

“People seldom improve when they have no other model but themselves to copy.”

— Oliver Goldsmith



MENTORING BEST PRACTICES

In 2009, YouthBuild USA was awarded an OJJDP grant to support and defend the mentoring efforts in YouthBuild USA programs. The YouthBuild USA National Mentoring Alliance (NMA) was formed as the first step in the launch of the mentoring initiative. The NMA serves as a learning community of YouthBuild programs engaged in mentoring. In March 2010, the first NMA Training Institute was conducted in support of YouthBuild USA programs incorporating mentoring into their program model. As of December 2010, the National Mentoring Alliance has trained 398 staff, 624 mentors, 804 mentees, created 439 matches, created 4 handbooks, conducted 21 site visits, 8 webinars, and initiated a program assessment survey; a very robust beginning due to the phenomenal efforts of the NMA leadership team.

As we approach 9 months since the initial NMA Training Institute, we agreed that it was time to begin capturing the promising practices from the program field. This white paper serves as the first of many investigative reports analyzing and broadcasting the promising practices during the mentoring grant life cycle.

Overview of OJJDP Mentoring Grant to YouthBuild USA

The grant amount is \$8,840,000 over a three year period. The original scope of performance was July 2009 to June 2012. Due to a delay in funding, the period of performance has been requested to extend the grant period to March 2013.

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The mentoring focus is 16-18 YouthBuild USA program participants¹. The grant award from OJJDP reflected the following three purposes:

1. Improve youth outcomes: The key outcome measures that programs will track are that 65% of all participants complete the program, 52% attain their GED or diploma, 50% positive placement within six months of program completion, and a recidivism rate of 20% or less.
2. Improve the administration of mentoring programs for at-risk young people: The intent is to improve the mentoring component in the pilot programs and establish mentoring in a total of 40 YouthBuild programs. The YouthBuild USA National Mentoring Alliance (NMA) was established for this purpose².
3. Enhance organization capacity through training and technical assistance (TTA): The NMA leadership team consists of Carlos Campos (Director), Tommy McClam (Program Manager), and Melissa Medina (Program Associate). Tommy McClam spearheads the TTA effort through multiple engagements to include:
 1. Coordinating synchronous and asynchronous TA delivered by experts in the mentoring field
 2. E-Learning and Webinars
 3. Site Visits
 4. Regional Trainings
 5. Bi-annual Training Institutes
 6. Operations Manuals and mentor/mentee support guides
 7. Creating an online Community of Practice
4. Other grant requirements:
 1. 200 YouthBuild USA staff will be trained on Mentoring Best Practices
 2. 1500 mentors will be trained
 3. 1500 successful matches lasting for 15 months
 4. 250 community service projects
 5. Assessment study to review performance measures and outcomes
 6. Data reporting through DCTAT

The YouthBuild USA mentoring model³:



¹ This is a grant requirement, but does not preclude programs from extending the “reach” of mentoring to the 19-24 year old population.

² The NMA now includes 67 programs, 46 of which are funded through the OJJDP grant.

³ See attached Fact Sheet.

The mentoring logic model used the “evidence-based” practices as reflected in MENTOR’s “How to Build a Successful Mentoring Program Using the Elements of Effective Practice” (MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, 2005). The YouthBuild programs’ best practices focus specifically on the recruiting, screening, training, and matching the mentor and mentee. The monitoring phase has two areas of focus: helping the mentor/mentee match establish trust and ensuring they “connect” frequently (4 hours every month a minimum). The measurement phase includes data collection and the assessment as previously noted.

