



Vulnerable Youth: Federal Mentoring Programs and Issues

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Summary

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

Approximately 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. Evaluations of the BBBS program and studies of other mentoring programs demonstrate an association between mentoring and some positive outcomes, but the effects of mentoring on particular outcomes and the ability for mentored youth to sustain gains over time are less certain.

The federal government provides funding for mentoring primarily through a grant program to the Department of Justice (DOJ), with annual appropriations for the program of about \$80 million to \$100 million in recent years. This funding is used for research and direct mentoring services to select populations of youth, such as those involved or at risk of being involved in the juvenile justice system. Separately, other DOJ funds are used to provide mentoring to Indian youth and youth who are reentering the community after being in a correctional facility. Other federal agencies provide or are authorized to support mentoring as one aspect of a larger program. For example, select programs carried out by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) can provide mentoring, among other services. Youth ChalleNGe, an educational and leadership program for at-risk youth administered by the Department of Defense (DOD), includes mentoring as an aspect of its program. Federal agencies also coordinate on federal mentoring issues. The Federal Mentoring Council serves as a clearinghouse on mentoring issues for the federal government.

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

Issues relevant to the federal role in mentoring include the limitations of research on outcomes for mentored youth, the potential need for additional mentors, grantees' challenges in sustaining funding, and the possible discontinuation of federal mentoring funding.

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Recent Developments

In recent years, two mentoring programs—the Mentoring Children of Prisoners (MCP) program and Safe and Drug Free Schools (SDFS) Mentoring program—have provided a significant source of federal funding for mentoring services. However, the programs were short-lived: funding for the MCP program, carried out by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) since FY2003, was discontinued beginning in FY2011; and funding for the SDFS program, carried out by the Department of Education (ED) since FY2002, was discontinued beginning in FY2010. Congress continues to support another mentoring program administered by the Department of Justice (DOJ). Funding for this program declined from FY2011 to FY2012.

Separately, a law (P.L. 112-34) enacted on September 30, 2011, extended authorization for programs that have been authorized in the past with the MCP program; however, the law did not extend program or funding authorization for the MCP program, which most recently had been authorized to receive “such sums as may be necessary” for each of FY2007-FY2011.

FY2012 Appropriations

After passing two temporary appropriations measures, Congress provided final funding for DOJ and select other departments under the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2012 (P.L. 112-55), including \$78 million for the mentoring program. For FY2012, the Administration proposed funding for DOJ mentoring grants at \$45 million.¹ According to the Administration, this decrease was proposed as part of the overall goal of reducing the deficit.

FY2011 Appropriations

On April 15, 2011, President Obama signed the Department of Defense and Full Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 (P.L. 112-10), which provided almost \$276 million (\$275,975,000) for DOJ programs authorized under the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A), including the JJDP A mentoring program.² This was a reduction of \$56.5 million (or 17%) from the FY2010 level of \$332.5 million for JJDP A programs.³ By applying this same percentage (17%) to the mentoring program, which was funded at \$100 million in FY2010, it received \$83 million under P.L. 112-10. P.L. 112-10 included an across-the-board rescission for most programs, which further reduced funding for the program to \$82.8 million.⁴ However, P.L. 112-10 also gave the Department of Defense (DOD) the option to transfer \$20 million for DOJ mentoring grants. DOD transferred these funds, bringing the total funding for the program to \$102.8 million.

¹ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, *FY2012 Performance Budget*, p. 232, <http://www.justice.gov/jmd/2012justification/pdf/fy12-ojp-justification.pdf>.

² FY2011 began on October 1, 2010. Until April 15, 2011, funding for FY2011 was provided at FY2010 levels for most programs under a series of continuing resolutions.

³ JJDP A programs received \$423,595,000 in FY2010, including \$91,095,000 in earmarks. The \$332.5 million excludes the earmarks, per P.L. 112-10.

⁴ Congressional Research Service (CRS) analysis of FY2011 appropriations law.

P.L. 112-10 does not reference the Mentoring Children of Prisoners (MCP) program;⁵ however, it was included in a table, provided by the House Appropriations Committee, showing programs to be eliminated or reduced in funding.⁶ HHS has interpreted the FY2011 funding law (P.L. 112-10) to mean that the program would not be funded in FY2011.⁷

Introduction

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 such program, was implemented in 1994 to provide mentoring services for at-risk youth ages 5 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.

Although there is no single overarching policy today on mentoring, the federal government has supported multiple mentoring efforts for vulnerable youth since JUMP was discontinued in FY2003, including the Mentoring Children of Prisoners (MCP) program, administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS); and the Safe and Drug Free Schools (SDFS) Mentoring program, which was administered by the Department of Education (ED). These programs were discontinued in FY2010 and FY2009, respectively. The purpose of these programs was 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 through short-term grants and initiatives. Many of these grants are carried out by the Department of Justice (DOJ), which has allocated funding for multiple mentoring initiatives, including mentoring for certain vulnerable youth and research on mentoring. In addition, the federal government has provided funding to programs with vulnerable youth that have a strong (but not exclusive) mentoring component. Youth ChalleNGe, an educational and leadership program for at-risk youth administered by the Department of Defense, helps to engage youth in work and school, and leadership opportunities. Adult mentors assist enrolled youth with their transition from the program for at least one year. Finally, federal agencies coordinate on mentoring issues. The Federal Mentoring Council was created in 2006 to address the ways agencies can combine resources and training and technical assistance to federally administered mentoring programs, and to serve as a clearinghouse on mentoring issues for the federal government.

⁵ Unlike other recent appropriation acts, P.L. 112-10 is not accompanied by a published table and an explanatory statement indicating congressional intent for program funding levels.

⁶ U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, "Historic Spending Cuts the Centerpiece for Final Continuing Resolution (CR) for Fiscal Year 2011," press release, 112th Congress, April 12, 2011, http://appropriations.house.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressReleases.Detail&PressRelease_id=285&Month=4&Year=2011.

⁷ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, *FY2011 Operating Plan*, <http://www.hhs.gov/asfr/ob/docbudget/2011operatingplan.html>.

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 two recent (discontinued) 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.⁸ These programs are not discussed in this report. The report concludes with an overview of issues that may be of interest to Congress. These issues include the limitations of research on outcomes for mentored youth, the 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.⁹ 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 at "high risk" of certain negative outcomes.¹⁰

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 programs.¹¹ Mentors provide academic assistance and

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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. (Hereinafter, Government Accountability Office, *Student Mentoring Programs*.) After this report was issued, the name of the General Accounting Office was changed to the Government Accountability Office.

¹⁰ 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-Alcantara.

¹¹ Government Accountability Office, *Student Mentoring Programs*, p. 6.

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.¹² These early organizations provided practical assistance to youth, including help with finding employment, and created recreational outlets. The most prominent mentoring organization at the time, Big Brothers (now known as Big Brothers Big Sisters of America), continues today as the oldest mentoring organization in the country.¹³

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.¹⁴ 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.¹⁵ 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.¹⁶ Then Secretary of Labor Elizabeth Dole made the case for mentoring as a way to improve the lives of youth and prepare them for the workforce.¹⁷ 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 2 million vulnerable youth.¹⁸

¹² 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.

¹³ 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. (Hereinafter, U.S. Department of Justice, *Big Brothers Big Sisters*.)

¹⁴ Marc Freedman, *The Kindness of Strangers: Mentors, Urban Youth, and the New Volunteerism* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993), p. 5. (Hereinafter, Freedman, *The Kindness of Strangers*.)

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Justice, "Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP) Guidelines," *59 Federal Register* 3820, July 28, 1994.

¹⁶ Freedman, *The Kindness of Strangers*, p. 4. The Points of Light Foundation is funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

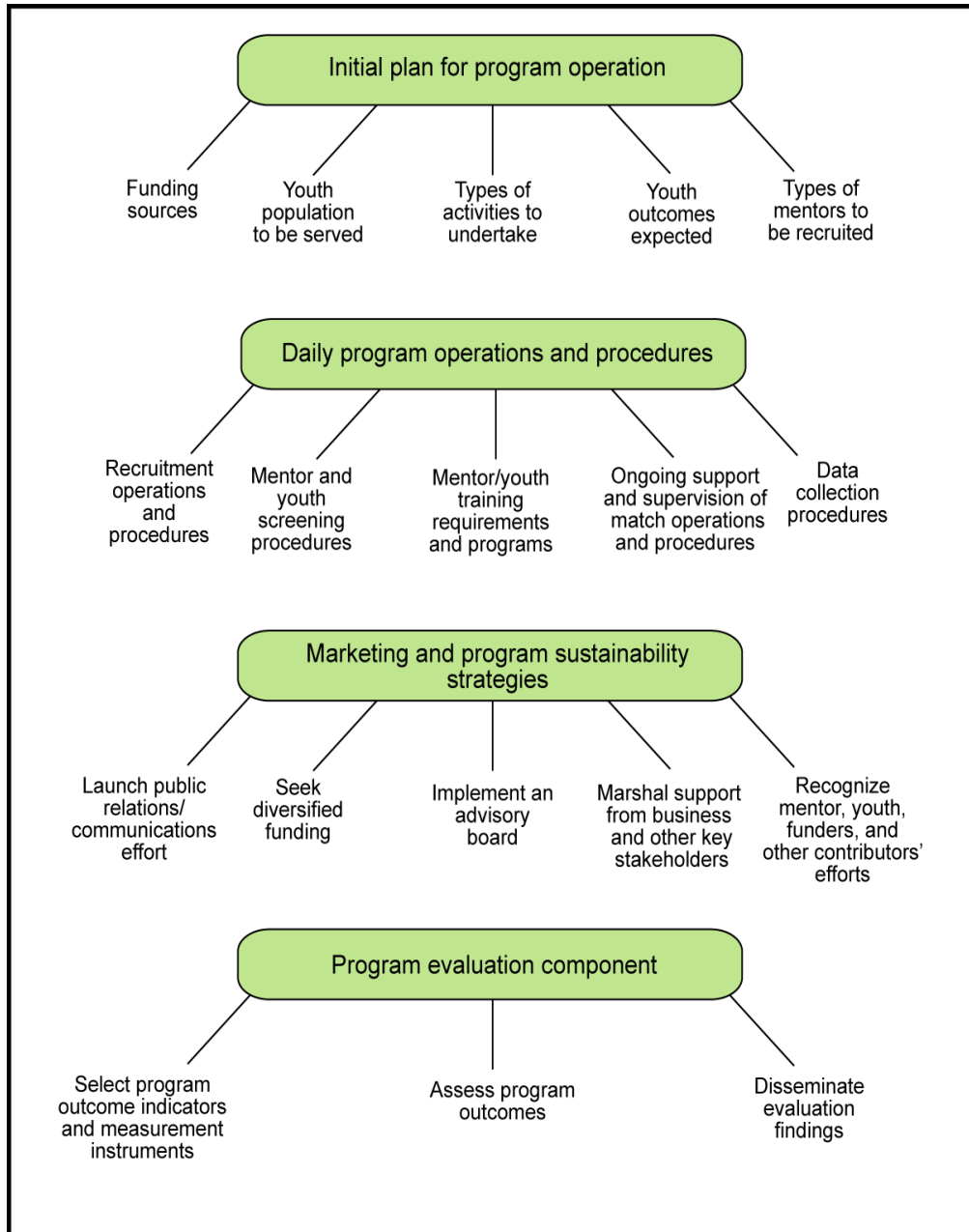
¹⁸ The Presidents' Summit on America's Future, *Remarks at the Presidents' Summit on America's Future*, available at http://clinton3.nara.gov/WH/New/Summit/Remarks_index.html.

