September 2005

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A special thank you to the members of the National Disability Mentoring Council for their support in the development of this best practices guide:

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Preface

The Best Practices Guide in Mentoring Youth with Disabilities signals an important milestone in the history of our organization. Since our founding in 1985, we have received many requests for information from individuals and organizations across the United States wanting to start mentoring programs for youth with disabilities in their area. With our new National Mentoring Initiative now in place, we are able to provide training and technical assistance to many of these organizations.

It is our hope that you find this guide to be a useful tool to help you start your own mentoring program or expand one you currently run to include youth with disabilities. Youth with disabilities have so much to gain from relationships with mentors who can guide them on their paths toward independence and full participation in their communities. Adults with disabilities who have grown up to be successful leaders of the community are the perfect resource for youth with disabilities. These mentors can demonstrate by example what is possible and help youth define and achieve success for themselves.

The hundreds of mentor matches we have made over the last twenty years have been an inspiration to us and kept our belief in our programs alive. Our group and online mentoring programs have found innovative ways to connect mentors to youth who might not otherwise have had the benefit of a mentoring experience. We have seen the impact of mentoring in so many ways:

• Youth who have given up hope have begun to believe in themselves;

• Young adults who have been told they would never go to college have degrees and are now working;

• Parents who have searched for after-school, social or recreational programs for their son or daughter have found a place for their kids to "hang out" and make friends in the community;

• Mentors who feel fulfilled to be part of a young person's success;

• Mentees who have grown up to become mentors themselves because of the difference their mentor made in their lives.

These and so many other stories have demonstrated to us the power of mentoring and the lasting benefits it can bring to a young person's life.

We hope you will consider joining our National Disability Mentoring Council to help us promote mentoring for youth with disabilities throughout the

United States. It is only through our collective work that we can help build a society that truly embraces, accepts, and values people with disabilities and all they have to offer.

First we'd like to thank the mentors who have volunteered thousands of hours working with youth in our programs. We'd also like to thank our colleagues, family members, staff, board members, funders, and others who have believed in our work and provided us with the support we needed to help our organization grow over the years. It is our hope that this is the first of many publications and resources we will be able to share with others. We'd especially like to recognize the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Technology Opportunities Program; the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy; and Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation for their funding to develop our mentoring programs into replicable models and to create this best practices guide.

Regina Snowden and Maureen Gallagher, Partners for Youth with Disabilities

Table of Contents

1) Introduction
The History of Mentoring
The Mentoring Movement and the Inclusion of Youth with Disabilities
Research on the Effectiveness of Mentoring Youth with Disabilities

2) Mentoring Models
Types of Mentoring Models
Examples of Mentoring Models in the U.S.

3) Best Practices
Best Practices for Recruiting, Screening, and Training
Best Practices for Matching, Follow-up, and Retention

4) E-Mentoring
Benefits of E-Mentoring
Consideration in Setting-Up and Running Mentoring Program
Partners Online Case Study

5) Starting a Program
Start-Up Instructions
Possible Challenges/Red Flags and Suggestions for Overcoming Them
Documentation and Legal Issues

6) Sustaining Programs
Budgeting
Funding Resources
Challenges/Red Flags

7) Evaluation
Purposes of Evaluation Plans
Developing Scientifically-Based Program Evaluation Tools

8) Transition
Elements of Successful Transitioning
Key Strategies for Working with Employers
Understanding the Workforce Development System

9) Resources

Chapter 1: An Introduction to the Mentoring Movement for Youth with Disabilities

The practice of mentoring has been recognized for centuries as an effective, relatively simple way to help youth develop skills, knowledge, confidence and motivation. Those involved in mentoring began a movement in the 1980s to include previously underserved youth in their efforts. Mentoring programs for at-risk youth sprang up across the country, but most did not target or serve a very important sector of at-risk youth: youth with disabilities (Snowden, 2003). The disability mentoring movement has only begun to catch the limelight. This chapter will provide you with a brief history of the mentoring movement as a whole and introduce you to the disability mentoring movement of today. It will also present evidence showing the effectiveness of mentoring at-risk youth and highlight the importance of incorporating mentoring for youth with disabilities into the mentoring movement.

Tracking the Mentoring Movement as a Whole

You would have to look all the way back to the ancient Greeks to find the origins of mentoring. The informal practice of mentoring, which involves an older, more experienced person (oftentimes a family member, family friend or teacher) guiding a youth through his or her development, has occurred throughout history as well. An example of more structured mentoring may be found in the Friendly Visiting Campaign, which started in the late 1800s. Through this effort, hundreds of middle-class women mentored individuals in poor and immigrant communities to help bring them out of poverty. Big Brothers Big Sisters, which was founded in 1904, is a successor to the Friendly Visiting Campaign (Freedman, 1993). Big Brothers Big Sisters now includes 470 agencies nationwide (Big Brothers Big Sisters, 2004).

Fast forward several decades to the early 1980s, when the growth of mentoring programs for disadvantaged youth began. In 1983, Margaret Mahoney, then president of The Commonwealth Fund, noticed that our society lacked ways to build meaningful connections between young adults and caring older adults. She called for a "renaissance of mentoring" to compensate for the "absence of traditional family and community linkages to bring younger people together with older ones" (Sipe, 1998, p. 11).

Following the new spotlight on mentoring in the 1980s, Ray Chambers and Geoff Boisi, financiers and philanthropists, founded MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership in 1990 to lead the effort to connect youth with mentors. MENTOR and other organizations across the country were responsible for much growth in the mentoring movement during the 1990s. Initiatives at the national, state and local levels emerged. MENTOR's directory of mentoring programs contained listings for 1700 programs in the mid-1990s (Johnson and Sullivan, 1995). In 2004, the directory contained over 5000 programs. The federal government responded to the need for mentoring programs for at-risk youth in 1992, when Congress amended the Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 to create the Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP). According to the JUMP website, the federal government has funded over 300 JUMP sites since 1994 (Juvenile Mentoring Program, 2005).

"What mentors do is not always spectacular; what they do will not always make the headlines of the paper or be the lead story on the nightly news. But if all they do is diffuse the anger of one individual, they have made a difference in the world. If all

*they do is relieve the frustration of one individual, they have made a difference in the world. If all they do is make one person less lonely, they have made a difference in the world. If all they do is fortify the courage, inspire the dreams, sustain the hope and build the self-esteem of one individual, they have made a difference in the world. Mentors have made that difference in the world because they have been and are a positive force in the life of at least one person." **– Judge Reginald C. Lindsay, United States District Judge**

The mentoring movement picked up even more momentum in 1997, when the Corporation for National Service, Points of Light Foundation and United Way of America joined forces to sponsor the President's Summit for America's Future. Four U.S. presidents attended the event, which urged Americans to make children and youth a national priority by fulfilling the Five Promises for youth (America's Promise, 2003). The first Promise is to provide "ongoing relationships with caring adults – parents, mentors, tutors or coaches" (Powell, 2003, p.1). After the President's Summit, General Colin L. Powell founded America's Promise – Alliance for Youth, which is a network that helps every community, organization and individual in the nation fulfill the Five Promises (America's Promise, 2003).

Mentoring has been at the forefront of the nation's consciousness for the last several years. In 1997, the Harvard Mentoring Project began a national media campaign to draw attention to mentoring and the need for mentors. The group is still continuing this effort, and recently added two new initiatives, the "Who Mentored You?" and "Thank Your Mentor Day" campaigns (Harvard Mentoring Project, 2001). The MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership website highlights recent events that have focused national attention on mentoring. In 2002, the National Mentoring Partnership, along with the Harvard Mentoring Project, launched January as National Mentoring Month. That same year, the U.S. Postal Service unveiled its "Mentoring a Child" stamp. In 2004, President Bush declared January "National Mentoring Month" and mentioned the importance of mentoring in his State of the Union address (National Mentoring Partnership, 2002). U.S. News & World Report writer Michael Gerson said that "discovering" a role for mentoring in the social policy arena has been "the single greatest policy insight in the last century" (Grossman, 1998, p. 8).

Milestones in the Disability Mentoring Movement

Despite the strides that the mentoring movement has made, it has largely overlooked one key group of at-risk youth in its efforts: young Americans with disabilities. Advocates of youth with disabilities have struggled to get them included in mentoring programs and to make the public aware of the importance of creating initiatives for this underserved group (Snowden, 2003). Though many types of programs have grown out of policymakers' recent shift of attention to the needs of youth with disabilities, few include mentoring components.

Only within the last few years have large numbers of disability service providers recognized the special impact that a mentor has on the life of a youth with a disability. However, the mentoring movement for youth with disabilities actually began back in 1983, when Boston-based social worker Regina Snowden noticed the lack of quality programming for the teenagers with disabilities she served. Realizing that there is no better role model for a young person with a disability than a successful adult with a disability, Ms. Snowden began Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD), a pilot mentoring project with a few one-to-one matches. Many of the mentors and mentees from those matches still keep in touch almost twenty years later, and by 2004, Ms. Snowden's small pilot mentoring project had grown to serve over 600 youth per year in one-to-one, group and e-mentoring programs. Other disability service providers caught wind of PYD's success, and soon groups asked for advice and assistance with starting disability mentoring programs.

By 1999, the federal government focused its attention on mentoring youth with disabilities. The White House held the first National Disability Mentoring Day, which was patterned after school-to-work activities, to increase the profile of National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October. The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) took over administration of National Disability Mentoring Day in 2001, and built it from a program serving 1500 participants from 32 states in 2001 to one with over 8000 student and job seeker participants from all fifty states plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands and fourteen other countries in 2003. The AAPD dropped the word "national" from the title in 2003 due to international participation. Today, Disability Mentoring Day recruits mentors from employers and includes activities such as job shadowing and hands-on career exploration for students and job seekers with disabilities (American Association for People with Disabilities, 2005).

In 2003, several federal agencies and nonprofit groups expanded the mentoring youth with disabilities movement. The U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) created an Intermediary Grants for Mentoring Youth with Disabilities Initiative in 2003, issuing grant funds to disability service providers across the nation to help organizations in their areas start mentoring programs for youth with disabilities transitioning into employment or post-secondary education. Also in 2003, the Rehabilitation Services Administration, under the Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, noted the importance of mentoring youth in transition in its American Rehabilitation (Autumn 2003) magazine, and made grant funds available to entities to start model mentoring demonstration projects.

Key Events in the Mentoring Movement and PYD's National Growth

- **800 BC-300 BC**: Ancient Greeks practice mentoring

- **Late 1800s**: Friendly Visiting Campaign created

- **1904**: Big Brothers Big Sisters created

- **1980s**: Growth of mentoring programs for disadvantaged youth

- **1983**: Margaret Mahoney, president of The Commonwealth Fund, calls for a "renaissance" of mentoring programs for youth

- **1983**: Partners for Youth with Disabilities is created to form mentoring relationships between youth and adults with disabilities

- **1990**: Ray Chambers and Geoff Boisi create MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership

- **1992**: Congress creates the Juvenile Mentoring Program, which supports 93 mentoring projects for at-risk youth

- **1994**: The first formally recognized e-mentoring program, "Telementoring Young Women in Engineering and Computing Project," was created by Education Development Center's Center for Children and Technology through funding from the National Science Foundation

- **1997**: President's Summit on the Future of America is held in Philadelphia and attendees call for the creation of mentoring programs for at-risk youth

- **1997**: America's Promise – Alliance for Youth is created by Colin Powell and Ray Chambers; the organization calls on Americans to provide youth with "ongoing relationships with caring adults" (Powell, 2003, p.1)

- **1997**: The Harvard Mentoring Project launches a national media campaign to draw

attention to mentoring and the need for mentors

- **1999**: National Disability Mentoring Day is started in the White House

- **2001**: American Association for People with Disabilities and U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy began cosponsoring National Disability Mentoring Day

- **2001**: Partners for Youth with Disabilities pilots an e-mentoring program for youth with disabilities with funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Technology Opportunity Program and develops the Massachusetts Disability Mentoring Council to advise the project

- **2002**: U.S. Postal Service draws attention to the mentoring movement by issuing its "Mentoring a Child" stamp

  An Introduction to the Mentoring Movement for Youth with Disabilities 1-6Partners for Youth with Disabilities – Best Practices for Mentoring Youth with Disabilities
- **2003**: National Disability Mentoring Day becomes Disability Mentoring Day when students and jobseekers from 14 countries participate

- **2003**: Intermediary Grants for Mentoring Youth with Disabilities Initiative started by the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy

- **2003**: American Rehabilitation magazine notes importance of mentoring youth with disabilities

- **2003**: Rehabilitation Services Administration starts a grant initiative for creation of model mentoring programs

- **2003**: Partners for Youth with Disabilities creates the National Mentoring Youth with Disabilities Initiative with funding from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy and forms the National Disability Mentoring Council to help spread mentoring for youth with disabilities across the country

- **2003**: Boston Medical Center, Department of Family Medicine and Partners for Youth with Disabilities receive funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to expand Making Healthy Connections, a health promotion mentoring program for youth with disabilities

- **2004**: President George Bush declares January "National Mentoring Month" and mentions the importance of mentoring in his State of the Union address

- **2004**: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Disability holds a kick-off event, promoting "I Can Do It, You Can Do It," a mentoring program for youth with disabilities which promotes physical fitness

The Effectiveness of Mentoring

Researchers from various fields have studied the outcomes of mentoring at risk

youth using different mentoring models. Overall, studies have found that mentoring positively affects youths' lives in several areas. One study, an evaluation of the Sponsor-a-Scholar program in Philadelphia, PA found that at-risk youth involved in a mentoring program that stresses academic goals had improved high school and college outcomes. Youth had significantly higher grade point averages, higher rates of college attendance in each of the first two years following high school graduation, and higher rates of participation in college preparation activities. This same study also found that youth most at-risk, those with fewer resources at their disposal, benefited most from mentoring (Johnson, 1999).

In its 1998 report to Congress, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention reported outcomes from the mentoring programs funded by its JUMP initiative. Their study found that at-risk youth who received mentoring through the programs were less likely to use alcohol and drugs, avoided fights and friends who started trouble, did not join gangs, and did not use guns or knives. The study's authors expressed that regular youth participation in mentoring activities could provide an at-risk youth with "personal connectedness, supervision and guidance, skills training, career or cultural enrichment opportunities, a knowledge of spirituality and values, a sense of self-worth, and goals and hope for the future" (Juvenile Mentoring Program Report to Congress, 1998, p.10). A 1995 study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters found that youth who participated in the program's one-to-one mentoring were 46% less likely to initiate drug use and 27% less likely to initiate alcohol use than their non-mentored counterparts. They also missed half as many days of school, felt more competent with schoolwork and received higher grades, and enjoyed more positive relationships with parents and friends (Tierney and Grossman, 1995).

Potential Benefits of Mentoring for Youth with Disabilities

It seems clear that mentoring programs for at-risk youth yield positive results. What about the effectiveness of mentoring youth with disabilities? Can we expect the same positive results? Do the special needs of this particular at-risk group imply different outcomes? Unfortunately, researchers have conducted very few studies of mentoring programs for youth with disabilities. Too few programs exist to provide a valid sample size across programs, and most of the characteristics of at-risk youth taken into account in other studies do not include disability-

related issues. However, there is evidence to suggest that mentoring for youth with disabilities can yield important outcomes.

One study that appeared in the Journal of Rehabilitation's January/March 1995 issue did look at the impact of mentoring on adolescents with severe physical disabilities. The research showed that mentored youth reported significantly higher levels of disability-related self-efficacy and significantly more knowledge of strategies used to overcome barriers to community independence. In addition, parents of mentored youth perceived their children as significantly more knowledgeable about strategies to promote community independence and had significantly higher levels of confidence in the community-based capabilities of their children (Powers, Sowers, and Stevens, 1995). Mentors in the study provided qualitative evidence that their mentees "(1) learned how to conquer disability-related barriers, (2) became more positive about their capabilities and future potential for independence, (3) became more self-reliant, and (4) expressed increased interest in working, going to college, and living in their own homes" (Powers, Sowers and Stevens, 1995, p.12).

Another study of youth with mild disabilities in middle school substantiates that mentoring can help these youth improve self esteem and grade point averages, improve attendance and receive fewer suspensions (Campbell-Whatley, 2001). Moccia, Schumacher, Hazel, Veron & Dessler (1989) also found that mentoring can be a strong intervention related to academic outcomes. While examining a demonstration mentoring project set up to help high school students with learning disabilities, they found positive effects on graduation rates and enrollment in postsecondary schools.

While there may be a lack of published scientific research related to mentoring for youth with disabilities, many mentoring programs for youth with disabilities have documented outcomes. Based on PYD's experience mentoring youth with disabilities, below are examples of potential outcomes for youth with disabilities:

• Increased independent living skills

• Improved motivation and self-esteem

• Healthier relationships with family, friends, teachers, etc.

• Increased involvement in community and extracurricular activities

• Increased interest in continuing education and the knowledge of how to do so

• Increased interest in having a job/career and the knowledge of how to do so

• Increased disability pride

• Increased knowledge of disability rights

• Improved self-advocacy skills

Merging Two Mentoring Movements

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to increase awareness of the mentoring movement and its achievements and, most importantly, to emphasize the necessity of including youth with disabilities—a special sector of at-risk youth often overlooked and underserved in the movement. As the statistics reported by the National Organization on Disability/Harris Survey of Americans with Disabilities (2004) in the box below indicate, youth with disabilities face incredible barriers to successful self-development and full participation in society.

Participation Gaps for Youth with Disabilities

• 35% are completely uninvolved in their communities, compared to 21% without disabilities

• 22% fail to complete high school, compared to 9% without disabilities

• 32% aged 18-64 are working, compared to 81% without disabilities

• 28% postpone health care because they can't afford it, compared to 12% without disabilities

• 41% voted in the 2000 presidential election, compared to 51% of those without disabilities

• 28.4% have access to the Internet at home, compared to 56.7% without disabilities

• 30% have a problem with inadequate transportation, compared to 10% of those without disabilities

Youth with disabilities are in need of positive role models who have overcome barriers to become successful adults. The evidence presented by Powers, Sowers and Stevens (1995) points to the promise that mentoring holds for youth with disabilities. It is critical for mentoring organizations to proactively take steps to provide mentoring services for these youth. It is also just as important for leaders of the mentoring movement to include youth with disabilities in their efforts to raise public awareness about the importance of mentoring.

Incorporating Youth with Disabilities into Existing Mentoring Programs

The rest of this manual presents instructions, resources, suggestions and advice to help organizations start, run and sustain mentoring programs for youth with disabilities. However, organizations do not have to take the big step of creating entirely new mentoring programs in order to include youth with disabilities in their efforts. Agencies may take a few small steps to make their programs more accessible. According to Sword and Hill (2003), some issues for mentoring program staff to consider when making programs accessible and welcoming for youth with disabilities include the following:

• Do we need to provide reasonable accommodations in order for the young person to participate? If so, what are they, and how might we provide them?

• Are mentors in our mentoring program prepared to mentor a young person who may have academic limitations, social problems and/or medical complexities? Oftentimes, the best mentor for a youth with a disability is a mentor who has the same or similar disability.

• What disability-related information do we need to provide for the mentors? Where might we find the information we need to provide?

• How can the mentoring program staff train and support mentors to help them understand the needs of mentees with disabilities while also teaching them to expect the best from their mentees?

• What is the mentoring program's policy on disclosing the disability?

Besides addressing the issues above, existing mentoring programs should establish some basic provisions for serving youth with disabilities. The steps below are based on the experience of Partners for Youth with Disabilities and represent relatively simple actions that will draw youth with disabilities to your program and make sure that they benefit from the experience once they've joined.

• Make your mentoring website accessible to youth with all kinds of disabilities. Visit the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Accessibility Initiative at http://www.w3c.org/WAI for more information.

• Design your program recruitment and promotional materials to clearly show that youth with disabilities are encouraged to participate. It is a good idea to include a direct statement as such.

• Design mentoring program trainings to cover issues pertinent to serving youth with

disabilities, such as disclosure of disability, special accommodations, health-related issues and limitations, mentor and mentee expectations, mandatory reporting of abuse and neglect, and so forth (Sword and Hill, 2003).

Once you have made the commitment to serve youth with disabilities through a mentoring program, it is critical to understand the steps needed to ensure that your program experiences success and produces positive results for the youth served. The remainder of the chapters will highlight research in the field, discuss best practices, and detail the experiences of Partners for Youth with Disabilities, providing you with a road map for starting and maintaining your program.

Chapter 2: Mentoring Program Models

When you hear the word "mentoring," you may think of a traditional one-to-one relationship between an adult and a younger person who spend time together. Although many mentoring programs do operate using this conventional method, mentoring may actually occur in other forms as well. Starting a mentoring program requires some tough but important decision-making. Making the decision about what form you would like your mentoring program to take should be at the top of the list. The various mentoring program models require different amounts of space, personnel, staff time, and monetary resources. Some may augment or supplement other services for youth with disabilities. Some may be embedded in employer-based or school-based programs. Chapter 2 outlines different types of mentoring models, compares the models, and gives short descriptions of existing example programs that are using the models.

One-to-one models One-to-one community-based model

Description:

• A youth is matched with an adult volunteer from the community-at-large.

• Mentors and mentees communicate via face-to-face meetings, telephone conversations, emails, and letters.

• Most activities take place in the community, outside work or school.

• Program staff ask matched pairs to communicate a certain number of times per week or month, and to stay matched for a certain length of time.

• Matches are often focused on building relationships and social skills, although some have an academic and/or career focus as well.

Example program:

Partners for Youth with Disabilities, Inc.'s MENTOR MATCH PROGRAM for youth with disabilities provides unique role model relationships by carefully pairing "mentoring" adults from the community who have a disability with youth who have similar disabilities. This program is designed to encourage a social relationship between mentor and mentee whereby they can identify common ground (such as hobbies, interests, etc.) and work on individual mentee goals. The program facilitates one-to-one meetings and offers participants custom designed workshops and recreational activities to assist them in developing their relationships. The program strives to convey to the youth and their families that growing up with a disability need not limit self-esteem, social, career and lifestyle options (Partners for Youth with Disabilities [PYD], 2004).

"As a former public school teacher I have a firsthand understanding of what young people can accomplish when they truly strive to realize their dreams, and I wholeheartedly embrace the arts as a vehicle for helping them find their way. Access to Theatre has created a remarkable roadmap for success." **First Lady Laura Bush, Honorary Chair of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities,** *discussing PYD's Access to Theater program, an inclusive group mentoring program which brings together youth with and without disabilities to work with artists from the community to create original theater productions.*

One-to-one school-based model

Description:

• A youth is matched with an adult volunteer through a program in the youth's school. Mentors may be college students.

• Mentors and mentees communicate mostly via face-to-face meetings, but may also communicate via email or letters. Communication may take the form of tutoring.

• Most activities take place during school hours on school grounds.

• Matches are usually focused on building academic and/or career-related skills.

Example program:

Philadelphia Futures' SPONSOR-a-SCHOLAR PROGRAM (SAS) "is dedicated to motivating students who might not otherwise consider higher education to stay in school and attend college. The program selects at-risk students from the Philadelphia public school system and offers them an opportunity to participate in a mentoring relationship with an adult volunteer. Students enter the program in high school-usually in 9th grade-and remain in the program through the first year of college." Students receive academic assistance, college counseling and other services in addition to mentoring (Johnson, 1999).

One-to-one employer (business)-based model

Description:

• A youth is matched with an employee-mentor through a school or community organization.

