁰⁴ These funds were appropriated under a mentoring line item. Some of this funding has gone to the MISIY program (\$2.6 million in FY2006 only). The balance of this funding has been allocated to community and faith based mentoring organizations through competitive awards and specific set asides in appropriation bills. Most of the funding for these organizations has gone to Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (see below). OJJDP has also funded youth-serving organizations such as the National Network of Youth Ministries, Youth Friends, Virginia Mentoring Partnership, People for People, the Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation, and the Messiah College, among others, to provide mentoring to at-risk youth.

The FY2008 appropriations law (P.L. 110-161) provides a line item of \$70 million for mentoring grants and directs the Office of Justice Programs (which oversees the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention) to provide a report and spending plan to congressional Appropriations Committees that details the scope of the grant program and the criteria and methodology DOJ will employ to award these grants. In its joint explanatory statement to accompany H.R. 2764 (which was signed into law as P.L. 110-161), Congress stated that it expects national programs that have received funding under the Byrne discretionary program¹⁰⁵ or the JJDP Part E program to be eligible for funding under the mentoring grant program.¹⁰⁶

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. In most years from FY1998 to FY2007, the Department of Justice allocated more than \$40 million to Big Brothers

¹⁰⁴ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, December 2007.

¹⁰⁵ Byrne Discretionary Grant program funds activities that are to improve the functioning of the criminal justice system. For additional information, see CRS Report RS22416, *Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program: Legislative and Funding History*, by Nathan James.

¹⁰⁶ U.S. House, Committee on the Rules, Joint Explanatory Statement to Accompany FY2008 Consolidated Appropriations Amendment to H.R. 2764, Division G, available at [http://www.rules.house.gov/110_fy08_omni.htm]. President Bush signed H.R. 2764 (P.L. 110-161) into law on December 26, 2007.

Big Sisters of America and its affiliates in specific set asides in appropriation bills.¹⁰⁷ Funding for the national organization (\$12.4 million in FY1998, \$5.0 million in FY2003, \$6.0 million in FY2004, and \$7.0 million in FY2005 and in FY2006) has been used to build a national infrastructure that supports 450 local affiliates in serving one million children (this initiative is known as “Building Capacity for High-Volume Quality Growth”).¹⁰⁸ Congress has also appropriated funds directly to state and regional affiliates, including Kansas Big Brothers Big Sisters (\$497,750 in 2003 and \$246,807 in FY2006) and Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Georgia (\$98,948 in FY2004).

Also in FY2007, the Department of Justice awarded Part E (Developing, Testing, and Demonstrating Promising New Initiatives and Programs) funds to Big Brothers Big Sisters under a competitive solicitation (Prevention and Intervention Programs) designed to advance juvenile justice, child protection, and/or delinquency prevention by expanding knowledge in these areas.¹⁰⁹ The funding is used to support mentoring services for Alaskan Native youth.

Federal Issues in Mentoring

Three bills have been introduced in the 110th Congress that primarily concern mentoring.¹¹⁰ The Foster Care Mentoring Act (S. 379) seeks to provide additional mentoring services for youth in the foster care system. The Mentoring America’s Children Act (H.R. 2611/S. 1812) would make changes to the SDFS Mentoring program. Issues that may be relevant to this legislation and any discussions around the federal role in mentoring include (1) the limitations of research on outcomes for mentored youth; (2) the potential need for additional mentors, particularly for vulnerable populations; (3) grantees’ challenges in sustaining funding; and (4) the possible discontinuation of federal mentoring funding.

Limited Research on Mentored Youth Outcomes

A few positive evaluations of mentoring programs may have provided some justification for federal support of these programs.¹¹¹ The 1995 landmark study of community-based mentoring programs at select Big Brothers and Big Sisters chapters

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, November 2007.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *OJJDP FY2007 Prevention and Intervention Programs grant solicitation*, available online at [<http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/grants/solicitations/FY2007/intervention.pdf>].

¹¹⁰ Other legislation (most notably, H.R. 3168 and S. 990) authorizes programs and funding for mentoring, among additional activities.

¹¹¹ 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. (Hereafter referenced as Walker, “Youth Mentoring and Public Policy.”)

demonstrated that mentored youth were less likely than their non-mentored counterparts to use drugs and alcohol, hit someone, and skip school, among other outcomes. A recent evaluation of the Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring program found similar promising results for mentored youth. Nonetheless, findings from these and other studies are limited and/or show that mentoring is limited in improving all youth 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, are short-lived and that mentored youth do not improve in certain areas (see pages 7 and 8 for a more detailed discussion).