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.¹⁹ 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 some of the elements, policies, and procedures of effective mentoring programs, as identified in a report by MENTOR, Incorporated, a national mentoring advocacy group and clearinghouse on mentoring issues.

¹⁹ See, Jean Baldwin Grossman, ed., *Contemporary Issues in Mentoring, Public/Private Ventures*, p. 6.; Mentor/National Mentoring Partnership, "Elements of Effective Practice in Mentoring," 3rd ed., 2009; 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. (Hereinafter, Rhodes and DuBois, "Understanding and Facilitating the Youth Mentoring Movement.")

Figure 1. Select Elements, Policies, and Procedures of Effective Mentoring Programs



Source: Congressional Research Service, based on Figure 1 in GAO, *Student Mentoring Programs*. This information is presented in MENTOR Incorporated, “Elements of Effective Practice in Mentoring,” 3rd ed., 2009. (The GAO figure was based on an earlier, and similar, edition of the document.)

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.²⁰ 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

A 2011 analysis assessed findings from 73 mentoring evaluations to determine the effectiveness of mentoring.²¹ The analysis reviewed evaluations, published between 1999 and 2010,²² of mentoring programs that were intended to promote positive youth outcomes through relationships between children and youth under age 18 and adults (or older youth) serving as mentors. The analysis encompasses programs that used various formats and strategies—including those that used paid mentors, older mentors, and group formats—and took place for a relatively brief period (e.g., a few months). Each of the evaluations included a comparison group of youth who were not mentored. In some programs, the youth were randomly assigned to participate in the comparison group, while in other programs the comparison group consisted of youth who did not participate in the mentoring program for some other reason, such as attending a school where the mentoring program was not offered.

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

²⁰ Rhodes and DuBois, "Understanding and Facilitating the Youth Mentoring Movement," p. 9.

²¹ David L. DuBois et al., "How Effective Are Mentoring Programs for Youth? A Systematic Assessment of the Evidence," *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, vol. 12, no. 2 (2011). (Hereinafter, DuBois et al., "How Effective Are Mentoring Programs for Youth? A Systematic Assessment of the Evidence.")

²² An earlier analysis assessed findings from 55 evaluations of youth mentoring programs that had been published through 1998. See David L. DuBois et al., "Effectiveness of Mentoring Programs: A Meta-Analytical Review," *American Journal of Community Psychology*, vol. 30, no. 2 (2002).

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

Examples of the Positive Effects of Mentoring

Some studies have shown strong gains for youth who are mentored. These studies use experimental design, meaning that some youth are randomly assigned to receive a mentor (the treatment group) and others are randomly selected to not receive mentoring (the control group). There is wide consensus that using randomized assignment allows researchers to best estimate the impact of an intervention such as mentoring.²³

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 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.²⁴

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 others²⁵) with an experimental design found that the outcomes for youth with a mentor were better than outcomes for their counterparts without a mentor.²⁶ These outcomes included the following:

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

²³ For further information, see CRS Report RL33301, *Congress and Program Evaluation: An Overview of Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) and Related Issues*, by Clinton T. Brass, Erin D. Williams, and Blas Nuñez-Neto.

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ These programs are a sampling of some of the programs profiled.

²⁶ Susan Jekielek et al., *Mentoring Programs and Youth Development: A Synthesis*, Child Trends, January 2002, available at http://www.childtrends.org/what_works/clarkwww/mentor/mentorrrpt.pdf. (Hereinafter, Jekielek et al., *Mentoring Programs and Youth Development*.)

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

Similarly, a 2007 study of Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring programs, with adults serving as mentors, demonstrated some positive results. This study—among the most rigorous scientific evaluations of a school-based mentoring program—found that mentored youth (randomly selected into the treatment group) made improvements in their first year in overall academic performance, feeling more competent about school, and skipping school, among other areas, compared to their non-mentored counterparts (randomly selected into the control group).²⁷

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.²⁸ In the 2007 Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring evaluation, the nonschool related outcomes, including substance use and self worth, did not improve.²⁹

Other research has indicated that mentored youth make small gains or do not sustain positive gains over time.³⁰ 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 2007 Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring evaluation found that, in the second year of the program, none of the academic gains were maintained (however, mentored youth were less likely to skip school, and more likely to feel that they would start and finish college).³¹ 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.³² A 2008 study of Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring that used high school students as mentors and drew on data used for the 2007 study, found that while the mentored students experienced gains on some outcomes, the improvements were not sustained for students who ended their involvement in the program after one school year (the minimum time commitment).³³ Similarly, a recent

²⁷ 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/publication.asp?section_id=22&search_id=&publication_id=220. (Hereinafter, Herrera et al., *Making a Difference in Schools*.)

²⁸ Jekielek et al., *Mentoring Programs and Youth Development*, p. 15.

²⁹ Herrera et al., *Making a Difference in Schools*, pp. 37-38.

³⁰ Rhodes and DuBois, "Understanding and Facilitating the Youth Mentoring Movement," pp. 3-5.

³¹ Herrera et al., *Making a Difference in Schools*, pp. 47-78.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. iv-v.

³³ Carla Herrera et al., *High School Students as Mentors: Findings from the Big Brothers Big Sisters School-Based Mentoring Impact Study*, Public/Private Ventures, September 2008, available at http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publication.asp?section_id=22&search_id=&publication_id=252.

evaluation of the federal school-based mentoring program demonstrates that the program did not have an impact on students overall in terms of interpersonal relationships, academic outcomes, and delinquent behaviors.³⁴

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.

Department of Justice Mentoring Program

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 (JJDP) 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.³⁵ 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 (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 a new Part C (Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Block Grant Program, to be used for activities designed to prevent juvenile delinquency). The act also created a new Part 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 relatively small amount of funding appropriated for JUMP may have been a factor in its elimination. The report states: “In creating this block grant, the [Senate Judiciary] Committee has eliminated separate categorical programs under current law.... Funding for the Part E—State Challenge Activities and Part G—Mentoring Program received minimal funding.”³⁶ The report goes on to say that the committee does not discourage mentoring activities under the Part C block grant program.³⁷

³⁴ Lawrence Bernstein et al., *Impact Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education’s Student Mentoring Program Final Report*, Abt Associates, March 2009, available at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20094047/>. (Hereinafter, Bernstein et al., *Impact Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education’s Student Mentoring Program Final Report*.)

³⁵ Sen. Frank R. Lautenberg, “Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Authorization Act,” remarks in the Senate, *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 138 (October 7, 1992).

³⁶ U.S. Congress, House Committee on Education and the Workforce, *Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 2001*, report to accompany H.R. 1900, 107th Cong., 1st sess. H.Rept. 107-203 (Washington: GPO, 2001), p. 31. An evaluation of JUMP found that the program did not recruit the desired number of mentors, that many of the relationships appeared to have ended prematurely, and that some youth outcomes did not improve. Nonetheless, the results of the evaluation do not appear to have been a factor in eliminating the program.

³⁷ 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 (continued...)

After the JUMP program was discontinued with the end of FY2003, the Bush Administration 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.³⁸ However, in the years since JUMP's discontinuation, Congress has appropriated mentoring funds under a separate mentoring line item titled "Mentoring Part G" or "Mentoring;" the line item does not specify under which part of the JJDP, as amended, the funding is authorized.³⁹ The Department of Justice has interpreted the appropriations language as requiring the agency to allocate funds pursuant to old Part G.⁴⁰ Below is a discussion of funding appropriated to the Department of Justice for mentoring since JUMP was discontinued.

Funding

The JUMP Program ended in FY2003 and Congress resumed funding for DOJ mentoring in FY2005. Since this time, Congress has provided \$9.9 million to \$102.8 million annually for mentoring. See **Table 1** below.

Table 1. FY2005-FY2012 Appropriated Funding for the Department of Justice Mentoring Program
(\$ in millions)

FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012
\$15.0	\$10.0	\$9.9	\$70.0	\$80.0	\$100.0	\$102.8	\$78.0

Source: Congressional budget submission for the Office of Justice Programs, FY2008-FY2011; FY2011 funding data based on Department of Defense and Full Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 (P.L. 112-10); and FY2012 funding based on Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2012 (P.L. 112-55).

After passing two temporary appropriation measures, Congress provided final FY2012 funding for DOJ under an appropriations law for selected departments (P.L. 112-55), including \$78 million for the mentoring grants, a reduction of nearly \$4 million from FY2011 funding.⁴¹ As of early January 2012, funding solicitations have not been announced for the program

(...continued)

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

³⁸ 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.