• Mentors and mentees communicate mostly via face-to-face meetings, but may have some contact via telephone and/or email.

• Match activities take place at the mentee's school or at the employee's place of business.

• Matches have an employment-related focus, with activities such as job shadowing, internships, and resume writing/interviewing skills-building.

Example program:

Johns Hopkins Hospital's THE HOSPITAL YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAM pairs youth with employees at local hospitals. "One afternoon a week for two to four hours children between the ninth and twelfth grades meet with a mentor at one of the hospitals, observing the work of all of the hospitals' departments, spending several months working in one of the departments, and participating in various career development and social activities" (Jaffe, 1999).

"Tuesday is one of the best days of the week for me. I have a mentor and we spend Tuesday after school with each other. He is like a big brother to me. He is special to me; he teaches me things that are right and things that are wrong. He is in a wheelchair, too, because he is disabled. I wish everybody could have a mentor just like mine-then they could be as happy as me." **- Partners for Youth with Disabilities mentee**

Group mentoring

Group mentoring model

Description:

• A certain number of adult volunteers (from one mentor to several mentors) mentor youth in a group setting.

• Group sizes may be small or large.

• Mentors communicate with mentee groups mostly via face-to-face contact, possibly via Internet chat rooms.

• Mentoring activities can take place at a school, business or community organization's space.

• Mentoring activities can be focused on academics, employment, careers, relationships, social skills or independent living skills. Many programs focus on a combination of these.

• Mentees benefit from interactions with other mentees as well as mentors.

• One-to-one matches may result from group mentoring interactions.

Example program:

Los Angeles Team Mentoring's TEAMWORKS MENTORING PROGRAM serves middle-school aged youth from disadvantaged communities. "Adult teams of mentors, comprised of teachers from the school, college students and business/community volunteers, work with groups of 12-15 students using an activity-based curriculum that focuses on leadership development, team building, community service, academic achievement, and cultural diversity" (Los Angeles Team Mentoring, Inc., 2005).

Proven Benefits of Standard Mentoring Models

Many studies have been done that show the benefits of standard mentoring programs (Sipe, 1999; Grossman, 1999; Johnson, 1999). Studies have mainly focused on the effects of mentoring on "at-risk" youth. The results seem clear- when a program is well-run and uses best practices, there are many benefits to mentoring. Benefits often differ depending on the focus of the program. Below is a breakdown of benefits based on different types of programs:

One-to-one mentoring model

• Less likely to initiate drug and alcohol use

• Less likely to hit someone

• Better school attendance

• Improved feelings of competence about the ability to do well in school

• Higher grades

• More positive relationships with friends and family

One-to-one academically-oriented mentoring model

• Improved academic performance

• More likely to participate in college preparatory activities

• More likely to attend college immediately after high school graduation

• Remained longer in school

Group mentoring model

• Better attitudes toward school, families and communities

• Better school attendance

Note. From "Mentoring Adolescents: What Have We Learned?," by Cynthia L. Sipe, 1999, Contemporary Issues in Mentoring, p. 16. Copyright 1999 by Public/Private Ventures. Adapted with Permission.

New Innovations to Existing Mentoring Models

E-mentoring model

Description:

• A youth is matched with an adult volunteer as in other one-to-one mentoring models.

• Mentors and mentees communicate primarily via email, list serves, chat or instant messaging.

• Programs may be community-based, school-based, or employer-based.

• Peer mentoring may take place via forums and/or moderated chats.

Example program:

Partners for Youth with Disabilities' PARTNERS ONLINE PROGRAM (POL) is an e-mentoring program that enables youth and adults with disabilities who might be isolated due to health, mobility, or geography to participate in a mentoring relationship through technology. POL's objectives include improving access, facilitating frequent communication and building the technology skills that are so important to the educational and professional goals of people with disabilities. Matched pairs are provided the means to communicate through an innovative community web portal that includes email, forums, one-to-one messaging and chat in a secure environment monitored by PYD staff. For an in depth exploration of e-mentoring and the POL model, see chapter 4 (PYD, 2004).

Peer-to-peer mentoring model

Description:

• Youth are matched with other youth instead of with adult mentors.

• Mentoring may take place via one-to-one matches or in a group mentoring setting.

• Mentoring activities may be school-based or community-based.

• Peer mentors communicate with peer mentees via face-to-face contact, telephone, email, or letters.

Example program:

BEST BUDDIES INTERNATIONAL'S programs serve middle school, high school, and college-aged young adults with intellectual disabilities by pairing them in one-to-one friendships with peers. Peer mentors help their peer mentees develop social skills, leadership skills, and job skills (Best Buddies International, 2005).

Example program:

Partners for Youth with Disabilities' MENTORING THROUGH PEER LEADERSHIP PROGRAM. This community service mentoring program trains young adults with and without disabilities ages 16-24 to become leaders in their communities and places them in service positions in a variety of settings where they work as mentors and role models for youth with disabilities. Peer leaders learn the value of community service while simultaneously developing their own leadership, independence, and employment skills (PYD, 2004).

Senior citizens-as-mentors mentoring model

Description:

• Youth are matched with volunteer mentors who are senior citizens in the community.

• Mentoring may take place via one-to-one matches or in a group mentoring setting.

• Mentoring activities may be school-based or community-based.

• Senior citizen mentors communicate with mentees via face-to-face contact, telephone, email or letters.

Example program:

Through Generation Inc.'s EXPERIENCE CORPS BOSTON, adults over age 55 mentor area school children during school hours by acting as reading coaches, classroom mentors, and lunchtime mentors. Older adults also mentor youth one-to-one outside of school through Experience Corps Generation Clubs. Group mentoring takes place via specialized community service learning activities (Experience Corps, 2005).

Faith-based mentoring model

Description:

• Youth are matched with volunteer mentors from religious denominations and faith-based organizations in the community.

• Mentoring may take place via one-to-one matches or in a group mentoring setting.

• Mentoring activities often take place at the religious denomination's place of worship or at the faith-based organization's site, but may also take place in the community.

• Faith-based mentors and their mentees communicate via face-to-face contact, telephone, email or letters.

• If the mentoring initiative is secularly funded, faith-based mentors may be asked not to proselytize to their mentees.

Example program:

Baton Rouge, Louisiana's WALK-BY-FAITH COLLABORATIVE matches at-risk youth in one-to-one mentoring relationships with East Baton Rouge churchgoers. Mentors are mainly recruited from African American Baptist churches. Besides one-to-one mentoring, the program offers monthly recreational activities and a weekly optional Bible study. Due to secular collaborations and funding, the program asks that its mentors not proselytize to mentees (Bauldry & Hartman, 2004).

Quick Comparison of Mentoring Models

Mentoring Model	Type of Mentoring Relationship	Mentor Characteristics	Location of Mentoring	Communication Method	Mentoring Focus
One-to-one community-based	One-to-one	Adult volunteer from the community	In the community, outside work or school	Face-to-face meet-ings, telephone, email, letters	Developing social skills & relationships/ overall personal development
One-to-one school-based	One-to-one	Adult volunteers from the community or college students	At the mentee's school	Mostly face-to-face meetings; sometimes tele-phone, email or letters	Building academic or career-related skills; tutoring
One-to-one employer-based	One-to-one	Adult employee of a sponsoring employer	At the mentee's school or the employee's place of business	Face-to-face meet-ings, telephone, email or letters	Building employment-related skills or finding employment; activities include job shadowing, internships, resume writ-ing, mock interviews
E-mentoring	One-to-one and/or group	Adult volunteers from the community	Places where mentees & men-tors access the Internet	Email, chat or in-stant messaging, forums	Developing technology skills as well as social skills; can focus on academics and/or employment as well
Group	One or several mentors to a group of mentees	Adult volunteers or young adult peers of the mentees	At a commu-nity-based site, school or place of business	Face-to-face group dynamics; may include Internet forums and/or chats	Developing social skills and relationships; may have additional

					focus on academics, employment and independent living skills
Peer-to-peer	One-to-one and/or group	Young adult peer(s) of the mentee(s)	In the community, at a school or at a community-based meeting site	Face-to-face, telephone, email, letters and/or face-to-face group dynamics	Developing social skills and relationships with peers; may have an additional academic focus; peer mentors develop leadership and job readiness skills.
Senior citizens-as-mentors	One-to-one and/or group	Senior citizens in the community	In the community, at a school or at a community-based meeting site	Face-to-face, telephone, email, letters and/or face-to-face group dynamics	Developing social skills and intergenerati onal relationships; may have additional focus on academics and/or employment

Blending Mentoring Models

Combining one-to-one with structured group mentoring

Description:

• Youth benefit by having an opportunity to work with mentors individually as well as in a group setting.

• By using two approaches to mentoring, mentees have an increased chance of gaining mentoring experiences (i.e., if the one-to-one relationship fails, the structured group mentoring experience continues to provide learning opportunities).

• Mentees can have the opportunity to learn from a variety of mentors and peers so they have a higher likelihood of achieving their goals.

• Supports for mentors, mentees and parents of the mentees can be built into group activities and meetings where people can share and benefit from each other's experiences.

Example program:

Partners for Youth with Disabilities' MAKING HEALTHY CONNECTIONS (MHC) PROGRAM provides a unique health promotion mentoring and skills building program designed to motivate youth with disabilities, ages 14-22, to maintain wellness and make a fully informed transition to adult health care services. Unlike traditional mentoring programs for youth with disabilities, which focus on providing one-on-one role modeling in order to provide support to youth, Making Healthy Connections provides structured group mentoring in combination with individual mentoring to empower youth to make the challenging transition to the complex world of adult health care. The MHC model integrates group and individual activities, hypothetical problem-solving, and experiential learning within the group and individual mentoring structure. The MHC project design incorporates three interrelated tracks: Youth Learning (a 12-week group mentoring skills training curriculum); Parents Learning (a 12-week training curriculum focused on building relationships between parents, children, healthcare providers, schools, and communities); and Individual Mentoring, through which adults with disabilities support youth participants in the practice of

newly acquired skills and serve as role models through the sharing of their own experiences. With these three tracks, MHC provides a comprehensive approach to helping young people successfully transition to adulthood (PYD, 2004).

Combining E-mentoring and group mentoring in a transition-to-work model

Description:

• Youth enrolled in a transition to work program or class are matched with an adult mentor

• Mentoring activities are part of a transition-to-work curriculum within a class setting.

• Teacher involved in talking to students about mentoring, and in developing career related topics and assignments for students and mentor to engage in and explore.

• All participants (teacher, mentor, students) have access to electronic communication via e-mentoring web portal

• Group mentoring takes place in blended combination of electronic group chat and forum discussions, in combination with in-person group meetings with the class.

Example program:

Computer Technologies Program E-MENTORING PROJECT WITH THE CALIFORNIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF (CSD). This pilot project allows students to explore technology-related careers with mentors in a classroom-based group setting using a blended mix of e-mentoring and in-person meetings with students. All CSD freshmen are enrolled in a career development class as part of the school's transition-to-work program. Students are split into six different classes, and each class of students is matched with a mentor involved in a technology-related career. The class instructor has woven the mentorship experience into the career development curriculum. Students, mentors and teacher are trained in the Partners Online (POL) software. POL email, chat and talk features are instrumental in getting students used to business communication, while being used as tools to explore technology careers through e-mentoring (Computer Technologies Program, 2005).

Choosing a mentoring model can be a challenging decision. As you have seen from this chapter, there are many models to choose from and each has its

own advantages and disadvantages. When making your decision, some things to consider may be the age and geography of your target population, the outcomes you are most interested in, and your potential referral sources for mentors and mentees. The remainder of the chapters will walk you through the steps to start and maintain your mentoring program.

Chapter 3: Best Practices for Mentoring Youth with Disabilities

Chapter One showed evidence that mentoring programs can yield impressive results. However, research has shown that programs must be structured and implemented effectively in order to have impact. This chapter presents best practices for successful mentoring programs. While this chapter focuses on traditional one-to-one mentoring between an adult and a youth, many of the ideas are applicable to others types of mentoring as well. The best practices are drawn from PYD's twenty years of experience implementing effective programs for youth with disabilities, from MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership's "Elements of Effective Practice," and from studies of other successful mentoring programs across the country. Best practices are grouped according to the necessary structural elements of an effective mentoring program. Chapter Three ends with some additional best practices for mentoring programs for youth with disabilities.

Best Practices for Recruiting

Many programs report that recruitment is one of the most important activities they do. Make sure that you do not underestimate the amount of time it will take to build relationships with referral sources and publicize your program within your community. Also, keep in mind that if your agency is new to serving youth with disabilities, it will take time to learn about community resources related to disability as well as network with these disability-specific agencies. Below are some successful recruitment strategies.

Use word of mouth to recruit program participants, especially mentors.

- Encourage the mentors in your program to recruit new mentors from their friends, family, co-workers and acquaintances. Studies show that word of mouth is the most effective way to recruit high-quality mentors.

- Try hosting a "bring a friend" event, where mentors bring individuals who are interested in learning more about mentoring.

Use mass media advertising, such as local Public Service Announcements, to recruit youth.

- Studies show that mass media advertising recruits more potential mentees than mentors.

Identify sources of potential mentors and mentees in your area, and concentrate your efforts on those sources.

- For youth with disabilities, some ideas for sources include private special education schools, parent advisory groups, health care providers, special education departments in public schools, and social service agencies.

- For adults with disabilities, some ideas for sources include local employers, Independent Living Centers, State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies, associations and local chapters of various disability organizations, local religious denominations, volunteer organizations and volunteer fairs, and Chambers of Commerce.

- Create a mailing list with sources' contact information. Keep this updated.

Employ marketing techniques when creating and disseminating

program information.

- Design attractive, eye-catching promotional literature and displays.

- Advertise by distributing inexpensive useful items such as magnets, pens and notepads emblazoned with your agency's website, logo and phone number.

- Design alternative formats of your recruitment materials, such as fliers in large print and in Braille.

Promote your program in-person whenever possible.

- Create a brief, persuasive speech to recruit program participants.

- Contact sources of potential program participants in your area personally via phone. Send promotional literature; then arrange to speak to the group briefly about your program.

- Remember to bring promotional literature and advertising items to distribute to potential recruits after you deliver your speech.

- Look for opportunities at all times to tell others about your program. Remember that word of mouth is the most effective recruitment tool.

Design a written recruitment plan to keep track of your efforts.

- List the sources you'll target each month and the recruitment methods you plan to use for each source. Frequently update the plan as you conduct recruitment efforts.

- Include your entire mentoring program staff/agency staff in recruitment activities. Ask everyone to keep track of his/her efforts.

*"Utilizing the 'Elements of Effective Practice' from MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, will ensure that your mentoring program is an appropriate response to the identifying need of your children and youth. It's about the safety for mentors and mentees and the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship." - **Nancy Anderson, Executive Director, Maine Mentoring Partnership***

Best Practices for Screening

Screening is critical to the success of your mentoring program. Thorough screening can serve the following purposes:

- increase the chances that potential participants are appropriate for the program

- reduce the likelihood of an unsafe environment for your mentees

- protect the agency from legal liability

- protect the program's reputation

Therefore, it is important to follow best practices for screening, including:

Initiate the screening procedure with a brief conversation in person or by phone.

- Begin by fully explaining your program's mission and guidelines.

- Make sure prospective mentors, mentees, and mentees' parent(s)/guardian(s) understand the program's expectations and are willing to make the time commitment.

- Choose potential mentors who understand that their primary responsibility will be to develop a friendship with the mentee (Sipe, 1999).

- Be up front with prospective mentors. Let them know that the process of mentoring might be difficult and somewhat time-consuming. Ask them how they will fit mentoring into their schedules (Sipe, 1999).

Conduct personal interviews with program applicants.

- Require prospective mentees' parent(s)/guardian(s) to be present at mentee interviews if possible.

- Interview applicants at their homes if possible. This allows program staff a glimpse of applicants' lifestyles.

- Interviewers should explain the mentoring program in depth again, answering any questions fully and making sure that applicants understand the screening, training and matching process.

- Ask prospective mentees to fill out an application during the interview. Have mentees' parent(s)/guardian(s) sign consent forms.

- Prospective mentors may fill out an application before or during the interview.

Design program applications for potential mentors and mentees to be as comprehensive as possible.

- Collect all necessary demographic and background information. Ask mentors and mentees to describe their ideal mentor match partner. Document any health-related concerns or needed accommodations.
- Ask mentors and mentees to sign a statement agreeing to meet program length and time requirements.

Require mentees' parent(s)/guardian(s) to sign consent forms.

- Forms should address legal concerns, confidentiality, release of medical information and responsibility for mentor match supervision.
- You may consider having an attorney review your consent forms prior to their use.

Require prospective mentors and mentees to sign forms agreeing to abide by program rules and regulations.

- Rules should articulate frequency of contact and length of the match.
- Firm policies should be in place regarding unsupervised contact; for example, no overnight visits.

Best Practices for Mentoring Youth with Disabilities 3-6Partners for Youth with Disabilities – Best Practices for Mentoring Youth with Disabilities

Ask prospective mentors to provide contact information for at least three references.

- At least one reference should be an employer if possible. Other references should know the applicant well, but not be family members, significant others, or someone employed by the mentor (i.e., a Personal Care Attendant).
- Create a reference check questionnaire designed to gauge the applicant's suitability for the mentor role. Ask pertinent questions about the applicant's history and character, including questions about the applicant's integrity, honesty, follow-through, ability to work with youth, alcohol and/or drug use, and driving habits. Conduct reference checks via phone or in person.

Conduct a criminal history background check on all prospective mentors prior to accepting them into your program.

- There are several types of background checks to choose from, including state background checks, federal background checks and driving history checks.

- State background checks are done by a state agency. For a list of state agencies providing background checks, see http://www.nonprofitrisk.org/csb/csb_crim.htm#apndxb. The cost associated with state background checks varies from state to state.

- FBI checks are the most comprehensive because they are completed using fingerprints and include both convictions and arrests. They are normally costly, but can be obtained for $18.00 through a pilot program called SafetyNET. Mentor: National Mentoring Partnership is one agency helping to pilot this program. For more information, see http://www.mentoring.org/safetynet/.

- For information about obtaining a driving record, contact your local Department of Motor Vehicles. By reviewing a driving record, you can obtain information about driving infractions, such as DUIs. This may be more relevant for your program if your mentors will be transporting youth in the mentor's car.

- When deciding which background check(s) you will use, there are several things to consider, such as cost, liability, and safety of your mentees. You may decide to consult with an attorney when making this decision.

After the interview, have the staff member(s) who conducted the interview fill out an applicant assessment form.

- Questions on assessment forms should ask the interviewer to comment on the applicant's suitability for the program and to describe characteristics of an ideal match partner.

Best Practices for Training

Programs should provide comprehensive training for all mentors prior to being matched. Many programs also provide training for mentees. Training is critical to ensure that participants understand program expectations and rules, and are provided ideas for goals and activities. Best practices for training include the following:

Provide comprehensive, in-person training for mentors.

- Require new mentors to attend a training session before being matched with a mentee.

- Offer training sessions frequently and at convenient locations and times. Make sure your training location is physically accessible.

- Create a training manual or binder to distribute to new mentors. Include materials from the in-person training, program guidelines and expectations, mentoring program staff

contact information, ideas for accessible mentor and mentee meetings, and common frustrations and suggestions for overcoming them. Mentors may use this information throughout their mentoring relationship. Create alternate formats of your training materials, such as large print and Braille options and provide electronic versions of your materials.

- To supplement your training offerings, create an accessible training that your mentors can access online.

- Offer periodic refresher trainings for mentors, or mentor support groups, to make sure they're updated on the latest program requirements, to address concerns and questions and to provide new ideas and resources.

Topics to Cover During Training Sessions

Mentoring program requirements, guidelines and expectations.

- Make sure mentors know exactly what you expect of them.

- Some of PYD's guidelines include the following: no overnight visits, each participant is responsible for his/her own money needed for an activity, and mentors and mentees should contact their assigned agency representative should they have any concerns.

What it means to be a mentor.

- Mentors should have realistic expectations about their mentoring relationship and about what they will be able to accomplish.

The stages of a mentoring relationship.

- Explain that in order to accomplish any goals through mentoring, mentors must first establish a trusting friendship, and that this will take time. Friendships are built in stages.

- Inform mentors about the obstacles they may face during each stage of the relationship and provide ideas about overcoming them.

Diversity issues and disability issues such as disability etiquette, disclosure, and abuse.

- Do not assume that mentors will have knowledge of disability issues. Even if a mentor has a disability, that does not mean he/she has information regarding all disabilities. You may want to utilize organizations in the area that have knowledge of disability

training. Local Independent Living Centers may provide a good place to start.

- Address issues and differences posed by visible and invisible disabilities and how they may impact a match.

- Address racial and ethnic diversity issues.

- Explore other differences that there may be between a mentor and mentee, such as socioeconomic status, primary language, education levels, etc.

- For information regarding abuse issues, contact your local (city/state) entity that deals specifically with issues related to abuse of persons with disabilities.

- For more specific disability resources, see the Resource List at the end of this guide.

Ideas and resources.

- Give mentors suggestions for accessible activities, and resources to help mentees set and achieve goals.

- Make sure mentors and mentees understand that activities should be free or low in cost. Provide suggestions for local activities. Many local museums, theaters, and zoos will provide free or reduced-cost tickets to mentoring programs. If you can gather tickets, you can provide a mentor and mentee tickets for their first activity.

Make sure to cover Critical Attributes of Effective Mentors presented below.

Critical Attributes of Effective Mentors

- Mentors must make a commitment to being consistent and dependable. Mentors may have to do the work to keep the mentoring relationship going at times, such as initiating contact and scheduling meetings. Mentors should establish boundaries and expectations about the frequency of contact that the mentor can commit to in the long-term (Sipe, 1999).

- Mentors must respect their mentee's viewpoint (Sipe, 1999).

- Mentors must be good listeners.

- Mentors should discover their mentee's interests and involve the youth in planning activities.

- Mentors must understand that mentees need to have "fun" and incorporate that need into mentoring activities (Sipe, 1999).

- Mentors should get to know the mentee's family and establish a comfort level with them, but not get too involved with the family. Mentors should never become the mediator in a

family conflict. It is not the mentor's role to coach the parent on parenting or get into confrontations with the parent (Sipe, 1999).

- Mentors should seek out the help and support of mentoring program staff (Sipe, 1999).

Provide a brief training for your new mentees.

- Hold in-person group trainings, in-person one-to-one trainings or interactive online trainings.

- Cover program rules and requirements. Make sure mentees know what is expected of them.

- Explain what it means to be a mentee. Make certain mentees have realistic expectations of their mentors.

- Address confidentiality and disclosure issues.

- Address safety issues and discuss whom the youth should contact if a problem should arise with the mentor.

Best Practices for Matching

Making a successful match can be challenging. As with any relationships, there are many reasons that two people "click." Thoughtful matching can increase the likelihood that the match will work. Therefore, it is better to take the time needed to find the right partner for a participant rather than rushing and pairing two people together who have little in common. Here are some strategies to consider when matching:

Remember that youth who share many things in common with their mentors are more likely to be satisfied with their matches.

- Try to match youth and adults with several things in common, such as similar hobbies and career interests.

- If your program makes one-to-one matches, try to match youth and adults who live close to one another. It will be easier for them to spend more time together.

