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Vulnerable Youth: Federal Mentoring Programs and Issues

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Summary

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

Approximately 2.5 million youth today are involved in formal mentoring relationships through Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) of America and similar organizations. Contemporary mentoring programs seek to improve outcomes and reduce risks among vulnerable youth by providing positive role models who regularly meet with the youth in community or school settings. Some programs have broad youth development goals while others focus more narrowly on a particular outcome. Evaluations of the BBBS program and studies of other mentoring programs demonstrate an association between mentoring and some positive outcomes, but the effects of mentoring on particular outcomes and the ability for mentored youth to sustain gains over time are less certain.

The federal government provides funding for mentoring primarily through a grant program to the Department of Justice (DOJ), with annual appropriations for the program of about \$78 million to \$90 million in recent years. This funding is used for research and direct mentoring services to select populations of youth, such as those involved or at risk of being involved in the juvenile justice system. Other federal agencies provide or are authorized to support mentoring as one aspect of a larger program. For example, select programs carried out by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) can provide mentoring, among other services. Youth ChalleNGe, an educational and leadership program for at-risk youth administered by the Department of Defense (DOD), includes mentoring as an aspect of its program. Federal agencies also coordinate on federal mentoring issues. The Federal Mentoring Council has served as a clearinghouse on mentoring issues for the federal government, though it has been inactive in recent years.

Two other federal programs—the Mentoring Children of Prisoners (MCP) program and Safe and Drug Free Schools (SDFS) Mentoring program—provided a significant source of federal funding for mentoring services. However, the programs were short-lived: funding for the MCP program was discontinued beginning with FY2011 and funding for the SDFS program was discontinued beginning with FY2010. The Mentoring Children of Prisoners program was created in response to the growing number of children under age 18 with at least one parent who is incarcerated in a federal or state correctional facility. The program was intended, in part, to reduce the chance that mentored youth would use drugs and skip school. Similarly, the SDFS Mentoring program provided school-based mentoring to reduce school dropout and improve relationships for youth at risk of educational failure and with other risk factors. As part of its FY2010 budget justifications, the Obama Administration had proposed eliminating the program because of an evaluation showing that it did not have an impact on students overall in terms of interpersonal relationships, academic outcomes, and delinquent behaviors.

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

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Introduction

Since the mid-1990s, Congress has supported legislation to establish structured mentoring programs for the most vulnerable youth. The Department of Justice's Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP), the first such program, was implemented in 1994 to provide mentoring services for at-risk youth ages 5 to 20. The purpose of contemporary, structured mentoring programs is to reduce risks by supplementing (but not supplanting) a youth's relationship with his or her parents. Some of these programs have broad youth development goals while others focus more narrowly on a particular outcome such as reducing gang activity or substance abuse, or improving grades. Research has shown that mentoring programs have been associated with some positive youth outcomes, but that the long-term effects of mentoring on particular outcomes and the ability for mentored youth to sustain gains over time are less certain.

Although there is no single overarching policy today on mentoring, the federal government has supported multiple mentoring efforts for vulnerable youth since JUMP was discontinued in FY2003. In recent years, two mentoring programs—the Mentoring Children of Prisoners (MCP) program and Safe and Drug Free Schools (SDFS) Mentoring program—have provided a significant source of federal funding for mentoring services. However, the programs were short-lived: funding for the MCP program, carried out by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) since FY2003, was discontinued as of FY2011; and funding for the SDFS program, carried out by the Department of Education (ED) since FY2002, was discontinued as of FY2010.

The federal government currently funds mentoring efforts through short-term grants and initiatives. Many of these grants are carried out by the Department of Justice (DOJ), which has allocated funding for multiple mentoring programs, including mentoring for certain vulnerable youth and research on mentoring. In addition, the federal government has provided funding to programs with vulnerable youth that have a strong, but not exclusive, mentoring component. Youth ChalleNGe, an educational and leadership program for at-risk youth administered by the Department of Defense, helps to engage youth in work and school, and leadership opportunities. Adult mentors assist enrolled youth with their transition from the program for at least one year. Finally, federal agencies coordinate on mentoring issues. The Federal Mentoring Council was created in 2006 to address the ways agencies can combine resources and training and technical assistance to federally administered mentoring programs, and to serve as a clearinghouse on mentoring issues for the federal government. The council has been inactive in recent years but federal agencies, including the Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Justice, are collaborating to reconvene the council.¹

This report begins with an overview of the purpose of mentoring, including a brief discussion on research of structured mentoring programs. The report then describes the evolution of federal policies on mentoring since the early 1990s. The report provides an overview of the federal mentoring initiatives that are currently funded. Note that additional federal programs and policies authorize funding for mentoring activities, among multiple other activities and services.² These

¹ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and Justice, September 2015.

² The White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth, convened in 2003 to identify issues in coordinating federal youth policy, identified approximately 123 federally funded programs administered by 10 agencies with a mentoring component. These programs do not have mentoring as a primary focus. The task force's final report is available at http://www.mpmn.org/Resources/white_house_task_force.pdf.

programs are not discussed in this report. The report concludes with an overview of issues that may be of interest to Congress. These issues include the limitations of research on outcomes for mentored youth, the potential need for additional mentors, grantees' challenges in sustaining funding, and the possible discontinuation of federal mentoring funding. The **Appendix** includes a description of two federal mentoring programs that were funded until FY2010 and FY2011.

Overview and Purpose of Mentoring

Mentoring refers to a relationship between two or more individuals in which at least one of those individuals provides guidance to the other. In the context of this report, mentoring refers to the relationship between a youth and an adult who supports, guides, and assists the youth.³ Youth can receive mentoring through informal and formal relationships with adults. *Informal* relationships are those that develop from a young person's existing social network of teachers, coaches, and family friends. This report focuses on *formal* mentoring relationships for vulnerable youth. These relationships are cultivated through *structured* programs sponsored by youth-serving organizations, faith-based organizations, schools, and after-school programs. Volunteers in structured programs are recruited from communities, churches, and the workplace, and undergo an intensive screening process. Youth eligible for services through structured mentoring programs are often identified as at "high risk" of certain negative outcomes.⁴

The purpose of modern structured mentoring programs is to reduce risks by supplementing (but not replacing) a youth's relationship with his or her parents. Some programs have broad youth development goals, while others focus more narrowly on a particular outcome such as reducing gang activity or substance abuse, or improving grades. Structured mentoring programs are often *community based*, meaning that mentored youth and adults engage in community activities (e.g., going to the museum and the park, playing sports, playing a board game, and spending time together outside of work and school). Other programs are characterized as *school based* because they take place on school grounds or some other set location, like a community center. The co-location of mentoring programs in schools facilitates relationships with teachers, who can meet with mentors and refer youth to the programs.⁵ Mentors provide academic assistance and recreational opportunities and expose youth to opportunities that promote their cognitive and emotional development.

Origins of Contemporary Mentoring Programs

The origin of today's structured mentoring programs is credited to the efforts of charity groups that formed during the Progressive Movement of the early 1900s. These groups sought adult volunteers for vulnerable youth—defined at the time as youth who were poor or had become involved in the then nascent juvenile court system.⁶ These early organizations provided practical assistance to youth, including help with finding employment, and created recreational outlets. The

³ See U.S. General Accounting Office, *Student Mentoring Programs: Education's Monitoring and Information Sharing Could Be Improved*, GAO Report GAO-04-581 (Washington, June 2004), p. 6. (Hereinafter, Government Accountability Office, *Student Mentoring Programs*.) After this report was issued, the name of the General Accounting Office was changed to the Government Accountability Office.

⁴ For further discussion of risk factors and groups of at-risk youth, see CRS Report RL33975, *Vulnerable Youth: Background and Policies*, by (name redacted)

⁵ Government Accountability Office, *Student Mentoring Programs*, p. 6.

⁶ George L. Beiswinger, *One to One: The Story of the Big Brothers Big Sisters Movement in America*. (Philadelphia: Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, 1985), pp. 15-20.

most prominent mentoring organization at the time, Big Brothers (now known as Big Brothers Big Sisters of America), continues today as the oldest mentoring organization in the country.⁷

The contemporary youth mentoring movement began in the late 1980s with the support of foundations and corporations, including Fannie Mae, Commonwealth Fund, United Way of America, Chrysler, Procter & Gamble, and the National Urban League.⁸ In addition, nongovernmental organizations such as One to One in Philadelphia and Project RAISE in Baltimore were established by entrepreneurs seeking to expand mentoring services to vulnerable youth.

The federal government has supported structured mentoring programs and initiatives since the beginning of the contemporary mentoring movement. At that time, mentoring was becoming increasingly recognized by the government as a promising strategy to enrich the lives of youth, address the isolation of youth from adult contact, and provide one-to-one support for the most vulnerable youth, particularly those living in poverty.⁹ Among the first projects undertaken by the federal government was a youth mentoring initiative in the early 1990s implemented by the newly created Points of Light Foundation, a federally funded nonprofit organization that promotes volunteering.¹⁰ Then Secretary of Labor Elizabeth Dole made the case for mentoring as a way to improve the lives of youth and prepare them for the workforce.¹¹ Other early initiatives included the Juvenile Mentoring Program (see below). The federal government also signaled the importance of mentoring during the 1997 Presidents' Summit, which was convened by the living Presidents (at the time) to pledge their support for policies that assist youth. The Presidents and other national leaders called for adults to volunteer as mentors for over 2 million vulnerable youth.¹²

Characteristics of Successful Mentoring Programs

Studies of structured mentoring programs, including those that have received federal funding, indicate that the programs are most successful when they include a strong infrastructure and facilitate caring relationships. Infrastructure refers to a number of activities including identifying the youth population to be served and the activities to be undertaken, screening and training mentors, supporting and supervising mentoring relationships, collecting data on youth outcomes, and creating sustainability strategies.¹³ The mentor screening process provides programs with an opportunity to select those adults most likely to be successful as mentors by seeking volunteers

⁷ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, "OJJDP Helps Big Brothers Big Sisters Celebrate 100th Anniversary," *OJJDP News @ a Glance*, vol. 3, no. 3, May/June 2004, p. 1. (Hereinafter, U.S. Department of Justice, *Big Brothers Big Sisters*.)