³⁹ 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).

⁴⁰ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, November 2007.

⁴¹ For FY2012, the Administration proposed funding for DOJ mentoring grants at \$45 million. According to the Administration, this decrease was proposed as part of the overall goal of reducing the deficit. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, *FY2012 Performance Budget*, p. 232, <http://www.justice.gov/jmd/2012justification/pdf/fy12-ojp-justification.pdf>.

The FY2011 appropriations law (P.L. 112-10) provided almost \$276 million (\$275,975,000) for programs authorized under the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP), including the JJDP mentoring program.⁴² This was a reduction of \$56.5 million (or 17%) from the FY2010 level of \$332.5 million for JJDP programs.⁴³ By applying this same percentage (17%) to the mentoring program, which was funded at \$100 million in FY2010, it received \$83 million under P.L. 112-10. That law included an across-the-board rescission for most programs, which further reduced funding for the program to \$82.8 million. However, P.L. 112-10 also gave DOD the option to transfer \$20 million for DOJ mentoring grants. DOD transferred these funds, bringing the total funding for the program to \$102.8 million. Of this amount, \$99.9 million was allocated for mentoring grants and \$2.9 million was used for grant performance measure reporting, OJJDP technical assistance and training, peer review costs, and grant monitoring costs.

In January 2011, in anticipation of final funding for FY2011, OJJDP sought comments about the office's FY2011 proposed spending plan. OJJDP issued a notice on its final spending plan in July 2011, which stated that it would fund multiple mentoring grants to reduce juvenile delinquency and gang participation, improve academic performance, and reduce the school dropout rate.⁴⁴ DOJ subsequently allocated funding under multiple mentoring grants, including grants to support mentoring programs and research. Separately, OJJDP provided \$3.0 million for mentoring under the Tribal Youth program, and \$5.4 million (via DOJ's Bureau of Justice Affairs) for mentoring authorized under the Second Chance Act. **Table 2** summarizes the purpose and goals of these activities. For example, one of the grants funds research on mentoring while others provide direct services. Of those grants that fund direct services, some provide mentoring to multiple groups of at-risk youth and other grants focus on youth with disabilities and youth who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

⁴² U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, "Historic Spending Cuts the Centerpiece for Final Continuing Resolution (CR) for Fiscal Year 2011," press release, 112th Congress, April 12, 2011, http://appropriations.house.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressReleases.Detail&PressRelease_id=285&Month=4&Year=2011.

⁴³ JJDP programs received \$423,595,000 in FY2010, including \$91,095,000 in earmarks. The \$332.5 million excludes the earmarks, per P.L. 112-10.

⁴⁴ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, "Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Proposed Plan for Fiscal Year 2011," 76 *Federal Register* 2135, January 15, 2011; and U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, "Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Final Plan for Fiscal Year 2011," 76 *Federal Register* 40394, July 8, 2011.

Table 2. Description of Department of Justice Mentoring Grants, FY2011

Mentoring Grant	Description	Entities Eligible to Apply	Number of Grantees and Award Amounts	Total Amount of Funding
DOJ Mentoring Program Grants				
National Mentoring Programs	The grant seeks to strengthen and expand existing mentoring activities. The grant prioritizes programs that seek to increase participation of mentors from underrepresented groups, target children of single-parent families, and make truancy prevention a priority. The goal of the grant is to reduce juvenile delinquency, drug abuse, truancy, and other high-risk behaviors.	National organizations, which are those with an active program or programs with a financial relationship with affiliates in at least 45 states.	Five awards ranging from \$3.0 million to \$48.3 million	\$72,930,000 ^a
Multi-state Mentoring Initiative	The grant seeks to enhance the capacity of organizations to develop or expand their current mentoring programs that strive to reduce juvenile delinquency and gang participation, improve academic performance, and reduce school dropout rates. These programs must have a strategy for supporting the involvement of parents of mentoring participants or providing/coordinating services for them, providing opportunities for structured activities for mentoring matches, and providing ongoing options for mentors to further develop their mentoring-related skills and abilities.	Private nonprofit and for-profit organizations, including faith-based, community-based, and tribal organizations. The organizations must have been in existence for at least three years, have had programs in five or more states for at least a full calendar year, and have a strong presence in their communities. National organizations—those with a program or programs or affiliates in at least 45 states—are ineligible to apply.	Nine awards ranging from \$570,000 to \$3.0 million	\$21,070,000 ^b
Research on Best Practices for Mentoring	The grant seeks to support research that will further the understanding of evidence-based and effective practices in mentoring programs that serve at-risk youth. The goal is to generate research that has practical application for these programs.	States, including territories; units of local government, including federally recognized tribal governments; nonprofit and for-profit organizations, including tribal nonprofit and for-profit organizations; and institutions of higher education, including tribal institutions of higher education.	Five awards ranging from \$283,987 to \$500,000	\$2,218,963

Mentoring Grant	Description	Entities Eligible to Apply	Number of Grantees and Award Amounts	Total Amount of Funding
Mentoring for Youth with Disabilities Initiative	The grant seeks to support the prevention and reduction of delinquency and other negative behaviors (e.g., truancy, school disciplinary infractions) in at-risk youth with disabilities and to enhance their positive behaviors and personal strengths, among other attributes. The program seeks to fund organizational and community capacity building to effectively serve youth with disabilities, including the creation or improvement of training for staff, mentors, and community members focused on supporting youth with disabilities; the design or integration of a well-coordinated network of services to meet youth and family needs; the development of creative strategies to recruit and retain mentors and mentored youth; and the creation of a culturally competent system to elicit and sustain family, school, and community involvement	States, including territories; units of local government, including federally recognized tribal governments; nonprofit and for-profit organizations, including tribal nonprofit and for-profit organizations; and institutions of higher education, including tribal institutions of higher education.	Eight awards ranging from \$238,797 to \$280,964	\$2,205,393
Mentoring for Child Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation Initiative	The grant seeks to support efforts of community service organizations to develop or enhance their mentoring capacity, facilitate outreach efforts, and increase the availability of direct services for child victims (younger than age 18) of commercial sexual exploitation or domestic sex trafficking, including children who are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents. The grant recipient(s) will integrate promising practices and proven principles into mentoring service models; develop strategies to recruit, train, support, and maintain mentors; and provide a comprehensive array of support services to empower children to move past their experiences with victimization to develop their full potential.	States, including territories; units of local government, including federally recognized tribal governments; nonprofit and for-profit organizations, including tribal nonprofit and for-profit organizations; and institutions of higher education, including tribal institutions of higher education.	Three awards ranging from \$499,831 to \$500,000	\$1,499,831
<i>Total Funding for DOJ Mentoring Program</i>				\$99,924,187 ^c

Mentoring Grant	Description	Entities Eligible to Apply	Number of Grantees and Award Amounts	Total Amount of Funding
Other DOJ Mentoring Grants, Administered by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention				
Tribal Youth National Mentoring Program ^d	The grant seeks to build the capacity of tribes to develop and implement culturally sensitive mentoring activities on tribal reservations. Funded mentoring programs are to strengthen and expand mentoring activities in reservation communities that intend to increase participation of tribal youth in interactions with adult tribal mentors. Programs must incorporate best practices based on research and consider a variety of national and tribal mentoring approaches and consult with tribes in developing a mentoring program.	National organizations, including community, secular, and faith-based nonprofit organizations and federally recognized tribal governments. National organizations are those with an active program or programs with affiliates in at least 45 states.	Two awards ranging from \$1.0 million to \$2.0 million	\$2,999,854
Second Chance Juvenile Mentoring Initiative ^e	The grant seeks to support the successful and safe transition of youth offenders from correctional facilities to their communities through mentoring programs and transitional services. Funded mentoring programs are to integrate best practices and proven principles into mentoring service models, develop strategies to recruit and maintain mentors, and assess and develop services to respond to the needs of youth offenders reentering their communities. The grant seeks to reduce recidivism among youth ex-offenders, enhance the safety of communities, and enhance the capacity of local partnerships to address the needs of youth ex-offenders.	Public agencies, including state agencies, units of local government, public universities and colleges, and tribal governments; and private nonprofit organizations, including faith-based, tribal, and community organizations.	Nine awards ranging from \$547,083 to \$609,310	\$5,408,358

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) review of grant announcements, available at http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/funding/archived_solicitations_11.htm; and of grant awards, available at <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/funding/funding.html>; and correspondence with the Department of Justice, October and November 2011.

- a. This includes \$16,930,000 in DOD funding for mentoring, per Section 1809 of the Department of Defense Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act (P.L. 112-10). The purpose of these funds is to support mentoring of children in military families.
- b. This includes \$3,070,000 in DOD funding for mentoring, per Section 1809 of the Department of Defense Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act (P.L. 112-10). The purpose of these funds is to support mentoring of children in military families.
- c. This includes \$20 million in DOD funding for mentoring, per Section 1809 of the Department of Defense Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act (P.L. 112-10), bringing total funding to \$102.8 million for the

- program. Of the \$102.8 million, \$2.9 million went to costs for grantee performance measures reporting, overall technical assistance and training, peer review costs, and grant monitoring costs.
- d. This program is authorized by the Second Chance Act (P.L. 110-199) and funded by an account within the DOJ's Bureau of Justice Affairs.
 - e. This program is authorized by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, as amended, and funded by the Tribal Youth Program, which is administered by OJJDP.

In addition to the DOJ mentoring program, the federal government supports mentoring through short-term grants and congressionally directed appropriations, and by funding programs that have a strong, but not exclusive, focus on mentoring. Efforts to support mentoring are carried out both independently and jointly by the Corporation for National and Community Service, Department of Health and Human Services, and Department of Defense.⁴⁵

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. CNCS is authorized by two statutes: the National and Community Service Act (NCSA, P.L. 101-610) of 1990, as amended, and the Domestic Volunteer Service Act (DVSA, P.L. 93-113) of 1973, as amended. Though CNCS does not administer a program explicitly for mentoring, the agency has provided funding for mentoring, among other purposes, through two of its volunteer organizations, AmeriCorps⁴⁶ and SeniorCorps. AmeriCorps members serve directly as mentors (through the AmeriCorps State and National program) or focus their efforts on building the capacity of mentoring organizations to increase the number of children they serve (through the AmeriCorps Vista program).⁴⁷ Senior Corps, through its RSVP and Foster Grandparents programs, provides mentoring to children and youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, including children of prisoners. CNCS also leads federal efforts to promote National Mentoring Month, which is intended to raise awareness of mentoring, recruit individuals to mentor, and promote the growth of mentoring by recruiting organizations to engage their constituents in mentoring.