- Matching a youth and an adult with similar disabilities can be especially meaningful, but should not be the sole factor in making a match. PYD has found that youth matched with a successful role model with a similar disability display increased independent living skills, increased disability pride, and greater optimism regarding his or her future. However, it may be impractical or difficult to match based on similar disability. Therefore, explore cross-disability matching or matching based on other similarities

such as interests, hobbies, and/or career options.

- Consider the importance of race and ethnicity when making a match.

Before arranging for a mentor and mentee to meet for the first time, call them to give them a description of their potential match partner.

- Call the potential mentor first to make sure s/he still has time to be matched. Describe the potential mentee and his or her interests, and see if the mentor is interested in pursuing the match.

- Call the potential mentee next, and make certain to speak to the mentee's parent(s)/guardian(s). Check to see if the youth is still interested in participating in the mentoring program, then describe the potential mentor and see if the mentee and his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) would like to pursue the match.

- Explore all issues that could become barriers in the match. Remember, it is better to not match then to have a match terminate early because of incompatibility.

Once the potential mentor and potential mentee express interest in being matched, schedule an initial match meeting.

- Try to speak with the youth to prep him/her for the meeting and let him/her know what will be taking place.

- Try to schedule the match meeting at the youth's home. This will make the youth and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) more comfortable, and will ensure that the mentor knows how to get to the youth's home.

- Require the following people to be present at an initial match meeting: a mentoring staff member, at least one of the mentee's parent(s)/guardian(s), the mentee and the mentor.

- The mentoring staff member should cover program requirements and guidelines and discuss match supervision and follow-up procedures.

- The staff member may want to facilitate discussion between the mentor, mentee and the mentee's parent(s)/guardian(s) to make sure they become as well acquainted as possible. First meetings can be awkward and a bit intimidating.

- Ask the mentor and mentee to exchange contact information. Make sure the mentor is aware of any of the mentee's health concerns or necessary accommodations.

- Have the mentor and mentee discuss goals for the relationship.

- Leave the mentor and mentee with a list of ideas for activities. You may want to solicit

free tickets to local attractions to distribute at initial match meetings.

- Ask the mentor and mentee to pick a date, time and place for their next meeting. You may want to encourage them to meet at the mentee's home when parent(s)/guardian(s) are present for the first few interactions so the parent(s)/guardian(s) can get to know the mentor.

Keep in mind that every match meeting is unique and requires flexibility, so it is helpful to have new employees "shadow" several match meetings (at least three) before attempting one on his/her own. Sometimes a youth may feel inhibited by having a parent present and may not act like him/herself. It may make sense to start the meeting with everyone, and then give the youth and mentor time to talk to each other away from the group. Developing a match meeting "checklist" rather than a "script" will enable staff to remain flexible while still accomplishing the necessary goals of the match meeting.

Best Practices for Match Supervision/Follow-Up

Regular match follow-up is absolutely critical to the success of matches and the ultimate benefits of your program. Following these strategies can assist you with constructing a clear follow-up policy:

Do not underestimate the importance of regular follow-up.

- Mentoring program staff must supervise matches to make sure they are meeting regularly and that the relationships are positive (Sipe, 1999).
- Catching problems early and providing support to mentors and mentees is crucial for helping them overcome obstacles (Sipe, 1999).
- Regular follow-up may help keep troubled matches from dissolving (Sipe, 1999).

For efficient follow-up, keep program participants' files up-to-date. Record new information, such as a change of address or phone number, on a regular basis.

Keep a match supervision schedule to remind staff when to contact each match.

Conduct match supervision activities on a regular, frequent basis.

- Follow up once per month if staff time allows, especially in the beginning of match relationships. Once per quarter may be sufficient for more mature match relationships.

Make match supervision as personal as possible. Contact mentors and mentees via phone or in person.

Design a follow-up form to help guide the conversation during match supervision.

- Ask pertinent questions intended to help the staff member ascertain the health of the match and if the goals of the match are being attained.
- After the form has been filled out, file a copy with the mentor's and mentee's participant files.

Address any issues that arise during match follow-up as soon as possible to keep matches running smoothly.

Best Practices for Participant Retention

Despite your best efforts, sometimes participants choose to leave the program. Many times a choice to leave may be related to external issues, such as a family crisis or geographic move. However, other times a participant may feel unsatisfied with the program or his or her match relationship. Below are some strategies to increase participant retention:

Keep adults and youth informed about where they are in the stages of the screening and matching process.

- Send postcards, make phone calls, and/or send emails to let them know when they've been accepted into the program.
- Periodically send updates while they're on the wait list.

Organize and offer support groups for mentors.

- Hold a monthly support group at a local coffee shop or pizza parlor.
- Encourage mentors to exchange ideas and discuss frustrations. Staff and other mentors can provide support and suggestions.
- If your program has a website, offer a support group forum or chat feature. This is a good place for program staff to post helpful tips and topics.

Host periodic group recreational activities for mentors and mentees.

- Hold events at low or no cost venues if possible.
- Try to host events once per quarter. This is a great chance for all of your program's mentors and mentees to get to know one another. PYD's recent activities have included a trip to the Museum of Fine Arts (the museum arranged an accessible behind the scenes tour), a show at Wheelock Family Theater (they provided audio description for our visually impaired participants), a baseball game at Fenway Park, a trip to a local zoo, and a pizza party.
- Ask program staff to use the events as opportunities to oversee matches and look for any noticeable problems.
- Make sure all activity locations are physically accessible. Ask activity locations about accessible seating options and other accommodations.

Best Practices for Closure

Many programs overlook the importance of closure to the relationship and the program in general. Some relationships will end naturally and some will end more abruptly, but all endings should be addressed by the mentoring staff. "Goodbyes" can be awkward, difficult, or even painful for some individuals; therefore it is imperative to provide lots of support to the mentor and mentee during the process. Below are some steps to be taken to ensure a smooth closure.

Ensure that mentee and mentor understand the commitment involved in the mentoring relationship, and the length of time the mentoring relationship will last.

Ensure that the mentor and mentee know what steps to take if one of them cannot continue in the relationship.

- Address these issues when training both mentee and mentor and during the match meeting.

Develop a closure procedure or closure guidelines to ensure consistency among staff's approach to closure once the relationship comes to a natural conclusion or if one person must end the relationship early. The procedure should lay out the following guidelines:

- Encourage the mentor and mentee to speak with the mentoring staff person as soon as one of them knows that he/she will not be able to continue in the relationship.

- Encourage the mentor to begin the closure conversation early, by saying things such as, "You know, in two months, the program will be over. Can you believe we have already been matched the whole school year? It makes me feel sad that we won't see each other regularly anymore, but I feel so lucky that I had the chance to know you."

- Provide ideas for closure activities to the mentor, such as exchanging cards, drawing a picture of their favorite activity, or enjoying a special meal together.

- Include a closure meeting, in which the mentoring staff person, mentor, and mentee meet to discuss what will take place once the relationship ends. Will the mentor and mentee continue to communicate? If so, how? Will they just send holiday cards once a year or will they email once a month? Maybe there will be no communication at all. Remind the mentor that he/she should not agree to anything that he/she knows he/she will not be able to do.

- Set up separate exit interviews with both the mentor and mentee to give each an opportunity to discuss his/her experiences in the mentor program. This may be an appropriate time to have any evaluation of the program (surveys, post-tests, etc.) completed.

"It is crucial to base your mentoring program on best practices in the field, which include providing careful screening, thoughtful matching, and structured support and training to your mentors and mentees." **- Regina Snowden, Executive Director, Partners for Youth with Disabilities**

Best Practices for Involving Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians play an important role in mentoring programs. Keeping them involved and aware will increase the likelihood that the youth participants have a safe and rewarding experience. Below are some ways to keep parents/guardians involved:

Work with parents to involve them in the mentoring process.

- Include parents in the initial youth interview in order to explain the mentoring services to them, discuss the goals of the mentoring relationship, and gain their permission for their son/daughter to participate (especially if youth is under the age of 18).

Value parent input when determining the best mentor to match with the youth.

- Parents have good intuition about the type of mentor that would be the best fit for their son or daughter.

- Parents are able to share aspects of their son or daughter's development that may be important to consider when determining the type of mentor or mentoring program that would work most effectively.

Encourage parents to provide close supervision of one-to-one mentor match relationships and to alert staff if problems occur.

- Encourage parents to meet and interact with their son or daughter's mentor on a regular basis to assess how the mentor match is going, provide information to mentors on their son or daughter's needs, and to provide safety guidelines.

- Have parents contact you directly should they have any concerns about their youth's mentoring experience.

- Contact parents regularly to seek their input and guidance regarding their youth's involvement in the mentoring program.

Provide supports and trainings for parents.

- Ask mentors to share resources with the parents of mentees in order for the parents to have more information regarding issues such as independence, recreation, education and careers.

- Consider offering parent trainings and support groups where parents can come together with other parents to learn about resources to help their youth and families. Topics such as transition, adult services, disability rights, and employment options can give parents more confidence and knowledge to help their youth achieve their goals.

Include parents in program evaluation activities.

- Ask parents to provide input about their youth's progress since beginning the mentoring program. Parents are often the ones to notice the significant changes in the youth's behavior and attitudes.

Best Practices for Mentoring Programs for Youth with Disabilities

Starting a mentoring program for youth with disabilities or committing to making your already existing mentoring program accessible to youth with disabilities will take time and resources to ensure that your program is ready. Below are some best practices Partners for Youth with Disabilities has found to be successful for mentoring programs for youth with disabilities.

Establish a clear structure for serving youth with various kinds of disabilities.

- Handle disclosure of disability-related information carefully.
- Systematically use reasonable accommodations so youth and mentors can participate fully in the program's activities (i.e., personal care assistants, sign language interpretation, etc).
- Keep in mind that disabilities vary widely among youth. What works for one youth may not work for another youth with a different disability.

Provide appropriate disability-related training to all program staff.

- Be sure to have regular trainings for all staff. It is important to keep staff abreast of new resources, community agencies and research in the disability field. Often, local organizations that specialize in specific disability-related services can provide information and/or resources for your trainings. Potential places to gather information may be Independent Living Centers, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, transportation services, and adaptive recreational programs.

Fully cover disability-related issues during mentor training.

- Use follow-ups, refresher training and mentor support groups to address any disability-related questions or concerns.

Mentors should encourage discussion of disabilities as a part of the mentoring relationship.

- A major goal of mentoring programs for youth with disabilities is for youth to become comfortable discussing their disabilities and advocating for themselves.

Make sure mentors and mentees communicate regularly.

- Youth with disabilities may be more likely to have experienced failed relationships and lack of adult guidance. As a consequence, they may become frustrated and withdraw from the mentoring relationship if they do not communicate with their mentors on a frequent, ongoing basis. There are many ways to keep the relationship connected, even if it becomes more difficult to physically connect. Ideas for remaining connected include fun cards, phone calls, emails, and post cards. Encourage the mentors to contact the mentees when they see a topic or read about an article in the newspaper or a magazine that they find interesting and that they think their mentee would enjoy hearing about. Also, encourage the mentors to find topics of interest to both the mentor and mentee that they can explore together (science, technology, cultural events, music, sports, etc.) and use that topic as a base from which to develop rapport or get to know each other better.

- Encourage the mentors to not become discouraged when they may feel inadequate about the amount of time they are able to commit. Encourage them to use various ways to remain connected and by creating a quality experience in the time they are able to meet.

Ensure that your program is physically and programmatically accessible to all youth.

- Consider the accessibility of your website, recruitment materials, physical location, training locations, activities, interview procedures, and evaluation procedures.

Chapter 4: E-Mentoring

This chapter will discuss online mentoring programs in general and will share a case study of the Partners Online Program, which takes the typical e-mentoring model to a new level by combining one-to-one with group mentoring through a secure Internet website. By examining this model in detail, we will address many of the benefits and challenges posed by online mentoring programs. In addition, we have created several appendices that specifically address the Partners Online technology if you are interested in replicating the program for your own organization.

History of Online Mentoring Programs

America Online (AOL) and Netscape played instrumental roles in revolutionizing the way people communicate to transcend geography and time. In 1985, AOL extended the use of email to the general public. Prior to this period, email use had been limited to scholars and scientists at institutes of higher education and government laboratories (P.B. Single & R.M. Single, 2005). One can assume that informal mentoring took place among researchers and scientists who had access to email. In 1994, Netscape introduced the World Wide Web, which made it possible for one person or institution to suddenly communicate with a broad and unknown audience (e.g., the ability to make your project or program known to anyone who could access the World Wide Web).

In the early 1990s, a number of e-mentoring or tele-mentoring programs started up thanks to this new and inexpensive communication medium, but the first federally funded e-mentoring program was the Telementoring Young Women in Engineering and Computing Project. This mentoring project was developed by Education Development Center's Center for Children and Technology with National Science Foundation funding in 1994 and ran for 5 years. This program was distinct in that it was a structured mentoring program with outcomes based evaluation. The goal was to determine whether e-mentoring was an effective option for mentoring high school females with an interest in engineering and computing (P.B. Single & R.M. Single, 2005). Many young women do not have access to these female role models within the context of high school, their neighborhoods, or even their families. E-mentoring was seen as a way to tap into a network and engage in these important mentoring relationships. This early program laid the foundation for e-mentoring programs and defined several program components that are now deemed critical for success (Bennett, Hupert, Tsilalas, Meade, & Honey, 1998; P.B. Single & R.M. Single).

Since this project's founding in 1994, hundreds of e-mentoring projects have emerged. This creates an impressive need for best practices in e-mentoring to be established and disseminated, especially for youth with disabilities.

"Partners Online (POL) allows us to be very creative in the ways we can offer mentoring services to young people with disabilities. In a world that is increasingly mobile and busy, POL is a tool that expands possibilities for meaningful communication between youth and adult role models." - **Joseph Quinn, Mentorship Project Coordinator, Computer Technologies Program, Berkeley, CA**

Exploring Different Online Mentoring Models

There are many different online mentoring models. These models have several names including e-mentoring and tele-mentoring. E-mentoring has taken on a meaning of mentoring that takes place via email. However, for all these programs, the common denominator is that correspondence takes place electronically rather than face-to-face. In this guide, we refer to all programs that use electronic communication mediums as Online Mentoring programs. Listed below are a few of the most common models.

One-to-One Mentoring via Email: In this model, a mentee is matched in a one-to-one relationship with a mentor and they use email to correspond regularly. Often this model is employed in a school-based or workplace setting with a focus on career mentors or mentors who assist with class projects.

A sample program is Connecting to Success, a program through the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition at the University of Minnesota (Institute on Community Integration, 2005).

Peer-to-Peer Mentoring/Group Mentoring via Listservs: In this model, participants again use email to communicate. However, youth and mentors are registered to a listserv which allows a discussion to take place via email among all registered users. In this model, a user sends an email to the listserv address and all users can read and respond to the group or to the individual. Typically the relationship is one mentor to many mentees, with the distinction that mentees can also advise and talk with other mentees.

An example of this model is University of Washington's DO-IT programs (DO-IT, 2005). For more information, visit www.washington.edu/doit. Another example is University of Texas at Austin's Four Directions Electronic Mentoring Project (Four Directions Electronic Mentoring Project, 2005).

Online Mentoring via an Online Community: This is a new mentoring model employed by the Partners Online program (Partners Online, 2005), which blends one-to-one and group mentoring via a secure Internet website. The Partners Online site incorporates discussion forums, group chats, private

messages and other features. One-to-one mentoring takes place via private mail and "talk-one-on-one." Group mentoring takes place via discussion forums and group chats which enable mentees to correspond with their peers and other mentors. To visit Partners Online, go to www.pyd.org/partnersonline/ .

Benefits of Online Mentoring

When it comes to mentoring youth with disabilities, obstacles related to transportation, geographic distance and health may hinder a successful match. For example, coordinating face-to-face meetings may be difficult if either the mentor or mentee does not have access to transportation to meet in person. Many working adults also find it difficult to fit regular face-to-face meetings into an already busy schedule. In these cases, online mentoring may offer several benefits over traditional face-to-face mentoring models. These benefits include the following:

• Electronic communication circumvents transportation, geographic or health obstacles

• Technology empowers those who are "non-verbal" and enables them to use assistive technology to communicate directly, rather than through an interpreter

• Using computers encourages independence and resourcefulness in youth that will assist them in school, the workplace and the community

• Online mentoring can be easier option for qualified mentors who are not able to make the time commitment of face-to-face meetings

• Asynchronous communication mediums, such as email and discussion boards, allow mentoring to take place any time of the day or night

In addition to the aforementioned benefits, participating in an online GROUP mentoring program allows participants to derive the following benefits:

• Ability to connect with peers who share similar experiences reduces sense of isolation

• Youth learn from a variety of mentor and peer experiences and can find resources as needed as they grow up

• Youth have the opportunity to mentor each other (peer mentoring) and practice self-expression in a more public forum

• One adult can mentor several youth if program has a shortage of mentors

• Some individuals may be difficult to match in traditional one-to-one relationships

• Not "time-sensitive" – youth get answers to questions and support when they need it; they don't have to wait

• With discussion forums, participants can review past discussions or continue them

• Participating in a program like Partners Online, which includes chat and discussion forum capabilities, allows users to choose their preferred communication style for mentoring (e.g., some youth are shy about posting in discussion forums, but love to participate in live group chats).

Research Findings about the Impact of Online Mentoring for Youth with Disabilities:

Evaluating the impact of online mentoring can pose quite a challenge for a variety of reasons. For one, the program design and goals can vary tremendously. Additionally, the impact can vary markedly based on factors such as the participants' age, relative maturity level, and intellectual capabilities. When it comes to programs that serve youth with disabilities, many more variables are thrown into the mix, depending on the nature of the disability and the youth's family situation. Lastly, the nature of the mentoring relationship can vary tremendously from program to program. For example, most other online mentoring programs have a teacher or coordinator monitor every email exchange between mentor and mentee. For most participants, this would place a barrier to achieving intimacy. A mentee might feel uncomfortable discussing a difficult family situation. For these reasons, it is extremely difficult to construct "controlled" studies which compare an un-mentored versus mentored group, or find much quantitative data about the impact of online mentoring.

There is much research on mentoring "best practices," which is incorporated throughout this guide. For example, research suggests that "the more an e-mentoring program can facilitate frequent and regular communication among the participants, then the more successful will be the program" (P.B. Single & R.M. Single, 2005, p. 10). As discussed in Chapter 7, for youth with disabilities mentoring can impact many of the goals and skills associated with the transition process such as succeeding academically, developing career awareness, accepting support while taking responsibility, communicating effectively, overcoming barriers and developing social skills.

Though the final analysis is not yet complete, PYD obtained the following results through interim project surveys administered to Partners Online participants:

90% of respondents stated that Partners Online "has helped them feel more supported by and connected to other people and/or families with disabilities."

87% stated they have "become more aware of resources that would help them or someone else [they] know become independent" through the Partners Online site.

83% stated they "felt more confident about using computers, the Internet, and/or participating in online communities since joining Partners Online."

97% said "they would recommend the Partners Online Program to someone else with a disability."

In more personal ways, the program has had a tremendous impact. One mentee said about his mentor, "He shares my interests. It's not just that we're both disabled… I'm a writer and so is he. He looks at my writing and gives me books, ideas and techniques to improve my writing." Another youth said about participating in Partners Online: "I usually volunteer a lot and I want to do a summer job at camp this year. I talk to certain people online who have the same kind of disability as I do and we talk about how to advocate for ourselves and how to get jobs."

Online Mentoring Program Design

The most critical decision is selecting an appropriate online mentoring program design with specific goals for the youth as well as planned activities and infrastructure that will support those goals. According to the National Mentoring Partnership (2005), young people can benefit from an e-mentoring program that accomplishes the following:

- Focuses on academic achievement, career exploration or development of a supportive and nurturing relationship

- Spans an entire calendar year, school year, or time period of several years

- Asks their online volunteers to send just one or two emails a week or one that calls for volunteers to spend several hours each week communicating with youth

- Is a curriculum-based program that matches youth one-to-one with an individual mentor or program that matches entire classrooms of students with mentors from a single workplace

Requirements to Develop and Run an Online Mentoring Program

Contrary to many popular assumptions, running an effective and responsible online mentoring program, whether it is through email, a listserv, or an online community (combination of discussion forums and chat), requires an equal amount of effort as a traditional mentoring program. In particular, screening mentors for an online match should be just as thorough as for a traditional, face-to-face match. Please refer to Chapter 3, "Elements of Effective Mentoring Programs," for best practices in making one-to-one matches. Single and Muller (2001) define a "structured e-mentoring program" as one that provides "training and coaching to increase the likelihood of engagement in the e-mentoring process and relies on program evaluation to identify improvements for future programs and to determine the impact on the participants" (p.108). Supporting this definition, the National Mentoring Partnership (2005) has developed comprehensive guidelines for running responsible e-mentoring programs. Based on PYD's experience and research, as well as information from the National Mentoring Partnership, e-mentoring programs should include the following:

1. A statement of purpose and long-range plan that includes

- Program details: who, what, why, where, when and how activities will be performed
- Assessment of organization's readiness and capacity to create and sustain quality e-mentoring program; input from constituents, staff, funders, volunteers, community
- Realistic, attainable, adaptable and easy-to-understand operational plan
- Goals, objectives, timelines and accountability for all aspects of the plan
- Funding resource and sustainability development plan
- Staffing plan that incorporates human service and technology expertise with defined roles and responsibilities
- Annual assessment of operational plan
- Program evaluation plan

2. Technology Implementation Strategy that includes

- Communication system (e.g., email, listserv, discussion forum software) appropriate to goals of the program and its participants (National Mentoring Partnership, 2005).

- Communication system that is safe and reliable for the participants (National Mentoring Partnership).

    E-Mentoring 4-8Partners for Youth with Disabilities – Best Practices for Mentoring Youth with Disabilities
- Determination of the technology requirements, roles and responsibilities of partner organizations and program participants (National Mentoring Partnership).

- Policies regarding privacy and security of program participants' data and communication (National Mentoring Partnership).

- Method for archiving emails to meet the safety and/or evaluation needs of the program

3. Safety measures for young people and mentors that include

- Establishment of a code of online conduct guided by common sense, basic etiquette and mutual respect

- Adherence to rules and laws that apply in face-to-face mentoring, as well as those unique to online mentoring, such as Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA)

- Establishment of guidelines and permissions in order to govern young people's appropriate and safe access to the Internet.