⁸ Marc Freedman, *The Kindness of Strangers: Mentors, Urban Youth, and the New Volunteerism* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993), p. 5. (Hereinafter, Marc Freedman, *The Kindness of Strangers*.)

⁹ U.S. Department of Justice, "Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP) Guidelines," 59 *Federal Register* 3820, July 28, 1994.

¹⁰ Marc Freedman, *The Kindness of Strangers*, p. 4. The Points of Light Foundation is funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹² The Presidents' Summit on America's Future, *Remarks at the Presidents' Summit on America's Future*, http://clinton3.nara.gov/WH/New/Summit/Remarks_index.html.

¹³ Jean Baldwin Grossman, ed., *Contemporary Issues in Mentoring, Public/Private Ventures*, p. 6.; Mentor/National Mentoring Partnership, "Elements of Effective Practice in Mentoring," 4th ed., 2015; and Jean E. Rhodes and David L. DuBois, "Understanding and Facilitating the Youth Mentoring Movement," *Social Policy Report*, vol. 20, no. 3 (2006), pp. 8-11. (Hereinafter, Rhodes and DuBois, "Understanding and Facilitating the Youth Mentoring Movement.")

who can keep their time commitments and value the importance of trust. Further, these studies assert that orientation and training ensure youth and mentors share a common understanding of the adult's role and help mentors develop realistic expectations of what they can accomplish. Ongoing support and supervision of the matches assist mentored pairs in negotiating challenges. Staff can help the pairs maintain a relationship over the desired period (generally a year or more), and assist them in bringing the match to a close in a way that affirms the contributions to the relationship of both the mentor and youth. According to the studies, successful programs are known to employ strategies to retain the support of current funders and garner financial backing from new sources. Finally, the studies demonstrate that successful programs attempt to measure any effects of mentoring services on the participating youth. Programs can then disseminate these findings to potential funders and participants.

Characteristics of Successful Mentoring Relationships

Research on youth mentoring demonstrates that mentoring relationships are likely to promote positive outcomes for youth and avoid harm when they are close, consistent, and enduring.¹⁴ Closeness refers to a bond that forms between the youth and mentor, and has been found to have benefits for the youth. Mentor characteristics, such as prior experience in helping roles or occupations, an ability to appreciate salient socioeconomic and cultural influences, and a sense of efficacy for mentoring youth, appear to facilitate close mentoring relationships. Consistency refers to the amount of time mentors and youth spend together. Regular contact has been linked to positive youth outcomes, and relationships become strong if they last one year or longer. Youth in relationships that lasted less than six months showed declines in functioning relative to their non-mentored peers.

Evaluation of Mentoring Programs

A 2011 analysis assessed findings from 73 mentoring evaluations to determine the effectiveness of mentoring generally.¹⁵ The analysis reviewed evaluations, published between 1999 and 2010,¹⁶ of mentoring programs that were intended to promote positive youth outcomes through relationships between children and youth under age 18 and adults (or older youth) serving as mentors. The analysis encompasses programs that used various formats and strategies—including those that used paid mentors, older mentors, and group formats—and took place for a relatively brief period (e.g., a few months). Each of the evaluations included a comparison group of youth who were not mentored. In some programs, the youth were randomly assigned to participate in the comparison group, while in other programs the comparison group consisted of youth who did not participate in the mentoring program for some other reason, such as attending a school where the mentoring program was not offered.

The researchers found that overall, the programs resulted in modest gains for youth. According to the analysis, the programs tended to have positive effects on outcomes across various categories, including academics and education, attitudes and motivation, social skills and interpersonal

¹⁴ Jean E. Rhodes and David L. DuBois, "Understanding and Facilitating the Youth Mentoring Movement," p. 9.

¹⁵ David L. DuBois et al., "How Effective Are Mentoring Programs for Youth? A Systematic Assessment of the Evidence," *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, vol. 12, no. 2 (2011). (Hereinafter, DuBois et al., "How Effective Are Mentoring Programs for Youth? A Systematic Assessment of the Evidence.")

¹⁶ An earlier analysis assessed findings from 55 evaluations of youth mentoring programs that had been published through 1998. See David L. DuBois et al., "Effectiveness of Mentoring Programs: A Meta-Analytical Review," *American Journal of Community Psychology*, vol. 30, no. 2 (2002).

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

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

The Department of Justice is funding mentoring research as part of its mentoring program. Multiple evaluations are underway. For example, one study is evaluating a randomized controlled trial of paid mentors versus volunteer mentors or a control group. Another study is supporting research to disseminate evidence-based best practices for designing and delivering mentoring programs in various types of juvenile justice settings. A third study is evaluating a parent engagement model implemented by a Big Brothers Big Sisters chapter, which consists of the usual BBBS mentoring program plus a parent orientation training, a parent handbook, and enhanced match support and the opportunity to participate in family events.¹⁷

Examples of the Positive Effects of Mentoring

Some studies have shown strong gains for youth who are mentored. These studies use experimental design, meaning that some youth are randomly assigned to receive a mentor (the treatment group) and others are randomly selected to not receive mentoring (the control group). There is wide consensus that using randomized assignment allows researchers to best estimate the impact of an intervention such as mentoring. A notable study in 1995 of the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America program compared outcomes of eligible youth who were randomly selected to receive mentoring services. The study found that 18 months after the youth were assigned to their groups, the mentored youth skipped half as many days of school and were 46% less likely than their control group counterparts to use drugs, 27% less likely to initiate alcohol use, and almost one-third less likely to hit someone.¹⁸

A 2002 review of studies of major community-based programs (the 1995 Big Brothers Big Sisters evaluation and evaluations of Across Ages, Project BELONG, and Buddy System, among others)¹⁹ with an experimental design found that the outcomes for youth with a mentor were

¹⁷ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, March 2015.

¹⁸ Joseph P. Tierney and Jean Baldwin Grossman, with Nancy L. Resch, *Making A Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters*, Public/Private Ventures, reissued September 2000, http://www.seriousgiving.org/files/unitedstates/BBBS/111_publication.pdf.

¹⁹ These programs are a sampling of some of the programs profiled.

better than outcomes for their counterparts without a mentor.²⁰ These outcomes included the following:

- *Improved educational outcomes:* Youth in the year-long Across Ages mentoring program showed a gain of more than a week of class attendance. Evaluations of the program also showed that mentored youth had better attitudes toward school than non-mentored youth.
- *Reduction in some negative behaviors:* All studies that examined delinquency showed evidence of reducing some, but not all, of the tracked negative behaviors. Mentored youth in the BELONG program committed fewer misdemeanors and felonies. In the Buddy System program, youth with a prior history of criminal behavior were less likely to commit a major offense compared to their non-mentored counterparts with a prior history.
- *Improved social and emotional development:* Youth in the Across Ages program had significantly more positive attitudes toward the elderly, the future, and helping behaviors than non-mentored youth. Participants in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program felt that they trusted their parents more and communicated better with them, compared to their non-mentored peers.

Similarly, a 2007 study of Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring programs, with adults serving as mentors, demonstrated some positive results. This study—among the most rigorous scientific evaluations of a school-based mentoring program—found that mentored youth (randomly selected into the treatment group) made improvements in their first year in overall academic performance, feeling more competent about school, and skipping school, among other areas, compared to their non-mentored counterparts (randomly selected into the control group).²¹

Some Outcomes Do Not Improve or Are Short Lived

Although research has documented some benefits of mentoring, findings from studies of mentoring programs show that mentoring is limited in improving all youth outcomes. The 2002 review of mentoring program evaluations found that programs did not always make a strong improvement in grades and that some negative behaviors—stealing or damaging property within the last year—were unaffected by whether the youth was in a mentoring program.²² In the 2007 Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring evaluation, the nonschool related outcomes, including substance use and self-worth, did not improve.²³

Other research has indicated that mentored youth make small gains or do not sustain positive gains over time.²⁴ The 1995 Big Brothers Big Sisters study found that mentored youth and non-mentored youth showed decreased functioning over time, although those in the mentoring group declined more slowly than those in the non-mentoring group. Further, the 2007 Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring evaluation found that, in the second year of the program, none of

²⁰ Susan Jekielek et al., *Mentoring Programs and Youth Development: A Synthesis*, Child Trends, January 2002, <http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2002/08/mentorrrpt.pdf>. (Hereinafter, Jekielek et al., *Mentoring Programs and Youth Development*.)

²¹ Carla Herrera et al., *Making a Difference in Schools: The Big Brothers Big Sisters School-Based Mentoring Impact Study*, Public/Private Ventures, August 2007, pp. 34-35, <http://www.bigsister.org/bigsister/file/Making%20a%20Difference%20in%20Schools.pdf>. (Hereinafter, Carla Herrera et al., *Making a Difference in Schools*.)

²² Susan Jekielek et al., *Mentoring Programs and Youth Development*, p. 15.

²³ Carla Herrera et al., *Making a Difference in Schools*, pp. 37-38.

²⁴ Jean E. Rhodes and David L. DuBois, “Understanding and Facilitating the Youth Mentoring Movement,” pp. 3-5.

the academic gains were maintained (however, mentored youth were less likely to skip school, and more likely to feel that they would start and finish college).²⁵ The evaluation also pointed to weaknesses in the program's design, such as high attrition (due likely to the transitioning for some youth to middle school, or high school), limited contact with mentors and youth over the summer, and delays in beginning the program at the start of the school year.²⁶ A 2008 study of Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring that used high school students as mentors and drew on data used for the 2007 study, found that while the mentored students experienced gains on some outcomes, the improvements were not sustained for students who ended their involvement in the program after one school year (the minimum time commitment).²⁷ Similarly, an evaluation of the discontinued federal school-based mentoring program demonstrated that the program did not have an impact on students overall in terms of interpersonal relationships, academic outcomes, and delinquent behaviors.²⁸

The remainder of this report provides an overview of the federal role in mentoring and select federal programs, as well as a discussion of mentoring issues.