The Serve America Act (P.L. 111-13), which amended NCSA and DVSA, authorizes funding for programs in which mentoring is a permissible activity, among several other activities.⁴⁸ For example, the new law provides that AmeriCorps can fund new programs—including the Education Corps, Clean Energy Services Corps, and Veterans Corps—that can be used for mentoring, among other activities. In addition, the law authorizes the program to fund initiatives that seek to expand the number of mentors for disadvantaged youth, as defined under the act.

⁴⁵ 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.

⁴⁶ This program is authorized under Title I-C of DVSA as the National Service Trust Program and is also known as AmeriCorps State and National Grants Program or AmeriCorps.

⁴⁷ Based on correspondence with the Corporation for National and Community Service, March 2011.

⁴⁸ For further information about the new law, see CRS Report R40432, *Reauthorization of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 and the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 (P.L. 111-13)*, by Ann Lordeman.

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. 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.⁴⁹ 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.⁵⁰

Since the Council was convened, it has met quarterly. According to CNCS, the Council has three priorities.⁵¹

- One of the priorities is to increase federal coordination around mentoring programs and issues by creating a website that will include articles, papers, program evaluations, and research from practitioners in the mentoring field. The site will also contain a record of Council meetings and initiatives, and will link to a new federal website (<http://www.findyouthinfo.gov>) on resources for assisting youth. The findyouthinfo.gov website was created pursuant to Executive Order 13459, which established a federal Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs. Among other things, the Working Group is charged with identifying and promoting initiatives and activities that merit strong interagency collaboration because of their potential to offer cost-effective solutions, including mentoring. At the Working Group's April 2008 meeting, the Federal Mentoring Council presented about its history, structure, and goals, and to brainstorm about how to collaborate with the Working Group, such as through expanding information about mentoring on the group's website.⁵²
- Another priority of the Council is to identify common measures approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that all partner agencies can use, and thereby enable the Council to assess the aggregate impact of the federal investment in mentoring.
- A third priority of the Council is to review federal requests for proposals to ensure that the language used about mentoring is clear, consistent, and easily identifiable by potential applicants.

The Council is not funded, although staff at HHS, CNCS, and the other agencies commit time to serving on the Council and carrying out its activities. When funding has been required to

⁴⁹ 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>.

⁵⁰ Based on correspondence with the Corporation for National and Community Service, March 2011.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, December 2008 and March 2011.

⁵² Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs, *Progress Report to the President, Implementation of Executive Order 13459: Improving the Coordination and Effectiveness of Youth Programs*, August 7, 2008.

implement their initiatives, such as the website, member agencies have contributed funding as they were able.⁵³

Department of Defense

Youth ChalleNGe Program⁵⁴

The Youth ChalleNGe Program is a quasi-military training program administered by the Army National Guard to improve outcomes for youth who have dropped out of school or have been expelled. As discussed below, mentoring is a major (and not optional) component of the program. The program was established as a pilot program under the National Defense Authorization Act for FY1993 (P.L. 102-484), and Congress permanently authorized the program under the National Defense Authorization Act for FY1998 (P.L. 105-85). Congress has since provided an annual appropriation for the program as part of the Department of Defense authorization acts. Currently, 35 programs operate in 28 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Youth are eligible for the program if they are ages 16 to 18 and enroll prior to their 19th birthday; have dropped out of school or been expelled; are unemployed; are not currently on parole or probation for anything other than juvenile status offenses and not serving time or awaiting sentencing; and are drug free.⁵⁵ In recent years, more than 8,000 young people have enrolled and approximately 7,000 have graduated annually.⁵⁶ The program consists of three phases: a two-week pre-program residential phase where applicants are assessed to determine their potential for completing the program; a 20-week residential phase; and a 12-month post-residential phase.⁵⁷ During the residential phase, youth—known as cadets—work toward their high school diploma or GED and develop life-coping, job, and leadership skills. They also participate in activities to improve their physical well-being, and they engage in community service. Youth develop a “Post-Residential Action Plan (P-RAP)” that sets forth their goals, as well as the tasks and objectives to meet those goals. The post-residential phase begins when graduates return to their communities, continue in higher education, or enter the military. The goal of this phase is for graduates to build on the gains made during the residential phase and to continue to develop and implement their P-RAP.

A core component of the post-residential phase is mentoring in which a cadet works with a mentor to meet his or her goals set forth in the P-RAP. This component is referred to as the “Friendly Mentor Match” process. Parents and youth are asked to nominate at least one prospective mentor prior to acceptance into the program. They are advised to identify an individual who is respected by the youth and would be a good role model. Cadets tend to know their mentors before enrolling in the program; however, members of an applicant’s immediate family or household and ChalleNGe staff members and their spouses are not eligible to become

⁵³ Based on correspondence with the Corporation for National and Community Service, December 2008.

⁵⁴ Unless otherwise noted, this information is based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Defense, National Guard, June 12, 2008.

⁵⁵ U.S. Department of Defense, National Guard, *Youth ChalleNGe Program 2010 Performance and Accountability Highlights*, 2011, <http://www.ngycp.org/site/node/18>

⁵⁶ Ibid.”

⁵⁷ U.S. Department of Defense, National Guard, Youth ChalleNGe Program, About Us,” http://www.ngycp.org/aboutus_dependant_T2_R29.php.

mentors. By week 13 of the residential phase, and prior to the formal matching of a cadet and a mentor, programs are required to use a National Guard-approved curriculum to train the mentors and the cadets for their roles and responsibilities during the formal mentoring relationship.

Mentors be at least 21 years old, of the same gender as the youth (unless otherwise approved by the director of the program), and within reasonable geographic proximity. Mentors must also undergo a background check that includes two reference checks, an interview, and a criminal background investigation that includes a sex offender registry check. In some programs, the mentors are required to initiate the background investigation and have the results provided to the program prior to their acceptance as a mentor. Mentors and cadets begin weekly contact during the last two months of the residential phase and maintain monthly contacts during the post-residential phase. Cadets and mentors are encouraged to participate in community service activities or job placement activities. Although the program prefers that the pair meet in person, contact may be made by telephone calls, emails, or letters, particularly for those cadets who enlist in the military or attend school in a different community.

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

Youth ChalleNGe was evaluated by Manpower Development Research Corporation (MDRC), a social policy research organization. The evaluation began in 2005, when 12 state ChalleNGe programs agreed to participate in the evaluation.⁵⁸ The evaluation used a random assignment research design, whereby youth were randomly selected to receive the treatment (i.e., to participate in the program) or to a control group that did not participate in the program. The results of the evaluation are based on a survey administered about nine months, 21 months, and three years after the members of the program and control groups entered the study.⁵⁹ MDRC issued reports after each survey wave. The two earlier reports found that youth in the program group had higher education attainment and a stronger work history than the control group. The most recent report—more than a year after the post-residential phase had ended—shows that these favorable outcomes persisted at the three-year mark. Those who enrolled in Youth ChalleNGe were significantly more likely to have earned a GED (but not necessarily a high school diploma),⁶⁰ to have earned any college credit, to be employed, to have higher earnings, and to be working. Although the earlier reports found positive impacts on criminal justice involvement and health, these impacts faded over time. At the three-year survey, about half of youth in both the program and control groups reported ever having been arrested and about two-thirds of each group reported being in good or excellent health. Further, on some outcomes, there were few statistically significant differences between the treatment and control groups or the

⁵⁸ Dan Bloom, Alissa Gardenhire-Crooks, and Conrad Mandsager, *Reengaging High School Dropouts: Early Results of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program*, MDRC, February 2009; and Megan Millenky, Dan Bloom, and Colleen Dillon, *Making the Transition: Interim Results of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Evaluation*, May 2010; and Megan Millenky et al., *Staying on Course: Three-Year Results of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Evaluation*, June 2011, http://www.mdrc.org/project_32_80.html.

⁵⁹ The treatment group includes 68% of program group members who went on to enroll in Youth ChalleNGe and the 33% who did not enroll.

⁶⁰ During the time the evaluation was conducted, most programs helped participants prepare for the GED exam, but a few of them offered a high school diploma.

outcomes were worse for the treatment group, including that they were more likely to not use birth control⁶¹ or had tried illegal drugs other than marijuana.

Overview of Discontinued Mentoring Programs

In recent years, two federal programs provided a significant source of funding for mentoring services until they were discontinued: the Mentoring Children of Prisoners program, which was administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services since FY2003, and the Safe and Drug Free Schools Mentoring program, which was administered by the U.S. Department of Education since FY2002. 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 was intended, in part, to reduce the chance that mentored youth would use drugs and skip school. Similarly, the SDFS Mentoring program provided school-based mentoring to reduce school dropout and improve relationships for youth at risk of educational failure and with other risk factors.

Congress discontinued funding for the Mentoring Children of Prisoners program beginning in FY2011 and the SDFS Mentoring program beginning in FY2010. For FY2012, the Obama Administration has proposed funding the Mentoring Children of Prisoners program at \$25 million, a reduction of \$24.3 million from FY2010 (and the FY2011 budget request).⁶² The FY2012 request has proposed these reductions because many of the mentoring matches had not been sustained. As part of its FY2010 budget justifications, the Obama Administration proposed eliminating the SDFS program because of an evaluation showing that it does not have an impact on students overall in terms of interpersonal relationships, academic outcomes, and delinquent behaviors.⁶³ The evaluation is discussed further below.

