

Welcome! You are reading the first issue of the Mentoring Resource Center e-Newsletter. This e-Newsletter is written for, and distributed exclusively to, ED Mentoring Programs. Each month we plan to update you on the latest news from the field of youth mentoring, provide grant-specific announcements, showcase featured resources, and highlight solutions to questions posed by ED mentoring programs just like yours.

And we want to hear from you to. See something you really like? Notice a news announcement that is missing? Have a question? Contact us at edmentoring@emt.org with your suggestions and questions! We want this to be a resource that truly meets your needs.

We will be disseminating this e-Newsletter via the ED Mentoring Forum Listserv. If you wish to add or delete members from the listserv please contact Michael Garringer of the MRC at: garringm@nwrel.org.

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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Region III Grantee Training a Success!

Grantees from Maine to Florida gathered in Washington D.C. for the first grantee training offered by the Mentoring Resource Center. Grantees spent two and a half days learning

new ideas and building their toolkits for program success. Participants attended workshops focusing core principles such as recruitment, screening, and matching, in addition to specialized topics, such as diversity issues in mentoring, securing youth and parent buy-in, and introducing youth to careers.

The initial conference evaluation suggests that attendees really enjoyed the initial event, citing the CD-Rom of resources, the content of the specific workshops, and the opportunity to interact with fellow grantees as major pluses. One attendee wrote:

This has been extremely enlightening, especially because I am new to mentoring. I am lucky to have received training from such incredible teachers! The conference was very well-organized and executed. I have learned a great deal from the breakouts, due to their practical “exercises” conducted in small groups. Great conference!

Grantees from both cohorts should note that we will be putting the curriculum and materials from these events on the ED Mentoring website once they are all complete. This will give program staff access to the resources and materials over time, which can really help if you have staff turnover or add additional staff.

2. Region I and II Training Dates Set

Locations and dates are set for the remaining Region I and Region II Grantee Trainings. Please keep in mind that these events are for 2004 ED grantees only. We are working on a number of trainings and other learning opportunities that will be available to all cohorts. We look forward to meeting the new grantees at these events!

Region II Grantee Training

When: March 29th-31st

Where: La Mansion del Rio Hotel, San Antonio, TX

Who: Grantees from Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Wisconsin

What: A sample agenda and registration information can be found at:

http://www.emt.org/ed_mentoring/centralregistration.htm

Region I Grantee Training

When: May 10th-12th

Where: Wyndham San Diego at Emerald Plaza, San Diego, CA

Who: Grantees from Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

What: A sample agenda and registration information can be found at:

http://www.emt.org/ed_mentoring/westregistration.htm

3. The 2005 Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools National Conference Approaches OSDFS will be hosting a National Conference in Washington, DC, August 14-17, 2005. In addition to addressing broad-based issues related to alcohol, drug and violence prevention, the Conference will address issues related to crisis planning; health, mental health, and physical education; civic and character education; scientifically-based programs; and many other areas concerning drug and violence prevention. OSDFS is in the planning stage for this conference but more information is coming soon. In the meantime, please mark this date on your calendar and keep an eye on the OSDFS website for more info (<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/news.html>).

4. \$114 Million Proposed for Mentoring in the President's 2006 Budget

Hot off the press! The President's 2006 Budget was officially released this month. The proposed budget outlines \$114 million dollars for mentoring. The key federal agencies that are slated to receive mentoring-related funds include the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Justice Department's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. It remains to be seen if those dollars shift as the budget makes its way through the approval process, but it does look like mentoring continues to be a cornerstone youth development strategy at the federal level. For more information about the President's 2006 Budget visit: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2006/>

RESOURCES & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

5. Your Technical Assistance Providers Want to Hear from You!

Perhaps the most valuable service that the MRC provides to ED grantees is the provision of in-depth technical assistance. Technical assistance is the process by which we help you build a stronger program. It can involve offering you advice and practical solutions as you work through a problem, supplying research and resources that can strengthen your services, the creation of networking and learning opportunities, and personalized consultation.