The YouthBuild USA mentoring model is further refined by the following characteristics:

- **Youth driven and elective:** Youth are briefed during the first 30 days in the program about the mentoring component. Those that elect to participate receive additional training on their role in helping the relationship thrive.
- **Mentees ages 16–18, Mentors ages 21 or over:** This is an OJJDP grant requirement. Programs are encouraged to leverage all their resources to extend the benefits of mentoring to the 19-24 year old participants.
- **15-month commitment:** In the typical scenario, this resembles a nine month YouthBuild program cycle with the mentoring relationship continuing for an additional six months.
- **One-to-one** community-based matches supplemented by service projects and group activities: While group, team, and peer mentoring are acceptable mentoring strategies, the 15 month match is primarily a one-to-one mentoring experience.
- Matches meet **for four hours a month** during the 15 month mentoring relationship. Additional “contact” time is encouraged either face to face or through electronic media⁴.
- Match activities centered around youth **Life Plans:** Life Plans are created early in the mentor/mentee relationship and help guide the activities. The core areas are creating objectives around career goals, health, asset development, positive relationships, education, and leadership.
- Mentees are exposed to **mentor-rich environments** and learn how to build and maintain positive social networks. A core philosophy in the YouthBuild USA mentoring model is helping the mentees become “mentor magnets”. To do this, programs will expose mentees to a variety of mentor-rich environments and train them how to attract a mentor into their life. The key features of being a “mentor magnet” include: being passionate, opportunistic, and realistic, being an eager learner, demonstrating ability, showing initiative, and being accessible.
- The programs are staffed with a dedicated Mentoring Coordinator⁵.

⁴ This is based on the programs’ volunteer policies.

- There are currently 46 funded mentoring programs with the anticipation of adding 10 more funded programs in the second round of funding in 2011⁶.

Methodology

It was important to the leadership of the YouthBuild USA National Mentoring Alliance to establish a “Community of Practice” for the mentoring programs. A key feature to the NMA is the establishment of a “learning community” around thought leaderships and practices in the youth mentoring field.

During our training and technical assistance visit to programs, we came across best practices as they relate to the launch of the mentoring initiative. We began to frame two questions into our TTA:

1. What practices and strategies are most effective in the pre-launch phase of the mentoring component?
2. What practices and strategies were effective after the launch of the mentoring initiative?

Tommy McClam was our primary researcher and senior analyst in this review. He also had at his disposal a highly skilled team of coaches and independent consultants from Education Northwest who are recognized experts in the mentoring field.

Pre-established benchmarking standards indicate that, to be a promising practice, techniques must be:

1. Proven over time: Limited in this effort as this was a “new” initiative.
2. Replicable: Easy to transfer to the majority of other YouthBuild USA programs.
3. Feasible: Cost and resources are within the scope of the majority of YouthBuild USA programs.
4. Suitable: The promising practice addresses a specific outcome requirement.

The review to date has revealed several promising practices that fit the above criteria. Detailed descriptions of each practice, projected outcomes, and suggested tools and references can be found in the individual Practice profiles in this white paper. The following is a summary of each individual practice:

Practice 1: *Developing partnerships that enhance programmatic sustainability*

Strategic partnerships are essential to the short term success and the longevity of the mentoring program. Community involvement is essential to providing a successful and relevant mentoring program.

⁵ See funding chart that is attached.

⁶ See attached map of funded programs.

Practice 2: *Implementing the principles of mentoring into the core fabric of the organizations*

Ensuring you have the support of the entire organizations is a critical part of a mentoring program start-up. Mentoring programs must be inter-woven into the youth services already being provided to allow the mentor/mentee relationship to enhance the overall program.

Practice 3: *Mentoring advisory committees can be valuable assets to a mentoring program*

They are especially helpful for new programs or those operating inside an existing youth-serving organization.

Practice 4: *Using Mentoring Best Practices in the early program implementation phases*

Integrating the Mentoring Best Practices into the foundation of your program adds quality assurance standards that will provide programmatic structure and sustainability factors.

Conclusion

The practices identified within this review will provide valuable direction on how to practically integrate proven mentoring practices and techniques which will enhance and maximize overall program operations and youth development service delivery. The practice of applying Mentoring Best Practices, leadership and staff orientation, and inclusion of communities and partners will strengthen implementation and add to the overall program fidelity. Using these principles and steps will result in mentoring youth services that will assist in providing young people with tools to help catapult them to success. The Best Practices of four YouthBuild programs were used to establish the basis of this article: YouthBuild McLean County, Normal, IL; Prevention PLUS, Inc., CCEO YouthBuild, Gardena, CA; Forest Park, GA; and YouthBuild Just-A-Start, Cambridge, MA.