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 Bush Administration'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. Until it was discontinued as of FY2011, the program was 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 funded public or private entities—in

⁶¹ Those who reported never using birth control did not match closely with those who are married or living with a partner.

⁶² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, *FY2012 Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committee, Children and Families Services Programs*, p. 115, <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/olab/budget/2012/cj/CFS.pdf>.

⁶³ U.S. Department of Education, *FY2010 Justifications of Appropriation Estimates, Safe Schools and Citizenship Education*, p. G-15. <http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget10/justifications/g-ssce.pdf>

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 was 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, was intended to improve academic and behavioral outcomes. Mentors were to supplement existing caring relationships that the child had 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. A recently enacted law (P.L. 112-34) extended authorization for programs that have been authorized in the past with the MCP program; however, the law did not extend program or funding authorization for the MCP program, which most recently had been authorized to receive “such sums as may be necessary” for each of FY2007-FY2011.

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. Data from the Department of Justice’s (DOJ’s) Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) show that over the past two decades a growing number of parents are incarcerated in state and federal prisons, which means a greater number of children are spending some period of their childhood without one of their parents present.⁶⁴ In 1991, approximately 452,000 parents were incarcerated in state and federal prisons and these parents had approximately 946,000 children. By 2007, nearly 810,000 parents were incarcerated and they had over 1.7 million children.⁶⁵ The BJS data further indicate that higher incarceration rates for African Americans compared to whites and Hispanics are having a disproportionate effect on African American children. BJS estimates that 6.7% of African American children in the United States have an incarcerated parent compared to 2.4% of Hispanic children and 0.9% of white children.

When parents are sent to prison it is likely to reduce the frequency and quality of contacts they have with their children. In many cases, parents are incarcerated in facilities that are more than 100 miles from where their families live, which can make personal visits between incarcerated parents and children difficult.⁶⁶ In addition, prisons can be uninviting places for children to visit with their parents, and procedures at correctional facilities can make it difficult for children to meet with their parents in the first place. Data from BJS indicate that parents are much less likely to receive personal visits from their children compared to telephone calls or letters.⁶⁷ Research suggests that the absence of a parent can have negative consequences for childhood development,

⁶⁴ Lauren E. Glaze and Laura M. Maruschak, *Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children*, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCJ 222984, Washington, DC, January 2009, pp. 2, 14, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/pptmc.pdf>. (Hereinafter, Glaze and Maruschak, *Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children*.)

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Jeremy Travis, *But They All Come Back: Facing the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press, 2005), pp. 132-142. (Hereinafter, Travis, *But They All Come Back*.)

⁶⁷ Glaze and Maruschak, *Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children*, p. 18.

and parental incarceration may negatively affect children, to the extent that incarceration contributes to parental absence.⁶⁸

Grantee Requirements

A number of entities were eligible to 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 was to 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.⁶⁹ Grant funds were to be expended within one year and are to be used for mentoring services exclusively (i.e., not wraparound services or other social services).⁷⁰

Grantees recruited mentors, including individuals from the child's family and community, church congregations, religious nonprofit groups, community-based groups, service organizations, Senior Corps,⁷¹ and the business community. Grantees provided mentor training and criminal background checks, and monitored mentoring relationships. They also evaluated youth outcomes. Grantees were expected to incorporate a message of positive youth development into their programs and coordinate with other organizations to develop a plan that addressed the needs of the entire family.⁷² (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.)

Mentored Youth and Mentors

In FY2010, the program served more than 28,000 youth in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.⁷³ (See the **Appendix** for the number of matches in each of FY2006-FY2010.) Children ages 4 to 18 were eligible for the program if their parent was in state or federal prison, although they could have continued to receive services if their parent was released from prison during the mentoring relationship; children whose parents are in halfway houses, under

⁶⁸ Travis, *But They All Come Back*, pp. 138-140.

⁶⁹ 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.

⁷⁰ Office of Management and Budget, *Mentoring Children of Prisoners Assessment*.

⁷¹ Senior Corps is a program administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service that provides volunteer opportunities for individuals ages 55 and older.

⁷² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, *Report to Congress on the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program*, October 8, 2010.

⁷³ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, February 2011.

supervision, or house arrest were not eligible unless the detention follows a federal or state prison sentence.⁷⁴

Mentors were to undergo screenings that included in-depth interviews and criminal background checks. They were required to commit to attending training and meeting with their assigned youth one hour per week for one year. Mentors were 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: Caregiver's Choice Program

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 had not already been matched to a mentor. The law specified that vouchers were to 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.⁷⁵ In November 2007 (FY2008), HHS awarded a competitive three-year cooperative agreement grant to MENTOR Incorporated, a national mentoring advocacy group and clearinghouse on mentoring issues, to administer the voucher demonstration program.

The law gave HHS the discretion to renew the three-year agreement for up to two years, if HHS determined that the grantee had met the requirements of the agreement, and evaluations of the demonstration project show that it is effective in providing mentoring services. Based on an evaluation of the first two years of the voucher demonstration project, HHS did not exercise the option to extend funding for this demonstration beyond the initial three years in which it was funded (see below for further information). The voucher program was known as the Caregiver's Choice Program.

The law specified that in year one, no less than 3,000 vouchers were to be distributed to children and families. The law also specified that in year two, no less than 8,000 vouchers were to be distributed and in year three, no less than 13,000 vouchers were to be distributed. As required by law, MENTOR was to identify and recruit qualified mentoring programs and eligible families, coordinate the distribution and redemption of vouchers, and oversee the quality of the mentoring services. The law stipulated that it could not provide direct mentoring services. To this end, MENTOR coordinated 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.⁷⁶ Families and caregivers were directed to a national call center to enroll in the voucher program and to learn about mentoring options in their community. The voucher for mentoring services was included in the packet and

⁷⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, *Mentoring Children of Prisoners Funding Opportunity, HHS-2010-ACF-ACYF-CV-0070*, June 15, 2010.

⁷⁵ 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.

⁷⁶ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, *Report to Congress on the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Service Delivery Demonstration Project*, October 8, 2010 (Hereinafter, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Report to Congress on the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Service Delivery Demonstration Project*, October 8, 2010.)

contained an identification code. (This identifier became the primary means of data collection and system management for the voucher demonstration project.) The families redeemed the vouchers at organizations deemed to be quality providers of mentoring services.

MENTOR conducted an advertising campaign to encourage mentoring programs to become certified as “quality providers” (allowing them to receive MCP vouchers).⁷⁷ MENTOR, in consultation with FYSB, also identified quality standards for these providers that addresses program capacity, sustainability, design, management, and operations.⁷⁸

Funding and Grant Awards

Overall, the program received initial funding of \$10 million in FY2003 and was funded at approximately \$50 million in each subsequent year, until FY2010, as shown **Table 3**.⁷⁹ On April 15, 2011, President Obama signed the Department of Defense and Full Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 (P.L. 112-10).⁸⁰ That law does not reference the Mentoring Children of Prisoners program;⁸¹ however, it is included in a table, provided by the House Appropriations Committee, that shows programs to be eliminated or reduced in funding.⁸² The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the department that administers the program, interprets the FY2011 funding law (P.L. 112-10) to mean that the program was not funded in FY2011.⁸³ According to HHS, the department did not have latitude to shift funding from other programs.⁸⁴ Funding for the program was obligated at the end of the fiscal year, and therefore no grantees received funds that were appropriated under continuing resolutions for FY2011.

For FY2012, the Administration proposed funding the program at \$25 million, a reduction of \$24 million from FY2010 (and the FY2011 budget request).⁸⁵ The FY2012 request proposed these reductions because many of the mentoring matches have not been sustained: fewer than 40% of youth in the program have remained in mentoring relationships beyond 12 months and 20% of matches ended within six months. The budget request cites research indicating that short-term

⁷⁷ For information about the publicity campaign, see <http://www.mentoring.org/caregiverschoice>.

⁷⁸ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, December 2008.

⁷⁹ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, January 2010.

⁸⁰ FY2011 began on October 1, 2010. Until April 15, 2011, funding for FY2011 was provided at FY2010 levels for most programs under a series of continuing resolutions.

⁸¹ Unlike other recent appropriation acts, P.L. 112-10 is not accompanied by a published table and an explanatory statement indicating congressional intent for program funding levels.

⁸² U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, “Historic Spending Cuts the Centerpiece for Final Continuing Resolution (CR) for Fiscal Year 2011,” press release, 112th Congress, April 12, 2011, http://appropriations.house.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressReleases.Detail&PressRelease_id=285&Month=4&Year=2011.

⁸³ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Legislative Affairs and Budget, April 2011.

⁸⁴ Although P.L. 112-10 increased funding for the Children and Families Services account within HHS’s Administration for Children and Families (which includes Mentoring Children of Prisoners), the increased funds are available only for the Head Start program. Funding for certain other programs or activities within the Children and Families account was also decreased or eliminated.

⁸⁵ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, *FY2012 Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committee, Children and Families Services Programs*, p. 115, <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/olab/budget/2012/cj/CFS.pdf>.

(less than six months) mentoring relationships can be detrimental to children, and that grantees experience “significant loss in financial investment through training, screening and other elements of the mentoring match process.” It goes on to state that the Administration would encourage grantees to concentrate on program elements that result in positive mentoring experiences and outcomes rather than the number of matches. HHS stated that it intends to focus on identifying and disseminating evidence-based best practices on mentoring relationships.

Table 3. FY2003-FY2010 Appropriated Funding for the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program

(dollars in millions)

FY2003	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010
\$10.0	\$49.7	\$49.6	\$49.5	\$49.5	\$48.6	\$49.3	\$49.3

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, 2007. FY2008 funding data based on U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, *Joint Explanatory Statement to Accompany FY2008 Consolidated Appropriations Amendment to H.R. 2764/P.L. 110-161, Division G*. FY2009 funding data based on U.S. Congress, House Committee on Rules, *Joint Explanatory Statement to Accompany FY2009 Consolidated Appropriations Amendment to H.R. 1105/P.L. 111-8, Division F*. FY2010 funding based on U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, *Departments of Transportation and Housing and Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010*, report to accompany H.R. 3288/P.L. 111-117, 111th Cong., 1st sess., December 8, 2009, H.Rept. 111-366. FY2011 funding data based on Department of Defense and Full Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 (P.L. 112-10).