The MRC's technical assistance services are about building a relationship with you and your program staff. Over the course of your grant we hope you will come to see the MRC staff as a trusted partner in your efforts, one that you can turn to for guidance and information. Because, in the end, we have just as much interest in seeing your program succeed as you do.

So please do not hesitate to contact us with your questions, concerns, and areas of need. We're here to help you and we look forward to working with you in building effective,

sustainable mentoring programs. We will soon be adding a “request for assistance” form to the website. In the mean time, you can always reach us at:

Phone – 1 (877) 579-4788

Email – edmentoring@emt.org

6. New and Useful Web Resources

We know as you get your programs up and running that program safety and volunteer screening are big issues that need immediate attention for just about everyone. This issue of the e-Newsletter looks at some online resources that can get you up to speed on screening and risk management. It now looks like we’ll be doing a lengthier publication on this topic at some point this year, in addition to providing immediate training on it at the events, but we thought that pointing out some of the better stuff on the Web would also be helpful.

Perhaps the best online resource for risk management information is the website of the Nonprofit Risk Management Center. This D.C.-based agency offers a wide variety of publications, training opportunities, and advice to programs just like yours. ED programs will be particularly interested in resources such as:

>>>Their *Community Risk Management and Insurance* newsletter, which is free for nonprofit organizations and government agencies (<http://nonprofitrisk.org/nwsltr/nwsltr.htm>). This month’s issue featured some great information on making some risk management “resolutions” to start the New Year and keeping safe and secure while engaged in online activities in the course of running your program. This current content can be found here: <http://nonprofitrisk.org/nwsltr/current.htm>.

>>>Their “Community Service Brief” called *Criminal History Records Checks*. Originally written for AmeriCorps programs, this concise publication really does a great job of covering the basics about the different types of checks and how programs should move through the process of getting them done. http://nonprofitrisk.org/csb/csb_crim.htm#crimtop

>>>They also have an amazing number of web-only and archived articles available on topics from looking at facilities from a risk management perspective to preventing false allegations of sexual abuse (<http://nonprofitrisk.org/articles/articles.htm>). One could spend untold hours just poking around their site and learning... A LOT...

[It’s also worth noting that they have also put out a great print resource specifically around mentoring called “More Than a Matter of Trust,” which is available from the MRC’s Lending Library.

(<http://www.nwrel.org/resource/singleresource.asp?id=10076&DB=res>)...]

Another online great resource is called “Guidelines for the Screening of Persons Working with Children, the Elderly, and Individuals with Disabilities in Need of Support.” It was developed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and features a great model and process for developing, assessing, and implementing a solid screening procedure (<http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles/167248.pdf>).

This resource, and many others on screening and background checks, can be found in the “online resources” section of the MRC website:
http://www.edmentoring.org/online_res2.html.

7. New Resources in the Lending Library

ED-funded mentoring programs have the ability to borrow materials from the Lending Library housed at the National Mentoring Center. Many grantees have already taken advantage of this service and have borrowed resources on a wide variety of program development topics (please remember to return your items so that others may borrow them!!!). Here are some of the latest titles added to the collection:

Why Bad Ads Happen to Good Causes

<http://www.nwrel.org/resource/singleresource.asp?id=15932&DB=res>

Knowing You've Made a Difference: strengthening campus-based mentoring programs through evaluation and research

<http://www.nwrel.org/resource/singleresource.asp?id=15928&DB=res>

When Living Hurts: for teenagers, young adults, their parents, leaders, and counselors

<http://www.nwrel.org/resource/singleresource.asp?id=15927&DB=res>

More Than Just a Place to Go: how developmental assets can strengthen your youth program

<http://www.nwrel.org/resource/singleresource.asp?id=15924&DB=res>

You can learn more about the Lending Library and search the collection here:

http://www.edmentoring.org/lending_library.html

8. Technical Assistance Question of the Month

In this section of the e-Newsletter, we will be taking a question we've been getting frequently from grantees and put out an answer to the whole group. This month's question is one that we were asked both via the TA Hotline (1-877-579-4788) and at the initial training. It goes something like this:

“My program is new, I'm new, a bunch of us are new... What the heck should we be doing?!!! When are things due? What steps should I be taking? Where do I get started?...”