Department of Justice Mentoring Program

Overview

As noted above, the Department of Justice is the first federal agency to have funded a structured mentoring program. The 1992 amendments (P.L. 102-586) to the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) added Part G to the act, authorizing the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to establish a mentoring program, which came to be known as the Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP). The program was created in response to the perception that youth in high-crime areas would benefit from one-on-one adult relationships.²⁹ The objectives of JUMP were to reduce juvenile delinquent behavior and improve scholastic performance, with an emphasis on reducing school dropout. From FY1994 through FY2003, Congress appropriated a total of \$104 million (\$4 million to \$15.8 million each year) to the program.

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

²⁵ Carla Herrera et al., *Making a Difference in Schools*, pp. 47-78.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. iv-v.

²⁷ Carla Herrera et al., *High School Students as Mentors: Findings from the Big Brothers Big Sisters School-Based Mentoring Impact Study*, Public/Private Ventures, September 2008, http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_1149.pdf.

²⁸ Lawrence Bernstein et al., *Impact Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education's Student Mentoring Program Final Report*, Abt Associates, March 2009, <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20094047/>. (Hereinafter, Lawrence Bernstein et al., *Impact Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education's Student Mentoring Program Final Report*.)

²⁹ Sen. Frank R. Lautenberg, "Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Authorization Act," remarks in the Senate, *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 138 (October 7, 1992).

relatively small amount of funding appropriated for JUMP may have been a factor in its elimination. The report states: “In creating this block grant, the [Senate Judiciary] Committee has eliminated separate categorical programs under current law.... Funding for the Part E—State Challenge Activities and Part G—Mentoring Program received minimal funding.”³⁰ The report goes on to say that the committee does not discourage mentoring activities under the Part C block grant program.

After the JUMP program was discontinued with the end of FY2003, the Bush Administration requested funding for mentoring under Part C (Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Block Grant Program) and Part E (Developing, Testing, and Demonstrating Promising New Initiatives and Programs), which can fund mentoring demonstration projects.³¹ However, in the years since JUMP’s discontinuation, Congress has appropriated mentoring funds under a separate mentoring line item titled “Mentoring Part G” or “Mentoring”; the line item does not specify under which part of the JJDPA, as amended, the funding is authorized.³² Below is a discussion of funding appropriated to the Department of Justice for mentoring since JUMP was discontinued.

Funding

The JUMP Program ended in FY2003 and Congress resumed funding for DOJ mentoring in FY2005. Since this time, Congress has provided \$9.9 million to \$102.8 million annually for mentoring through a mentoring line item under the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention account. See **Table 1** below.³³

Table 1. FY2005-FY2015 Appropriated Funding for the Department of Justice Mentoring Program

(\$ in millions)

FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015
\$15.0	\$10.0	\$9.9	\$70.0	\$80.0	\$100.0	\$102.8	\$78.0	\$84.0	\$88.5	\$90.0

Source: Congressional budget submission for the Office of Justice Programs, FY2008-FY2011; FY2011 funding data is based on Department of Defense and Full Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 (P.L. 112-10); FY2012 is funding based on Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2012 (P.L. 112-55); FY2013 funding based on the Continuing and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013 (P.L. 113-6). Appropriations include rescissions where applicable, and the FY2013 appropriation includes the amount

³⁰ U.S. Congress, House Committee on Education and the Workforce, *Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 2001*, report to accompany H.R. 1900, 107th Cong., 1st sess. H.Rept. 107-203 (Washington: GPO, 2001), p. 31. An evaluation of JUMP found that the program did not recruit the desired number of mentors, that many of the relationships appeared to have ended prematurely, and that some youth outcomes did not improve. Nonetheless, the results of the evaluation do not appear to have been a factor in eliminating the program.

³¹ See, for example, U.S. Department of Justice, *2007 Congressional Authorization and Budget Submission*, p. 141.

³² See, for example, House Committee on Appropriations, *Making Appropriations for Science, the Departments of State, Justice, and Commerce, and Related Agencies for the Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2006, and for Other Purposes*, report to accompany H.R. 2862, 109th Cong., 2nd sess., CP-3 (Washington: GPO, 2006).

³³ The U.S. Department of Justice, through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, currently partners with MENTOR to create the National Mentoring Resource Center. The goal of this center is to improve the quality and effectiveness of mentoring across the country by supporting youth mentoring practitioners. The center serves as a comprehensive resource for mentoring tools, program and training materials, and information. In addition to accessing online resources, mentoring programs can apply for no-cost training and technical assistance to support them in incorporating evidence-based practices. The center received \$999,920 in FY2013 and \$1,000,000 in FY2014 from the DOJ mentoring funds program. See the website for more information: <http://www.nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/>.

sequestered as required under the terms of the Budget Control Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-25) and the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-177), as amended. FY2014 funding based House Committee on Rules, 113th Cong., 2nd sess., Committee Print 113-32 to the Senate Amendment to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (H.R. 3547), which was enacted as P.L. 113-76. FY2015 funding based on the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (P.L. 113-235).

FY2015

FY2015 appropriations for the DOJ mentoring program were \$90 million. Of this amount, \$80.6 million was available for the program and another \$9.4 million was used for other purposes within the Office of Justice Programs (management and administration, peer review, and a research set-aside). The program funds were used as follows: \$74.6 million for mentoring grants, \$4.0 million for training and technical assistance, \$1.1 million for other mentoring activities, and approximately \$900,000 for research activities. **Table 2** summarizes the purpose, goals, and funding levels for the grants that totaled \$74.6 million. The grants include funding for mentoring by organizations with programs that have a national presence (National Mentoring Programs), operate in multiple states (Multi-State Mentoring Initiative), operate locally in collaboration with other mentoring providers (Collaborative Mentoring Programs), or serve vulnerable populations (youth in foster care and youth with disabilities).

FY2014

FY2014 appropriations were not enacted prior to the beginning of the fiscal year (October 1), resulting in a 16-day shutdown of the federal government. On October 16, 2013, the Senate and House agreed to a bill (H.R. 2775) to provide temporary government-wide FY2014 funding through January 15, 2014 (or until full-year funding is appropriated). This bill was signed by the President on October 17, 2013 (P.L. 113-46). This continuing resolution (CR) funded the mentoring program at \$88.5 million.

Of the \$88.5 million, approximately \$9.0 million was made available for purposes outside of the program, including management and administration and a research set-aside. The remaining \$79.5 million was used as follows: \$67.2 million for competitively awarded grants to support mentoring programs and selected mentoring research; \$5.3 million for other mentoring activities; \$3.5 million for training and technical assistance on mentoring; and \$3.4 million for other mentoring research.

Table 2. Grants Awarded Under the Department of Justice Mentoring Program, FY2015

Mentoring Grant	Description	Entities Eligible to Apply	Number of Grantees and Award Amounts	Total Amount of Funding
National Mentoring Programs	This grant seeks to support national organizations that have mentoring programs (one-to-one, group, and peer mentoring) throughout the country. The entities are to serve at-risk and high-risk youth. “At-risk” or “high-risk” youth includes youth who are most likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system because they have certain predictive or correlative characteristics; are already involved in the juvenile justice system; and/or reside in environments that have high rates of parental incarceration and other risk factors. Eligible entities must also serve American Indian and Alaska Native youth both on and off reservations. Eligible entities must use one or more enhancements of services to improve the access to and impact of mentoring services.	Eligible entities include national organizations, which are those that have active chapters or subgrantees in at least 45 states.	4 awards	\$41,592,871 ^a
Multi-State Mentoring Initiative	This grant seeks to support organizations that have mentoring programs (one-to-one, group, and peer mentoring) in multiple states. Eligible entities should provide mentoring to youth who are at-risk or high-risk for involvement in the juvenile justice system. Entities are encouraged to target mentoring services to American Indian and Alaska Native youth; children of parents on active military duty; children of incarcerated parents; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and questioning youth; youth with disabilities; and youth in rural communities. Eligible entities must use one or more enhancements of services to improve the access to and impact of mentoring services.	Eligible entities include multi-state organizations, defined as organizations that have operated an established mentoring program for at least three years and have active chapters or subgrantees in at least 5 states but no more than 45 states.	13 awards	\$26,000,000

Mentoring Grant	Description	Entities Eligible to Apply	Number of Grantees and Award Amounts	Total Amount of Funding
Collaborative Mentoring Programs	This grant seeks to support a collaborative of mentoring organizations that each provides mentoring (one-to-one, group, and peer mentoring) in at least one location that is independent of the other organizations. The organizations must all implement the same program design. Organizations must ensure that no individual will receive duplicative services from more than one member of the collaborative. Eligible entities must initiate mentoring services for youth who are age 17 or younger, and include those at-risk or high-risk for involvement in the juvenile justice system youth (see definitions above). Eligible entities must use one or more enhancements of services to improve the access to and impact of mentoring services.	A collaborative of three to five mentoring organizations. Organizations that operate in multiple states may participate.	4 awards	\$6,000,000
Mentoring for Youth: Underserved Populations—Foster Youth	This grant seeks to support mentoring organizations for mentoring youth in foster care. Mentoring services must be provided across a minimum of two active chapters or subawardees in two states. The mentoring services can be one-on-one, group, or a combination of both types. Eligible entities must use one or more enhancements of services to improve the access to and impact of mentoring services.	Eligible applicants are limited to multi-state organizations, defined as organizations that have operated an established mentoring program for at least three years, and have active chapters or subawardees in at least 5 states but fewer than 45 states.	1 award	\$500,000

Mentoring Grant	Description	Entities Eligible to Apply	Number of Grantees and Award Amounts	Total Amount of Funding
Mentoring for Youth: Underserved Populations—Youth with Disabilities	This grant seeks to support mentoring organizations for mentoring youth with disabilities. Mentoring services must be provided across a minimum of two active chapters or subawardees in two states. The mentoring services can be one-on-one, group, or a combination of both types. Eligible entities must use one or more enhancements of services to improve the access to and impact of mentoring services.	Eligible applicants are limited to multi-state organizations, defined as organizations that have operated an established mentoring program for at least three years, and have active chapters or subawardees in at least 5 states but fewer than 45 states.	1 award	\$500,000
Total Funding				\$74,592,871

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) correspondence with the Department of Justice, October 2015 and review of grant announcements and grant awards for FY2015 at U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, “Funding Resource Center,” <http://ojp.gov/funding/>.