A related issue is the use of mentoring techniques, such as group mentoring, that have not been rigorously evaluated. The Mentoring Initiative for System-Involved Youth grant solicitation encouraged applicants to “consider a variety of mentoring approaches, such as one-to-one, group, student/peer, team education, and sports mentoring; professional development coaching; and other approaches best suited to meet the needs of the target population.”¹¹² Two of the MISIY grantees appear to use group mentoring or team-based mentoring as a primary technique, and one of the programs uses therapeutic mentoring provided by paid case managers.¹¹³ The 2004 GAO report on the Safe and Drug Free Schools Mentoring program found that 3% of grantees used group mentoring exclusively and that 20% used group mentoring in combination with one-to-one mentoring.¹¹⁴ Compared to mentoring pairs, these other mentoring techniques have not been thoroughly evaluated.

Finally, researchers have noted that evaluations of certain mentoring techniques are often not in place prior to implementation. In response to GAO’s finding that the SDFS Mentoring program lacked an evaluative component, the Department of Education has contracted with a research organization to evaluate outcomes of students in programs funded by the program.

¹¹² U.S. Department of Justice, “Application for Funding: Mentoring Initiative for System Involved Youth.”

¹¹³ Mentoring programs for juvenile justice-involved youth that employ paraprofessionals may be the most appropriate and cost effective. See Elaine A. Blechman and Jedediah M. Bopp, “Special Populations: Youth Offenders,” in David L. Dubois and Michael J. Karcher, eds., *Handbook of Youth Mentoring*, (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2005).

¹¹⁴ GAO, *Student Mentoring Programs*, p. 15.

Gap in Mentoring Services

A 2002 poll by MENTOR, a mentor advocacy group, estimated that 15 million at-risk¹¹⁵ youth need a mentor.¹¹⁶ Recruiting and retaining volunteers appears to be a major challenge for mentoring organizations, including those funded through federal mentoring programs.¹¹⁷ In its 2004 report of the Safe and Drug Free Schools Mentoring program, GAO found that new grantees had more difficulty than established grantees in recruiting and supporting mentors.¹¹⁸ Similarly, HHS reports that some mentors in organizations that receive Mentoring Children of Prisoners' funding have dropped out before being matched with a youth because of the time and energy commitment mentoring entails.¹¹⁹ 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.¹²⁰ Further, 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.

To address the perceived mentoring gap, the Corporation for National and Community Service has partnered with MENTOR to match three million youth with mentors by 2010. The campaign has also secured commitments from corporate and foundation partners for funding to support research on mentoring programs and engage their networks of employees in mentoring. The Federal Mentoring Council is also undertaking efforts to recruit federal employees to serve as 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.¹²¹ According to a 2005 study by MENTOR, less than one-fifth of mentors reported mentoring a youth involved in the

¹¹⁵ This definition encompasses youth with poor academic performance or substance abuse issues, or are sexually active, and may overstate the number of youth who need mentoring.

¹¹⁶ MENTOR, "The National Agenda For Action: How to Close America's Mentoring Gap," 2006, available at [<http://www.mentoring.org/leaders/files/nationalagenda.pdf>], p. 10.

¹¹⁷ 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. (Hereafter referenced as Astukas and Tanti, "Recruiting and Sustaining Volunteer Mentors.")

¹¹⁸ GAO, *Student Mentoring Programs*, pp. 20-21.

¹¹⁹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Report to Congress: The Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program*, September 2007.

¹²⁰ Astukas and Tanti, "Recruiting and Sustaining Volunteer Mentors," pp. 235-249.

¹²¹ Walker, "Youth Mentoring and Public Policy," pp. 509-510.

juvenile justice or foster care systems or with a parent in prison.¹²² However, most of these mentors said they would be willing to work with vulnerable youth populations. Recent efforts to recruit volunteers for vulnerable populations are also underway, as evidenced by two of the three current federal mentoring programs that target youth involved in the foster care or juvenile justice systems and children with imprisoned parents. In addition, provisions in the proposed Foster Care Mentoring Act (S. 379) are intended to help recruit mentors for children in the foster care system. These provisions would forgive the federal student loan debt of mentors who serve 200 hours each year, at \$2,000 each year, not to exceed \$20,000 total. Nonetheless, potential mentors may still be discouraged from working with youth facing serious personal difficulties. In addition, creating financial incentives for mentors may raise the concern that this type of mentoring would not be strictly voluntary.