The anxiety of getting a new mentoring program up and running is palpable. Even established programs can have difficulty adding on programming and staff when they get a new grant. Growing a solid program takes time, and the MRC will be here to help you every step of the way... but in the short term, here are a few things you can do to keep your head above water, figure out where you're at, and get things going in the right direction:

1) Revisit Your Grant!

This sounds simple, but you'd be surprised at how often program coordinators, and other staff hired AFTER the grant was awarded, are totally in the dark about what the agency or program promised to actually do. So take the time to revisit the goals, processes, and partnerships spelled out in the grant with all staff and stakeholders. Wondering how to do background checks? Look at what you proposed in your grant. Want to know who at the school site is responsible for what? Look in the grant. Want to know the goals for the number of matches? Or what data you're collecting for your local evaluation? Look at... well, you get the idea...

The point being that a review of the grant can answer some questions while pointing out other things that may have changed between now and then that need addressing. And it can make sure that all partners are clear as to their roles and responsibilities.

Misunderstood and poorly-executed partnerships can torpedo many new mentoring efforts.

2) Assess Where You Are in Designing the Program

Running a good mentoring program involves the simultaneous implementation of many different facets. No point in recruiting if you haven't figured out how background checks will be done. And you shouldn't be making matches if you don't know how you'll be monitoring them. The pieces of the mentoring program puzzle must be developed and thought out together.

Take the time to compare your program to one of the idealized "standards" of the field, such as the National Mentoring Center's "Foundations of Successful Youth Mentoring" (<http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/foundations.html>) or the National Mentoring Partnership's "Elements of Effective Practice" (available at <http://www.mentoring.org>). How many of the components mentioned in these guides do you find present in your program? What areas of program operations have you not thought about? Where will you need assistance in figuring out what to do? Use these as a filter of your strengths and weaknesses; from there you'll know where to put your time and energy in figuring out how your program works.

3) Think About Policies and Procedures

We cannot stress this enough. If you do not have a policy and procedure manual in place (or in serious development) you are asking for trouble. Not only will you be ill-equipped to deal with problem situations when they come up ("What do you mean I can't take my

mentee across state lines?... We're just going to the dog track and the firing range...") but you run the risk of losing a tremendous amount of program knowledge if key staff walk out the door. So develop clear policies and procedures so that you're covered legally, ethically, and procedurally in all situations and have clear ways of doing things that all staff can reference.

Among the many resources available to help in this area are "How to Develop an Operations Manual for Your Mentoring Program" by EMT Associates and the "Generic Mentoring Program Policy and Procedure Manual" developed by NMC (http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/policy_manual.html).

4) Create a Timeline

You may find it helpful to create a master timeline that includes dates that are meaningful to your program (internal benchmarks, launches of marketing campaigns, data collection deadlines for your evaluation, etc.) and dates having to do with the grant itself and the services the MRC is offering (quarterly report deadlines, grantee trainings, data submission dates, etc.). Folks often feel a whole lot better when they can visualize where they are at, and where they need to be in three months, or next fall...

5) Turn to the MRC

At the very core, we exist to help you figure this stuff out. In the short term, we'll be undertaking two things that will help with what we've just discussed: the creation of a collection of sample forms (applications, matching tools, youth referral forms, etc.) that your program can either use outright or get ideas from (depending on any copyright restrictions from the source) AND the creation of a "deadline reminder" section on the website that shows the upcoming ED deadlines and events, as well as all the MRC learning opportunities available to you. Both of these tools will be developed and posted to the website soon.

Until then, give us a call (1-877-579-4788) or shoot us an email (edmentoring@emt.org) and we'll do our best to help you navigate your way through these often chaotic initial months...

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