

State of Connecticut Judicial Branch



Court Support Services Division

JUVENILE JUSTICE MENTORING PROGRAM (JJMP) *PROGRAM GUIDE*

This Program Guide has been developed to assist program staff with the day to day operations and ongoing expectations of the Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division (JBCSSD) Juvenile Justice Mentoring Program (JJMP). This is a working document which can be revised and updated on a regular basis as processes, protocols, and expectations change.

Program Description:

The Juvenile Justice Mentoring Program (JJMP) is a statewide mentoring program focused on complementing and enhancing existing Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division (JBCSSD) services. The JJMP will have two mentoring service options targeting different risk levels and supportive needs of juveniles involved with JBCSSD.

The goal of the JJMP is to provide youth with positive adult contact that can have a strong, long lasting, positive effect on the youth. While building these mentoring relationships, the focus should be on reducing risk factors, reducing anti-social behaviors, increasing family/peer relations, increasing positive social connections, increasing school performance, enhancing personal growth and development, and ultimately reducing recidivism by helping children and youth transition into healthy young adults.

Prior to referral, the juveniles will be assessed through a validated risk and needs assessment. Referrals will come from Juvenile Probation Officers or JBCSSD contracted services providers for one of two service options:

- Traditional Mentoring
 - Volunteer mentors
 - Low and/or medium risk juveniles (Tiers 2-4)
 - One year match commitment
 - Up to 2 hours per week
 - Predominantly serve as prosocial adult and prosocial connector
 - Referrals will be from Juvenile Probation Officers or JBCSSD contracted services providers
- Intensive Mentoring
 - Paid mentors
 - High risk juveniles (Tier 5)
 - About 6 months match commitment
 - Up to 5 hours per week
 - Prosocial adult and prosocial connector, educational support, address antisocial behaviors, family support, enhance life skills, enhance problem solving skills, assist in conflict resolution, etc.
 - Referrals will only be from Juvenile Probation Officers

Program Expectations:

- Eligibility criteria:
 - 10-17 years old
 - Delinquents and status offenders (FWSN)
 - Males and Females
 - Tiers 2 - 4 for Traditional Mentoring
 - Tier 5 for Intensive Mentoring
 - Criminogenic needs are being addressed or have been addressed
 - Must have at least 2 months left of supervision and/or in program
 - Client/family must be willing participants

Exception can be made on a case by case basis with the written approval from JBCSSD Compliance Staff.

State of Connecticut is in the process of considering legislative changes that would impact the age of juvenile jurisdiction. If this occurs, JBCSSD and mentoring providers will discuss changes to the eligibility age.

- Exclusionary criteria:
 - Criminogenic needs have not been met (or currently not being addressed)
 - Child/youth is actively homicidal, suicidal, psychotic, or in need of detox

- Referrals
 - Juveniles will be referred by Probation Officers and JBCSSD contracted providers (currently only the Linking Youth to Natural Communities (LYNC) but may include others based on need and utilization). The referral source will have discretion in determining which clients are appropriate for mentoring taking into consideration clients' and families interest and level of engagement. Discretion will be considered particularly with the "intensive mentoring" referrals that will solely be referred by probation officers and will be based on clear guidelines developed by JBCSSD.
 - Through a JBCSSD approved risk assessment, children / youth will be classified in Tiers. Referrals will be submitted by the referral source utilizing standard referral form containing mutually agreed upon client information.
 - It will be the responsibility of the service providers to acknowledge receipt of the referral within 1 business day or receipt. Referrals will need to be accepted or denied within 3 business days with notification via email to the referral source and via phone contact to child/youth or family. If a referral is denied, the JBCSSD Compliance Staff must be notified.

- Engagement
 - Families of children and youth that are involved in the criminal justice system typically are harder to engage and have substantial basic needs and barriers to pro-social living. Mentoring is a voluntary service, one that youth may not feel they need. Providers must work to engage difficult and challenging youth and families.
 - Youth and families who are referred to the JJMP will be asked to sign an agreement verifying their willingness to participate and comply with program requirements.