- Comprehensive background checks, screening and training of mentors

- Confidentiality policy of program

4. Marketing and Recruitment Plan for both mentors and youth that includes

- Strategies that reflect accurate expectations and benefits
- Year round marketing
- Targeted message and recruitment strategies for youth and adults
- Targeted outreach on behalf of youths' needs and interests for suitable match
- Recruitment via multiple media including listservs, newsletters, press, and conferences
- Recruitment via collaborations with other agencies, schools and businesses

5. Separate orientations developed for mentors and young people that include

- Program overview, including mission and goals

- Expectations and restrictions

- Description of eligibility, screening process, logistics and suitability requirements

- Description of how technology works and what equipment is needed

- Level of commitment expected

- Benefits and rewards of participation

- Summary of program policies, particularly those that govern privacy, reporting, communications and evaluation

- Safety and security around use of the Internet

6. Eligibility screening for mentors and young people that includes

- Application process and review

- Reference checks for mentors which include character references, child abuse registry check and criminal records checks

- Sustainability criteria that satisfy program mission and needs of target population including personality profile, skills, geographic, gender and cultural requirements, previous volunteer experience, motivation for volunteering, access to and experience with technology, academic standing

- Successful completion of training and orientation

7. Strategy for matching mentors and young people that includes

- Development of match guidelines based on gender, age, disability, language requirements, availability, needs, interests, geography, life experience, temperament

- Determination whether initial match meeting will be done in person or online

- Commitment by all participants to the conditions of the match and the mentoring relationship

8. Program Training Curriculum for mentors and mentees that includes

- Qualified program trainers

- Program orientation, including goals of project and how to get help if needed

- Participation requirements and expectations

- Activities that build commitment to the program

- Skills development; end-user training to use computer, Internet or selected technology
- Code of conduct
- Cultural/heritage/disability sensitivity and appreciation training
- Do's and don'ts of managing the relationship
- Role descriptions for program participants
- Support materials and problem-solving resources
- Guidelines for how to get the most out of program
- Suggestions on how to get the mentoring relationship started

9. A monitoring and evaluation process that includes

- Pre-defined as well as consistent and regular communications with staff, mentors and young people
- Tracking system for ongoing assessment and to determine usage of communication system
- Written records (i.e., case notes on participants)
- Program evaluation surveys at specific intervals to determine user satisfaction and program impact
- Staff follow-up procedures
- Input from stakeholders such as community partners and/or family members
- Rationale for the selection of the monitoring strategy over other available models

10. Sustaining the Program (support, recognition and retention):

- Provide your mentors with topics to guide discussions
- Check in frequently with your mentors
- Be available to address any concerns raised by mentors/mentees
- Develop Train the Trainer Model to help field technology questions from mentors and mentees and to provide in-home assistance
- Cost effective strategies to keep costs to a minimum
- Provide games and contests--keep site fresh and dynamic
- Identify in-kind resources from collaborators, such as PYD's relationship with Easter Seals of Massachusetts (www.ma.easterseals.com) which provides assistive technology assessments to Partners Online participants

- Partner with businesses and others who are invested in your work

- Conduct mentor appreciation activities

11. Program Evaluation and Dissemination Strategy that includes

- Multiple evaluation strategies to meet the needs of all stakeholders

- Multiple data collection strategies:
- Intake data
- Surveys at regular intervals
- Staff completed "progress reports" or case notes
- Exit data
- Interviews with program participants

- Sharing of program information and lessons learned with stakeholders and broader mentoring community.

Common Challenges of Starting Up Online Mentoring Programs

While the previous section provides you with a minimal list of requirements in starting an e-mentoring program, it is worth highlighting the following considerations and challenges which PYD has learned in implementing and replicating Partners Online.

It takes time to get started —keep in mind that it can take up to 6-12 months to get your applications, necessary consent forms and criminal background checking capabilities in place before you can even begin to recruit participants.

Training and Supporting end-users—if you will be working with inexperienced computer users, or elect to use a technology similar to Partners Online's chat/discussion forum software, you will need to devote some resources to training and providing end-user assistance.

Addressing assistive technology needs— many youth with disabilities require assistive technology to use the computer and Internet, but may not possess it upon enrolling in your program. Plan for resources or form partnerships to evaluate and secure the assistive technology necessary to participate in your program (For example, as mentioned previously, PYD formed a collaboration with Easter Seals of Massachusetts to provide reduced cost assistive technology evaluations).

Choosing a technology—choose a technology that is both accessible [adheres to Section 508 and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) to ensure access for end-users with disabilities] and can be supported by your staff resources. Someone needs to manage the technology. Think about outsourcing if you don't have the technical expertise on staff.

Accessibility—although many websites purport to be "accessible" or "Bobby"-compliant, the web accessibility standards (available at www.w3.org) are less clear for dynamic web content such as database-driven content, discussion forums, and chat applications. Be sure to test software with your potential end-users before selecting it for the project. PYD partnered with the Massachusetts Assistive Technology Partnership (www.matp.org) to help assess website accessibility. Other resources on accessibility include: www.cast.org and www.w3.org.

Security and Back-up Procedures—implement the necessary procedures to protect the site or listserv from hackers, or programs that mine personal information and email addresses. Plan in the event that your server "goes down" by implementing a regular back-up schedule, and develop security policies for your agency that protect your client's data.

Confidentiality—make sure applications and correspondence take place through secure channels, by implementing a security certificate and transmitting Internet forms through a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) that will encrypt the content. Make sure no personally identifying information is contained on a server that is vulnerable to attacks.

Test for Browser Compatibility—when considering a web-based technology solution for mentoring, keep in mind to test the site with multiple browsers, including AOL, Netscape, Firefox and Internet Explorer as the site design can be altered with each browser, or security settings may interfere with site function.

Managing a technology project— if you are new to running a technology project, or lack the technology expertise in house, consider outsourcing to a project team rather than managing separate contractors. This will ensure one point person has accountability for the project.

Resources to provide computer and Internet services for families—try and cultivate a list of community resources that will enable computer access for low income participants. These include securing donated equipment from companies, collaborations with schools, and access to computers in libraries or the community.

Which model is right for you?

The table below provides a quick snapshot to highlight key differences between online mentoring models as they relate to technology and staff resources.

	One-to-One	Group	Online Community
Technology	Correspondence via email. Mentoring.org software.	Requires Listserv Software and Hosted Server.	Discussion Board or Collaboration Software, or customized Partners Online Software on hosted server.
Monitoring procedures	A teacher or program coordinator monitors or approves each email exchange between mentor and mentee. Recommend Mentoring.org software which is an email relay service, so participants need not know each other's email addresses.	Depends on the nature of the listserv. With some listservs, an administrator must approve all posts. Others, such as DO-IT, allow all participants to self-post to the group. Some permit exchanges between individuals. In this case, inappropriate messages require disclosure by recipient.	Partners Online software has built in reporting capabilities to monitor user activity. Chats are moderated and "recorded." Administrator has ability to check mail exchanges if alerted to inappropriate conduct. Administrator can also restrict or revoke membership if user is inappropriate.
Activities to foster mentor-mentee exchanges	Provide mentors with conversation ideas.	Initiate discussion topics; provide mentors and mentees with ideas and encourage them to initiate topics.	Initiate discussion topics; train moderators to manage/monitor certain discussion "themes." Schedule frequent chat events, contests to stimulate participation.
Staff Duties	Recruitment. Review applications and enroll participants. Make matches. Install/configure mentoring.org software on server. Manage volunteers.	Technology expertise to manage listserv. Recruitment and outreach. Seed discussion threads. Review applications and enroll participants.Manage volunteers.	Recruitment and outreach. .Review applications and enroll participants. Train participants. Manage and facilitate discussion forums and chats. Technology expertise to support end-user computer/software compatibility problems and work with developer if necessary.
Best Practice Information	Connecting to Success Program, www.ici.umn.edu/ementoring	DO-IT Program, University of Washington, www.washington.edu/doit	Partners for Youth with Disabilities, www.pyd.org

Hopefully, you now have a better idea of the models available and the considerations in setting up an online mentoring program. The next section provides a specific case study of PYD's Partners Online program.

Partners Online Case Study

Genelle Campbell, National Mentoring Director of PYD, interviews Eleanor Axelrod, Technology Program Director, about the Partners Online program.

What led PYD to create the Partners Online Program? Can you tell me the vision behind it and how it got started?

PYD was founded in 1985 and had a 16-year history of running one-to-one and group mentoring programs. Since we were pioneers in disability mentoring, we received many inquiries from other agencies and states looking to replicate our program. Unfortunately, we were limited to serving youth and forming matches in the Greater Boston area.

Because of the obstacles posed by face-to-face meetings and gaps between get-togethers in our group mentoring programs, we had seen mentors and mentees begin to use email and chat rooms to talk with each other rather than the phone to communicate. We also had a number of youth who could not participate in our programs due to health or transportation issues. Two PYD staff members, Brad Parmenter, PYD's Peer Leadership Program Coordinator, and Maureen Gallagher, PYD's Deputy Director, began to think about the possibility of developing an online mentoring program that could transcend these barriers, serve many more youth, and create a way for youth and mentors to get together more frequently.

Not too long after the vision for an online mentoring program came about, we learned about a funding opportunity through the Technology Opportunities Program (TOP) of the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration that provided seed grants to organizations wanting to develop creative technology solutions to address community need. PYD applied for a grant to TOP and fortunately, in 2001, was awarded a 3-year matching grant of $439,000 to develop Partners Online. The goal was to use the Internet and assistive technology to overcome geographic and logistical obstacles to mentoring for youth with disabilities. Our vision was to create a safe secure online network where participants could use a variety

of tools to correspond including email, discussion forums, group and one-on-one chat. Our mentoring model incorporated one-to-one matches, group mentoring and a separate parent mentoring component. A key component of the grant was to develop a program replication capability so we could better field the nationwide replication inquiries we received.

Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation provided us with a two-year grant to work on the program replication and evaluation components of the grant. During the course of the grant we also secured support from other foundations including The Boston Foundation, the Millbank Foundation, Yawkey Foundation, MCJ Foundation, and Oracle.

"I feel like it has given me a chance to reach out to people that I normally wouldn't have been able to. I have chatted with people of all ages about all different subjects and bridged gaps and online it doesn't matter. You are able to find common ground where in the real everyday life beyond the internet it might not seem cool. I love it. It is like a part of my everyday being. I check the site at least once a day. I believe we have a voice because of Partners Online and we can all gain so much from one another." **- Partners Online Youth**

How does Partners Online compare to PYD's traditional mentoring program, Mentor Match?

The recruitment and program enrollment process is very similar between the two programs. Mentors and mentees must adhere to a one-year program commitment and the same frequency of communication requirements. The key difference is in the preferred communication style, the frequency of face-to-face meetings, and the age of the youth. Partners Online matches must communicate 1-2 times per week via email or chat, and are encouraged to see each other face-to-face at least 3-4 times per year. Youth must be ages 14-24. Mentor Match pairs talk on the phone once per week and see each other monthly. Youth in the Mentor Match program are ages 6-22.

In terms of screening requirements, all mentors go through the same rigorous interview, criminal background and reference checks for both programs, and all youth who desire a POL mentor are also interviewed by PYD staff.

The key distinction is that Partners Online participants join an online mentoring network and have access to other peers and mentors. Other PYD group mentoring program participants as well as Mentor Match youth elect to participate in the Partners Online program. Some youth even participate solely in

the Partners Online group mentoring component rather than be matched one-on-one with a mentor. These youth can complete an online application in lieu of an in-person interview. In addition, Partners Online provides a Parent Mentoring component where parents of youth with disabilities can log into a separate area and exchange information and support.

How does Partners Online compare to the Group Mentoring that takes place through Listservs?

With Listservs, conversations go right to your email. Depending on the listserv, the messages can be grouped into a daily or weekly email, or you can receive an individual message for each response. This offers convenience, but the drawbacks are that people sometimes feel inundated with messages from the listserv, and many programs do not offer a way to archive and access older discussions. This means new participants can't access relevant exchanges that happened in the past (Yahoo! Groups would be an exception as it provides an archive feature). With Partners Online, the bulk of the group mentoring occurs via discussion forums in which the topics and conversations are archived. To join a conversation, users must log into the Partners Online website at www.pyd.org/partnersonline where they can peruse both old and new topics. Users may also participate in a "real time" group chat. Partners Online is unique in that it blends one-to-one and group mentoring and offers a parent support component. The mentoring relationships that take place are:

• Mentee to Mentee

• Mentor to Mentee

• Mentor to Mentor

• Mentor to Parent

• Parent to Parent

What are the benefits of the Partners Online Mentoring Model?

For PYD, Partners Online has had several benefits, including the following:
- It allows us to enroll and begin serving youth right away, rather than having them remain on a waiting list until they are matched.

- It is another option for youth who may prove especially challenging to match either due to the nature of their disability, where they live, or lack of access to transportation.

- It enables youth to mentor other youth and receive acknowledgement. Teens can be excellent problem solvers and it develops confidence to see their advice or insights well received.

- It reduces isolation because a young person can log on and access a network of friends.

- It is not limited by geography or time— a mentor or youth can access Partners Online any time of the day (or night) and post a question or response.

- It provides an instant network— someone within Partners Online has probably gone to that university the youth is interested in attending or knows someone who has an expertise in a certain field.

- Since it operates 24/7, Partners Online fills in down time between face-to-face mentoring meetings and events.

- It enables PYD staff to get to know and serve youth better, to have a better understanding of the active Partners Online youth and to provide specific scholarship, competition or recreational information.

- Group chats allow us to provide fun, educational and interactive "workshops" on a variety of topics without having to leave home.

- It allows us to serve the entire state rather than just Boston. In fact, we have accepted some youth from out of state.

What steps did you take to set up a safe and secure online mentoring program?

We performed an informal risk assessment and came up with worst case "what if" scenarios. Through this exercise, we realized that threats to the safety and security of the participants came from two possible sources. One was the "internal threat"-- a mentor, youth or staff person internal to the program. The other was an "external threat"--someone not connected to the program, but who could possibly gain access to the client or client information or compromise the program, such as a hacker. It's important to focus on minimizing all risks rather than assuming there is a "zero-risk" approach.

To protect the program from "internal threats," we try to screen inappropriate people out and then arm participants with an escalation procedure if there is inappropriate behavior. Our strategy includes the following:

• Screening participants thoroughly

• Implementing a Code of Online Conduct

• Restricting access to email addresses and full names (Users correspond with each other

via a Partners Online User ID and cannot "view" email addresses)

- Providing Internet safety training (e.g., not disclosing personally identifying information)

- Involving parents and obtaining parental consent if youth is under 18

- Monitoring the online community by reading posts and transcripts

- Reacting promptly to offenders--sending a personal reminder about appropriate conduct and revoking privileges if conduct persists

To protect the program from "external threats" we employed the following strategies:
- Implemented standard technology precautions— such as a security certificate through Verisign [a third party Certification Authority which authenticates the server prior to establishing an SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) connection]. For more information on this topic, read Secrets and Lies, by Bruce Schneier.

- Registrations reviewed and activated by Partners Online administrator rather than self-activated. Allowing users to self-activate their accounts provides instant access and gratification, but you also run the risk of inappropriate people or fake accounts.

- Eliminated personally identifying information from Partners Online technology. Applications to the program are handled separately so, even if someone gained access to the POL database, there would be no information of interest.

- Selected a dedicated hosting option with a trusted third party who would monitor the servers.

- Selected and developed software solutions created in programming languages that are not typically targeted by hackers.

- Trained users in selecting more secure passwords and keeping them confidential.

What was the greatest obstacle you encountered during the project?

The greatest obstacle was the lack of truly accessible (Section 508 compliant) commercial software applications which could be used for our online mentoring "network." We evaluated using some sort of client software for communication purposes, but found that most were not compatible with every operating system, and we didn't want to exclude our Macintosh users. For that reason, we looked for a web-based solution. However, websites that retroactively check for Section 508 compliance still have huge usability gaps for users of screen-readers and screen magnifiers due to the website's choice of navigation and use of pop-up menus. We evaluated vendors that were "Bobby-compliant" (adhere to W3C standards for accessibility and Section 508). Though technically accessible, these websites weren't "usable" to many of our participants. Often the standards weren't applied to dynamic content and applications such as discussion forums

and chats, making them unusable.

For that reason we used an open-source Bulletin Board Solution, phpBB and modified the design and application layers to make it fully accessible. We then hired a technology firm, XIGroup (www.xigroup.com) to develop customized chat and talk applications and integrate them with phpBB. It wasn't until the second year of the TOP grant that XIGroup was hired as the first year focused on testing a number of other solutions. In retrospect, more effort was spent trying to address these technology issues, which left less resources to focus on cultivating the program and on recruitment until the last year and a half of our federal grant.

To what extent did you stick to your original plan?

There were two key changes, or evolutions of thought that occurred with this project. Since the focus of the grant was on cutting edge technology, the original plan called for implementing our "mentoring network" through a VPN (Virtual Private Network) and employing Biometric Security Devices (devices that use security options such as fingerprints instead of typed passwords). We discovered that Biometric devices are not accessible to all (e.g., a user who is quadriplegic) and that implementing a VPN required downloading and installing client software to each end-user computer. We would effectively be responsible for computer desktop support, and that unrelated computer activities by our end-users or their family members could compromise the network. In short, pursuing a web-based solution for our network would require far less staff resources.

The original plan also called for hosting and managing the network ourselves. We learned that the cost of the servers and effort required to manage them was far more burdensome than a dedicated hosting solution. In the end, XIGroup worked with PYD to develop the Partners Online technology and hosted it, which gave us one point of contact for any technology-related issues. While the vision for the network remained the same, we adjusted how that network would be deployed.

What did PYD learn about managing an online mentoring community? Did your expectations evolve during the project?

Despite the blending of one-to-one, group and parent mentoring, our focus going into the project was on the one-to-one mentoring component. We anticipated seeing the most results with youth who were matched in one-to-one relationships. Consequently, our entire evaluation design and project deployment

schedule focused on the matched youth. Once the technology was deployed, we concentrated on enrolling mentor pairs first. We enrolled approximately 25 matches, but we saw little activity taking place until we decided to begin enrolling youth waiting to be matched along with matched pairs.

The surprise was that the group mentoring worked most effectively. We saw that youth were spending more time connecting with peers and participating in discussion forums than exchanging emails with their mentors. We saw youth providing wonderful advice to one another and realized that Partners Online could fill a vital role by serving youth who were waiting to be matched. We also began integrating Partners Online into our other site-based group mentoring programs such as Making Healthy Connections and created specific discussion forums and chat rooms for those users. We learned that it takes a critical mass of users to start generating discussions, so it worked better to enroll a large group of unmatched youth rather than pair by pair.

Though not in our original evaluation plan, we created a special group mentoring evaluation survey to assess the trends we were observing and began incorporating changes based on the feedback. We learned that participants crave "meeting new people" but appreciate the safety of Partners Online. Participants also expressed that group mentoring created a less pressured situation than one-on-one email exchanges with someone you barely know. As a result, we began to focus more on the group mentoring and now enroll unmatched participants right away. If a match fails, often both people leave the program. However, if a user is participating in Partners Online group mentoring, they are more likely to benefit by staying involved in the program.

What activities did PYD do to build and sustain the Partners Online community? How did you get people to start using the site?

I've mentioned that it takes a critical mass of users to start generating discussions. In order to get people to start using the site, they need to see that, when they visit, the atmosphere is vibrant and inviting. If a new person comes to a discussion forum and sees no activity, they will leave. We identified a dedicated group of users that included staff, youth and mentors to act as forum moderators and be responsible for writing and responding to user posts. The program coordinator was actively involved in running and managing the community. Her responsibilities included cultivating and training forum moderators, responding to topics and deleting old posts. She also came up with contests and other ideas to give people incentives to sign up for Partners Online and actively post.

We also developed a weekly email and hosted a variety of chat topics from relationships to careers and college. We kept an open dialog with the users and encouraged them to suggest new topics. We also ensured there was a broad range of topics to appeal to everyone. We were cognizant that, for instance, a fourteen-year-old isn't typically interested in college and careers just yet. We also started a forum for users to give us feedback on the site, any technical issues they were experiencing, and ideas they had for the community.

What community collaborations and other community supports did you develop to support the program?

Several collaborations were instrumental in bringing the program to fruition. We developed a Statewide Disability Mentoring Council with members from disability agencies, mentoring organizations, state agencies, parents, mentors, youth and staff to advise the project. We recruited participants who had an interest in promoting mentoring for people with disabilities, could act as project collaborators and serve on sub-committees, and who could also promote the program among their constituents. We formed a relationship with the Massachusetts Assistive Technology Partnership (MATP) whose key role was to advise on the accessibility of the PYD and Partners Online websites. Easter Seals of Massachusetts agreed to provide reduced cost assistive technology evaluations for our participants and allowed us to use their computer facilities for group trainings. With support from Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation, Computer Technologies Program (CTP) of Berkeley, California was our first program replication site. In exchange for our providing them with resources and training to start a career mentoring program, they provided end-user feedback on the technology platform and served on the Statewide Disability Mentoring Council which expanded to a national council in the third year of the project. XIGroup of Baltimore, Maryland worked with PYD to develop the technology platform. They provided us with in-kind programming services in exchange for educating them about accessibility. We secured used computer donations through Oracle and individuals. Lastly, we collaborated with Independent Living Centers, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, disability councils, parent groups, and hospitals to promote the program and recruit participants. In exchange, we promoted their programs through Partners Online.

How did you develop and implement your program evaluation model and what outcomes were you seeking to measure? What results were

achieved?

As stipulated in our federal grant, we hired an outside evaluator to develop the evaluation toolkit. Our evaluation plan called for analyzing demographic intake data, administering youth, parent and mentor surveys for matched pairs, a group mentoring survey, site usage and frequency of contact data, quarterly progress reports conducted by staff, and annual focus groups or individual interviews to collect qualitative information.

We wished to demonstrate improved youth outcomes in 5 key areas: (1) increased education/employment/technology skills, (2)increased independent living/self-advocacy skills, (3) improved motivation and self-esteem, (4) improved relationships, and (5) increased community involvement and participation in recreational activities.

During the course of the grant, we modified the tools to better measure the outcomes we were seeking. For example, we discovered how often someone does something is not an accurate measure of effectiveness or improvement. We also learned that mentoring takes awhile to show outcomes and that administering surveys more than every 6 months was not an effective measure. We administered surveys in paper and electronic format, depending on the client. To reduce costs and resources associated with scoring data, we began administering surveys with an online tool called Zoomerang.

The preliminary results from our evaluation efforts indicate the following:

90% of respondents stated that Partners Online "has helped them feel more supported by and connected to other people and/or families with disabilities."

87% stated they have "become more aware of resources that would help them or someone else [they] know become independent" through the Partners Online site.

83% stated they "felt more confident about using computers, the Internet, and/or participating in online communities since joining Partners Online."

97% said "they would recommend the Partners Online program to someone else with a disability."

My favorite quote from a youth follows:

"I have lived part of a life without Partners, and it was a rough and tumble life, and one that had a veiled future. Partners is a program, which is a light that tears

74

open shadows that block your foresight of the future, and the people who work for Partners are the masons that lay down the bricks that guide you towards a successful life."

How can another organization replicate the Partners Online program? What considerations should they keep in mind?

In creating the program, our intent was to give people the tools to implement their own version of Partners Online from scratch. However, we have learned that it takes a critical mass of users to really get a program like this running. Unless an organization already has a large number of constituents, the replication model we recommend is to create a Partners Online satellite.

In this model, local sites screen the participants who join the Partners Online community. For example, with our replication site, CTP Berkeley, they recruit, screen and match participants and enroll them in Partners Online. We create special forums for that group, but they also have the ability to communicate with Massachusetts youth and mentors. They have implemented a school-based mentoring program, but are using Partners Online as the vehicle to communicate with mentors with ongoing regularity.

What kind of staffing resources are required to run a program like Partners Online?

If you're starting from scratch, you really need your legal forms, applications and criminal background checking capabilities in place. You will probably need 1-2 full-time people who could do the following:
• Conduct outreach and recruitment, screening and training of end-users

• Enroll participants in the system

• Monitor discussions

• Assist end-users in training to use the site or their own computer applications

• Write weekly emails

• Recruit and train forum moderators

• Design program activities

• Develop/adapt evaluation survey tools suited for your program

• Administer surveys

• Obtain computers/Internet connectivity for low income participants

*Note: matching youth one-to-one with mentors requires more staff resources, with the caveat that one staff person should probably not handle more than 25-30 matches to ensure adequate support and follow-up.