Sustaining Resources

Some organizations that receive federal mentoring grants report challenges with securing diverse sources of funding and expanding their programs because of limited funding.¹²³ While the Safe and Drug Free Schools Mentoring program does not require grantees to provide a match, they are ineligible to apply for subsequent grants, even in the last year of the grant cycle. (They may, however, apply for other Department of Education grants for which they are eligible and/or apply for subsequent SDFS Mentoring grants after the grant cycle ends.) For example, grantees awarded funds in FY2007 are only eligible to apply for a subsequent grant after FY2009, the final year of their grant. This may lead to gaps in funding for organizations that rely on federal dollars to sustain their services. According to the Department of Education, grantees must wait to reapply for continuation grants because the agency would like to provide funding opportunities for new grantees and to encourage current grantees to secure other sources of funding.¹²⁴

To improve the prospects that organizations continue providing mentoring services beyond the life of their grants, the three federal mentoring programs provide training and technical assistance to help grantees in becoming financially sustainable.¹²⁵ For example, the Education Development Center is working with MISIY grantees to develop strategies and tools to secure additional financial

¹²² MENTOR, "Mentoring in America," 2006, available at [<http://www.mentoring.org/leaders/files/pollreport.pdf>].

¹²³ Erika Fitzpatrick, "Surviving Without Uncle Sam's Money: Mentoring Grant Cutoff Sparks Talk About How to Diversify Funding," *Youth Today*, June 2007, p. 10.

¹²⁴ Based on correspondence with U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, December 2007. Also, see U.S. Department of Education, "Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools: Notice of Final Eligibility Requirement," 71 *Federal Register* 70369, December 4, 2006.

¹²⁵ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Family and Youth Services Bureau, November 2007; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, September 2007; and U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, September 2007.

resources. EDC has conducted pre-assessments of the grantees to gauge their need for this type of assistance.¹²⁶ Further, pending legislation to reauthorize the Safe and Drug Free Schools program would enable grantees to reapply for additional funding after their grant terminates. The Mentoring America's Children Act (H.R. 2611/S. 1812) would enable grantees to seek additional funding. Specifically, the act provides that in awarding grants, the Secretary must consider entities who have received prior grant funding only if they meet specific criteria: (i) performance during the initial grant cycle was satisfactory, in terms of program design and number of children served (*the bills do not specify which entity or persons are to determine if the performance was satisfactory*); (ii) the subsequent grant is to support expanded services to a new geographic area or target population; and (iii) the eligible entity demonstrates that it is able to provide a 50% match to federal funds for all three years of the new grant. The act would also require first-time grantees to provide a match of at least 10% in the first year, at least 25% in the second year, and 50% in the third year.

Possible Discontinuation of Select Federal Mentoring Funding

Funding appears uncertain for two of the three primary federal mentoring programs. The Administration has proposed eliminating the Safe and Drug Free Schools Program, claiming that the program has met its objectives.¹²⁷ Funding for the program will continue in FY2008, pursuant to the FY2008 appropriations law (P.L. 110-161) signed by the President on December 26, 2007. MISIY is funded as a pilot project that may not continue beyond FY2009, the last year of grant funding. The Administration plans to await results from the evaluation prior to determining the feasibility of expanding the program.¹²⁸ However, a pending omnibus crime control bill (S. 2237) proposes to expand the MISIY program to additional sites and authorize an annual appropriation of \$4.8 million for FY2008 to FY2012.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ U.S. Department of Education, *FY2008 Education Budget Request*, available at [<http://www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget08/summary/edlite-section2a.html#sdfsc>].

¹²⁸ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, September 2007.

¹²⁹ The bill proposes to amend Section 261(a) of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5665(a)) by adding, "The Administrator shall expand the number of sites receiving [MISIY] grants from 4 to 12." *This proposed change appears to be a drafting error.* Section 261(a) does not currently authorize funding *specifically* for MISIY or any other pilot project; rather, it authorizes funds *generally* for demonstration grants and projects.

Appendix

Table A-1: Mentoring Children of Prisoners: Demographics and Characteristics of Children, Mentors, and Relationships (FY2006)

Demographic or Characteristic	
Total Number of Matches	27,525
Average age of youth	11 years
Percent of children who were male	44%
Percent of mentors who were male	38%
Total number of matches that began in FY2006 and were across gender (e.g., female mentor and male youth)	2,461 (8.9%)
Total number of matches that began in FY2006 and were across race or ethnicity (e.g., Asian mentor and white youth)	6,380 (23.2%)
Average number of days youth was waiting for a mentor	53 days
Share of children with fewer than 12 hours of regular mentor/youth contact during the past quarter (i.e., four-month period)	24%
Share of children with 12 to 24 hours of regular mentor/youth contact during the past quarter	22%
Share of children with more than 24 hours of regular mentor/youth contact during the past quarter	32%
Share of children for whom the frequency or length of their contacts with mentors is unknown	22%
Average number of initial pre-match training/orientation(s) per mentor	5
Average number of hours post-match training per mentor	4.5
Average number of staff follow-up contacts in person or by phone per mentor per fiscal quarter addressing the following: key mentor skills, commitment, or mentor's response to child crisis or other critical issue in child's life	15.7

Source: Congressional Research Service presentation of data provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, June and December 2007.