Note: The FY2011 appropriations law (P.L. 112-10) does not reference the Mentoring Children of Prisoners program;⁸⁶ however, it is included in a table, provided by the House Appropriations Committee, that shows programs to be eliminated or reduced in funding. See U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, “Historic Spending Cuts the Centerpiece for Final Continuing Resolution (CR) for Fiscal Year 2011,” press release, 112th Congress, April 12, 2011, http://appropriations.house.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressReleases.Detail&PressRelease_id=285&Month=4&Year=2011.

The MCP site-based program was authorized to receive “such sums as may be necessary” for each year through FY2011. Funding for the site-based grantees was distributed on a competitive basis for up to three years. There were 149 site-based grantees in FY2010.⁸⁷ In recent years, the amount of the grants ranged from \$26,000 to \$2 million annually.⁸⁸ (Some of these organizations make sub-awards to other organizations for mentoring services.) Grantees were 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.

As required by the reauthorizing legislation (P.L. 109-288), funding could not be awarded to the national mentoring support organization to distribute the vouchers unless \$25 million in program appropriations was first available for site-based grants. If funding was available, the organization was to receive up to \$5 million in the first year of the cooperative agreement, \$10 million in the

⁸⁶ Unlike other recent appropriation acts, P.L. 112-10 is not accompanied by a published table and an explanatory statement indicating congressional intent for program funding levels.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, December 2010.

⁸⁸ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Report to Congress on the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program*, October 8, 2010, p. 5. (Hereinafter, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Report to Congress on the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program*, October 8, 2010.).

second year, and \$15 million in the third year. Vouchers of up to \$1,000 could be awarded on behalf of an individual child to be redeemed for mentoring services.⁸⁹

Funding was appropriated for the voucher component from FY2007 through FY2009. In FY2008, 3,008 vouchers (with FY2007 funds) were distributed; in FY2009, 8,173 vouchers (with FY2008 funds) were distributed; and in FY2010, 6,128 vouchers (with FY2009 funds) were distributed.⁹⁰ As discussed further below, HHS did not exercise the option to extend funding for the voucher demonstration beyond these three years.

Program Performance and Oversight

Of all MCP funds, 4% was to be set aside for evaluations, research, and technical assistance related to site-based and voucher-related mentoring services.⁹¹

Reports to Congress and Evaluations

The authorizing legislation (P.L. 107-133) directed HHS to evaluate the site-based program and submit its findings to Congress by April 15, 2005.⁹² The reauthorizing legislation (P.L. 109-288) directed HHS to include the voucher demonstration component as part of the larger evaluation. P.L. 109-288 also required HHS to submit, within 12 months after the reauthorizing legislation was passed (i.e., September 28, 2007), a report on the characteristics of the mentoring program, a plan for implementing the voucher program, a description of the evaluation, and the date that HHS would submit the final report on the evaluation. The legislation further specified that a report on the status of the voucher component was 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 was 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 September 2007, HHS submitted a report to Congress that provided an overview of the MCP program and plans for an evaluation that compares the outcomes of children in the program with outcomes among groups of similar children.⁹³ In October 2010, HHS submitted two additional reports—one that addresses the MCP program and evaluation and another that addresses the voucher demonstration project.⁹⁴ HHS anticipates that a final report of the evaluation will be available in December 2013.

⁸⁹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Mentoring Children of Prisoners Competitive Grant Announcement*, 2007.

⁹⁰ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Report to Congress on the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Service Delivery Demonstration Project*, October 8, 2010, p. 7; and based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, March 2011.

⁹¹ The percentage of funds set aside for this purpose was increased from 2.5% to 4% under P.L. 109-288.

⁹² The law was general and stated that HHS was to “conduct an evaluation of the program and submit to the Congress not later than April 15, 2005, a report on the findings of the evaluation.”

⁹³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Report to Congress on the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program*, September 12, 2007. This report was in response to the reporting requirement under P.L. 107-133.

⁹⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Report to Congress on the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program*, October 8 2010; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Report to Congress on the Mentoring* (continued...)

HHS subcontracted with Abt Associates to conduct process and outcome evaluations of the mentoring program, including the voucher component. As described in the October 2010 report that addresses the MCP program, the outcome evaluation of the program began in November 2007. The objectives of the study are to record short-term outcomes related to identity development, cognitive development, social and emotional development, and relationships with peers and adults; and long-term measures related to behavioral outcomes, academic outcomes, and psychological outcomes.⁹⁵ Youth were surveyed at the beginning of their mentoring relationship and again 15 months later. The results of the outcome evaluation will 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).⁹⁶ The major comparison will be the rate of change in risk behaviors or positive outcomes (the study will not examine whether the MCP program would have made a difference among the children had they not received mentoring). In addition to surveying youth, HHS (and Abt Associates) is surveying grantees to assess how the MCP program was carried out, including by examining the structure of the program; staffing; and strategies for recruiting, screening, training, and supporting mentors and youth. From this survey, HHS plans to identify and disseminate promising practices for mentoring programs.

HHS is also evaluating the outcomes of children and grantees participating in the voucher component of the MCP program (specifically, the first two years of the project)⁹⁷ to determine whether the voucher approach provided quality services and whether parents and children had been given more options and access to mentoring. As part of its October 2010 report to Congress on the vouchers, HHS described its concerns with the voucher component based on how the program was carried out in its first two years (FY2008 and FY2009).⁹⁸ Among other things, the report noted that the program had been largely unable to locate and engage caregivers of children of prisoners in the targeted areas (e.g., rural areas); that even as the number of vouchers distributed met the statutory goals in the law, many went unredeemed (so that no mentoring occurred); and that the large majority of mentoring matches that were made through vouchers were not sustained for a full 12 months (meaning they were less likely to have positive effect on the mentee). Further, MENTOR, Incorporated, had challenges with identifying and recruiting qualified mentor programs that could provide mentoring services, and mentoring providers found the application process burdensome. While the statute enables HHS to extend the original cooperative agreement beyond the initial three years, HHS chose not to do so and as of FY2010 all mentoring grants went to site-based entities.⁹⁹

(...continued)

Children of Prisoners Service Delivery Demonstration Project, October 8 2010. These reports were in response to the reporting requirements under P.L. 109-288.

⁹⁵ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, December 2008, May 2009, and January 2010.

⁹⁶ Carla Herrera et al., *Making a Difference in Schools: The Big Brothers Big Sisters School-Based Mentoring Impact Study*, Public/Private Ventures, August 2007. The study uses consistent definitions and other methods to make comparisons between the groups.

⁹⁷ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, December 2008, May 2009, and March 2011.

⁹⁸ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Report to Congress on the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Service Delivery Demonstration Project*, October 8, 2010.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* See also HHS, *Report to Congress on the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Service Delivery Demonstration Project* (sent to relevant committees October 8, 2010).

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. 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.¹⁰⁰ In its 2007 report to Congress, HHS stated that it has taken steps to improve the number of matches, such as conducting site visits to grantees.¹⁰¹

Research

HHS collected 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 allowed 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, among other features of the program. **Table A-1**, at the end of this report, displays select demographics and characteristics for youth enrolled in the program in FY2006 through FY2010, excluding those youth who received a voucher. Among the more notable trends is the recent decline in the number of mentoring matches, from 42,666 in FY2009 to 28,534 in FY2010 (the number of mentoring matches ranged from 27,525 to 37,380 in each year from FY2006 through FY2008). The share of children spending certain amounts of time with their mentors was relatively stable across time: about 25% of all mentored children have spent less than 12 hours a month with their mentors; about 45% have spent 12 to 24 hours per month; and about 25% have spent more than 24 hours per month (the amount of time was unknown for about 5% of the mentored children). The number of training hours for mentors before they were matched ranged from about four to seven hours each year, and the number of training hours for mentors after they were matched ranged from about two to 4.5 hours annually. The number of days that children wait to be matched fluctuated over time. In FY2010, children waited about 71 days on average, compared to about 88 days in FY2009, 53 days in FY2006, and 61 days in FY2008 (data are not available for FY2007).

In 2006, HHS introduced the Relationship Quality Survey Instrument (RQI) to assess the dynamics of the mentor/mentored youth relationship. The RQI sought 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 asked 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

¹⁰⁰ *The Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program*, Report to Congress, p. 11.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

evidence of trust in the mentoring relationship. According to HHS, the percentage of youth who respond positively or very positively to the questions increased over time.¹⁰²

Training and Technical Assistance

In September 2008, HHS entered into a competitively awarded cooperative agreement with the Mid-Atlantic Network of Youth & Family Services (MANY) to provide training and technical assistance for the program.¹⁰³ The agreement was authorized through FY2011. MANY was responsible for conducting a needs assessment for MCP grantees, and organizing an annual national conference for all MCP grantees and workshops throughout the year.¹⁰⁴ The organization also conducted site visits and provided on-site assistance, among other types of assistance.

In addition, the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development at the University of Oklahoma (the contractor for FYSB on select child welfare programs and the Runaway and Homeless Youth program) developed a peer-to-peer monitoring tool that allowed grantees to join federal staff on visits to other grantees to monitor compliance with the legislative intent of the program and to encourage exchange of ideas between peer mentoring professionals.¹⁰⁵

Finally, HHS staff provided direct assistance to grantees.¹⁰⁶ Program specialists assisted grantees in grant management, service delivery planning, program start-up and implementation, reporting, and building partnerships. HHS staff monitored grantee activities and oversaw detailed quarterly narrative and financial information. The staff also facilitated transfers of promising practices from experienced to less experienced grantees.

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

Recent Developments

Until it was discontinued with the end of FY2009, the SDFS Mentoring program provided school-based mentoring to reduce school dropout and improve relationships for youth at risk of educational failure and with other risk factors. Congress did not appropriate funding for the program in FY2010. As part of its FY2010 budget justifications, the Obama Administration proposed eliminating the program because of an evaluation showing that it does not have an impact on students overall in terms of interpersonal relationships, academic outcomes, and

¹⁰² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Report to Congress on the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program*, October 8, 2010, pp. 5-6.