The following template includes items that may factor into an e-mentoring budget. The template factors in the technology development to build Partners Online, the PYD general website and the creation of the Program Evaluation toolkit. Resources that are required to assist replication sites were also factored into this budget. While this budget will differ significantly for someone seeking to set up a Partners Online satellite, it includes many of the line-items common to both.

Sample E-mentoring Budget

• **Project Manager salary & benefits:** (include duties in narrative description for all personnel)

• **Additional personnel salary & benefits**

• **Program Evaluator** (if not conducting in-house)

• **Technology Consultant** (to assist with configuring server or listserv technology)

• **Personal Care Assistants/Sign Language Interpreters** (client accommodations for in-person training events or group activities)

• **Marketing and promotional materials** (brochures, posters, pens, magnets)

• **Advertising** (running program announcements in newsletters, magazines, etc.)

• **Telephone** (calls to perspective participants, youth, mentors, parents during follow-up)

• **Postage** (for program mailings)

• **Internet access** (to run online program)

• **Client equipment and Internet access** (if providing these to participants)

• **Program materials** (training handbooks, supplies, etc.)

• **Criminal history background check fees** (for mentors, staff and volunteers who will come in contact with youth)

• **Staff travel expenses** (to interview youth and mentors)

• **Conferences** (for staff development)

• **Group activities** (such as trainings, celebration, etc.)

• **Office site rental or group event venue** (if appropriate)

For more information about the Partners Online project, contact Partners for Youth with Disabilities at (617)556-4075 or visit http://www.pyd.org.

Chapter 5: **Starting a Mentoring Program for Youth with Disabilities**

Now that you've decided to start a mentoring program for youth with disabilities, what steps should you take to put down a solid foundation for future success? We've broken important start-up planning into eight phases to help make the process a bit less daunting. Remember to allow plenty of time for each phase. Some frustrations and delays are inevitable, but if you take the time to thoroughly work through these steps, you will avoid pitfalls and end up with an effective, sustained program.

Phase 1: Pre-planning

- **Identify other mentoring programs in your area.** Find out what types of mentoring programs they offer, and what populations they serve. Try to visit the programs to see how they operate. Do they have offerings for youth with disabilities? What about youth service providers? Are youth with disabilities already being served through mentoring in your area? If so, should you work with an existing program to augment its services? If not, or if you'd like to start your own program to target a different population of youth with disabilities (i.e., different age range or socioeconomic group), could you collaborate with any of these places for recruiting, funding, etc.?

- **Get the facts about youth with disabilities in your area.** Ask youth service providers for statistics. How many youth with disabilities are there, based on age and type of disability? Gauge the numbers, ages and needs. This will help you decide what type of mentoring program to start and help you choose which goals to focus on. For instance, your goals may be to improve social skills, academic performance, independent living skills, employment and college transitioning or combinations of some or all of these.

- **Make contacts with schools, businesses, disability-related agencies and other non-profit organizations in your area.** Explain your idea for beginning a mentoring program, and ask if these entities might provide resources such as program participants, mentors, funding, in-kind donations, and/or office and program space. Forge resource partnerships early on, and they will help sustain your program for years to come.

- **Join mentoring networking organizations such as your state's branch of the National Mentoring Partnership** (http://www.mentoring.org) and the National Disability Mentoring Council (http://www.pyd.org). They provide trainings, ideas, and tips and can help put you in touch with other mentoring programs in your area.

- **If you are creating a mentoring program within an existing organization, make sure you have support from the organization's leadership and from your co-workers** (Kerr, Shulze and Woodward, 1995). Enlist them to help you make connections, gather resources and design the program.

- **Recruit successful local people with a variety of backgrounds to form an advisory council or Board of Directors.** Make certain to include people with disabilities and those with disability expertise. Try to draft a diverse group who will consider many different viewpoints. Ask the members to help steer your

program as it forms and grows. Meet regularly with this group as you begin your program.

Phase 2: Develop a Mission and Program Policies

- **Once you've chosen the type of mentoring program you'd like to start, the population you'll serve and the goals you'll try to achieve, create a mission statement for your program.** It should embody your objectives and very briefly state the way in which your program will achieve those objectives. It will also be helpful to craft a vision statement to clarify your longer-term goals. You may modify the vision statement over time, but it can act as a guide to keep you on track.

- **Develop policies for your program.** For example, decide how you will recruit participants, raise mentee achievement, retain and support youth and adult participants and forge partnerships with local schools, businesses and the community (Miller, 2002). How will you deal with issues such as mentee safety, mentee or mentor misconduct, disclosure of medical information, and early match termination? Write down the policies you develop in a policy handbook.

- **Begin to develop policies for program staff delineating the roles and responsibilities** of the mentoring program coordinator, other managers and all dedicated staff, etc. (Miller, 2002). Add these to the policy handbook mentioned above.

Phase 3: Design a Program Framework

Design a framework for your program. You may want to solicit potential mentors and mentees for input to ensure their needs will be met (Kerr et al., 1995).

- **Define your target group. What age range do you want to serve?** Will you focus on a specific geographic area and/or a certain socio-economic group? Use the information you gathered during the pre-planning phase to make these decisions.

- **Choose which mentoring model you will use.** Will the mentoring be one-to-one, group, or a combination of the two? Look at Chapter 2 for types of mentoring models. Also, set a minimum duration for mentoring relationships.

Think about how often mentoring activities will occur and where they will happen.

- **Develop strategies for recruiting mentors and mentees.** Lack of participation may be one of the biggest obstacles your program will face. It is very important to figure out several different workable recruitment methods before you begin your program. See Chapter 3 for recruitment best practices.

- **Work out an effective method for screening and selecting applicants.** Identify the qualities, characteristics and experiences you would prefer mentors to possess (Miller, 2002). Make sure that recruitment and referral materials communicate these favored traits (Miller). Design your screening and selection process to reflect desired traits, levels of skill and commitment (Miller). It should also help you spot negative traits to screen out unfit candidates (Miller). Chapter 3 contains suggestions for an effective screening process.

- **Develop mentor and mentee trainings.** Keep in mind that in-person trainings are the most effective. It is best to give participants some training before they take part in the program, although it is also a good idea to provide ongoing training too. You may want to create a formal group training curriculum and a more informal one-to-one training protocol. Decide the length of training programs and how frequently you will hold them. See Chapter 3 for ideas about what to include in your trainings.

- **Set up a procedure for making mentor matches.** What factors will you consider most important when matching a mentor and mentee? Similar disabilities, common interests, and geographic proximity are a few things that often lead to successful matches.

- **Settle upon a method for introducing newly formed mentoring pairs.** Where will you conduct initial match meetings? Who should attend? How will you ensure that matches get off to a good start? See Chapter 3 for suggestions.

- **Plan follow-up practices to put in place once you've made matches.** It is important to allot enough program resources to follow up with mentors, mentees and mentees' parents on a regular basis. Strive to make contact via phone, email or in-person at least once every few weeks, and plan quarterly group activities so program staff may watch mentoring pairs interact in person. Develop policies to handle conflicts between mentors and mentees and to deal with early match terminations in a healthy way (Kerr et al., 1995).

"Listen to the community. Parents, mentors, and youth can guide your mentoring program in the right direction. Some of our most successful initiatives have come about because we have listened to our constituents. They need to be an integral

*part of planning your program." - **Maureen Gallagher, Deputy Director, Partners for Youth with Disabilities***

- **Think of ways to retain program participants.** Some ideas include setting up mentor support meetings at a local coffee shop and holding ongoing trainings, recognizing and rewarding mentors and mentees with a yearly banquet, and providing incentives such as letters and/or certificates of recognition, t-shirts with program logos, and magnets with program logos (Wunsch, 1994).

- **Create an evaluation and assessment plan.** You should lay out your evaluation process in detail early since you need to collect some data from participants before they start the program to create a baseline. Your evaluation should measure outcomes tied to the program objectives you've chosen (Wunsch, 1994). See Chapter 6 for tips about designing an effective program evaluation.

Phase 4: Determine Resource Needs, Create a Program Budget and Begin to Secure Funding

- **Determine your program's resource needs.** These will differ depending on whether your program will be a new service of an existing organization or a brand new entity. However, all mentoring programs do need some of the same resources, such as funds for marketing, recruitment and training (Miller, 2002). Staffing costs often take up the largest portion of the budget costs. You'll also need funds to provide ongoing follow up and support, to evaluate your program, and to make your program accessible. Accessibility costs may include accessible transportation, sign language interpreters and personal care attendants, etc.

- **Make critical decisions about how your program will function.** How many staff members will you need? Do you need to acquire office space? Where will you hold trainings and other group events? Who will be responsible for accounting and human resource tasks?

- See Chapter 6 for more detailed information about creating a realistic program budget and raising money to sustain your program.

You may want to use the basic sample budget below as a starting point for creating your own program budget.

Income

- **In-kind donations** (such as mentors' time)

- **Public and voluntary grants** (government grants, local grants, etc.)

- **Foundation grants**

- **Corporate grants & donations** (from local and national businesses)

- **Fundraising events** (dinners, golf tournaments, walk-a-thons, etc.)

- **Individual Donations**

Expenses

- **Program manager salary and benefits**

- **Additional staff salaries and benefits**

- **Marketing and promotional materials** (brochures, posters, pens, magnets, etc.)

- **Program materials** (such as policy handbooks, participant and staff training materials, office supplies)

- **Equipment** (office equipment and maintenance)

- **Liability insurance**

- **Criminal history background check fees** (for mentors, staff)

- **Mentee travel expenses** (to events - keep accessibility costs in mind)

- **Staff travel expenses** (to interviews, events)

- **Group activities** (social events, outings, recognition banquet)

- **Reasonable accommodations** (sign language, personal care assistance, etc.)

- **Office site rental or mortgage payments**

- **Training and group event venue** (if office space isn't appropriate)

- **Telephone and postage**

Phase 5: Define Program Coordinator's Role and Hire the Best Candidate

- **Your mentoring program's most important resource will be its coordinator (Wunsch, 1994).** The success of your program will largely ride on how well the coordinator carries out his/her responsibilities, so it is crucial to formulate a realistic job description and to hire the right person for the job. If possible, you may want to hire an assistant coordinator to help the program coordinator with his/her many duties.

- **Think about what it will take to keep your program running smoothly and use these ideas to get started with a list of coordinator responsibilities.** Here are some potential ideas to get you started. Your coordinator may do any of the following:

  ✓ Develop program materials such as forms, records, and training materials and use them effectively and efficiently to run the program

  ✓ Handle marketing and recruitment duties

  ✓ Carry out participant screening/selection

  ✓ Conduct mentor trainings

  ✓ Match mentors and mentees

  ✓ Conduct match follow-up

  ✓ Plan and implement group activities, mentor support groups, etc.

  ✓ Monitor, evaluate & make improvements to the program (Miller, 2002)

  ✓ Develop and cultivate partnerships/connections with other organizations

  ✓ Oversee use of resources and manage the program cost-effectively

  ✓ Help with fundraising

- **Once you've completed the program coordinator's job description, you'll need to begin looking for someone to fill the role.** What should you look for in a candidate? Your brand new mentoring program will benefit from being run by a self-starter with innovative ideas. Look for someone who is professional and who has exceptional people skills. Effective computer and writing skills are necessary. You will also want to look for the following specific qualifications:

  ✓ a solid commitment to the concept of mentoring and of mentoring youth with disabilities in particular (Kerr et al.,1995)

  ✓ an understanding of the process of mentoring (Kerr et al.)

  ✓ an ability to conduct mentor and mentee interviews and assess needs and abilities

  ✓ strong organizational and administrative skills (Kerr et al.)

  ✓ personal or professional experience in the disability area and knowledge of

resources in the field

- **After you've hired your program coordinator, make sure to provide him/her with thorough training using the policy handbook you created.** Communicate often with the coordinator as the program develops, and use his/her feedback to make any necessary changes in program design or operation.

Phase 6: Construct Program Systems and Produce Forms, Records and Training Materials

- **Design systems to track recruitment efforts, referrals, participant information and evaluation data before you begin your program.** It is also necessary to create a system for tracking fundraising and grant writing efforts. Do not overlook this step, because failure to set up smooth systems at the start will result in a chaotic mess of information that will take time to sort out later. You may also lose participants, funders and donations if you cannot keep track of important information. It will probably be easiest to purchase recordkeeping and fundraising software for this step. You may want to adapt the following tips and suggestions for systems or create entirely new systems that work for your program's individual needs.

  To track recruitment efforts: Begin by compiling a list of local agencies, disability organizations, schools and businesses that may be able to provide your program with referrals. Keep the list updated with addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers, email addresses and contact names. Use a calendar to create a week-by-week or month-by-month recruitment plan, selecting certain days to call, email or visit the entities on the list. Also use the contact list for mass mailings, etc.

  To track referrals: Create a referral form capturing all necessary information for staff to fill out when they receive a referral. The form may be paper or computerized. Make certain to gather the referral's contact information, as well as the referring organization's information. You may use this to target the referring agency again and/or to add it to your recruitment contact list. Check the referral forms or database very frequently, and make sure to follow up on referrals the same day or as soon as possible.

  To track participant information: If at all possible, you should use a computer

database for keeping track of participant information (Kerr et al., 1995). This will make it easier to gather demographic data, keep track of file completion, create mailing lists, and gather evaluation data, to name a few examples. You will also want to keep a paper file for each participant. The paper file should contain the participant's application, references, and permission/consent forms. It may also contain evaluation forms, a form for tracking your program's correspondence with the participant, and a form for tracking the participant's trainings.

To track evaluation data: You may track evaluation data alongside the rest of participant information by making a section for evaluation data on the participants' computerized files or in the paper files. Depending on the type of evaluation you are doing, it may be necessary for you to keep evaluation data separate from the participant files in order to maintain confidentiality.

To track fundraising and grant writing efforts: Use a fundraising software system to track donors and donations. To save costs, you may want to create your own simple database to keep track of potential grant funders, proposal deadline dates, proposals submitted, grants received and denied, and thank you letters sent. Keep this information updated very regularly and share it with staff who fundraise so they can update it as well.

- **Once you've built your program's foundational systems, you'll need to fill them in with record keeping forms.** You may want to ask to see other mentoring programs' forms to get some ideas for creating your own. The forms may evolve over time, but make sure you're capturing all the necessary information from the start.

Application forms: Create separate forms for mentees and mentors, since you'll need to capture different information from each group.

A mentor application form may be somewhat like an employment application. It should gather contact information; any demographic information you need for evaluations and/or for grant applications; a brief history of the applicant's school, work and family life; information about the applicant's disability to use for accessibility and matching purposes; and questions about what type of youth the applicant would like as a mentee. It should also contain reference contact information and a brief section explaining the commitment the applicant will be undertaking as a mentor for the mentor to sign. You can make the reference check a part of the application or a separate form. Make sure to gather information from references on the form that will shed light on the applicant's appropriateness for the mentor role. You may also wish to create a form for the

staff member who interviews the applicant to fill out after

the interview. The staff member can express thoughts about the applicant, the interview, and the applicant's suitability on this form.

A mentee application should capture contact information for the mentee and the mentee's parents/guardians, as well as any necessary demographic information. You may want to gather information about the youth's school performance and experience, relationships with peers and adults, and family background. The application should ask questions about the youth's disability and any necessary accommodations. It should also gather information about the youth's preferred type of mentor.

Permission/consent forms are vitally important to make participants and mentees' parents/guardians aware of program rules and policies and to protect your mentoring program from liability. For mentees, these may include a form that explains program rules; a form that gives parental consent to release the youth's pertinent health information in case of an emergency; a form that explains the parents'/guardians' responsibility to supervise one-to-one matches; a form for publicity consent; and a form releasing your program from liability. Parents/guardians should sign all forms for youth under 18 and mentees should sign the form explaining program rules. Forms for the mentor to sign may include the program rules form; a form explaining program policies prohibiting certain activities, such as overnight match activities and drinking/smoking/using drugs while taking part in a match activity and a form explaining the policy on disciplining mentees. Make sure to have the mentor sign a criminal history check form as well.

You will create evaluation forms to fit your evaluation design. See Chapter 6 for more information and suggestions.

Participant correspondence forms: In addition to the necessary forms explained above, you may wish to create form letters to correspond with your program participants. These are useful during the screening and matching process. Make form letters or postcards to thank applicants for interviewing, to congratulate mentors once they're accepted into the program, and to keep in touch with unmatched participants while they're waiting to be matched. Write a letter to mail to newly matched mentors and mentees containing their match partner's contact information as well as the program coordinator's phone number and email. Also create a letter to mail when matches are terminated. Participants will appreciate the correspondence, and having a form letter handy will save your

busy program staff time.

*"Want to create and run a top notch youth mentoring program? Effective mentoring programs pursue a standard of excellence, create accountability, and evaluate all that they do." **- National Network of Youth Ministries***

- **Training materials:** You will need to create training materials before you begin your program. These will vary depending on the types of training you choose to provide. You will probably want to create a training manual or folder with handouts for group trainings. You may also wish to produce a short manual for one-to-one follow-up trainings. In addition, as your mentoring program staff grows, it will be helpful to make a staff training handbook. You may use this to conduct staff group trainings and/or as a handy reference book for staff. See Chapter 3 for helpful ideas about creating training materials.

Phase 7: Look into Legal Considerations

Programs serving youth encounter many legal questions along the way. Since you will be running a mentoring program involving youth with disabilities who are spending time with adults, you will need to be aware of your program's potential liabilities. You may also need legal advice as your organization grows. It is wise to seek legal counsel in at least the following areas. Your program may have legal questions about other areas as well.

- **Seek legal counsel to guide you as you design your program.** An attorney will be able to spot potential legal concerns and liabilities, and will suggest ways to avoid them. Also, you will have to purchase liability insurance for your program. An attorney can assist you in figuring out what type you'll need and may be able to help you save money on this expense.

- **Ask an attorney or tax professional to assist you if you are thinking about incorporating** as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. If you will be seeking grant funding, you will most likely have to become a 501(c)(3), but it is a

complicated process. Start the process early, and consult a professional for help.

- **Have a lawyer examine the forms you've created for your program that we discussed in the above section.** It is especially important that an attorney help you create the liability forms, such as the disclosure and release of health information form, the match supervision form, and the program rules and policies forms. If the worst case scenario ever occurs, you will want these forms to protect you against a lawsuit.

- **You may or may not choose to consult an attorney to help** with this, but make sure to implement a reference check and criminal history background check procedure. These will help protect your mentees and your program from injury.

- **Although you're just starting your mentoring program, you should keep the possibility of expansion in the back of your mind.** If you ever do decide to replicate your program in another town or state, you will need legal guidance to help you navigate added liability and contract concerns.

Phase 8: Start Your Mentoring Program

Congratulations! You've made it to Phase 8 – you're ready to start your mentoring program. All of the preparation work will pay off as soon as you make your first match. To get the ball rolling, you'll want to take the following steps first:

- Use the marketing and recruitment strategies you've designed to begin spreading the word about your program. Begin recruiting participants, and keeping track of your recruitment efforts and referrals.

- Put your screening and selection process into practice as soon as you've received referrals.

- Once you've selected participants, hold trainings using the curriculum and materials you've created to prepare your mentors and mentees for being matched.

- Don't forget to implement the systems you've created for keeping track of participant files and trainings.

- Begin your evaluation process with the pre-assessment forms/tools you've designed.

Now you know the steps involved in starting a mentoring program for youth with disabilities. This should help ensure that you have thought about the many aspects of program start-up. For more information regarding program start-up, see the Resources section at the end of the guide.

Chapter 6: Sustaining Mentoring Programs

Now that the work of start-up has been given appropriate attention, an incredibly important question arises. What can be done to ensure that this program is sustained? Mentoring programs often struggle with the fiscal issues related to starting and sustaining a mentoring program. Therefore, this chapter will serve as a guide to reinforce the importance of creating a resource development plan, searching for and securing grant funding, writing a proposal, and developing a realistic program budget.

Creating a Resource Development Plan

Creating a resource development plan is essential to the sustainability and viability of your mentoring program. The way to ensure that your program is able to meaningfully serve youth in the future is to work towards a fiscally healthy agency (Webster, 1999). A successful resource development plan can assist with putting you on the right path to "fulfill your mission, garner sufficient annual revenues to do the job well, diversify your funding base, develop a reserve, and plan for the long-term" (Webster, 1999, p.1).

This chapter will primarily focus on grants as sources of funding, but it is important to remember that grants should only be part of your plan (National Mentoring Center, 2002). According to the National Mentoring Partnership (2005), the most common mistake mentoring programs make when creating their development plan is to rely too heavily on one source of funding. Relying too heavily on one source of funding can put your program at risk for failure. According to many experts, you should not exceed more than 30% of your budget from any one source. In fact, according to Webster (1999, p. 1) "a thousand people donating $10 each is healthier for your program than a single $10,000 grant."

According to the National Mentoring Partnership (2005, How Can My Program Identify Funding Sources?), there are a variety of potentially good funding sources, including the following:

• City, county, state and federal governments

• Chambers of Commerce

• Community and private or corporate foundations

• Individual donors

• Major corporations

• United Ways

"Our Foundation-the only foundation dedicated exclusively to helping young people with disabilities-has been privileged to work with Partners for Youth with Disabilities from the very start. When MEAF was established in 1991, PYD was also in its early stages, and our staff was able to learn early on about the critical importance of mentoring. In years since, MEAF has supported a number of PYD projects; we've

*see those investments multiply in the impact the mentoring programs have had on succeeding generations of youth." **- Rayna Aylward, Executive Director, Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation***

In addition to a variety of sources of funding, there is also a diversity of forms in which that funding can be provided, such as the following:

• Cash Donations

• Estate Gifts or Planned Giving

• Event Income

• Sponsorships

• In-kind Contributions

• Grants

• Fees for Program Service

• Business income from the sale of products or services

• Interest and Dividends (Webster, 1999).

*"Through collaborations with other agencies, PYD has been able to offer more mentoring programs in the community. Our relationship with Massachusetts Department of Public Health and Boston Medical Center Department of Family Services is a perfect example. We teamed up with both of these agencies to develop a health promotion mentoring program for youth with disabilities. We now have three health promotion mentoring programs throughout the state. This would not have been possible without the support of these two partners." **- Maureen Gallagher, Deputy Director, Partners for Youth with Disabilities***

Each form of funding has its own advantages and disadvantages:

Form of Funding	Advantage	Disadvantage

Grants	• Proposal can serve as a planning tool • Can be done by one person A prominent grantor can enhance program's reputation • Funders reporting requirements can assist programs in keeping better records and performing comprehensive program evaluations • Can raise significant funds to get a program off the ground	• Most grants are short-term • Expenditures are restricted to line items and timeframes specified in grant budget • Recordkeeping requirements can be burdensome • Many grants are paid on a reimbursement basis • Grant writing duties often fall on overburdened staff • Program staff may have little or no training in grant writing
Events	• Great "friend-raisers" Mailing lists of potential donors can be gleaned from event registration information • Business sponsorships can underwrite the costs • Can raise community awareness Funds raised are often unrestricted and can cover general operating costs that other funding sources do not cover	• Events often do not net much profit considering staff time • Sometimes events lose money • Board members may consider fundraising events their sole fundraising responsibility • Events can occasionally raise contentious mission-related questions, such as whether to serve alcohol or accept sponsorship from corporations that are not aligned with the agency's mission
Business Income	• If a business venture turns a profit, it can be a steady source of income • If the business venture is substantially related to the organizations purpose, it can enhance the achievement of the mission	• Unrelated business income is generally taxable • Business ventures are financially risky • Resources can sometimes be diverted away from services related to mission • Organizations can lose money and increase debt
Individual Donations	• Individuals often support the agency for many years, increasing the amount of their gift over time • Most donations are unrestricted • Individual donor campaigns are largely a step-by-step process and its concepts are readily learned from books and trainings • Donors feel good about supporting the cause and can spread the word to other community members	• Individual donations are not a quick fix—it can take years to build a significant donor base • Active board leadership is required • A careful data collection and donor response system must be in place

(Adapted from Webster, 1999).