- a. An additional \$32,304 was carried over from remaining FY2014 funding for the grant program.

FY2013

On March 26, 2013, President Obama signed into law the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013 (P.L. 113-6). This full-year CR superseded a six-month CR for FY2013 (P.L. 112-175) that had been enacted on September 28, 2012. P.L. 113-6 provided \$90 million for the DOJ mentoring program, minus an across-the-board rescission of 1.877%, per Section 3001 of the act and an additional rescission of 0.2% for discretionary nonsecurity accounts, as calculated by OMB.³⁴ With these rescissions, funding was reduced to \$88.1 million.³⁵

On March 1, 2013, President Obama ordered that a sequester be implemented as required under the terms of the Budget Control Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-25) and the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-177), as amended. The order called for an across-the-board cut of 5.0% for nonexempt nondefense discretionary funding. Because the sequester was ordered before the enactment of the FY2013 full-year CR, OMB calculated the amounts to be sequestered based on annualized funding levels in place under the six-month FY2013 CR (P.L. 112-175).³⁶ DOJ has since determined that the amount of funding for the mentoring program with the sequester was \$84.0 million.³⁷

DOJ obligated \$72.6 million for five mentoring grants that focus on mentoring for vulnerable youth.³⁸ Local Mentoring Coordinator program, Multi-State Mentoring program, National Mentoring program, Mentoring Enhancement Demonstration Project, and Mentoring Best Practices Research. An additional \$0.9 million was provided via contract to the Library of Congress for research purposes. The balance of funds (\$10.6 million) was used for DOJ training and technical assistance, a research set-aside for the National Institute of Justice, management and administration, peer review, and reprogramming.

Corporation for National and Community Service

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNS) is an independent federal agency that administers programs to support volunteer services. CNS is authorized by two statutes: the National and Community Service Act (NCSA, P.L. 101-610) of 1990, as amended, and the Domestic Volunteer Service Act (DVSA, P.L. 93-113) of 1973, as amended. Though CNS does not administer a program explicitly for mentoring, the agency has provided funding for mentoring, among other purposes, through two of its volunteer organizations, AmeriCorps³⁹ and

³⁴ This rescission was applicable to discretionary, nonsecurity (as defined at 2 U.S.C. §900(c)(4)(A)) accounts within Division B of the act. Division B pertains to appropriations for Commerce-Justice-Science (CJS) accounts.

³⁵ Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, Letter to Chairs and Ranking Members of the House and Senate Appropriation Committees, April 25, 2013, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/legislative_reports/reductions/fy13_atb_reductions_04_25_13.pdf

³⁶ Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, *OMB Report to the Congress on the Joint Committee Sequestration for Fiscal Year 2013*, March 1, 2013, available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/legislative_reports/fy13ombjsequestrationreport.pdf.

³⁷ Based on correspondence with the Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, December 2013 and January 2014.

³⁸ The definition of “at-risk youth” is provided in some of the grant solicitations. The term is defined as those most likely to become involved in the juvenile system because they possess certain predictive characteristics or were already involved in the juvenile justice system. See, for example, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, “OJJDP FY 2012 Mentoring Best Practices Research,” <http://www.ojjdp.gov/grants/solicitations/FY2012/MentoringResearch.pdf>.

³⁹ This program is authorized under Title I-C of DVSA as the National Service Trust Program and is also known as AmeriCorps State and National Grants Program or AmeriCorps.

SeniorCorps. AmeriCorps members serve directly as mentors (through the AmeriCorps State and National program) or focus their efforts on building the capacity of mentoring organizations to increase the number of children they serve (through the AmeriCorps Vista program).⁴⁰ Senior Corps, through its RSVP and Foster Grandparents programs, provides mentoring to children and youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, including children of prisoners. CNS also leads federal efforts to promote National Mentoring Month, which is intended to raise awareness of mentoring, recruit individuals to mentor, and promote the growth of mentoring by recruiting organizations to engage their constituents in mentoring.

The Serve America Act (P.L. 111-13), which amended NCSA and DVSA, authorizes funding for programs in which mentoring is a permissible activity, among several other activities.⁴¹ For example, the law provides that AmeriCorps can fund new programs—including the Education Corps, Clean Energy Services Corps, and Veterans Corps—that can be used for mentoring, among other activities. In addition, the law authorizes the program to fund initiatives that seek to expand the number of mentors for disadvantaged youth, as defined under the act.

Federal Mentoring Council

From 2006 to 2010, the Federal Mentoring Council (“Council”) was active, and efforts are underway to reconvene the council.⁴² The Council was created to address the ways federal agencies could combine resources and training and technical assistance to federally administered mentoring programs, and to serve as a clearinghouse on federal mentoring.⁴³ The chief executive officer of CNS and the Commissioner of HHS’s Family and Youth Services Bureau chaired the Council, which was comprised of the leadership teams of eight federal agencies with multiple youth-focused programs. A national working group made up of leading mentoring experts and practitioners (including the chief executive officers of MENTOR, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, the Boys and Girls Club, and America’s Promise, among others) advised and shared effective mentoring practices with the Council.⁴⁴

Selected federal agencies are in the process of reconvening the Federal Mentoring Council as a subcommittee under the auspices of the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (Council). The OJJDP Administrator recently sought nominations for subcommittee members, and expects to convene a meeting with members in fall 2015.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Corporation for National and Community Service, “National Service and Mentoring,” March 2015.

⁴¹ For further information about the law, see CRS Report RL33931, *The Corporation for National and Community Service: Overview of Programs and Funding*, by (name redacted) and (name redacted).

⁴² Congressional Research Service correspondence with the Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Government Relations, February 2014; and with the U.S. Departments of Housing and Urban Development and Justice, April 2015 and September 2015. According to CNCS, the reasons the council disbanded are not clear.

⁴³ U.S. Department of Justice, Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Summary of the Quarterly Meeting on November 30, 2006.

⁴⁴ Corporation for National and Community Service, Federal Mentoring Council, <http://www.federalmentoringcouncil.gov/index.asp>.

⁴⁵ Congressional Research Service correspondence with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, October 2015.

Department of Defense

Youth ChalleNGe Program⁴⁶

The Youth ChalleNGe Program is a quasi-military training program administered by the Army National Guard to improve outcomes for youth who have dropped out of school or have been expelled. As discussed below, mentoring is a major (and not optional) component of the program. The program was established as a pilot program under the National Defense Authorization Act for FY1993 (P.L. 102-484), and Congress permanently authorized the program under the National Defense Authorization Act for FY1998 (P.L. 105-85). Congress has since provided an annual appropriation for the program as part of the Department of Defense authorization acts. Currently, 35 programs operate in 27 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.⁴⁷ See **Table 3** below for more funding information.

Table 3. Appropriated Funding for the Youth ChalleNGe Program

(\$ in millions)

FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015
\$76.6	\$85.3	\$83.1	94.6	\$106.6	\$115.0	\$125.0	\$125.0	\$125.0	\$134.4

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) correspondence with the Department of Defense, March 2015.

Youth are eligible for the program if they are ages 16 to 18 and enroll prior to their 19th birthday; have dropped out of school or been expelled; are unemployed; are not currently on parole or probation for anything other than juvenile status offenses and not serving time or awaiting sentencing; and are drug free. In recent years, nearly 9,000 cadets (students) have graduated annually. The program consists of three phases: a two-week pre-program residential phase where applicants are assessed to determine their potential for completing the program; a 20-week residential phase; and a 12-month post-residential phase. During the residential phase, youth—known as cadets—work toward their high school diploma or GED and develop life-coping, job, and leadership skills. They also participate in activities to improve their physical well-being, and they engage in community service. Youth develop a “Post-Residential Action Plan (P-RAP)” that sets forth their goals, as well as the tasks and objectives to meet those goals. The post-residential phase begins when graduates return to their communities, continue in higher education, or enter the military. The goal of this phase is for graduates to build on the gains made during the residential phase and to continue to develop and implement their P-RAP.⁴⁸

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

⁴⁶ Unless otherwise noted, this information is based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Defense, National Guard, June 12, 2008.

⁴⁷ National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Foundation, “ChalleNGe Near You,” <http://www.ngyf.org/challenge-near-you.html>.

⁴⁸ U.S. Department of Defense, National Guard, *Youth ChalleNGe Program 2014 Performance and Accountability Highlights*, 2015.

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

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

Mentors report each month during the post-residential phase about the cadets' placement activities, progress toward achieving their goals, and the activities associated with the mentoring relationship. Some programs also require the cadets to report monthly about their progress. At the end of the post-residential phase, an exit interview is conducted between program staff and the mentor, and the match is formally concluded.⁴⁹

Youth ChalleNGe was evaluated by Manpower Development Research Corporation (MDRC), a social policy research organization. The evaluation began in 2005, when 12 state ChalleNGe programs agreed to participate in the evaluation.⁵⁰ The evaluation used a random assignment research design, whereby youth were randomly selected to receive the treatment (i.e., to participate in the program) or to a control group that did not participate in the program. The results of the evaluation are based on a survey administered about 9 months, 21 months, and 3 years after the members of the program and control groups entered the study.⁵¹ MDRC issued reports after each survey wave. The two earlier reports found that youth in the program group had higher education attainment and a stronger work history than the control group. The most recent report—more than a year after the post-residential phase had ended—shows that these favorable outcomes persisted at the three-year mark. Those who enrolled in Youth ChalleNGe were significantly more likely to have earned a GED (but not necessarily a high school diploma),⁵² to have earned any college credit, to be employed, to have higher earnings, and to be working. Although the earlier reports found positive impacts on criminal justice involvement and health, these impacts faded over time. At the three-year survey, about half of youth in both the program and control groups reported ever having been arrested and about two-thirds of each group reported being in good or excellent health. Further, on some outcomes, there were few statistically significant differences between the treatment and control groups or the outcomes

⁴⁹ Dan Bloom, Alissa Gardenhire-Crooks, and Conrad Mandsager, *Reengaging High School Dropouts: Early Results of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program*, MDRC, February 2009.