Next Step

In utilizing the suggested practices, techniques, and steps contained within this review, program coordinators, staff, and leadership can better implement an organizational framework for establishing viable mentoring components within their organizations. Adding a strong mentoring component based on proven best practices will further improve other program areas helping the program achieve desired youth outcomes and further enrich the program capacity. The subsequent practice profiles support the importance and effectiveness of using proven mentoring techniques resulting in sustainable positive outcomes.

Practice Profile # 1	
Practice Title	Developing partnerships that enhance programmatic sustainability.
Program Objective Item(s)	External Partnerships – Programs must develop strategic community partnerships which will assist in providing long-term mentoring resources.
Relevant to Task	Inventory your partnership assets. Develop your partnership needs. Develop a partnership agreement. Obtain a formal partnership commitment. Define the alignment, values, and philanthropic goals of the partner organization. Brief mentors/mentees on the partnership and its importance to the program. Provide adequate lead time to develop partnerships.
Practice Overview	Cultivated mentoring program partnerships that integrated partners' success factors into the goals of the mentoring program.
Practice Outcomes	Youth provided with caring adult mentor. Trained mentors/mentees. Raised community awareness and visibility of the program. Students receive mentors from the community. Program clearly identifies stakeholders. Mentoring enhances the overall program deliverables. Identifies the benefits of long-term planning and implementation. A developed community partnership plan.
Prerequisites	Best Practices used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtaining organizational leadership buy-in, from the top down. • Establishing a well-defined partnership agreement. • Train and screen all partnership participants. • Create a Mentoring Agreement; clarify mentoring goals, roles and responsibilities.
Implementation Steps	Define expectations. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is the program staff familiar with the mentoring initiative? 2. Is the organization positioned to begin external mentor recruitment? 3. Can any existing organizational partnership be cultivated for mentoring relationships? 4. What are the aspects of mentoring that already exist in the program? 5. Are we equipped to train mentors? 6. Have we developed a partnership plan and implementation timeframes? 7. What will be required of the mentoring community partners? 8. How will we sustain the partnership? 9. Share what specialized knowledge you bring to the partnership. 10. Define benefits you can offer the partnering organization.