- Screening and Intake
 - Providers will have 3 business days to contact youth/family to schedule the intake process. Intake must include youth /guardian completed and signed agreement to participate, all demographic information and other pertinent information necessary to provide services.

- Communication and Reporting
 - Programs are required to maintain consistent, verbal and written communication with referral source. This communication exchange will ensure that all are

informed of youth's status while receiving services and that appropriate decisions are made regarding youth with engagement issues or any behavior concerns.

- In addition, programs are required to submit or report on the below: (this is not an exhaustive list)
 - Monthly progress reports
 - Quarterly meetings with referral source(as needed)
 - Discharge summary
 - Mentor/mentee monthly status and feedback
 - Mentor/mentee activity log

- Mentor recruitment and training
 - Programs should consider strategies that truly convey the benefits, practices, supports and even the challenges of mentoring. This should include a clear difference between the traditional and intense mentoring and which mentor qualifications will be required for each type.
 - Recruitment should be designed to build positive attitudes and emotions. Programs should consider recruiting mentors whose skills, motivation and background best match the goals and structure of the program, this includes, time, commitments, motivation, experience or desire to work with this population. This is especially true for those mentors that will be considered paid mentors. Mentors should be familiar and/or comfortable with being in the youth's community.
 - Program should have strategies to recruit and maintain a diverse pool of mentors, especially as the qualifications may differ for traditional mentors and intensive mentors.
 - Training is essential to the success of a mentoring program. Training focuses on ensuring that potential mentors have the basic knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to build a safe and effective relationship.
 - Mentor training has documented implications for the length of the match relationship as well as both mentors/mentee's experience and quality of the relationship.
 - Programs should have a comprehensive and relevant training track for potential mentors. Trainings should incorporate support and skill development or enhancement and understanding of juvenile justice and youth's risk and needs.

- Mentor /Mentee Match
 - The relationships that develop between youth and their mentors are the central route through which mentoring is thought to benefit youth (Rhodes 2005). By developing trusting relationships with adults children/youth will likely improve positive self-image and develop cognitive and social skill that will pass onto other future relationships.

Studies suggest that the quality of the mentoring relationship matter. Stronger and longer Mentoring relationships tend to be linked with more favorable outcomes for youth. (Grossman, Rhodes 2002, and Dubois 2006)

- Accordingly, effective mentor and mentee match is crucial to the longevity of the mentoring relationship, therefore it is essential to consider the following when making a match:
 - Do mentor and mentee meet eligibility criteria?
 - Commonalities and compatibility between mentors and mentees (demographics, race, gender, age language, personal preferences experience and interest).

- Mentor/mentee relationship and activities
 - Effective mentor and mentee match is crucial to the longevity of the mentoring relationship; however higher risk children/youth in particular, present many challenges to mentors. This youth population may come into the relationship with trust and behaviors issues that many mentors may be ill equipped to handle
 - Traditional mentoring will require a commitment of no less than 12 months, with up to 2 hours per week of contact.
 - Intensive mentoring will require a commitment of up to 6 months, with up to 5 hours per week of contact.
 - Although, more intensive programs are associated with better outcomes, mentoring programs have to weigh the possible benefits of more intensive relationships with possible greater difficulty recruiting and retaining mentors.
 - Programs are encouraged to implement activities that are low or no cost. Activities should also support and build Mentor/Mentee relationship.

- Safety
 - The programs are required to ensure that mentoring occurs in a safe and secure environment for the children youth/families as well as program staff. This includes both physical and emotional.
 - There should be policies and procedures in place that addresses physical, sexual and emotional abuse or harassment that safeguards not only employees but also children/youth /families; where mentoring can and cannot occur, expectations and conduct of mentors/mentees. There should also be policies in place that address emergencies, medical or mental health needs.
 - The program are expected to conduct background checks on all potential mentoring candidates and staff (DCF, criminal, DMV)