⁵⁰ Ibid; Megan Millenky, Dan Bloom, and Colleen Dillon, *Making the Transition: Interim Results of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Evaluation*, May 2010; and Megan Millenky et al., *Staying on Course: Three-Year Results of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Evaluation*, June 2011.

⁵¹ The treatment group includes 68% of program group members who went on to enroll in Youth ChalleNGe and the 33% who did not enroll.

⁵² During the time the evaluation was conducted, most programs helped participants prepare for the GED exam, but a few of them offered a high school diploma.

were worse for the treatment group, including that they were more likely to not use birth control⁵³ or had tried illegal drugs other than marijuana.

Similarly, the RAND Corporation, a nonprofit policy think tank, conducted a cost-benefit analysis of the program between 2005 and 2008.⁵⁴ This analysis looked at 10 ChalleNGe sites in 10 states. This report concluded that public investment in the program should be continued as currently operated because it generates labor market earnings and other benefits of \$2.66 for every dollar expended on the program and an estimated return on investment of 166%.

Federal Issues in Mentoring

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

Limitations of Research on Mentoring

A few positive evaluations of mentoring programs may provide justification for federal support of these programs.⁵⁵ The 1995 landmark study of community-based mentoring programs at select Big Brothers and Big Sisters chapters found that mentored youth were less likely than their non-mentored counterparts to use drugs and alcohol, hit someone, and skip school, among other outcomes.⁵⁶ The evaluation of the Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring program found similar results for mentored youth. Nonetheless, findings from these and other studies show that mentoring was limited in improving all youth outcomes. The long-term influence of mentoring for youth is unknown. The 1995 study tracked youth for 18 months, which is among the longest periods of time mentored youth have been studied. No study appears to address issues around how well youth transition to adulthood, such as whether they attend college or secure employment. Further, studies of mentoring programs have shown that some gains made by mentored youth, compared to their non-mentored counterparts, were short-lived and that mentored youth did not improve in certain areas. Still, these improvements, albeit temporary and limited to certain outcomes, may be a worthwhile public policy goal.

A related issue is the use of mentoring techniques that have not been evaluated using experimental design, where youth are randomly selected into control and treatment groups. Even the few evaluations of mentoring programs that use experimental design appear to have limitations. For example, concerns have been raised about the methodology used in the evaluation of the Safe and Drug Free Schools mentoring program. One concern is that grantees were not randomly selected. Grantees involved in the study “reported being less focused on improving students’ academic outcomes and on teaching risk avoidance” than grantees generally, even

⁵³ Those who reported never using birth control did not match closely with those who are married or living with a partner.

⁵⁴ Francisco Perez-Arce, Louay Constant, David S. Loughran, and Lynn A. Karoly, *A Cost-Benefit Analysis of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program*, Rand Corporation, 2012, http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR1193.html.

⁵⁵ Gary Walker, “Youth Mentoring and Public Policy,” in David L. Dubois and Michael J. Karcher, eds., *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2005), pp. 510-512. (Hereinafter, Walker, “Youth Mentoring and Public Policy.”)

⁵⁶ Joseph P. Tierney and Jean Baldwin Grossman, with Nancy L. Resch, *Making A Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters*, Public/Private Ventures, reissued September 2000, available online at http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/111_publication.pdf.

though these domains were the focus of the evaluation.⁵⁷ The grantees selected for the evaluation were more likely to serve females and more Asian, Latino, and Pacific Islander students but fewer white students than grantees overall. The grantees were also more likely to be school districts, compared to nonprofit or community-based organizations. They also tended to have more years of experience running school mentoring and serving more students. These differences may in fact have led to outcomes that were not representative of the entire pool of grantees nationally. Further, some mentored youth did not receive certain services that were tied to the outcomes of the study. For example, 43% of the mentored students reported working frequently with their mentors on academics while 21% never worked on academics. Still, it is unclear whether school-based mentoring programs should be tasked with improving both academic outcomes and certain other outcomes, like reducing involvement in gangs and other risky behaviors.⁵⁸

Another possible limitation of the SDFS mentoring evaluation was its design. Although the SDFS mentoring evaluation used random assignment, whereby youth were randomly assigned to the treatment (i.e., SDFS mentoring) or the control group (no SDFS mentoring), over one-third of the control group received mentoring, either from the SDFS grantee or from other organizations in the community. This finding raises questions about the extent to which the evaluation could have assessed the true effects of the program, since the outcomes for the control group may have been influenced by the participation of some of the youth in mentoring programs. According to the study, this may have “led to some dilution of the impacts on students compared to expectations.”⁵⁹

The program delivery also did not appear to have adhered to certain established best practices in mentoring, such as matches that lasted one year or more and ongoing training for mentoring. The average length of the mentoring relationship for students surveyed was 5.8 months, and on average, students were not assigned their mentor until about five weeks after they were randomly assigned to the treatment group.⁶⁰ Ongoing training did not appear to be widely available. Approximately 41% of mentors reported that ongoing training was available after they begun meeting regularly with their students.⁶¹ This is in contrast to recommendations by researchers in mentoring that mentors receive support and ongoing training after matches have been established.⁶² Still, nearly all mentors received pre-match training or orientation and talked with their program supervisor about how things were going with their mentoring relationship. Most mentors (62.3%) reported having access to social workers or staff when they needed support.

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

⁵⁷ Lawrence Bernstein et al., *Impact Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education’s Student Mentoring Program Final Report*, p. xvii.

⁵⁸ Jen Russell, “School-Based Mentoring Needs a Friend,” *Youth Today*, June 1, 2009. (Hereinafter, Jen Russell, “School-Based Mentoring Needs a Friend.”)

⁵⁹ Lawrence Bernstein et al., *Impact Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education’s Student Mentoring Program Final Report*, p. 92.

⁶⁰ Evaluations of other school-based mentoring programs have reported similar findings.

⁶¹ Lawrence Bernstein et al., *Impact Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education’s Student Mentoring Program Final Report*, p. 47.

⁶² MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, “Elements of Effective Practice in Mentoring,” 4th ed., 2015.

their mentors.”⁶³ Nonetheless, the Department of Education reported that training and technical assistance was provided by a contractor and ED staff.

A 2010 analysis of three major school-based mentoring programs, including the SDFS mentoring program, suggests that the effects of these programs are small but are in a range that “makes their interpretation subject to underlying perspectives and priorities.”⁶⁴ Similarly, a 2011 analysis assessed findings from 73 mentoring programs and found that despite the positive effect of the programs overall, the effect is small.⁶⁵ In other words, some stakeholders may have reason to be skeptical of the findings from the SDFS mentoring program and other mentoring programs, while others may argue that these findings are promising and should lead to further efforts to improve mentoring interventions.

Focusing on Quality of Programs

The number of mentoring programs appears to have grown in recent years, likely due to a variety of reasons, including federal attention to mentoring as an intervention for at-risk youth and promising associations between mentoring and multiple outcomes.⁶⁶ These programs have different formats and serve specific populations of youth. For example, in FY2014 DOJ provided funding to mentoring organizations that serve youth whose parents are imprisoned and youth who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

In light of this perceived expansion, researchers and policymakers caution that administrators should carefully implement mentoring programs while adhering to core practices of effective mentoring that have been informed by research. The Administration has allocated funding for grants to research on mentoring for at-risk youth.

Gap in Mentoring Services

MENTOR Inc., a mentor advocacy group, estimated that 9.4 million young people who are at-risk⁶⁷ youth need a mentor.⁶⁸ Recruiting and retaining volunteers appears to be a major challenge for mentoring organizations, including those funded through federal mentoring programs.⁶⁹ In its 2004 report of the Safe and Drug Free Schools Mentoring program, GAO found that new grantees had more difficulty than established grantees in recruiting and supporting mentors.⁷⁰ Similarly, HHS reports that some mentors in organizations that received Mentoring Children of Prisoners’

⁶³ Jen Russell, “School-Based Mentoring Needs a Friend.”

⁶⁴ Mark E. Wheeler, Thomas E. Keller, David L. DuBois, “Review of Three Recent Randomized Trials of School-Based Mentoring: Making Sense of Mixed Findings,” *Social Policy Report*, vol. 24, no. 3 (2010).

⁶⁵ David L. DuBois et al., “How Effective Are Mentoring Programs for Youth? A Systematic Assessment of the Evidence.”

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

⁶⁷ This definition encompasses youth, who, when they were in middle or high school had any of the following risk factors: incarcerated parent or guardian, regular absenteeism, poor academic performance, behavioral problems in school, delinquency, teenage pregnancy, or homelessness. MENTOR, Inc. The Mentoring Effect: Young People’s Perspectives on the Outcomes and Availability of Mentoring,” January 2014, http://www.mentoring.org/mentoringeffect/the_mentoring_effect_full_report/.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Arthur Astukas and Chris Tanti, “Recruiting and Sustaining Volunteer Mentors,” in David L. Dubois and Michael J. Karcher, eds., *Handbook of Youth Mentoring*, (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2005), p. 245. (Hereinafter, Arthur Astukas and Chris Tanti, “Recruiting and Sustaining Volunteer Mentors.”)