¹⁰³ For further information, see <http://members.mcpsupport.com/default.aspx/>.

¹⁰⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Mentoring Children of Prisoners Training and Technical Assistance Grant Announcement*, June 16, 2008.

¹⁰⁵ Based on correspondence with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, October 2007 and December 2008.

¹⁰⁶ *The Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program*, Report to Congress, p. 8.

delinquent behaviors. Some grantees were in their second year of the grant period when funding was discontinued (no grantees were in their third and final year of the grant period).¹⁰⁷

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 awarded funding to states to support activities that promote school safety. In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act (P.L. 107-110) reauthorized and amended ESEA, and enacted a school-based mentoring program under the SDFS program.¹⁰⁸

The SDFS Mentoring program was administered by the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools in the U.S. Department of Education, and provided 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.¹⁰⁹ Generally, mentored youth in the SDFS Mentoring program were paired with one adult¹¹⁰ who served as a positive role model and provided the child with academic assistance (e.g., tutoring, helping with homework, learning a game like chess, developing computer skills), exposure to new experiences that promoted 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).¹¹¹ According to a June 2004 GAO report of the program, many of these mentoring activities were carried out on school grounds, but some activities take place in the community and in the workplace.¹¹²

Purpose

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

¹⁰⁷ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, January 2010.

¹⁰⁸ 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 Gail McCallion.

¹⁰⁹ U.S. Department of Education, “Notice of Final Priorities, Requirements, and Selection Criteria Under the Mentoring Program,” 69 *Federal Register* 30794, May 28, 2004. (Hereinafter, U.S. Department of Education, “Notice of Final Priorities.”)

¹¹⁰ 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.

¹¹¹ GAO, *Student Mentoring Programs*, p. 17.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

Grantee Requirements

The Department of Education was 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 prioritized grant applications that proposed a school-based mentoring program, provided high quality background checks and technical assistance, and served children with greatest need living in particular areas.

In applying for grants, an eligible entity was to provide information on the children for which the grant was sought; a description of the method to match children with mentors based on the needs of the children; information on how the entity recruited, screened, and provided 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 were required to make assurances that no mentor would be matched with so many children that the assignment would 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 were to make assurances that the mentoring program would 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 was not beneficial to the child.

Mentored Youth and Mentors

As noted above, the SDFS Mentoring program targeted children with the greatest need. In awarding grants, the Department of Education was to prioritize entities that served children in grades 4 to 8 with greatest need living in rural areas, high-crime areas, or troubled home environments *or* who attend schools with violence problems.¹¹³ The Department of Education did not aggregate demographic and other data on youth participants, and therefore, the number and characteristics of youth that were served by the program are unknown.¹¹⁴

Mentors were to be a responsible adult, a postsecondary school student, or a secondary school student. While the Department of Education did not mandate a set amount of hours that mentors and students were to meet, it advised that programs require at least one hour each week.¹¹⁵ Mentors were screened using reference checks, child and domestic abuse record checks, and criminal background checks; and received training and support in mentoring. Mentors were uncompensated.

Funding and Grant Awards

The mentoring program was one component of the Safe and Drug Free Schools program. The SDFS program has two funding streams: one for state grants awarded by formula (which was also not funded for FY2010) and another for discretionary national grants. The SDFS mentoring

¹¹³ U.S. Department of Education, "Notice of Final Priorities."

¹¹⁴ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, October 2007.

¹¹⁵ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, July 2007.

program was funded through the national grants component.¹¹⁶ The program received about \$17 million to \$49 million each year since grants were first awarded in FY2002, as shown in **Table 4**. For FY2009, 264 continuing grantees were funded and no new grants were awarded.¹¹⁷

In the FY2007, FY2008, and FY2009 budget justifications, the Bush Administration proposed no funding for the mentoring program, on the basis that it has met its objectives. The Bush Administration budget for FY2009 also proposed to consolidate the SDFS national grants component, which currently has several sub-programs, into a single-flexible discretionary program.¹¹⁸ Similarly, the Obama Administration proposed to eliminate the program as part of the FY2010 budget because of an evaluation showing that it is ineffective, as discussed below.¹¹⁹ Also according to the Administration, many other federal programs support mentoring activities.

Table 4. FY2003-FY2009 Appropriated Funding for the Safe and Drug Free Schools Program
(dollars in millions)

FY2002	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009
\$17.5	\$17.4	\$49.7	\$49.2	\$48.8	\$19.0	\$48.5	\$48.5

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 Appropriations, *Joint Explanatory Statement to Accompany FY2008 Consolidated Appropriations Amendment to H.R. 2764/P.L. 110-161, Division G*. FY2010 data taken from U.S. Department of Education, *FY2010 Budget Summary, Programs Proposed for Elimination*. FY2010 funding data based on U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, *Departments of Transportation and Housing and Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010*, report to accompany H.R. 3288/P.L. 111-117, 111th Cong., 1st sess., December 8, 2009, H.Rept. 111-366.

Program Performance and Oversight

The No Child Left Behind Act does not specify whether or how the SDFS mentoring program was to be monitored and evaluated, or how grantees were to receive technical assistance and support. However, regulations promulgated in March 2004 specify that grant applicants were to include in their application an assurance that they would (1) establish clear, measurable performance goals; and (2) collect and report to the agency data related to the established Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) performance indicators for the mentoring

¹¹⁶ 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 Gail McCallion.

¹¹⁷ Based on correspondence with U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, May 2007.

¹¹⁸ U.S. Department of Education, *FY2009 Justifications of Appropriation Estimates, Safe Schools and Citizenship Education*, p. F-30, <http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget09/justifications/f-ssce.pdf>. (Hereinafter, U.S. Department of Education, *FY2009 Justifications of Appropriation Estimates*.)

¹¹⁹ U.S. Department of Education, *FY2010 Justifications of Appropriation Estimates, Safe Schools and Citizenship Education*, p. G-15, <http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget10/justifications/g-ssce.pdf>.

program's grant competition.¹²⁰ The Department of Education required grantees to provide an evaluation of their program at the end of the three-year grant period. Further, the agency established three performance measures for assessing the effectiveness of the mentoring program, using data from the 2004 cohort (the most recent data available).¹²¹

- The percentage of mentor-youth matches that are sustained for a period of nine months. The goal for 2007 was 44.9% and the actual figure was 38.6%.
- The percentage of mentored students who demonstrate improvement in core academic subjects as measured by grade point average after 12 months. The goal for 2007 was 49.6% and the actual figure was 22%.
- The percentage of mentored students who have unexcused absences from school. The goal for 2007 was 39.6% and the actual figure was 28.9%.¹²²

Evaluations

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 outcomes.¹²³ (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 developed an electronic listserv to promote communication among grantees. To ensure that the agency monitored 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 subcontracted with Abt Associates to conduct process and outcome evaluations.

The findings of the outcome evaluation were made available in March 2009.¹²⁴ The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the program's effect upon mentored children's school attendance and performance, risk reduction, and relationships with adults. The evaluation measured the characteristics and status of 2,400 students in grades 4 through 8 who were randomly assigned to participate in the program or to a control group. However, the programs from which they received mentoring were not randomly selected and in fact, were not representative of all grantees. For example, the grantees in the study tended to serve more female and minority youth than grantees generally.

¹²⁰ U.S. Department of Education, "Notice of Final Priorities."

¹²¹ Based on correspondence with U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, May 2009.

¹²² U.S. Department of Education, *FY2009 Justifications of Appropriation Estimates*, pp. F-39, F-40.

¹²³ GAO, *Student Mentoring Programs*.

¹²⁴ Bernstein et al., *Impact Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education's Student Mentoring Program Final Report*, Abt Associates, March 2009, available at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20094047/>.

The study involved two cohorts of students—those who were referred to the program during the 2005 and 2006 school year, and those who were referred during the 2006 and 2007 school year. The data were collected from student self-reports; school records; and surveys of students, mentors, and grantees. The study found that the program did not lead to statistically significant effects on students across the three domains evaluated: school attendance and performance, risk reduction, and relationships with adults. However, impacts were significant among certain sub-groups. For example, the program improved academic outcomes for girls and produced mixed academic outcomes for boys. The program also led to a decrease in truancy for younger students. Further, the program found that the program was carried out similarly to other school-based mentoring programs. Among other findings, the majority of mentors received pre-match training and had access to ongoing support from the program; the majority of students were matched with mentors of the same race and gender; mentors and mentored youth tended to meet one-on-one; and the average length of the mentoring relationship was about six months.

Training and Technical Assistance

In 2004, the Department of Education awarded a performance-based contract to EMT Associates, Incorporated, to operate the Mentoring Program Resource Training and Technical Assistance Center through FY2009.¹²⁵ The purpose of this center was to ensure that programs funded under the mentoring program receive assistance, as appropriate, in the management and implementation of their projects. Grantees received assistance with (1) training to ensure that they are using high-quality, evidence-based programs; (2) identifying gaps and weaknesses in their program design; (3) collaborating with other organizations; and (4) planning for program sustainability.¹²⁶

According to the Department of Education, department staff also provided needed assistance to grantees.¹²⁷ Mechanisms to assist grantees included 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.

Federal Issues in Mentoring

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

¹²⁵ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, July 2007 and May 2009.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, October 2007.

¹²⁷ This process is described in greater detail in GAO, *Student Mentoring Programs*, pp. 24-26.

Limitations of Research on Mentoring

A few positive evaluations of mentoring programs may have provided some justification for federal support of these programs.¹²⁸ The 1995 landmark study of community-based mentoring programs at select Big Brothers and Big Sisters chapters found that mentored youth were less likely than their non-mentored counterparts to use drugs and alcohol, hit someone, and skip school, among other outcomes.¹²⁹ A recent evaluation of the Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring program found similar results for mentored youth. Nonetheless, findings from these and other studies show that mentoring was 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, were short-lived and that mentored youth did not improve in certain areas. Still, these improvements, albeit temporary and limited to certain outcomes, may be a worthwhile public policy goal.