Who should spearhead your fundraising effort?

Many small nonprofits do not have a development director on staff. Therefore, the question arises, who should lead the effort to secure funding? Successful fundraising and development require a specialized skill set, experience, and contacts. If no one on staff possesses these traits, there are several options, including the following:

• Hire a development consultant (National Mentoring Partnership, 2005).

• Pick someone on staff to attend development seminars, classes and acquire the knowledge through reading and networking.

• Scale down your mentoring project (National Mentoring Partnership, 2005).

Grants

The remainder of the chapter will focus on grant funding. Since this is a common way to secure start-up funds for a new project, we will discuss types of grant funding, how to search for and secure grant funding, and writing a proposal.

Types of Grant Funding

There are two main categories of funding-public and private.

Public Funding: Public funding is available from federal, state, and local governments. Public funding can result in significant amounts of money, but often depends on the economic and political climate of the state and country.

Private Funding: Private funding refers to any non-governmental source of funds, such as funding from non-profit foundations, corporate grants, private grants, and/or fundraising events.

Within public and private funding, there are several types of funding, each with its own characteristics.

Type of Funding Source	Advantages	Disadvantages
Federal Government Sources	• Can provide significant amounts of money • More likely to cover indirect costs • Have firm deadlines and prescribed proposal formats • Easy to locate (www.grants.gov)	• Usually have detailed reporting requirements • Funding levels determined by economic and political climate Can be highly competitive • Proposals are usually lengthy and require a variety of compliances • Established programs can get a more favorable review • May require multi-state program implementation
State Government Sources	• Can be less competitive than federal grants • Can provide multiple year funding • Fund local initiatives	• Generally detailed reporting requirements • Funding levels determined by economic and political climate • Can be difficult to determine which state agencies have funding to support your program
Local Government Sources	• Can provide multiple year funding • Fund local initiatives	• Generally detailed reporting requirements • Funding levels determined by economic and political climate Generally smaller amounts of funding than state or federal grants
Independent Foundation An independent grant-making organization established to aid social, educational, and/or other charitable activities	• Applications are usually straight-forward • Reporting requirements usually minimal	• May have limited scope of funding priorities • May be difficult to locate
Company-Sponsored Foundation An independent grant-making organization with close ties to a corporation	• May sometimes provide other sources of support in addition to funding, such as access to volunteers and assistance with leveraging other grants	• Usually focus grant-making in areas where corporation operates
Community Foundation A publicly-supported organization which makes grants for social, educational, or other charitable purposes	• Applications are usually straight-forward • Reporting requirements usually minimal	• Usually limited in geographic scope • Generally smaller amounts of funding

Corporations Companies or businesses providing monetary funding or in-kind donations to chartable causes	• May provide in-kind donations (technology equipment, office equipment, etc.)	• Usually open to event sponsorships • Usually dependent on staff, constituents or board members who have relationship with company management

Searching for and Securing Funding

The person charged with leading the grant writing effort for your program must know the agency and program well. According to Associated Grant Makers (2005, Guide to Grant Maker Research), there are five questions to ask yourself before you begin your search for funding:

Does your agency have 501 (c) 3 status?

Many funders will not provide funding to organizations that do not qualify for non-profit status under section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code. For more information about how to apply for non-profit status, please see http://www.irs.gov.

What is the mission of your organization?

It is important for your organization to have a clear mission statement. Once your mission statement is reviewed, you are able to search for a funder whose interests match your mission. In addition, a clear mission statement will allow you to concisely describe the population you serve and the services you provide.

What are the goals of the particular project for which you need funding?

When considering the goals for your mentoring project, you must determine if there is a need for a mentoring program for youth with disabilities in your community and also that there are not similar projects already in existence in your community. If there is already an established mentoring program in your area serving a similar population, it may make sense to partner with that organization, rather than starting from scratch (North, Sherk, and Strother, 2002).

Who is in charge?

97

A competent board of directors and experienced management staff are essential when trying to secure funding. This not only will help attract funding, but will allow you to successfully carry out the activities of the project once funding is attained. If your agency is lacking in necessary skills to successfully complete the project, it may be important to consider hiring additional staff or bringing on an experienced consultant with skills directly tied to the project.

Where does your funding currently come from?

Potential funders will want to know what sources of income are currently in place. If you do not have any sources of income, then a clear development plan (including which alternative funding sources are being considered) is important. Once you can answer these questions accurately, you will be in a position to search for a funder that matches your agency's mission, goals, and interests.

Where to search for funding

Since there is limited funding earmarked for mentoring programs and programs for youth with disabilities, it is important to continually research funding options. There are numerous ways to search for funding for your mentoring program, including the following:

Location-Based Directories: Many directories are based on geographic scope, and can assist you in finding funding in your geographic area. Examples include Directory of Grant Makers (individualized by state), Associated Grant Makers, and World Guide to Foundations.

Program Interest-Based Directories: Some directories are interest specific and might be an efficient way to search for funding for your mentoring programs. Examples include the National Guide to Funding for Children, Youth and Families, and Disability Funding Week (www.cdpublications.com).

Corporate Giving Directories: Several directories provide information regarding corporate giving programs. Examples include the National Directory of Corporate Public Affairs and Giving By Industry.

Federal Grant Sources: http://www.grants.gov allows organizations to electronically find and apply for competitive grant opportunities from all Federal grant-making agencies. Grants.gov is the single access point for over 900 grant programs offered by the 26 Federal grant-making agencies.

Non-Profit Publications: Publications such as the Chronicle of Philanthropy (http://www.philanthropy.com) provide useful information on grant seeking, foundations, fundraising, and managing nonprofits. These types of publications can keep you up-to-date on trends and provide resources for fundraising activities.

Networking: Connecting with local and national agencies provides another way to find out about funding opportunities. In addition, joining your State Mentoring Partnership will keep you aware of the funding opportunities available in your state.

Writing a Mentoring Proposal

As stated before, successful proposal writing requires skills and sufficient time. There are many agencies that host trainings on proposal writing, and they are usually reasonable in cost. There are also several web-based resources to help you hone your proposal writing skills, including the following:

• The Grantsmanship Center: http://www.tgci.com

• The Foundation Center: http://fdncenter.org

• Mentor: National Mentoring Partnership: http://www.mentoring.org

• National Mentoring Center: http://www.nwrel.org

• Associated Grant Makers: http://www.agmconnect.org

What is in a proposal?

Funders often specify what they expect to see in a proposal. Some even provide the exact layout in which they want the information presented. Others are more vague. Review each potential funder's website to discern the following:

• Do they list what they want in the proposal?

• Do they have a page limit?

• Do they require certain attachments?

• Do they accept additional attachments?

If a funder does not specify what to include in a proposal, the following guidelines

show what is included in a typical proposal for a pilot mentoring initiative:

Statement of Need: This should include a clear idea of the needs of the population you intend to serve. This is your chance to show that you understand the issue from both a theoretical and practical standpoint. Use data and research to back up your points. It is acceptable to include national data, but the focus should be on the needs in your community.

Proposed Initiative: A brief description of the project and its highlights.

Benefits to the Mentees, Mentors, and Agency: What will be the benefits of the program? How many people will benefit from the services?

Goals: A description of the intended goals and outcomes of the project

Tasks: A description of the main activities.

Evaluation: A description of the program evaluation activities and how you will use the evaluation results to improve the program.

Personnel: This section lists those individuals that will work on the project and what their roles will be. It will include their area of expertise, experience, and length of time with the agency.

Timeline: A clear list or chart detailing when each activity will be completed.

Budget: A detail of how much the project will cost and how money will be spent.

If a funder does not specify a length, it is a good idea to keep the proposal relatively short—usually less than ten pages. If a funding source does specify, be sure to keep to the length stated.

Many funders accept the AGM Common Proposal Form (http://www.agmconnect.org) which allows you to save time by sending a similar proposal to multiple funders.

Development of In-Kind Resources and Collaborations

Many small agencies and mentoring programs can augment their financial resources by aligning themselves with other organizations that can assist with the development of the project. For example, Partners for Youth with Disabilities has partnered with schools, hospitals, Independent Living Centers, and businesses to bring resources to their mentoring program. Funders often like to

see that a mentoring program is working with other community organizations and businesses to ensure that the program is meeting an important need and has community involvement.

*"Youth and families are relying on us to come through for them. We're committed to starting mentoring programs that can be sustained over the long term. Developing a diversified funding base is key." **- Maureen Gallagher, Deputy Director, Partners for Youth with Disabilities***

Some vital resources community agencies and businesses can bring to a mentoring project include the following:

• Recruiting of mentors and mentees

• Training mentors and mentees

• Staff training resources and technical assistance

• Office and meeting space

• Refreshments for mentoring events

• Public relations activities

• Equipment and supplies

Strong collaborations and community partners may lead to additional funding as well. Community partners can jointly apply for grants. This can lead to the development of a stronger proposal and result in more funding for your project.

An example of a successful joint application: Partners for Youth with Disabilities collaborated with Boston University's CityLab project to apply for a grant through the National Science Foundation. CityLab is a program that teaches high school aged students about science through hands-on laboratory classes and workshops. CityLab partnered with Partners for Youth with Disabilities to participate in their program, to adapt their curriculum to be more inclusive of youth with disabilities, and to develop a mentoring component. This collaboration resulted in a two-year grant from the National Science Foundation that funded both of these projects for their work.

Potential Pitfalls

There are common mistakes that are found in proposals written for mentoring programs. Avoiding the following mistakes can make your proposal more competitive:

Making the proposal too "touchy/feely": Funders want to know that their money is supporting a program that is having a genuine effect. Therefore, it is crucial to base your needs statement on research and data. It is also important to clearly show that there is a need in your community. Spend time reading and gathering data. There are several web-based resources available to help you gather accurate information regarding youth and young adults with disabilities. While this list is not meant to be totally inclusive of all web-based resources, it is a helpful place to start:

• National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, http://www.ncwd-youth.info

• The Pacer Center, http://www.pacer.org

• U.S. Department of Labor, Office on Disability Employment Policy, http://www.dol.gov/odep

• Washington State Human Rights Commission, http://www.hum.wa/gov

• National Organization on Disability, http://www.nod.org

• U.S. Census Bureau, http://www.census.gov

• President George W. Bush's New Freedom Initiative, http://disabilityinfo.gov

• National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, http://www.ncset.org

• NationaL Longitudinal Transition Study II, www.nlts2.org

Not providing enough detail about the program specifics: It is crucial to lay out the specifics of why, what, how, who, and how much (Phillips-Jones, 2005).

Too Ambitious: For start-up programs, build in time to lay the foundation, train staff, and recruit participants. Do not tie goals to serving a large number of youth in the first year. Rather, base goals on setting the stage for a strong program. Many successful programs will first test a "pilot program" in the first year, in which they serve between 5-15 matches. Once the pilot program is successful, the number of matches will grow in subsequent years (North et al., 2002; Sherk, 1999).

Creating Realistic Program Budgets

As a part of your proposal, most potential funders will expect a program budget. Program budgets are often considered an afterthought and are not used in a meaningful way (Hall, 1988). A poorly planned budget can not only prevent you from securing funding, but can also cause many problems once the project is running. Therefore, when writing a proposal, as much care and time should be put into the budget as the rest of the proposal.

The more clear, accurate and well planned budgets are in the beginning; the more likely you will be able to achieve the following:

• adjust plans, activities, and spending as needed

• spend money cost-effectively

• reach the specific goals you have set

• strengthen the internal control system

Costs of a Mentoring Program

When considering the costs associated with a mentoring project, there are a few key things to consider:

• Successful mentoring programs usually have one full-time project manager or project coordinator. This salary is usually the largest expense for the project (North et al., 2002).

• The cost per match can often vary between $400-$2000 per match depending on the population served. Higher "risk" populations can usually be associated with higher per match costs. The items that make up the per match cost are generally insurance, volunteer incentives, criminal background checks, clerical supplies, refreshments, training materials, and recruitment materials (North et al., 2002). When working with youth and adults with disabilities, there may be additional costs, such as those associated with necessary accommodations. In addition, there may be costs involved in making your program appealing to youth with disabilities, such as making your website accessible and having recruitment materials in large print and/or in Braille.

Below is a basic budget template to use when starting to put together your mentoring budget.

Income

• **In-kind donations** (such as mentors' time)

• **Public and voluntary grants** (government grants, local grants, etc.)

• **Foundation grants**

• **Corporate grants & donations** (from local and national businesses)

• **Fundraising events** (dinners, golf tournaments, walk-a-thons, etc.)

• **Individual Donations**

Expenses

• **Program manager salary and benefits**

• **Additional staff salaries and benefits**

• **Marketing and promotional materials** (brochures, posters, pens, magnets, etc.)

• **Program materials** (such as policy handbooks, participant and staff training materials, office supplies)

• **Equipment** (office equipment and maintenance)

• **Liability insurance**

• **Criminal history background check fees** (for mentors, staff)

• **Mentee travel expenses** (to events - keep accessibility costs in mind)

• **Staff travel expenses** (to interviews, events)

• **Group activities** (social events, outings, recognition banquet)

• **Reasonable accommodations** (sign language, personal care assistance, etc.)

• **Office site rental or mortgage payments**

• **Training and group event venue** (if office space isn't appropriate)

• **Telephone and postage**

While sustaining a mentoring program can feel like an overwhelming task, this chapter provided many things to consider and steps to take to make this task more manageable. Thorough planning, ongoing research and skilled proposal writing can help your program raise the necessary funds to keep your program thriving and growing. For more information about budgeting and proposal writing, see the Resource section at the end of the guide.

Chapter 7: **Evaluating Mentoring Programs**

Program evaluation has gained more attention in recent years—and with good reason. Program evaluation forms the foundation critical to starting and maintaining your mentoring program (National Mentoring Center, 2005). Much research reports the benefits of mentoring for "at-risk" populations (Grossman, 1999; Johnson, 1999; Rhodes, 2005). However, very little evidence exists regarding the effectiveness of mentoring for youth with disabilities. Therefore, evaluation becomes critical when working to sustain a mentoring program for youth with disabilities.

Purpose of Evaluation

Since you probably see anecdotal evidence of the value of your program's work every day, it may seem counterproductive to expend resources to develop an evaluation plan. However, evaluation can serve many valuable purposes in your program, including program improvement, resource development, improved allocation of resources and advocacy (Juvenile Mentoring Program, 1998).

Program Improvement. Evaluation can help you measure your program's success and identify areas that require improvement. By comparing data from each year, you can ensure you are on the right track.

Resource Development. Funders want evidence that your program is reaching its intended goals. Although they like to hear success stories of individual youth, funders are more interested in overall program data that reflect the effective use of their funds. By providing evidence of the effectiveness of your program, your program will be more competitive in securing funds.

Improved Allocation of Resources. Evaluation can also be used to evaluate currently implemented strategies and processes that may be costly to your agency, such as recruitment strategies. For example, your agency may spend time and resources attending volunteer fairs in order to recruit mentors. However, if your evaluation shows that your most successful mentors were recruited through newspaper advertisements, you would be wise to redirect your resources to more successful strategies.

Advocacy. Clear program evaluation results can provide valuable information about the issue on which you are focusing. Having evidence to support the reality of the issue can help in rallying community leaders and legislators to your cause.

Who Will Design and Conduct the Evaluation?

"It is vital that each program build their evaluation plan in and allocate resources to it from the beginning of the project. It helps enable the program to identify clearly its goals and desired outcomes, and helps ensure that they are achievable and can be measured." - Nicole Roos, MA Department of Public Health

There are two options when deciding who will spearhead your evaluation efforts. Program leaders must decide whether to design and conduct the evaluation internally or to hire an independent evaluator (National Mentoring Center, 2005).

Keep in mind that an independent evaluator can charge

between $5,000-$30,000 depending on the evaluator's level of experience and the complexity and scope of the evaluation. A program may also be able to partner with an educational institution to work with a graduate student or professor, which could greatly reduce the cost of the evaluation (National Mentoring Partnership, 2005). There are advantages and disadvantages to each option.

Evaluator	Advantages	Disadvantages
In-House Evaluation	• Per hour wages of program staff evaluator likely to be less costly than outside consultant • Program staff may have clearer understanding of program goals and program constituents	• Staff may not have skills needed to develop and carry out an efficient and effective evaluation; time may need to be devoted to research evaluation resources • Staff time and agency resources may be diverted from program functions • The evaluation may be perceived by outsiders as being biased
Independent Evaluator	• Program staff can retain focus on program activities • Higher level of expertise • Unbiased perspective • Can ensure sufficient time is dedicated to evaluation efforts	• Evaluator may not understand your constituency • Can be extremely costly

What Do You Want to Measure?

When developing the evaluation plan for your program, you must first determine your definition of program success (Mentoring Canada, 2005). What is it you want to achieve? How will you know if you have achieved it? Your mission, constituents and activities may predict that your definition of success will not be the same as another mentoring program's definition. Being clear about your program's mission and activities helps you focus on evaluating specific program components from which you intend to see an impact. It is also important to focus evaluation on areas that are most logical and relevant to your program as well as those that are important to your potential funders (National Mentoring Partnership, 2005).

There are two main types of evaluations: process evaluations and outcome evaluations. Each can provide valuable information about your program's effectiveness and is useful for different purposes.

Process Evaluations focus on whether or not a program is being implemented as intended (Rhodes, 2005). Another name for process evaluation is formative evaluation. Process evaluation is conducted to provide program staff with evaluative information useful in improving the program. It is an ongoing process designed to consistently measure whether you are achieving what you planned to achieve in your mentoring program. A process evaluation might use program records, interviews and surveys (Rhodes) to help you answer questions such as the following:

• Are we making the number of mentor matches we planned?

• Are we maintaining the length of our matches?

• How many matches have we terminated?

• How many meetings have we conducted (Rhodes)?

• From how many agencies/schools are we receiving referrals?

Each measurement in a process evaluation tells you how well your actions are assisting you in accomplishing your program's goals. Process evaluations also help you gather the type of information that other programs find useful in replicating your mentoring program.

Outcome Evaluations focus on how the program affects its constituents. Outcome evaluation is also known as summative evaluation. In summative evaluation, you measure the outcomes for program participants as a result of the activities in your program. Outcome evaluation is the standard method to provide accountability to funders and constituents. Given the growing importance of outcome evaluation, the rest of the chapter is devoted to this topic.

Most mentoring programs focus their outcome evaluations on the following areas:

• Drug use/drinking/smoking rates

• Fighting/Bullying

• Self-Esteem

- Academic performance

- Career/ college placement

- Pregnancy rates

- School attendance

- Attitudes towards peers/parents

- Gang activity

- Recidivism

(Adapted from National Mentoring Center, 2005)

Mentoring programs for youth with disabilities may be interested in measuring impact in other areas in addition to the ones listed above. Some outcomes that Partners for Youth with Disabilities measures in its mentoring programs for youth with disabilities include increased self-advocacy, increased disability pride, and increased participation in community activities. Other outcomes for mentoring programs for youth with disabilities may include the following:

- Independent living skills

- Optimism regarding his/her future

- Understanding of necessary accommodations and ability to ask for accommodations

- Skills related to communicating with health care providers

- Motivation for higher education and/or training programs

- Technology skills

- Understanding of his/her assistive technology needs

- Understanding of disability rights, including the Americans with Disabilities Act

- Participation in the Individualized Education Plan process

- Knowledge and use of accessible transportation

- Citizenship, such as being registered to vote

- Relationship with peers

- Participation in community or recreational activities

- Career development skills

Not all desired outcomes can be expected to be achieved at the

same time. According to Campbell & Stanley (1963), there is a logical sequence of outcomes.

Short-term outcomes occur relatively soon and often focus on the knowledge, attitude and skills gained by participants. Examples include the following:

• an increase in knowledge after adult volunteers attend a mentor training

• an increase in computer skills after a youth participant attends a technology training

Intermediate outcomes take longer and may include behavior change and policy change. Examples include the following:

• an increase in a youth's community involvement after being involved in a mentoring program

• an improvement in a youth's grades after being involved in a mentoring program

Long-term outcomes can take years to achieve and may include societal shifts. Examples include the following:

• a decrease in the high school drop-out rate among youth with disabilities

• an increase in public transportation usage among young adults with disabilities

Evaluation Design

Evaluations can range from simply asking mentors and mentees about their experiences to complex large-scale experimental designs (Rhodes, 2005). The type of evaluation design you choose will depend greatly on the questions you ask and your available time and resources. The best course of action is to develop the most sophisticated design to provide you with the most meaningful and accurate information about your program (Juvenile Mentoring Program, 1998) and its impact on participants.

Learning about different types of evaluation designs will help you determine which is best for your program to adopt. Below are descriptions about types of

outcome evaluation designs adapted from Campbell & Stanley (1963):

Pre-Experimental Designs

Pre-experimental designs are used frequently in program evaluation but they provide you with very little information about whether it was your mentoring program that caused the observed outcomes in participants. Some examples of pre-experimental designs include the following:

• **Post-Test-Only Design or One Shot Case Study Design** involves measuring one group of people after the program ends. This is easy to design and implement, but provides very limited information. Evaluation should involve a comparison. Without having information about the group prior to their participation in the program, it is difficult to determine if change occurred. While this is usually the least helpful type of evaluation, some programs with limited resources choose this route due to its simplicity.

• **The One Group Pretest-Postest Design** involves comparing the same group of people at two stages in the program, usually before and after the intervention takes place. This type of design is fairly easy to design and implement. However, it is difficult to determine if the program caused the change. For example, in the case of a mentoring program, if a youth's behavior changes during his/her participation in the mentoring program, other factors such as home life, friends and school cannot be ruled out as influencing the youth's behavior.

• **The Static Group Comparison Design** compares two pre-existing groups, one participating in the mentoring program and one that is not. Because participants are not randomized into different groups, there is no way to tell whether the two groups would have been the same were it not for the mentoring program.

Experimental Designs

Experimental designs are the most highly recommended methods to use in outcome evaluations. The following are examples of experimental designs:

• **The Pretest-Posttest Control Group Design** entails the random assignment of participants into a mentoring group or a control group (one that does not receive mentoring). The groups are compared both before and after the mentoring program.

• **The Posttest-Only Control Group Design** is also a strong design and is more economical than the Pretest-Posttest Control Group Design. In this design, participants are also randomly assigned to a mentoring group or to a control group (one that does not receive mentoring). However, the groups are compared only after the mentoring program because randomization assumes the groups were equal at the beginning of the program. If you find that the mentoring group resulted in significant positive changes for that group, then it would be ethical to offer the mentoring program to the control group.

Methods to Collect Information

There are many ways in which you can collect data, including surveys, standardized measures, observations, documentation review, focus groups, and interviews. Each method has strengths and limitations. Often, a combination of methods will be used to get the most complete assessment of the program's impact and effectiveness.