⁷⁰ GAO, *Student Mentoring Programs*, pp. 20-21.

funding had dropped out before being matched with a youth because of the time and energy commitment mentoring entails.⁷¹ While research on mentor recruitment and retention is nascent, it reveals that mentoring organizations tend to attract individuals who are middle aged, educated, and have children in their household, and that word of mouth is among the top strategies for recruiting new volunteers.⁷² Further, individuals are likely to remain in formal mentoring programs if they feel adequately prepared to serve as mentors. According to the research on mentoring, retention may be high when programs continually monitor mentoring relationships for effectiveness and respond to the needs of mentors.

A related issue is that the mentoring gap may be wider for special populations. Mentoring programs primarily serve youth ages 9 through 11 who come to the attention of a parent or teacher, rather than the most at-risk populations, which include, but are not limited to, older youth, runaway and homeless youth, and youth in foster care or the juvenile justice system.⁷³ According to a 2005 study by MENTOR, less than one-fifth of mentors reported mentoring a youth involved in the juvenile justice or foster care systems or with a parent in prison.⁷⁴ However, most of these mentors said they would be willing to work with vulnerable youth populations. Recent efforts to recruit volunteers for vulnerable populations are also underway, as evidenced by DOJ's focus on youth involved in the foster care or juvenile justice systems and children with imprisoned parents. Nonetheless, potential mentors may still be discouraged from working with youth facing serious personal difficulties and challenges in their communities.

Sustaining Resources

Some organizations that receive federal mentoring grants report challenges with securing diverse sources of funding and expanding their programs because of limited funding or cuts in funding,⁷⁵ especially in light of the elimination of the Safe and Drug Free Schools Mentoring program and Mentoring Children of Prisoners program.

⁷¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Report to Congress: The Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program*, September 2007.

⁷² Arthur Astukas and Chris Tanti, "Recruiting and Sustaining Volunteer Mentors," pp. 235-249.

⁷³ Gary Walker, "Youth Mentoring and Public Policy," pp. 509-510.

⁷⁴ MENTOR, Inc. "Mentoring in America 2005: A Snapshot of the Current State of Mentoring."

⁷⁵ Erika Fitzpatrick, "Surviving Without Uncle Sam's Money: Mentoring Grant Cutoff Sparks Talk About How to Diversify Funding," *Youth Today*, June 2007, p. 10.

Appendix. Recently Discontinued Federal Mentoring Programs

Two federal programs that were used to provide a significant source of funding for mentoring services until they were discontinued: the Mentoring Children of Prisoners program, which was administered by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the Safe and Drug Free Schools Mentoring program, which was administered by the U.S. Department of Education. The Mentoring Children of Prisoners program was created in response to the growing number of children under age 18 with at least one parent incarcerated in a federal or state correctional facility. The program was intended, in part, to reduce the chance that mentored youth would use drugs and skip school. Similarly, the SDFS Mentoring program provided school-based mentoring to reduce school dropout and improve relationships for youth at risk of educational failure and with other risk factors.

Congress discontinued funding for the Mentoring Children of Prisoners program in FY2011 and the Safe and Drug Free Schools Mentoring program in FY2010. In FY2012, the Obama Administration proposed funding the Mentoring Children of Prisoners program at \$25 million, a reduction of \$24.3 million from FY2010 (and the FY2011 budget request). Both programs were eliminated, in part, because of evaluations showing a lack of effectiveness in achieving certain goals.

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

Overview

The Mentoring Children of Prisoners (MCP) Program was proposed as part of the Bush Administration's FY2003 budget and was signed into law under the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments of 2001 (enacted in law in 2002 under P.L. 107-133) as Section 439 of the Social Security Act. Until it was discontinued as of FY2011, the program was administered by the Family and Youth Services Bureau in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families. The program funded public or private entities—in areas of high concentrations of children with parents in prison, including urban, rural, and tribal areas—to provide mentoring services to children of prisoners. Mentoring through the MCP was defined as a structured program that matches each eligible child (with the permission of one or both their parents) to a screened and trained adult volunteer who serves as a positive role model to the child. This one-on-one relationship, involving activities based in the community and not primarily on school grounds or the workplace, was intended to improve academic and behavioral outcomes. Mentors were to supplement existing caring relationships that the child had with his or her parents, teachers, and other adults. The Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-288) expanded the scope of the program by authorizing HHS to enter into a three-year cooperative agreement with a national mentoring support organization to operate a new program that provides vouchers for mentoring services. A law (P.L. 112-34) enacted on September 30, 2011, extended authorization for programs that have been authorized in the past with the MCP program; however, the law did not extend program or funding authorization for the MCP

program, which most recently had been authorized to receive “such sums as may be necessary” for each of FY2007-FY2011.⁷⁶

Purpose

The MCP program was created in response to the growing number of children under age 18 with at least one parent who is incarcerated in a federal or state correctional facility. Data from the Department of Justice’s (DOJ’s) Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) show that over the past two decades a growing number of parents are incarcerated in state and federal prisons, which means a greater number of children are spending some period of their childhood without one of their parents present.⁷⁷ In 1991, approximately 452,000 parents were incarcerated in state and federal prisons and these parents had approximately 946,000 children. By 2007, nearly 810,000 parents were incarcerated and they had over 1.7 million children.⁷⁸ The BJS data further indicate that higher incarceration rates for African Americans compared to whites and Hispanics are having a disproportionate effect on African American children. BJS estimates that 6.7% of African American children in the United States have an incarcerated parent compared to 2.4% of Hispanic children and 0.9% of white children.

When parents are sent to prison it is likely to reduce the frequency and quality of contacts they have with their children. In many cases, parents are incarcerated in facilities that are more than 100 miles from where their families live, which can make personal visits between incarcerated parents and children difficult.⁷⁹ In addition, prisons can be uninviting places for children to visit with their parents, and procedures at correctional facilities can make it difficult for children to meet with their parents in the first place. Data from BJS indicate that parents are much less likely to receive personal visits from their children compared to telephone calls or letters.⁸⁰ Research suggests that the absence of a parent can have negative consequences for childhood development, and parental incarceration may negatively affect children, to the extent that incarceration contributes to parental absence.⁸¹

Grantee Requirements

A number of entities were eligible to apply for an MCP grant: any state or local government unit, independent school districts, federally recognized American tribal governments, Native American tribal groups (other than federally recognized groups), private nonprofit organizations, and

⁷⁶ On April 15, 2011, President Obama signed the Department of Defense and Full Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 (P.L. 112-10). P.L. 112-10 did not reference the Mentoring Children of Prisoners (MCP) program; however, the program was included in a table, provided by the House Appropriations Committee, showing programs to be eliminated or reduced in funding. U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, “Historic Spending Cuts the Centerpiece for Final Continuing Resolution (CR) for Fiscal Year 2011,” press release, 112th Congress, April 12, 2011. HHS interpreted the FY2011 funding law (P.L. 112-10) to mean that the program would not be funded in FY2011. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, *FY2011 Operating Plan*, <http://www.asph.org/UserFiles/FY2011-HHS-ConsolidatedOperatingPlans.pdf>.

⁷⁷ Lauren E. Glaze and Laura M. Maruschak, *Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children*, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCJ 222984, Washington, DC, January 2009. (Hereinafter, Glaze and Maruschak, *Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children*.)

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Jeremy Travis, *But They All Come Back: Facing the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press, 2005), pp. 132-142. (Hereinafter, Travis, *But They All Come Back*.)

⁸⁰ Glaze and Maruschak, *Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children*, p. 18.

⁸¹ Travis, *But They All Come Back*, pp. 138-140.

community and faith-based groups. In awarding grants, HHS considered the qualifications and capacity of the applicants to carry out a mentoring program for children of prisoners; the need for mentoring services in local areas, taking into consideration data on the number of children (and in particular of low-income children) with an incarcerated parent (or parents) in the area; and evidence of consultation with existing youth and family services.⁸² Grantees also had to expend their funds within one year for mentoring services only (i.e., not wraparound services or other social services).⁸³

Grantees recruited mentors, including individuals from the child's family and community, church congregations, religious nonprofit groups, community-based groups, service organizations, Senior Corps,⁸⁴ and the business community. Grantees provided mentor training and criminal background checks, and monitored mentoring relationships. They also evaluated youth outcomes. Grantees were expected to incorporate a message of positive youth development into their programs and coordinate with other organizations to develop a plan that addressed the needs of the entire family.⁸⁵ (Positive youth development refers to a philosophy of serving youth that emphasizes youth empowerment and the development of skills and assets that prepare youth for adulthood.)

Mentored Youth and Mentors

In FY2010 (the last year the program was in operation), the program served more than 28,000 youth in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.⁸⁶ Children ages 4 to 18 were eligible for the program if their parent was in state or federal prison, although they could have continued to receive services if their parent was released from prison during the mentoring relationship; children whose parents were in halfway houses, under supervision, or house arrest were not eligible unless the detention follows a federal or state prison sentence.

The program required mentors to undergo screenings that included in-depth interviews and criminal background checks. It also required participants to commit to attend trainings and meet with their assigned youth at least one hour per week for one year. Mentors could not be paid for their participation, except for incidental expenses reimbursement such as food and mileage on a case-by-case basis.

Voucher Demonstration Project: Caregiver's Choice Program

The Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-288) authorized a demonstration project to test the effectiveness of using vouchers to deliver MCP services more broadly to youth who had not already been matched to a mentor. The law specified that vouchers

⁸² HHS gave preference to grantees that demonstrated a need for mentoring services in their areas based on the concentration of children of prisoners who were not mentored at the time. Grantee applicants determined the number of eligible participants by contacting local school systems for student/parent information and/or the Bureau of Prisons. Others collaborated with child social service programs such as the foster care system and/or their state prisons. Organizations with well-established ministry programs recruited participants as part of their ministry work.

⁸³ Office of Management and Budget, *Mentoring Children of Prisoners Assessment*.

⁸⁴ Senior Corps is a program administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service that provides volunteer opportunities for individuals ages 55 and older.

⁸⁵ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, *Report to Congress on the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program*, October 8, 2010.