Best Practice in Action	<p>YouthBuild McLean County, Normal, IL has a partnership with Young Business Professionals and Women's Network of the State Farm Insurance, in conjunction with the local chapter of the 100 Black Men of Central Illinois. As a program initiative of YouthBuild USA National Mentoring Alliance funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), YouthBuild (YB) McLean County's mentoring program cultivated and developed a mentoring partnership with the Young Business Professionals and Women's Network of the State Farm Insurance of the Home office of the State Farm Insurance Corporation & the local chapter of the 100 Black Men of Central Illinois (who also had members who were employed by State Farm Insurance). YB Mclean County found it imperative to begin the establishment of partnership relations by finding individuals in the community who would become the ambassadors for YB McLean County in the community and the offices of State Farm. YouthBuild McLean County deputized three of their mentoring supporters as group coordinators who recruited others from their sphere of influence. These individuals from the community helped initiate the partnerships. A meeting was set by State Farm Employees that would support the efforts of YB McLean county with appropriate organizational leadership to familiarize the organization with the needs and benefits of partnering with their mentoring initiative to further cultivate the relationship and to develop a partnership agreement. Employees were encouraged by management to become mentors. Employees were screened, trained, and matched. Both YB McLean County and State Farm Insurance Company where able to meet organizational goals and objectives by providing the youth of the communities of Bloomington-Normal, Illinois with the needed service of offering mentoring and guidance to young people in the community both organizations live and work in. Through the partnership, the mentees benefit from a healthy mentoring relationship, while mentors receive the satisfaction of contributing to the success of the community, State Farm, and YB McLean County. The program added professional women, minority men, and a corporate partner from the community. <u>For more information contact Alicia Lenard, Program Manager/Mentoring Coordinator at YouthBuild McLean County, at alenard@youthbuildmcleancounty.org .</u></p>
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<u>Practice Profile # 2</u>	
Practice Title	Implementing the principles of mentoring into the core fabric of the organization.
Program Objective Item(s)	Mentoring used to strengthen the overall effectiveness of the program.
Relevant to Task	Program integrations – using mentoring as an integration enhancement to program goals and outcomes.
Practice Overview	Seamlessly integrate the mentoring model into existing programmatic areas, while cultivating buy-in from staff and maintaining the fidelity of service delivery.
Practice Outcomes	<p>Program implementation is seamless within the organization. Organizations functions as one team providing quality service.</p> <p>Staff is adequately trained in mentoring. Overall organizational outcomes are impacted positively. Youth receive comprehensive service plan.</p>
Prerequisites	<p>Best Practices used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate senior management and board members about the importance of mentoring and how it complements the organization’s mission in order to guarantee that mentoring is supported agency-wide. • Mentoring needs to be considered an integral part of services for youth. • Train and orientate staff on the implementation of mentoring into your organization. • Determine where mentoring will be integrated and will enhance the youth services already provided. • Embed mentoring component to achieve positive youth outcomes.
Implementation Steps	<p>Define expectations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop presentation of initiative concept. 2. Provide orientation for leadership and staff. 3. Develop mentoring organizational procedures and policies. 4. Determine where staff can coordinate efforts and services to support students. 5. Senior staff should promote the mentoring program throughout the organization, not as a separate program, but a part of how they do business. 6. Monitor the effectiveness of mentoring and make necessary adjustments.
Best Practice in Action	CCEO YouthBuild, Lennox, CA found that the mentoring program is an essential piece to the Youthbuild model. The model needs to assure it takes a comprehensive approach to deal with the target population of young people they work with. A mentoring program can be used as an organizational youth development asset that can get to deep rooted issue that may be missed by other components of the program. At CCEO YouthBuild, they have taken the approach to make sure all senior management, administration, instructional and

	<p>counseling staff members are on board with the implementation stages of the YouthBuild USA OJJDP National Mentoring Alliance initiative. CCEO ensures that not only the mentoring staff, but management and support staff attend training and understand how mentoring can help enhance other areas of their youth programming. In addition, the CCEO staff has taken the approach to make mentoring an overall approach to delivering youth services. The mentoring program does not happen in isolation, but is a fully integrated aspect of the YouthBuild program. <u>For more information contact Noe Zuniga, Program Director at CCEO YouthBuild, at noe@centurycenter.com.</u></p>
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<u>Practice Profile # 3</u>	
Practice Title	Mentoring advisory committees can be valuable assets to a mentoring program.
Program Objective Item(s)	Forming a Mentoring Advisory Committee.
Relevant to Task	Strengthen program community outreach and involvement through the use of an advisory committee.
Practice Overview	The advisory board is instrumental in working with the program in crafting and designing policies and procedures to integrate mentoring in your program.
Practice Outcomes	Builds community support for ongoing mentoring program sustainability. Offers a forum for program partners and stakeholders to communicate opinions, share expertise, and coordinate services.
Prerequisites	Best Practices used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an advisory committee with a sense of purpose and goals. • Strategically select individuals from the community to participate on the mentoring advisory committee. • Advisory committee needs doable tasks, a timeline, praise and recognition regularly. • Assure advisory committee that their input is valued. • Provide advisory committee with the regular guidance to stay on task. • Allow the advisory committee the ability to help enhance and sustain your program.
Implementation Steps	Define expectations. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Defining the advisory committee’s purpose, structure, and approach. 2. Identify candidates or sources for potential committee candidates. 3. Interview perspective advisory committee members. 4. Provide orientation to each new member 5. Conduct regular advisory board meetings. 6. Give advisory board members specific tasks and goals. 7. Encourage your board members often.
Best Practice in Action	Prevention PLUS YouthBuild, Forest Park, Georgia, has developed an extensive community-based mentoring advisory committee to assist the program in meeting the needs of their students and to promote their mentoring initiative to the community. This committee is made up of community participants such as the Vice President of Clayton State University, the Vice President of Atlanta Technical College, local community activists, local clergy, young people, and the Vice President of Clayton County Chamber of Commerce. When asked how advisory board members were chosen, Mentor Coordinator Paula Palmer-Green stated “As I meet people in the community, I look for individuals who want to serve and who have a