• **Surveys**. Surveys are a relatively simple way to gather information from a large number of individuals. They are usually relatively inexpensive to create and disseminate and allow you to gather an extensive amount of data. The downside is that the return rate for surveys can be low and surveys do not allow you to get a complete picture of an individual's experiences. Have alternate formats of the surveys available to ensure all participants can complete the surveys. Assure that the reading level of the surveys is appropriate for the participants. Having surveys available electronically can cut down on the cost of mailing, as well as help with the creation of alternate formats.

• **Standardized Measures.** There are a number of already developed and standardized questionnaires that measure outcomes important to mentoring programs such as self-esteem, attitudes, independent living skills, and peer relationships. These measures have the same cautions and disadvantages as surveys.

• **Observations**. Observations allow you to see the program as it is actually happening. However, categorizing behaviors that are observed may be a complex process.

• **Documentation Review**. Documentation review allows you to view the operations of a program without being intrusive to the program. This method can provide a historical viewpoint of the program, but can be time consuming.

• **Focus Groups**. Focus groups allow you to get in depth information from participants about their experience in the program through group discussion. It is important to have a skilled facilitator to lead the focus groups, as well as a skilled individual to analyze the responses qualitatively.

• **Interviews**. Interviews can provide in depth information about an individual's experience in the program and can help you develop a relationship with the participant. However, interviews can be time consuming and costly.

You can gather data using one method or combine methods for a more complete picture.

For example, surveys can be collected from a large group of participants and then a smaller group of participants can be involved in a focus group.

Keep the following in mind regarding data collection:

• Any time another individual is present during the collection method (interview, focus groups, observations), that person's presence can influence the participant. Always use a skilled facilitator/interviewer when using these methods.

• Always get "informed consent" when you are gathering personal information your from an individual. Informed consent means that the individual understands that he/she is agreeing to participate in an evaluation and is knowledgeable about how their personal information will (and will not) be used. If an individual is not able to give their informed consent, their legal guardian can do so.

• An individual should be informed that they have the right to not participate in the evaluation of the project.

• When using interviews, do not interview a mentee and mentor together. This may result in either pair not being honest in an effort to impress the other or not hurt the other's feelings.

• Have the appropriate accommodations in place so that you may collect data/information from any youth or mentor.

*"My partner David is like a friend; we have a lot in common. David has shown me that having a learning disability doesn't mean you can't do things. Building a train village, repairing my bike, and going on canoe trips are some of the fun times we've had together. When I'm feeling frustrated about school, I talk to David. He tells me that he felt that way too when he was growing up. Seeing what David has accomplished in his life helps me believe in my future." **- Partners for Youth with Disabilities' mentee***

Protecting the Rights and Welfare of all Participants Involved in Research

When evaluating your mentoring program, it's important to determine if evaluation will be considered research and has to adhere to regulations that protect participants involved in the research.

The Federal Government mandates certain legal standards for protection of humans in research. These standards are set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45 CFR Part 46 (see http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm <http://cme.cancer.gov/c01/redirect.php?url=http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm>). Subpart A, the basic policy for protection of human research subjects, is referred to as the Common Rule. The regulations were enacted in 1991 and apply to all federally funded human research. Once a research activity is deemed human subject research, the Department of Health and Human Services requires review by Institutional Review Boards and imposition of certain standards for informed consent (National Cancer Institute, 2005).

Even if your program evaluation does not fall under these regulations, it is important that your participants feel that the information they share as part of the evaluation process is kept confidential. Most programs use a coded system to protect the identity of the participants. Participants are much more comfortable sharing personal information for evaluation purposes if they understand the process you have in place to keep their information confidential.

Process Evaluation: Developing a Logic Model

A good place to start your evaluation process is to develop a Logic Model. According to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide (2004, p. III), "the purpose of a logic model is to link outcomes (both short- and long-term) with program activities/processes and the theoretical assumptions/principles of the program."

The Logic Model is used to assess whether you have achieved your outcomes in the program and to describe clearly the project actions and the impact of those actions. The Logic Model contains six components with Inputs ò Outputs ò Outcomes being central to the model. These components are (1) Situation - the

context and need that gives rise to a program or initiative; the logic model is built in response to this existing situation; (2) **INPUTS** - the resources, contributions and investments that are made in response to the situation. Inputs lead to (3) **OUTPUTS** – the activities, products, methods, services that reach people and users. Outputs lead to (4) **OUTCOMES** – the results and benefits for individuals, groups, agencies, communities and/or systems; (5) Environment – the surrounding environment in which the program exists and which influences the implementation and success of the initiative, including politics, climate, socioeconomic factors, market forces, etc.; and (6) Assumptions – the beliefs we have about the program, the participants and the way we expect the program to operate; the principles that guide our work (Baker, Davis, Gallerani, Sanchez, & Viadro, 2000).

With frequent review and revision, the Logic Model provides us a process of evaluation and continuous learning. The Logic Model enables us to show the difference between what we do and the impact we are having. It also provides a common program evaluation vocabulary and focus on quality and continuous improvement through the assessment of short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes (Baker et al., 2000).

"Being a mentor is very important to me. I can well remember the isolation I felt growing up in regards to my disability. Usually, if I heard about or met someone with a disability, it was in a negative context—that unfortunate or pitiable person. I feel it is essential to present kids with more encouragement than that! But, philosophy aside, my mentee is important to me because we are friends. We enjoy each other's company and have fun when we get together. I know that I am a part of her life, and she most certainly is an asset to mine." - PYD mentor

The model displays the chain of events that will effect changes and achieve the vision of the program. These are often stated in if-then relationships (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). In the Logic Model, you clearly describe the context of your mentoring program, the resources available in response to the situation, and the activities and methods used. Then you describe and evaluate short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes at the level of the youth participant, families, mentors and the system of collaborating agencies.

The formative and summative evaluation process contained in the Logic Model enables both continuous quality improvement of your mentoring program and detailed information for understanding project outcomes and for future replication. The model recognizes that many factors influence the outcomes (Baker et al., 2000).

The logic model also allows you to test theories related to your program. For more detailed information related to logic models, see W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Logic Model Development Guide (http://www.wkkf.org).

Definition and Example of the Three Key Elements of a Logic Model

Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes
Resources	**Activities**	**Benefits to Participants**
• Staff • Money • Volunteers • Supplies • Equipment Training • Curriculum	• Training • Education • Mentoring • Organizing • Shelter	• New knowledge • Changed attitudes • Improved skills • Modified behavior

(Adapted from United Way of America Outcome Measurement Resource Network, 1996)

Evaluation Tips and Resources for Mentoring Programs

Before you begin to develop your evaluation plan, you may want to explore some of these other resources about evaluating mentoring programs:

• Mentor/National Mentoring Partnership, http://www.mentoring.org

• Mentoring Canada, http://www.mentoringcanada.ca

• National Mentoring Center, http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/

• Evaluating Your Mentoring Program: A Beginner's Self-Evaluation Workbook for Mentoring Programs (2000), http://www.itiincorporated.com/sew_dl.htm

Here are some helpful tips as you begin to develop and implement your evaluation plan:

• When deciding which outcomes to measure, select the ones that are

✓ related to the impact you want to show
✓ ogically a result of your program
✓ important to your participants and your funders
✓ relatively easy to measure within your program's resources

• Surveys administered on site have the highest completion rates. If your program relies on program participants mailing surveys back, then your completion rate will drop significantly. Printing your surveys on green paper and doing a follow-up phone call will increase your return rate.

• When developing surveys, strive to keep them brief and measure only the outcomes in which you are interested. The longer and more complicated the survey, the greater the respondent burden-this will likely result in a lower response rate.

• Think about other tools to capture outcomes or measure progress, such as staff records or mentor diaries, which might capture participation in a certain activity.

Partners for Youth with Disabilities has been completing some type of program evaluation since its founding. While PYD is a small non-profit organization with limited resources, the benefit of completing a thorough program evaluation has always outweighed any costs or challenges. For more information regarding program evaluation, resources are included in the Resource section at the end of this guide.

Chapter 8: Using Mentoring to Promote Positive Employment & Post-Secondary Transitioning for Youth with Disabilities

In the Autumn 2003 edition of American Rehabilitation, Joanne Wilson, Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, commented that, "[Her] own experiences, research and the success of mentoring programs across the country demonstrate that mentoring is effective in helping youth with disabilities gain confidence, increase their academic performance and obtain experience in the workplace – all of which lead to increased opportunities to find meaningful employment and independence for these students." No matter what you choose as the short-term goals of your mentoring program, you should never overlook the long-term effects it may have on the youth with disabilities who benefit from it. Improved social skills and academic performance may be important to the youth you serve in the present, but, with proper training, mentors may help youth use these as initial steps to a fulfilling future. By providing information and training to your mentors, and by collaborating with local organizations and employers, your mentoring program can promote positive employment and post-secondary outcomes for the youth with disabilities it serves.

Follow the steps explained in this chapter to promote positive transitioning. The steps include the following:

• Understand the types of transition services your mentoring program can

provide.

• Become familiar with the transition needs of the youth in your mentoring program.

• Decide what specific kinds of transition services your program will provide.

• Identify the entities with which you will connect to offer transition services.

• Connect with the entities, including employers and federally funded programs, to provide transition services.

The first step in promoting positive transitioning is to understand the types of transition assistance you might provide. Table 1 shows elements necessary for successful youth transitioning to employment or post-secondary education.

"Despite the invaluable role and expertise of Vocational Rehabilitation agencies, they can't meet all the needs of this population (transition age youth). Recognizing this, RSA recently launched an initiative to connect students with disabilities with mentors who have similar disabilities and who possess the practical knowledge necessary to help students effectively transition to adulthood and overcome the attitudinal and environmental barriers that are so pervasive. Mentors will not only serve as valuable role models but will support students by assisting them with career and professional development, improving life skills and the disability specific techniques that will enhance independence, helping them to obtain their academic goals and providing students with encouragement and moral support" **- Joanne Wilson, Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services from 2001-2005, from the Autumn 2003 American Rehabilitation issue, "Mentoring and Transition."**

Table 1
Elements of Successful Transitioning

General Needs	Specific Needs
Access to Participation in High Quality Standards-Based Education Regardless of Setting	*In order to perform at optimal levels in education, all youth need* • academic and career-technical education offerings based on state and industry standards; • access to a varied and balanced set of learning strategies appropriate for the individual. *Youth with disabilities need* • individual transition plans that drive instruction and academic support; • specific and individual learning accommodations.
Preparatory Experiences	*In order to make informed choices about careers, all youth need* • career assessment including, but not limited to, interest inventories, and formal and informal vocational assessments; • information about career opportunities that provide a living wage, including information about education, entry requirements, and income potential; • training in job-seeking skills; • structured exposure to post-secondary education and other lifelong learning opportunities. *Youth with disabilities need* • information about the relationships between appropriate benefits planning and career choices; • identification of and access to disability-related support and accommodations needed for the workplace and community living; • instruction and guidance about communicating disability-related support and accommodation needs to prospective employers and service providers.
Work-Based Experiences	*In order to attain career goals, all youth need* • opportunities to engage in a range of work-based exploration activities such as site visits and job shadowing; • multiple on-the-job training experiences, including community service (paid or unpaid) that is specifically linked to the content of a program of study. *Youth with disabilities need* • instruction and guidance about requesting, locating, and securing appropriate supports and accommodation needed at the workplace.
Youth Development and Youth Leadership	*All youth need* • mentoring activities designed to establish strong

General Needs	Specific Needs
Opportunities	relationships with adults through formal and informal settings and also peer-to-peer mentoring opportunities; ▪ exposure to role models in a variety of contexts; ▪ training in skills such as self-advocacy and conflict resolution; ▪ exposure to personal leadership and youth development activities, including community service; ▪ opportunities to exercise leadership. *Youth with disabilities need* ▪ exposure to mentors and role models including persons with and without disabilities; ▪ training about disability issues and disability culture.
Support Services (Connecting Activities)	*All youth need* ▪ mental and physical health services; ▪ transportation; ▪ tutoring; ▪ post-program supports thorough structured arrangements in post-secondary institutions and adult service agencies; ▪ connection to other services and opportunities (e.g., recreation). *Youth with disabilities may need* ▪ appropriate assistive technologies; ▪ post-program supports such as independent living centers and other community-based support service agencies; ▪ personal assistance services, including readers and interpreters; ▪ benefits-planning counseling regarding the benefits available and their interrelationships so that individuals may maximize those benefits in transitioning from public assistance to self-sufficiency.

Note. From "Making the Connections: Growing and Supporting New Organizations: Intermediaries," by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth under Grant #E 9-4-10070 for the Office of Disability Employment Policy, October 2003.

After learning about the types of transition assistance your program might provide, you will need to become familiar with the youth you serve in order to gauge what kind(s) of transition assistance they require. It may be useful to utilize Tool 1 to collect information about your mentees.

Tool 1 Profile of Youth

	All	Attending High School	High School Dropout	High School Graduate	Attending Post-Secondary
Total youth population ages 14 – 25					

Characteristics					
Age:					
14 – 15					
16– 17					
18— 25					
Female					
Male					
Disability: by type of disability if known (add additional columns)					
Race/Ethnicity:					
Hispanic (only)					
American Indian/Alaskan Native (only)					
Asian (only)					
Black or African American (only)					
Hawaiian Native or other Pacific Islander (only)					
White (only)					
More than one race					
English Language Learner					
Single Parent					
Low Income					
Public Assistance Recipient					
SSI Recipient					

Note.   From "Making the Connections: Growing and Supporting New Organizations: Intermediaries," by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth under Grant #E 9-4-10070 for the Office of Disability Employment Policy, October 2003.

Now that you've assessed the needs of the youth you're serving, you should decide what types of transition assistance activities to provide. Remember that the primary goal is to train mentors so that they can assist youth with disabilities in achieving better employment outcomes and educational outcomes. Other suggested options include visiting your local One-Stop Center, creating internships, job shadowing and employment opportunities, and developing career building skills training for youth in your program. For many transition assistance activities, it will be necessary to connect with employers in your area. To ensure that employers are willing and helpful partners, you will need to understand their needs and know how to address their concerns. You may want to use the key strategies in Table 2 when working with employers to ensure that the results are satisfying to all concerned.

Table 2
Key Strategies for Working with Employers

Employer Needs	Key Strategies
Awareness of recruitment resources	- Connect with existing business and employer networks and job referral and placement organizations; - Market services through existing community forums (e.g., newsletters, job fairs, etc.); - Join business organizations; - Build and maintain networks of business and employer contacts through continuous dialogue; - Make direct contact with new employers.
Effective applicant screening	- Identify competencies needed for each job and industry; - Visit companies to identify needs; - Understand and adhere to typical company screening processes as closely as possible; - Know each youth's skills, interests, and aptitudes; - Match youth to employer needs and circumstances.
Applicants with technical skills	- Ensure youth are enrolled in updated and rigorous skills training programs; - Identify and address barriers to accessing training programs; - Match youth skills to job and task assignments.
Applicants with soft skills	- Encourage employers to support job shadowing and short-term internships as initial effort to expose youth to the workplace culture; - Prepare and support youth in soft skills (e.g., appropriate work behavior, language, dress, etc.); - Match youth with peer and adult mentors.
Convenient access to applicants	- Minimize red tape; - Coordinate employer outreach with other professionals; - Respond to employer outreach efforts.
Support for youth with disabilities	- Identify and address needed job accommodations; - Identify and address accessibility issues at workplaces; - Provide ongoing post-placement follow up with students and employers; - Prepare and support youth with disabilities to understand and manage job-related disability issues (e.g., disclosure, reasonable accommodation needs, etc.); - Conduct periodic disability and diversity awareness training for supervisors and co-workers.
Return on investment of time and resources	- Respect employers' time; - Keep meetings short and informative; - Ensure that both support services and youths' presence are benefits, not detriments, to employer operations.

Note. From "Making the Connections: Growing and Supporting New Organizations: Intermediaries," by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth under Grant #E 9-4-10070 for the Office of Disability Employment Policy, October 2003.

The next step is to identify the resources and entities in your locality and/or region with whom you will want to connect to provide youth with the transition services you decide to offer. Many of these entities are a part of the workforce development system. The following tables and tools will help you conduct a resource mapping exercise to locate the government-funded entities, non-profit organizations, employer organizations, and so forth, in your area that serve youth with disabilities.

Your list of principal players who provide youth transition services will probably include representatives from the following:
- Education, including vocational education, special education and post-secondary education
- Rehabilitation Agencies
- Mental Health Agencies
- Developmental Disability Agencies
- Child and Family Services
- State and local Workforce Investment Boards
- Social Security Administration
- Key business networks such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Business Leadership Network
- Economic Development Agencies

Although the information listed in the two tables below is general for all states, it should give you a broad overview of the all of the youth transition service providers. Table 3 shows the institutions and organizations that are a part of the workforce development system on the state level as well as key non-profit organizations that are involved in the delivery of workforce programs. Table 4 provides information about federal programs that are a part of the workforce development system.

Table 3
Parts of the Workforce Development System:
A Sampling of Educational, Workforce, and Support Services Organizations
Serving Youth Ages 14 to 25

INSTITUTIONS/ ORGANIZATIONS/	TYPE OF SERVICES	NATIONAL NUMBER
State Chartered		
High Schools	Secondary education.	21,994 secondary schools; 12,197 combined secondary and elementary schools
Comprehensive High Schools	Combined academic and vocational preparation.	15,005
Area Vocational-Technical (Voc-Tech) Centers	Preparation for specific trade and occupational areas.	1,816
Charter and Alternative High Schools	Varies by state law in terms of role and designation of purpose.	2,695 charter high schools; alternative schools unknown
Community Colleges	2 year associate degree programs, preparation for 4 year degree programs, specific continuing and adult education.	1,600 (including branch campuses)

INSTITUTIONS/ ORGANIZATIONS/	TYPE OF SERVICES	NATIONAL NUMBER
Public Four Year Colleges and Universities	Full range of degree granting programs.	612 public institutions, 4 year or higher
Cities, County Government, and Regional Development or Service Organizations sponsored by general units of government or school districts	These local units of government often provide direct services including workforce development.	Numbers of those that are directly involved in providing workforce development services vary by state.
Local Non-Profit Organizations or Private sector-led organizations		
Community Rehabilitation Programs	Employment services for people with disabilities.	8,100
Community-Based Organizations/Faith-Based Organizations	Employment services and/or human services, such as recreation and youth development activities. These may or may not be a part of a national network (e.g., Boys and Girls Clubs, National Urban League, Communities in Schools, etc.).	>10,000
Private Sector-led organizations (Chambers of Commerce, industry associations, apprenticeship programs, etc.)	Skill training, remediation, apprenticeships, etc.	Some 175-200 chambers and business organizations have been identified as active intermediaries though the number of chambers is much larger and many are involved in building a workforce development system
Federally Mandated Advisory and Governing Bodies		
Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs)	WIBs serve as governing bodies for WIA programs, and work on state and local workforce system. Private sector representatives hold the majority seats. Local boards are required to have Youth Councils; state boards have options for youth councils.	52 state 591 local
State Council on Developmental Disabilities	Governor appoints state board, which develops a state plan for services. Consumers and representatives of state agencies responsible for oversight of services make up the Council. The statewide services plan includes workforce preparation activities.	57
State Rehabilitation Council	Appointed by the governor, reviews, analyzes, and advises state rehabilitation agency about goals and priorities, effectiveness, and customer satisfaction. Annual reports to the governor and the commissioner required.	80
Statewide Independent Living Council	Appointed by the governor to develop, monitor, and evaluate state independent living plans.	55 states and territories

Table 4
Federally Supported
Parts of the Workforce Development System
Serving Youth Ages 14-25
Note: If an * appears it means the services are a part of the mandated One-Stop system.

AUTHORIZING ACT	TYPE OF SERVICES	AGES AND ELIGIBILITY	NATIONAL NUMBER
Department of Education			
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services			
Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title I	*Rehabilitation Agencies* State rehabilitation agencies responsible for statewide vocational rehabilitation programs. Services are provided to people with disabilities based on Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Transition service for youth is an allowable activity.	To be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, an individual must have a physical or mental impairment that results in a substantial impediment to employment; be able to benefit from receiving vocational rehabilitation services; and require vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain or regain employment. Age not specified.	Combined: 32 General: 24 Blind: 24 TOTAL: 80 **Note:** States have the option to have just one agency responsible for blind as well as all other persons with disabilities or to have two agencies.
Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, Title VII, Chapter 1, Part B	*Independent Living Centers* Independent Living Centers help people with disabilities maximize opportunities to live independently in the community. Centers can provide employment related support to individuals but actual training or education is typically not provided.	Centers set their own age requirements.	625 total ILCs, 336 of which are federally funded
Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, Title VI, Part B	*Supported Employment Programs* VR state agencies develop collaborative programs to provide supported employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities.	Individuals with most significant disabilities. Age not specified; for transition services, the regulations encourage agencies to work with students as early as possible.	Most of these programs are managed by non-profit community rehabilitation agencies – the estimated number is 8,100
Assistive Technology Act of 1998, sunsetting in fiscal year 2004	*Assistive Technology Centers* Centers provide information to children and adults with disabilities on increasing their use of standard, assistive, and information technologies and services.	Age not specified.	56
Office of Vocational and Adult Education			
Carl D. Perkins Vocational-Technical Education Act	*Career-Technical Education Programs* Funds can be used for a broad range	Individuals in secondary and postsecondary schools.	Education provided in either comprehensive

AUTHORIZING ACT	TYPE OF SERVICES	AGES AND ELIGIBILITY	NATIONAL NUMBER
Amendments of 1998, Title I	of programs, services, and activities designed to improve career–technical education programs and ensure access to students who are members of populations with special needs.	Age not specified but generally geared toward high school and community college students.	high schools (15,005) or area voc-tech centers (1,816)
Carl D. Perkins Vocational-Technical Education Act Amendments of 1998, Title II	*Tech-Prep Programs A sequenced program of study that combines at least two years of secondary and two years of post-secondary education. Occupational education or an apprenticeship program of at least two years following secondary instruction.	Beginning as early as the ninth year of school and can extend through two years of post-secondary.	Roughly 47% of the nation's high schools (or 7,400 high schools) offer one or more Tech Prep programs
Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Title II	*Adult Literacy Programs Provides basic education instruction through a variety of program settings (e.g., community colleges, high schools, alternative schools, community-based organizations, One-Stops, etc.).	Over the age of 16, not currently enrolled in school, who lack a high school diploma or the basic skills to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens.	5,263 Literacy Programs
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 1997, Part B and Part D, Subpart 1 authorizes Program Improvement grants to states	Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) Guaranteed right to free and appropriate education. IEPs are individualized plans to provide education for a young person including transition from school to positive adult outcomes.	Individuals are eligible for education services up to the age of 18 or through the age of 21 at the discretion of the state. Transitioning planning can begin at age 14 but must occur by age 16.	1,938,000 students between 14 and 21 received IDEA services in 2000-2001 school year
Department of Health and Human Services			
Administration for Children and Families			
Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) Title I is Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	*Required Work for Adults Provides assistance and work opportunities to needy families by granting states the federal funds and flexibility to develop and implement their own welfare programs. Work activities can include education and training, work experiences, and job search.	TANF serves needy families; income and asset limitations vary by state; some assistance can only go to families with minor children. TANF regulations define minor child as an individual who has not attained 18 years of age or has not attained 19 years of age and is a full-time student in a secondary school (or in the equivalent level of vocational or technical training).	FY 2001, the average monthly number of TANF families was 2,120,500 which included 787,000 child-only cases
Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act 1996	Support to Targeted Population The emphasis of the State Plan is to increase the self-determination, independence, productivity, inclusion and integration into the community of people with developmental	Services are for those who have a developmental disability. There is no age limitation on the services provided. Age is a factor in the	Total number of programs and services centered on workforce preparation and support services