A related issue is the use of mentoring techniques that have not been evaluated using experimental design, where youth are randomly selected into control and treatment groups. Even the few evaluations of mentoring programs that use experimental design appear to have limitations. For example, concerns have been raised about the methodology used in the evaluation of the Safe and Drug Free Schools mentoring program. One concern is that grantees were not randomly selected. Grantees involved in the study “reported being less focused on improving students’ academic outcomes and on teaching risk avoidance” than grantees generally, even though these domains were the focus of the evaluation.¹³⁰ The grantees selected for the evaluation were more likely to serve females and more Asian, Latino, and Pacific Islander students but fewer white students than grantees overall. The grantees were also more likely to be school districts, compared to nonprofit or community-based organizations. They also tended to have more years of experience running school mentoring and serving more students. These differences may in fact have led to outcomes that were not representative of the entire pool of grantees nationally. Further, some mentored youth did not receive certain services that were tied to the outcomes of the study. For example, 43% of the mentored students reported working frequently with their mentors on academics while 21% never worked on academics. Still, it is unclear whether school-based mentoring programs should be tasked with improving both academic outcomes and certain other outcomes, like reducing involvement in gangs and other risky behaviors.¹³¹

Another arguable limitation of the SDFS mentoring evaluation was its design. Although the SDFS mentoring evaluation used random assignment, whereby youth were randomly assigned to the treatment (i.e., SDFS mentoring) or the control group (no SDFS mentoring), over one-third of the

¹²⁸ Gary Walker, “Youth Mentoring and Public Policy,” in David L. Dubois and Michael J. Karcher, eds., *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2005), pp. 510-512. (Hereinafter, Walker, “Youth Mentoring and Public Policy.”)

¹²⁹ 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.

¹³⁰ Bernstein et al., *Impact Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education’s Student Mentoring Program Final Report*, p. xvii.

¹³¹ Jen Russell, “School-Based Mentoring Needs a Friend,” *Youth Today*, June 1, 2009. (Hereinafter, Russell, “School-Based Mentoring Needs a Friend.”)

control group received mentoring, either from the SDFS grantee or from other organizations in the community. This finding raises questions about the extent to which the evaluation could have assessed the true effects of the program, since the outcomes for the control group may have been influenced by the participation of some of the youth in mentoring programs. According to the study, this may have “led to some dilution of the impacts on students compared to expectations.”¹³²

The program delivery also did not appear to have adhered to certain established best practices in mentoring, such as matches that lasted one year or more and ongoing training for mentoring. The average length of the mentoring relationship for students surveyed was 5.8 months, and on average, students were not assigned their mentor until about five weeks after they were randomly assigned to the treatment group.¹³³ Ongoing training did not appear to be widely available. Approximately 41% of mentors reported that ongoing training was available after they begun meeting regularly with their students.¹³⁴ This is in contrast to recommendations by researchers in mentoring that mentors receive support and ongoing training after matches have been established.¹³⁵ Still, nearly all mentors received pre-match training or orientation and talked with their program supervisor about how things were going with their mentoring relationship. Most mentors (62.3%) reported having access to social workers or staff when they needed support.

In a similar vein, one of the Abt researchers raised questions about the extent of technical assistance available to grantees about implementing the program: “The legislation ... and the program guidance ... said to focus on the academic and social needs of students. Beyond that, there weren’t any prescriptive protocols for how people were going to conduct their mentoring activities, or how they were going to supervise their mentors, or how they were going to train their mentors.”¹³⁶ Nonetheless, the Department of Education reported that training and technical assistance was provided by a contractor and ED staff.

A 2010 meta-analysis of three major school-based mentoring programs, including the SDFS mentoring program, suggests that the effects of these programs are small but are in a range that “makes their interpretation subject to underlying perspectives and priorities.”¹³⁷ In other words, some stakeholders may have reason to be skeptical of the findings, while others may argue that these findings are promising and should lead to further efforts to improve the programs.

Focusing on Quality of Programs

The number of mentoring programs appears to have grown in recent years, likely due to a variety of reasons, including federal attention to mentoring as an intervention for at-risk youth and promising associations between mentoring and multiple outcomes.¹³⁸ These programs have

¹³² Bernstein et al., *Impact Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education’s Student Mentoring Program Final Report*, p. 92.

¹³³ Evaluations of other school-based mentoring programs have reported similar findings.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

¹³⁵ MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, “Elements of Effective Practice in Mentoring,” 2nd ed., 2003.

¹³⁶ Russell, “School-Based Mentoring Needs a Friend.”

¹³⁷ Mark E. Wheeler, Thomas E. Keller, David L. DuBois, “Review of Three Recent Randomized Trials of School-Based Mentoring: Making Sense of Mixed Findings,” *Social Policy Report*, vol. 24, no. 3 (2010).

¹³⁸ DuBois et al., “How Effective Are Mentoring Programs for Youth? A Systematic Assessment of the Evidence,” pp. 59-60.

different formats and serve specific populations of youth. For example, in FY2011 DOJ provided funding to mentoring organizations that serve youth with disabilities and youth who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

In light of this perceived expansion, researchers and policymakers caution that administrators should carefully implement mentoring programs while adhering to core practices of effective mentoring that have been informed by research (see **Figure 1** for select elements of effective mentoring practices). The Obama Administration stated, as part of its FY2012 proposal to fund the Mentoring Children of Prisoners program, that it would encourage grantees to concentrate on program elements that result in positive mentoring experiences and outcomes rather than the number of matches.¹³⁹ HHS went on to say that it intended to focus on identifying and disseminating evidence-based best practices on mentoring relationships. Separately, the Administration is funding, through FY2011 appropriations for the DOJ mentoring program, a grant on research of best practices in mentoring. As discussed in **Table 2**, the grant seeks to support research that will further the understanding of evidence-based and effective practices in mentoring programs that serve at-risk youth. The goal is to generate research that has practical application for these programs.

Gap in Mentoring Services

A 2002 poll by MENTOR, a mentor advocacy group, estimated that 15 million at-risk¹⁴⁰ youth need a mentor.¹⁴¹ Recruiting and retaining volunteers appears to be a major challenge for mentoring organizations, including those funded through federal mentoring programs.¹⁴² 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.¹⁴³ 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.¹⁴⁴ 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.¹⁴⁵ 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.

¹³⁹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, *FY2012 Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committee, Children and Families Services Programs*, p. 115, <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/olab/budget/2012/cj/CFS.pdf>.

¹⁴⁰ 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.

¹⁴¹ MENTOR, "The National Agenda For Action: How to Close America's Mentoring Gap," 2006, available at http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_399.pdf, p. 10.

¹⁴² Astukas and Tanti, "Recruiting and Sustaining Volunteer Mentors," in David L. Dubois and Michael J. Karcher, eds., *Handbook of Youth Mentoring*, (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2005), p. 245. (Hereinafter, Astukas and Tanti, "Recruiting and Sustaining Volunteer Mentors.")

¹⁴³ GAO, *Student Mentoring Programs*, pp. 20-21.

¹⁴⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Report to Congress: The Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program*, September 2007.

¹⁴⁵ Arthur Astukas and Chris Tanti, "Recruiting and Sustaining Volunteer Mentors," pp. 235-249.

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.¹⁴⁶ According to a 2005 study by MENTOR, less than one-fifth of mentors reported mentoring a youth involved in the juvenile justice or foster care systems or with a parent in prison.¹⁴⁷ 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 DOJ's focus on youth involved in the foster care or juvenile justice systems and children with imprisoned parents. Nonetheless, potential mentors may still be discouraged from working with youth facing serious personal difficulties and challenges in their communities.

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 or cuts in funding,¹⁴⁸ especially in light of the elimination of the Safe and Drug Free Schools Mentoring program and Mentoring Children of Prisoners program.

¹⁴⁶ Walker, "Youth Mentoring and Public Policy," pp. 509-510.

¹⁴⁷ MENTOR, "Mentoring in America 2005: A Snapshot of the Current State of Mentoring," 2006, available at http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_404.pdf.

¹⁴⁸ Erika Fitzpatrick, "Surviving Without Uncle Sam's Money: Mentoring Grant Cutoff Sparks Talk About How to Diversify Funding," *Youth Today*, June 2007, p. 10.

Appendix. Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program

Table A-1. Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program: Select Demographics and Characteristics of Children, Mentors, and Relationships (FY2006-FY2010)

Demographic or Characteristic	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010
Total number of matches	27,525	28,256	37,380 ^a	42,666 ^b	28,534
Average age of youth	11	10.5	11	11	11
Share of children who were male	45%	43%	45%	47%	45%
Share of mentors who were male	38%	40%	40%	41%	41%
Total number of matches in the fourth quarter of the fiscal year that were across gender	2,461	n/a	3,106	1,044	981
Total number of matches in the fourth quarter of the fiscal year that were across race or ethnicity	6,380	n/a	12,844	3,610	3,026
Average number of days youth was waiting for a mentor	53	n/a	60.5	87.7	70.6
Share of children with fewer than 12 hours of regular mentor/youth contact during the past quarter (i.e., four-month period)	24%	n/a	23%	23%	22%
Share of children with 12 to 24 hours of regular mentor/youth contact during the past quarter	22%	n/a	42%	42%	44%
Share of children with more than 24 hours of regular mentor/youth contact during the past quarter	32%	n/a	28%	27%	26%
Share of children for whom the frequency or length of their contacts with mentors is unknown	22%	n/a	7%	8%	5%
Average number of initial pre-match training/orientation(s) hours per mentor	5.0	4.1	7.3	7.0	4.5
Average number of hours post-match training per mentor	4.5	3.4	2.4	2.3	2.6
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	n/a	12.5	19.4	17.1

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 2008, December 2008, January 2009, and February 2010.

Note: Data are not available for some characteristics for FY2007 because of changes that year in the archiving feature of the MCP program's management information system.

- a. Does not include the 3,008 matches under the Voucher Demonstration Project.
- b. Does not include the 8,130 matches under the Voucher Demonstration Project.

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