⁸⁶ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, February 2011.

were to be distributed by an organization with considerable experience in mentoring services for children, and in developing program standards for planning and evaluating mentoring programs for children.⁸⁷ In November 2007 (FY2008), HHS awarded a competitive three-year cooperative agreement grant to The National Mentoring Partnership (MENTOR) to administer the voucher demonstration program. MENTOR referred to the voucher program as the Caregiver's Choice Program.

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

The law required MENTOR to distribute at least 3,000 vouchers in year one, 8,000 in year two, and 13,000 in year three. The law also required MENTOR to identify and recruit qualified mentoring programs and eligible families, coordinate the distribution and redemption of vouchers, and oversee the quality of the mentoring services. The law stipulated that it could not provide direct mentoring services. To this end, MENTOR coordinated with national networks for re-entry and incarcerated families, caregiver support networks, school districts, social service agencies, and faith- and community-based organizations to identify children to participate in the program.⁸⁸ MENTOR directed families and caregivers to a national call center to enroll in the voucher program and to learn about mentoring options in their community. The voucher for mentoring services included an identification code in the packet. (This identifier became the primary means of data collection and system management for the voucher demonstration project.) The families redeemed the vouchers at organizations deemed to be quality providers of mentoring services.

MENTOR conducted an advertising campaign to encourage mentoring programs to become certified as "quality providers" (allowing them to receive MCP vouchers). MENTOR, in consultation with FYSB, also identified quality standards for these providers that addressed program capacity, sustainability, design, management, and operations.⁸⁹

Funding and Grant Awards

Overall, the program received \$10 million in FY2003 and was funded at approximately \$50 million in each subsequent year, until FY2010, as shown in **Table A-1**.⁹⁰ On April 15, 2011, President Obama signed the Department of Defense and Full Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 (P.L. 112-10).⁹¹ That law did not reference the Mentoring Children of Prisoners program,⁹²

⁸⁷ HHS was required to provide a description of how the organization should ensure collaboration and cooperation with other interested parties, including courts and prisons, with respect to the delivery of mentoring services under the demonstration project.

⁸⁸ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, *Report to Congress on the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Service Delivery Demonstration Project*, October 8, 2010 (Hereinafter, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Report to Congress on the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Service Delivery Demonstration Project*, October 8, 2010.)

⁸⁹ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, December 2008.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, January 2010.

⁹¹ FY2011 began on October 1, 2010. Until April 15, 2011, funding for FY2011 was provided at FY2010 levels for (continued...)

however, it was included in a table, provided by the House Appropriations Committee showing programs either with funding reductions or that were eliminated.⁹³ The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the department that administered the program, interpreted the FY2011 funding law to mean that the program was not funded in FY2011.⁹⁴ According to HHS, the department did not have latitude to shift funding from other programs.⁹⁵ Funding for the program was obligated at the end of the fiscal year, and therefore no grantees received funds that were appropriated under continuing resolutions for FY2011.

Table A-1. FY2003-FY2010 Appropriated Funding for the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program

(dollars in millions)

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

Source: FY2002 to FY2007 funding data based on information provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Family and Youth Services Bureau, 2007. FY2008 funding data based on U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, *Joint Explanatory Statement to Accompany FY2008 Consolidated Appropriations Amendment to H.R. 2764/P.L. 110-161, Division G*. FY2009 funding data based on U.S. Congress, House Committee on Rules, *Joint Explanatory Statement to Accompany FY2009 Consolidated Appropriations Amendment to H.R. 1105/P.L. 111-8, Division F*. FY2010 funding based on U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, *Departments of Transportation and Housing and Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010*, report to accompany H.R. 3288/P.L. 111-117, 111th Cong., 1st sess., December 8, 2009, H.Rept. 111-366. FY2011 funding data based on Department of Defense and Full Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 (P.L. 112-10).

Note: The FY2011 appropriations law (P.L. 112-10) does not reference the Mentoring Children of Prisoners program. Unlike other recent appropriation acts, P.L. 112-10 is not accompanied by a published table and an explanatory statement indicating congressional intent for program funding levels. Nonetheless, the program is included in a table, provided by the House Appropriations Committee, that shows programs to be eliminated or reduced in funding. See U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, “Historic Spending Cuts the Centerpiece for Final Continuing Resolution (CR) for Fiscal Year 2011,” press release, 112th Congress, April 12, 2011.

Grantees were required to provide a nonfederal share or match of at least 25% of the total project budget in the first and second years of the project, rising to 50% in the third year.

Funding was appropriated for the voucher component from FY2007 through FY2009. In FY2008, 3,008 vouchers (with FY2007 funds) were distributed; in FY2009, 8,173 vouchers (with FY2008 funds) were distributed; and in FY2010, 6,128 vouchers (with FY2009 funds) were distributed.⁹⁶

(...continued)

most programs under a series of continuing resolutions.

⁹² Unlike other recent appropriation acts, P.L. 112-10 was not accompanied by a published table and an explanatory statement indicating congressional intent for program funding levels.

⁹³ U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, “Historic Spending Cuts the Centerpiece for Final Continuing Resolution (CR) for Fiscal Year 2011,” press release, 112th Congress, April 12, 2011.

⁹⁴ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Legislative Affairs and Budget, April 2011.

⁹⁵ Although P.L. 112-10 increased funding for the Children and Families Services account within HHS’s Administration for Children and Families (which includes Mentoring Children of Prisoners), the increased funds were available only for the Head Start program. Funding for certain other programs or activities within the Children and Families account was also decreased or eliminated.

⁹⁶ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Report to Congress on the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Service* (continued...)

Evaluations

Of all MCP funds, HHS had to set aside 4% for evaluations, research, and technical assistance related to site-based and voucher-related mentoring services.⁹⁷ The authorizing legislation (P.L. 107-133) for the MCP directed HHS to evaluate the site-based program and submit its findings to Congress by April 15, 2005.⁹⁸ The reauthorizing legislation (P.L. 109-288) directed HHS to include the voucher demonstration component as part of the larger evaluation. P.L. 109-288 also required HHS to submit, within 12 months after the reauthorizing legislation was passed (i.e., September 28, 2007), a report on the characteristics of the mentoring program, a plan for implementing the voucher program, a description of the evaluation, and the date that HHS would submit the final report on the evaluation. The legislation further specified that HHS submit a report on the status of the voucher component to the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee no later than 90 days after the end of the second fiscal year the project concluded. Congress required that the report include the number of children who received vouchers for mentoring services and any conclusions regarding the use of vouchers to deliver mentoring services to children of prisoners.

In September 2007, HHS submitted a report to Congress that provided an overview of the MCP program and plans for an evaluation to compare the outcomes of children in the program with outcomes among groups of similar children.⁹⁹ In October 2010, HHS submitted two additional reports—one that addresses the MCP program and evaluation and another that addresses the voucher demonstration project.¹⁰⁰ In March 2012, HHS submitted its final report to Congress on the evaluation of the program, which assessed how the program was carried out as well as the outcomes of children served by the program between January 2008 and January 2010.¹⁰¹

HHS subcontracted with Abt Associates to conduct process and outcome evaluations of the mentoring program. The objectives of the outcome study were to record intermediate-term outcomes related to identity development, cognitive development, social and emotional development, and relationships with peers and adults; and long-term measures related to behavioral outcomes, academic outcomes, and psychological outcomes.¹⁰² Abt Associates surveyed a sample of youths at the beginning of their time in the program, but before they met with their mentors, and again about 16 months later, regardless of whether they still met with their mentor.¹⁰³ Abt Associates matched the results of the outcome evaluation against similar at-

(...continued)

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

⁹⁷ The percentage of funds set aside for this purpose was increased from 2.5% to 4% under P.L. 109-288.

⁹⁸ The law was general and stated that HHS was to “conduct an evaluation of the program and submit to the Congress not later than April 15, 2005, a report on the findings of the evaluation.”

⁹⁹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Report to Congress on the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program*, September 12, 2007. This report was in response to the reporting requirement under P.L. 107-133.

¹⁰⁰ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Report to Congress on the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program*, October 8, 2010; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Report to Congress on the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Service Delivery Demonstration Project*, October 8, 2010. These reports were in response to the reporting requirements under P.L. 109-288.

¹⁰¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Evaluation of the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program Report to Congress*, March 7, 2012.

¹⁰² Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, December 2008, May 2009, and January 2010.

¹⁰³ The response rate was 65%.

risk youth who served as controls in the 2007 evaluation of the Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) school-based mentoring program and did not receive those mentoring services.¹⁰⁴

The outcome evaluation found differences between the two samples. For example, the BBBS comparison sample were younger, more likely to be white, and seemed to be a higher risk group than the MCP sample. The study controlled for these differences, but because the MCP youth had fewer risk factors, they might have had more unmeasured protective factors than the control group.

The major comparison was the rate of change in risk behaviors or positive outcomes (the study did not examine whether the MCP program would have made a difference among the children had they not received mentoring). MCP youth improved significantly more than the comparison group on several measures of identity, social-emotional development, and school attitudes. There was no difference between the groups in the amount of change reported for acceptance by their peers and the likelihood of attending and completing college. As noted in the final evaluation, “there is not a sufficient evidence base to rigorously attribute program outcomes to participation in the MCP program. It cannot be ruled out that these outcomes could have been observed in children of prisoners who were not provided with mentoring relationships.”