AUTHORIZING ACT	TYPE OF SERVICES	AGES AND ELIGIBILITY	NATIONAL NUMBER
	disabilities.	diagnosis process.	unknown
Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 which enacted the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program	*Support to Targeted Populations* States assist youth in a successful transition to adulthood. Activities and programs include, but are not limited to, help with education, employment, financial management, housing, emotional support and assured connections to caring adults for older youth in foster care as well as youth who have aged out of foster care. Older youth (18-21) can receive housing assistance if needed.	State can serve youth who are likely to remain in foster care and those who have aged out of foster care up to 21 years of age.	There were 62,000 15- to 17-year-olds in foster care as reported in a March 2002 Census Brief to give a sense of population that is "aging out" of foster care
Community Action Agencies Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended	*Multiple Services through Centers* Community Services Block Grants create, coordinate, and deliver a broad array of programs and services. To assist individuals in securing and maintaining employment, community action agencies provide linkages to job training opportunities, GED preparation courses, and vocational education programs.	Programs and services are to low-income individuals.	State-administered local network composed of over 1,100 local agencies, predominantly community action agencies
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration			
Children's Health Action of 2000 Public Law 106-310; and the Public Health Services Act, as amended; Title V and several sections of that title.	*Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services* Grants and cooperative agreements for substance abuse treatment and prevention as well as mental health needs of regional and national significance.	For the substance abuse (alcohol and drugs) component, treatment, prevention and support to families and children are included in eligible services. For mental health services the regional and national significance priorities determine eligibility.	Estimated 600 grants awarded in fiscal years 2002 and 2003
Public Health Service Act, Title V, Part E, Section 561, as amended; Public Law 102-321; 42 U.S.C. 290ff.	*Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services for Children with Serious Emotional Disturbances Program* The program provides grants to states and communities for the improvement and expansion of community–based systems of care for children with serious emotional disturbances and their families. Individualized service plans dictate the range of services and can include non-mental health services including education, vocational counseling and rehabilitation, and	Under the age of 22.	Forty-four grants per year. Estimated nationwide 4.5-6.3 million children with serious emotional disturbances and their families

AUTHORIZING ACT	TYPE OF SERVICES	AGES AND ELIGIBILITY	NATIONAL NUMBER
	protection and advocacy.		
Public Health Service Act, Title XIX, Part B as amended, Public Law 1060310; 42	*Mental Health Services* Through block grants to states, a range of services can be provided through qualified community programs. Services include but are not limited to psychosocial rehabilitation programs, mental health peer support programs and primary consumer-directed programs.	Mental health condition determines eligibility.	59 grants
Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services			
Title XIX of the Social Security Act	*Insurance* Provides medical assistance through the Medicaid Program.	Individuals and families with low incomes and resources.	In FY 2003, 40.4 million were enrolled, 7.7 million of whom are blind/disabled
Social Security Title XXI, as part of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997	*State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)* Gives each state authorization to offer health insurance. Families who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid may be able to qualify for SCHIP.	Children up to age 19 who are not already insured.	For FY 2002, there were 5,315; 229 children enrolled in SCHIP, including both separate child health programs and Medicaid expansion programs
Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)			
Title V of the Social Security Act	*Healthy and Ready to Work* Promotes a comprehensive system of family-centered, culturally competent, community-based care for children with special health care needs who are approaching adulthood and may need assistance in making the transition from pediatric to adult health care and to post-secondary education and/or employment.	Mainly covers children up to 18 years but some projects serve youth older than 18.	A range of demonstration grants have been launched since 1996; currently there are five statewide projects being supported
Housing and Urban Development Department			
Office of Community Planning and Development			
National Affordable Housing Act Added through Section 164 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992 Title IV Subtitle D	**Youth Build Program* Youth Build grants are available to public or private non-profit agencies, public housing authorities, state and local governments, Indian tribes, or any organization eligible to provide education and employment training.	Non-profit organizations assist high-risk youth between the ages of 16-24 to learn housing construction job skills and to complete their high school education.	78 grants
Community Renewal Tax Relief Act of 2000	*Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities* Targets tax incentives, performance grants, and loans to designated low income areas to create jobs, expand	EZs and ECs are based on economic characteristics of a geographic area and services are not age specified.	Currently 105 designated urban and rural EZ/EC's

AUTHORIZING ACT	TYPE OF SERVICES	AGES AND ELIGIBILITY	NATIONAL NUMBER
	business opportunities, and support people looking for work. Local units of governments are the eligible applicants.		
McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, reauthorized January 2002	*Emergency Shelter Grant Program* Provides homeless persons with basic shelter and essential support. Can assist with the operational costs of the shelter facility. Grants are to eligible jurisdictions, including states, territories, and qualified metropolitan cities and urban counties.	Age not specified.	In FY 2001, there were 366 grantees
Department of Justice			
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention			
Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act of 1974 (Pub. L. 93-415, 42 U.S.C. 5601 et seq.) and subsequent amendments	*Services to Adjudicated Youth* Grants program funds collaborative, community-based delinquency prevention efforts. Provides communities with funding and a guiding framework for developing and implementing comprehensive juvenile delinquency prevention plans.	States define the ages for adjudication purposes.	Currently 53 funded programs
AUTHORIZING ACT	**TYPE OF SERVICES**	**AGES AND ELIGIBILITY**	**NATIONAL NUMBER**
Department of Labor			
Employment and Training Administration			
Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Title I	*One-Stop Centers* A system under which entities responsible for administering separate workforce investment, educational, and other human resource development programs collaborate to create a seamless system of service delivery**.** Note * for mandated partners of the Centers.	Universal service at One-Stop for job search activities. For more intensive services, including training, older youth ages 18-21 may be co-enrolled as youth and adults. The next section (Youth Service Programs) provides details of eligibility.	1,978 comprehensive One-Stop centers and 7,535 satellite offices
Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Title I, B for formula grants and Title IV Subtitle D for nationally managed programs.	*Youth Service Programs* The formula grant program services are determined by and contracted for by the WIBs. The federal government manages the Youth Opportunity Programs, Migrant & Seasonal Farm worker and Native American programs.	Ages 14-21. Eligible youth are low income and one or more of the following: deficient in basic literacy skills; a high school dropout; homeless; a runaway; or a foster child; pregnant or a parent; an offender; an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment.	The numbers vary by program because local communities make decisions about how many and what type of services will be provided through formula grant funds

131

AUTHORIZING ACT	TYPE OF SERVICES	AGES AND ELIGIBILITY	NATIONAL NUMBER
Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Title I, C	*Residentially-Based Education and Training Programs* Job Corps is a federally administered program that provides academic and occupational training in a residential setting.	Same income and deficit eligibility criteria as for Youth Service Programs but ages range from 14-24 and there is no upper age limit for an otherwise eligible individual with a disability.	118 centers nationwide
The Wagner-Peyser Act as amended by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Title III, Subtitle A	*Employment Service Offices* Has listings of available jobs and provides a range of services to job seekers and employers. Also provides labor market information services.	The Employment Service provides universal service, available to all. Age not specified.	Employment Services are part of all One-Stops but there are additional offices in each state.
American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act of 1998, H-1B Technical Skills Training Grants	*Regional and Local Business Partnerships* Designed to help train U.S. workers in the high technology skills that the industry needs thereby reducing the need to import workers from abroad.	Organizations must partner and apply to the Department of Labor. The grants are either issued to a business partnership or to a local workforce investment board and generally are aimed at adults.	89 grants
Social Security Act, Section 403a, as added by Section 5001 of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997	*Welfare-to-Work Services* State grants to provide community or work experiences, job creation, on-the-job training, job retention or support services, vocational education or job training for a maximum of 6 months, or contracted services for job readiness, job placement or post-employment services.	Welfare recipients who have received benefits for at least 30 months or who are within 12 months of becoming ineligible for benefits due to a durational limit.	189 grants to Workforce Investment Boards and community organizations have been issued in three rounds of competitions.
Trade Act of 1974, Title II, Chapter 2	*Trade Adjustment Assistance* Assistance may include re-employment services, job search allowances, relocation allowances, funding for training, or readjustment allowances for eligible workers who have exhausted unemployment insurance or who are in training.	Workers who are significantly harmed by U.S. trade policies, i.e., by losing their jobs or having less work. Workers must apply for benefits within 12 months after being laid off or within 6 months after completing approved training.	68,568 individuals were served from July 1, 2002 through June 30, 2003
United States Code, Title 38, Chapter 41	*Disabled Veterans Readjustment Benefits* These benefits include job counseling, training and job placement.	Disabled veterans who are entitled to compensation or were released from active duty due to a service-related disability; spouses of persons who were totally disabled or died of a service-connected disability; or spouses of any	In Program Year 1999, 428,687 veterans registered for service from the local veteran employment representatives stationed at

AUTHORIZING ACT	TYPE OF SERVICES	AGES AND ELIGIBILITY	NATIONAL NUMBER
		active duty member of the Armed Forces who is missing in action, captured by hostile forces, or detained by a foreign government in the line of duty.	employment service offices and One-Stops; of that number, 39,986 were disabled veterans
Corporation for National and Community Service			
National and Community Service Act of 1990 as amended, 42 U.S.C. 12571-12595	*Service and Conservation Corps* State and local programs that engage primarily youth and young adults in full-time community service, training and educational activities.	Youth and young adults ages 16-25; eligibility depends on source of funding and local decisions.	118 Corps operate in multiple communities across 31 states and the District of Columbia; In 2002 over 24,000 enrolled young people provided their communities with 18.3 million hours of service in year-round and summer programs
Social Security Administration			
Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999	*Training for Social Security Disability Eligible Individuals* Establishes approved providers called Employment Networks (ENs). ENs can fund vocational rehabilitation, employment, or support services to help an individual go to work. The program is being rolled out in three phases across the country with the last phase available in late 2003.	An individual must be receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and must have a disability for which medical improvement is not expected or possible; the individual must live in a state where Tickets are available.	1000 Employment Networks recognized as of October 2003

Note. From "Making the Connections: Growing and Supporting New Organizations: Intermediaries," by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth under Grant #E 9-4-10070 for the Office of Disability Employment Policy, October 2003.

After using the above information to help you identify where to look for potential resources and partners, you may want to use the two tools below to gather specific information about the youth transition service providers in your area. Tool 2 may be used for agencies and organizations, while Tool 3 is to be used for employer organizations or networks.

Tool 2 Principal Players Designation
Complete one for each agency or organization

1. Program Name:

2. Contact Information:

3. Program Authority (e.g., federal or state legislation or executive order):

4. Program Purpose:

5. Eligibility Requirements/Target Population:

6. Funding Level:

7. Participant Level:

8. Key Participant Data (on youth with disabilities, outcomes related to purpose):

Note. From "Making the Connections: Growing and Supporting New Organizations: Intermediaries," by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth under Grant #E 9-4-10070 for the Office of Disability Employment Policy, October 2003.

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;">

Tool 3 Principal Players Designation
Complete one for each employer organization or network

1. Organization name:

2. Contact name:

3. Membership information: (number & type employers represented)

4. Organization's purpose(s):

5. Representation within the state: (statewide or in specific communities)

6. Workforce services provided to members:

7. Role in youth workforce development system: (indicate how it supports the system)

</div>

You will also find it helpful to disseminate information about free job transition services funded by the Office of Disability Employment Policy to your mentors, mentees and mentees' families. You will definitely want to become familiar with the Job Accommodations Network and the Employer Assistance Referral Network. Descriptions of both networks and the services they offer are excerpted from their brochures and are provided below.

Job Accommodations Network (JAN)
Your accommodation information resource

JAN is a comprehensive service providing accommodation information that can be used in the hiring, training, retention, and career advancement of people with disabilities.

Callers may receive any or all of the following:
- Individualized information for use in the workplace, job-training environment, or classroom.
- Information about the Americans with Disabilities Act and other disability-related employment legislation.
- Service and contact information on thousands of disability service organizations, facilities, and agencies.

Anyone may call JAN for information about job accommodations and the employability of people with disabilities.

Services are provided free of charge. JAN's consultants address questions regarding all disabilities, employment types, and business training environments. JAN preserves the confidentiality of communication between caller and consultant.

JAN's services may be accessed by calling the toll-free phone number (Voice/TTY): 1-800-JAN-7234

JAN may also be accessed on the following websites:
JAN Home Page: http://www.jan.wvu.edu
Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR): http://www.jan.wvu.edu/soar

Email: jan@jan.wvu.edu
Fax: 304-293-5407
Mail: P.O. Box 6080, WVU
Morgantown, WV 26506

Office hours: Calls are answered 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST, Monday through Thursday, and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Note. From Job Accommodations Network, by Office of Disability Employment Policy of the U. S. Department of Labor, contract #J-9-M-2-0022.

Employer Assistance Referral Network (EARN)

A free service for employers, EARN works to connect employers with job seekers who have disabilities. EARN connects employers to "linkage" agencies pre-qualified as having candidates who meet their job requirements, and it provides employers with resources and solutions within the full range of disability employment issues.

Employers connect with "linkage" agencies that have job-ready candidates with disabilities by the following process:
1. Employer contacts EARN via their toll-free number or website to enroll.
2. Employer posts job announcements with EARN.
3. EARN staff conducts research to identify agencies who have candidates meeting the employer's job requirements.
4. EARN staff refers employer to agencies with qualified candidates.
5. EARN maintains the employer's anonymity. The employer decides who to contact to further screen candidates and start the interviewing process.

Employers may contact EARN by calling the toll-free phone number: 1-866-327-6669, by accessing the website at http://www.EARNworks.com, or by emailing earn@earnworks.com.

Note. From The Employer Assistance & Recruiting Network, U. S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy, managed by Cherry Engineering Support Services, Inc.

Encourage employers in your area to use EARN's services to hire qualified personnel with disabilities.

Below are examples of successful programs that promote positive employment and post-secondary outcomes for youth with disabilities.

Example One: Partners for Youth with Disabilities, Inc.'s **Young Entrepreneurs Project** incorporates workshop-style learning and one-to-one mentoring to teach youth valuable transition-related skills. The Young Entrepreneurs Project collaborates with schools in the Boston Public Schools to teach business and entrepreneurship skills to youth with disabilities. Utilizing the national standards of the Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education, and a multimodal approach to learning, the Young Entrepreneurs Project ensures that they are teaching age-appropriate skills that will benefit youth as they transition out of high school. The one-to-one mentoring component pairs youth participants with adults in the business world who can assist youth with business plans, college applications, job applications and provide work-related opportunities such as job shadowing.

Example Two: D.C. Public Charter School Cooperative's **Apprentice Mentor Project** is a group mentoring project that matches caring

adults with high school "apprentices" with disabilities in grades 10-12. Mentors are working professionals who meet face-to-face with apprentices to participate in mentoring activities, including job-shadowing, interactive skills-development workshops; hands-on community service projects; and field outings to local businesses and community organizations. Via email and in person, mentors offer apprentices personal and academic support, guidance in the career and exploration process, and assistance in setting goals aimed at achieving independence after high school.

Example Three: VA Business Leadership Network, VA Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research & Training Center, and Richmond Youth Workforce Investment Networks

Mentoring Matters is a work-based mentoring program for junior and senior high school students and college students. The goal of the program is to improve employment outcomes for youth with disabilties by matching them with career mentors for job shadowing, career exploration, and job placement assistance.

Resource List

Disability Resources

American Association of People with Disabilities
1629 K Street NW, Suite 503 Washington, DC 20006
202-457-0046 (V/TTY)
800-840-8844 (Toll Free V/TTY)
http://www.aapd-dc.org

Institute for Community Inclusion
UMass Boston100 Morrissey Blvd .Boston, Massachusetts 02125
Voice:(617) 287-4300
Fax: (617) 287-4352TTY: (617) 287-4350
Email: ici@umb.eduwww.communityinclusion.org

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition
Institute on Community Integration
University of Minnesota
6 Pattee Hall150 Pillsbury Drive SE Minneapolis MN 55455
ncset@umn.edu612-624-2097
(phone)612-624-9344
(fax) www.ncset.org

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth
NCWD/Youth, c/o Institute for Educational Leadership
4455 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 310, Washington, DC 20008
Telephone: 1-877-871-0744 (Toll Free)
TTY: 877-871-0665 (Toll Free)
www.ncwd-youth.info

National Council on Disability
1331 F Street NW Suite 850 Washington DC 20004
Voice: 202-272-2004
TTY: 202-272-2074
www.ncd.org

National Organization on Disability
910 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Suite 600, Washington, DC 20006
Phone: (202) 293-5960
Fax: (202) 293-7999

TTY: (202) 293-5968www.nod.org

The Pacer Center
8161 Normandale Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55437
Voice: (952) 838-9000
TTY: (952) 838-0190
Toll-free in Greater Minnesota: (800) 537-2237
Fax: (952) 838-0199
www.pacer.org

President George W. Bush's New Freedom Initiative
disabilityinfo.gov

U.S. Department of Labor, Office on Disability Employment Policy
Frances Perkins Building 200 Constitution Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20210
Voice: 1-866-633-7365
TTY:1-877-889-5627
Fax:1-202-693-7888
www.dol.gov/odep

Youth to Work Coalition Phone: 612-624-5659www.ncset.org/youthtowork

Evaluation Resources

Mentoring Canada
c/o Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada 3228 South Service Road, Suite
113EBurlington, ON L7N 3H9
Phone: (800) 263-9133
Fax: (905) 639-0124
www.mentoringcanada.ca

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth
NCWD/Youth | c/o Institute for Educational Leadership
4455 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 310, Washington, DC 20008
Telephone: 1-877-871-0744
(Toll Free)TTY: 877-871-0665
(Toll Free), www.ncwd-youth.info

National Mentoring Center Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory101 S.
W. Main Street, Suite 500 Portland, OR 97204
Phone: 1-800-547-6339 x 135

www.nwrel.org/mentoring

Mentor/National Mentoring Partnership
1600 Duke Street, Suite 300 Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 703-224-2200
www.mentoring.org

United Way of America
701 North Fairfax Street Alexandra, VA 22314
Phone: 703-836-7100
http://national.unitedway.org/outcomes/index.cfm

Funding Resources

Associated Grant Makers
55 Court Street, Suite 520 Boston, MA 02108
Phone: 617.426.2606
Fax: 617.426.2849
agm@agmconnect.org

The Chronicle of Philanthropy
www.philathropy.com

The Foundation Center
79 Fifth Avenue/16th Street New York, NY 10003
Phone: 212-620-4230
www.fdncenter.org

The Grantsmanship Center
P.O. Box 17220Los Angeles, CA 90017
Phone: 212-482-9860
www.tgci.com

Mentoring Resources

National Mentoring Youth with Disabilities Initiative Partners for Youth with Disabilities, Inc.
95 Berkeley Street, Suite 109 Boston, MA 02116
Phone: 617-556-4075
www.pyd.org

America's Promise: The Alliance for Youth
909 N. Washington Street Suite 400 Alexandria, VA 22314-1556
Phone: 703-684-4500
www.americaspromise.org

Mentoring Canada
c/o Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada
3228 South Service Road, Suite 113 E Burlington, ON L7N 3H9
Phone: (800) 263-9133
Fax: (905) 639-0124
www.mentoringcanada.ca

Mentor/National Mentoring Partnership
1600 Duke Street, Suite 300 Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 703-224-2200
www.mentoring.org

National Mentoring Center
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory101 S. W. Main Street, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204
Phone: 1-800-547-6339 x 135
www.nwrel.org/mentoring

The Mentoring Group
13560 Mesa Drive Grass Valley, CA 95949
Phone: 530.268.1146
Fax: 530.268.3636
Email: info@mentoringgroup.com
www.mentoringgroup.com

Online Mentoring Programs for Youth with Disabilities

Partners Online
95 Berkeley Street, Suite 109 Boston, MA 02116
Phone: 617-556-4075
https://pol.pyd.org

Career Journeys
Oregon Health & Science University's Center for Self-Determination (CSD)
3181 SW Sam Jackson Park Road, L 106 Portland, Oregon 97239
Contact: Jo-Ann Sowers, Ph.D. and Clover Mow

Phone: 503-725-9610www.careerjourneys.org

Connecting to Success: Mentoring Through Technology to Promote Student Achievement.
National Center on Secondary Education and Transition University of Minnesota
Phone: 612-624-2097
http://www.ici.umn.edu/ementoring

Department of Defense E-Mentoring Program for College Students with Disabilities
Worforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities Office of the Deputy Secretary of Defense (Equal Opportunity)
Contact: Diane Levesque, Administrative Coordinator
Phone: 703-697-7851
Email: diane.levesque.ctr@osd.mil

DO-IT : Disabilities Opportunities Internetworking & Technology
Do-IT Pals Program University of Washington Box 355670 Seattle, WA 98195-5670
Director: Sheryl Burgstahler, Ph.D.
Phone: 206-543-0622
Email: sherylb@u.washington.edu
www.washington.edu/doit

Universal Design Resources
Adaptive Environments
374 Congress Street, Suite 301 Boston, MA 02210
Phone: 617-695-1225 (TTY)
www.AdaptiveEnvironments.org

CAST
A non-profit organization that works to expand learning opportunities for all individuals, especially those with disabilities.
http://www.cast.org

World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)
The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) develops interoperable technologies (specifications, guidelines, software, and tools) to lead the Web to its full potential. W3C is a forum for information, commerce, communication, and collective understanding.

Access the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines at:
http://www.w3.org/WAI/QuickTips and http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG

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The significance of mentoring:

"It has been said that 'a mentor affects eternity; he or she can never tell where their influence stops.'Mentoring takes on special meaning and special challenges when it comes to working with children with disabilities. Old attitudes about disability need to be set aside. The challenge is to help the child with a disability understand that fact—and to help family, friends and those in the community recognize it as well. The opportunity for a mentor is to open the world of health and learning, activity and engagement to a child with a disability. A mentor can help children with disabilities learn that their world of opportunities is no more narrow than it is for other children. And that world of opportunities includes the opportunity to be active and stay healthy.

The 'I Can Do It, You Can Do It!' Program created by the Office on Disability of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is a model of mentoring for children with disabilities that emphasizes physical fitness for a lifetime. It is based on the recognition that disability is not illness or inability. Disability is simply another way of living. To stay healthy for a lifetime, children with disabilities can take charge of their health through increased physical activities, through sports, throughout their lifetimes. We can preach that lesson; we can teach that lesson. However, the way that knowledge is best imparted to a child is when a mentor comes into the picture. Whether a man or woman, an adult with or without a disability, the mentor serves as a role model, a friend, a listener, and advisor. Through that role, the lesson of the need for physical exercise and activity can be taught readily and well.

Mentoring is a commitment, but it's a commitment that helps build better childhoods in the short-term, and in the long term, promotes better, longer, and healthier lives for people with disabilities.

As one of the Participating Organizations working closely with the Office on Disability in the implementation of this Initiative, we congratulate Partners for Youth with Disabilities for their outstanding record as a premier Mentoring Program."

Margaret J. Giannini, MD, FAAP

Director, Office on Disability U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

September 15, 2005