span of influence in the community. It is important that they are people who have a passion for mentoring and are in position to garner support within the community and advance the program to new levels.” Paula noted that her advisory teams are essential in developing strategies for fundraising, increasing opportunities, and obtaining mentors from the community. The advisory committee is directly involved in long range planning and is divided into various committees (fundraising, marketing and events) to accomplish this task. The success of the Prevention PLUS YouthBuild mentoring program is directly associated with the formation of their Mentoring Initiative Advisory Board. For more information contact Paula Palmer-Green, Mentoring Coordinator at Prevention PLUS YouthBuild, @ paulapalmergreen@gmail.com .

<i>Practice Profile # 4</i>	
Practice Title	The results of using Mentoring Best Practices in the early program implementation phases.
Program Objective Item(s)	Implementing Best Practices during program implementation.
Relevant to Task	Establishing program foundational policies.
Practice Overview	Early use of Mentoring Best Practices in program implementation results in greater chances for success and accomplishment of goals and outcomes.
Practice Outcomes	Best Practices used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well trained staff, mentors, and mentees. • A program that integrates proven mentoring principles. • A program with strong youth development youth services. • A sustainable program.
Prerequisites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate commonly recognized elements of effective mentoring practices. • Develop program policy and procedures. • Recruit, screen, orientate and train mentees/mentors. • Develop the mentoring match procedures and guidelines. • Develop a long-term program sustainability plan.
Implementation Steps	<p>Define expectations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a customized policy and procedural manual using Mentoring Best Practices. 2. Prepare a detailed implementation schedule. 3. Orientate leadership and staff. 4. Set milestone dates for implementation of program. 5. Evaluate progress and process. 6. Continually search the mentoring field for new and emerging promising practices.
Best Practice in Action	<p>YouthBuild Just-A-Start, Cambridge MA strategically plans their program implementation ensuring leadership and staff are properly orientated, policy manuals were prepared, recruitment plans constructed in advance, mentoring logo designed, partnerships developed, screening process was in place, training for both mentors and mentees was in order, and administrative requirements were all in place. In addition, the YouthBuild Just-A-Start coordinator prepared a comprehensive mentor handbook that capsulized the program mission, history, operations, and mentoring program polices, rules and guideline, along with community youth services resources and emergency contacts. Just-A-Start did exceptional due diligence in preparing program implementation using best practices, while understanding their youth populations and the challenges they face in their community. Because extensive pre-planning, the program has intentionally effectively provided mentee/mentor matches that have a life expectancy which will go far beyond the life of the grant. <u>For more information contact Kati Chase, Mentoring Coordinator at YouthBuild Just-A-Start, at katichase@justastart.org.</u></p>

References

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MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership. (2005). How to Build a Successful Mentoring Program Using the Elements of Effective Practice. Alexandria, VA: MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership.

⁷The development of **Operations Manual** was made possible through a generous grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice. YouthBuild USA would also like to acknowledge Education Northwest for their invaluable assistance in the development, guidance, and support given to this guide.

⁸ The development of **Ready for Mentoring: A Guide for YouthBuild Students** was made possible through a generous grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice. YouthBuild USA would also like to acknowledge Education Northwest for their invaluable assistance in the development, guidance, and support given to this guide.

⁹ The development of **Training YouthBuild Mentors: A Guide for Staff** was made possible through a generous grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice. YouthBuild USA would also like to acknowledge Education Northwest for their invaluable assistance in the development, guidance, and support given to this guide.