HHS also evaluated the voucher component of the MCP program to determine whether the voucher approach provided quality services and whether parents and children had been given more options and access to mentoring. As part of its October 2010 report to Congress on the vouchers, HHS described its concerns with the voucher component based on how MENTOR carried out the program. Among other things, the report noted that the program had been largely unable to locate and engage caregivers of children of prisoners in the targeted areas (e.g., rural areas); that even as the number of vouchers distributed met the statutory goals in the law, many went unredeemed (so that no mentoring occurred); and that the large majority of mentoring matches that were made through vouchers were not sustained for a full 12 months (meaning they were less likely to have positive effect on the mentee). Further, MENTOR, had challenges with identifying and recruiting qualified mentor programs that could provide mentoring services, and mentoring providers found the application process burdensome. While the statute enabled HHS to extend the original cooperative agreement beyond the initial three years, HHS chose not to do so and as of FY2010 all mentoring grants went to site-based entities.¹⁰⁵

As part of the FY2005 budget process, the Performance Assessment Rating Tool (PART) evaluated the MCP program. The PART was a survey instrument used under the Bush Administration to assess the effectiveness of selected federal programs and activities. The PART evaluation assessed the MCP’s purpose and design, strategic planning, management, and results/accountability. While the program received maximum scores for these first three measurements, it was rated as “Results Not Demonstrated” because the program performance data to assess results had only recently begun to be collected from grantees. In addition, the program also did not meet its mentor match goal. According to HHS, MCP grantees did not meet their mentor match targets because many had never previously received a federal grant and/or were new and formed specifically to operate the grant.¹⁰⁶ In its 2007 report to Congress, HHS

¹⁰⁴ Carla Herrera et al., *Making a Difference in Schools: The Big Brothers Big Sisters School-Based Mentoring Impact Study*, Public/Private Ventures, August 2007. The study used consistent definitions and other methods to make comparisons between the groups.

¹⁰⁵ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Report to Congress on the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Service Delivery Demonstration Project*, October 8, 2010.

¹⁰⁶ *The Mentoring Children of Prisoners Program*, Report to Congress, p. 11.

stated that it had taken steps to improve the number of matches, such as conducting site visits to grantees.¹⁰⁷

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

Overview

Congress enacted the Safe and Drug Free Schools (SDFS) program as Title IV-A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1994 (P.L. 103-382) in response to concerns about increased school violence and drug use among school-aged youth. The program awarded funding to states to support activities that promote school safety. In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act (P.L. 107-110) reauthorized and amended ESEA, and enacted a school-based mentoring program under the SDFS program.¹⁰⁸

Congress did not appropriate funding for the program in FY2010. As part of its FY2010 budget justifications, the Obama Administration proposed eliminating the program because of an evaluation showing that it did not have an impact on students overall in terms of interpersonal relationships, academic outcomes, and delinquent behaviors. Some grantees were in their second year of the grant period when funding was discontinued (no grantees were in their third and final year of the grant period).¹⁰⁹

The Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools (SDFS) in the U.S. Department of Education administered the SDFS Mentoring program and provided grants to establish and support school based mentoring programs. Under the program, school-based mentoring referred to mentoring activities that are closely coordinated with school (i.e., involve teachers, counselors, and other school staff who identified and referred students for mentoring services) and assisted youth with improving their academic achievement, reducing disciplinary referrals, and increasing their bonding to school.¹¹⁰ Generally, the SDFS Mentoring program paired one child¹¹¹ with one adult who served as a positive role model and provided the child with academic assistance (e.g., tutoring, helping with homework, learning a game like chess, developing computer skills), exposure to new experiences that promoted positive youth development (e.g., attending concerts and plays, visiting colleges, shadowing mentor at his/her job), and recreational opportunities (e.g., playing sports, creating arts and crafts projects, attending professional sports games).¹¹² According to a June 2004 GAO report of the program, many of these mentoring activities were

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ The SDFS program supported two major grant programs—one for states and one for national programs. Congress authorized the mentoring program under the national programs grant.

¹⁰⁹ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, January 2010.

¹¹⁰ U.S. Department of Education, “Notice of Final Priorities, Requirements, and Selection Criteria Under the Mentoring Program,” 69 *Federal Register* 30794, May 28, 2004. (Hereinafter, U.S. Department of Education, “Notice of Final Priorities.”)

¹¹¹ In a 2004 GAO analysis of the 121 SDFS Mentoring Program grantees who received awards in FY2002, 75% provided one-to-one mentoring only; 22% provided both one-to-one mentoring and group mentoring; and 3% provided group mentoring only.

¹¹² GAO, *Student Mentoring Programs*, p. 17.

carried out on school grounds, but some activities take place in the community and in the workplace.¹¹³

Purpose

The mentoring program targeted children with the greatest need, defined as those children at risk of educational failure or dropping out of school, involved with criminal or delinquent activities, or who lacked strong positive role models. The purpose of the program was to provide school-based mentoring programs that improved academic outcomes, improved interpersonal relationships, and reduced involvement in delinquency and gang involvement.

Grantee Requirements

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

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

Mentored Youth and Mentors

In awarding grants, the Department of Education prioritized entities that served children in grades 4 to 8 with greatest need living in rural areas, high-crime areas, or troubled home environments *or* who attend schools with violence problems.¹¹⁴ The Department of Education did not aggregate demographic and other data on youth participants, and therefore, the number and characteristics of youth served by the program are unknown.¹¹⁵

The program required mentors to be a responsible adult, a postsecondary school student, or a secondary school student. While the Department of Education did not mandate a set amount of hours that mentors and students were to meet, it advised that programs require at least one hour each week.¹¹⁶ Mentors were screened using reference checks, child and domestic abuse record

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ U.S. Department of Education, "Notice of Final Priorities."

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

¹¹⁶ Based on correspondence with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, July 2007.

checks, and criminal background checks; and received training and support in mentoring. Mentors were uncompensated.

Funding and Grant Awards

The mentoring program was one component of the Safe and Drug Free Schools program. The SDFS program has two funding streams: one for state grants awarded by formula (which was also not funded for FY2010) and another for discretionary national grants. The SDFS mentoring program was funded through the national grants component.¹¹⁷ The program received about \$17 million to \$49 million each year since grants were first awarded in FY2002, as shown in **Table A-2**. For FY2009, 264 continuing grantees were funded and no new grants were awarded.¹¹⁸

In the FY2007, FY2008, and FY2009 budget justifications, the Bush Administration proposed no funding for the mentoring program on the basis that it had met its objectives. The Bush Administration budget for FY2009 also proposed to consolidate the SDFS national grants component, which had several sub-programs, into a single-flexible discretionary program.¹¹⁹ Similarly, the Obama Administration proposed to eliminate the program as part of the FY2010 budget because of an evaluation showing that was ineffective, as discussed below.¹²⁰ Also according to the Administration, many other federal programs support mentoring activities.

Table A-2. FY2003-FY2009 Appropriated Funding for the Safe and Drug Free Schools Program
(dollars in millions)

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

Source: FY2002 to FY2007 funding data based on information provided by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, 2007. FY2008 funding data based on U.S. House, Committee on Appropriations, *Joint Explanatory Statement to Accompany FY2008 Consolidated Appropriations Amendment to H.R. 2764/P.L. 110-161, Division G*. FY2010 data taken from U.S. Department of Education, *FY2010 Budget Summary, Programs Proposed for Elimination*. FY2010 funding data based on U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, *Departments of Transportation and Housing and Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010*, report to accompany H.R. 3288/P.L. 111-117, 111th Cong., 1st sess., December 8, 2009, H.Rept. 111-366.

¹¹⁷ State grants are awarded to states based on a formula that incorporates poverty and population factors. States must use 93% of their allocation to make formula grants to local educational agencies (LEAs) based on poverty factors and each LEA's share of student enrollment in public and private nonprofit elementary and secondary schools. National grants are used primarily for a variety of discretionary programs designed to prevent drug abuse and violence in elementary and secondary schools. For further information, see CRS Report RL33980, *School and Campus Safety Programs and Requirements in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and Higher Education Act*, by (name redacted) and (name redacted).

¹¹⁸ Based on correspondence with U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, May 2007.

¹¹⁹ U.S. Department of Education, *FY2009 Justifications of Appropriation Estimates, Safe Schools and Citizenship Education*, p. F-30 (Hereinafter, U.S. Department of Education, *FY2009 Justifications of Appropriation Estimates*.)

¹²⁰ U.S. Department of Education, *FY2010 Justifications of Appropriation Estimates, Safe Schools and Citizenship Education*, p. G-15.

Evaluations

In 2004, GAO conducted a study of the program and made three recommendations to the Department of Education to facilitate monitoring and evaluation of the program: (1) explore ways to facilitate the sharing of successful practices and lessons learned among grantees, (2) ensure that the agency uses grantees' single audit reports, and (3) undertake a national study of the program's outcomes.¹²¹ (This second recommendation refers to audit reports of grantees that provide information on weaknesses related to grantee financial management, internal control, and compliance issues; these reports are available through the Office of Management and Budget's Federal Auditing Clearinghouse.) In response to GAO's first recommendation, the Department of Education developed an electronic listserv to promote communication among grantees. To ensure that the agency monitored single audit reports, the agency began to provide a comprehensive training to grant monitors (of the audit reports) to assist them access the information. In addition, the agency added a requirement to the grant monitoring procedures that directs staff to review audit findings at least annually.

Finally, in response to GAO's third recommendation, the Department of Education subcontracted with Abt Associates to conduct process and outcome evaluations. The Department of Education made the findings of the outcome evaluation available in March 2009.¹²² The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the program's effect upon mentored children's school attendance and performance, risk reduction, and relationships with adults. The evaluation measured the characteristics and status of 2,400 students in grades 4 through 8 who were randomly assigned to participate in the program or to a control group. However, the programs from which they received mentoring were not randomly selected and in fact, were not representative of all grantees. For example, the grantees in the study tended to serve more female and minority youth than grantees generally.

The study involved two cohorts of students—those who were referred to the program during the 2005 and 2006 school year, and those who were referred during the 2006 and 2007 school year. The data were collected from student self-reports; school records; and surveys of students, mentors, and grantees. The study found that the program did not lead to statistically significant effects on students across the three domains evaluated: school attendance and performance, risk reduction, and relationships with adults. However, impacts were significant among certain sub-groups. For example, the program improved academic outcomes for girls and produced mixed academic outcomes for boys. The program also led to a decrease in truancy for younger students.

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¹²¹ GAO, *Student Mentoring Programs*.

¹²² Lawrence Bernstein et al., *Impact Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education's Student Mentoring Program Final Report*.

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