

The U.S. Department of Education Mentoring Resource Center e-Newsletter is a quarterly resource created specifically for ED-funded youth mentoring agencies. It previews upcoming events, announces grant-specific information, and provides resources and helpful advice to those running mentoring programs. It is disseminated 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](mailto:garringm@nwrel.org).

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#### RESOURCES & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

1. ED Mentoring Forum Listserv: What it is and how it can help you

The MRC Listserv (<http://www.edmentoring.org/grantee/listserv.html>) is one of the most valuable resources that grantees can access for information and advice from other grantees, as well as from MRC staff. (Remember, to access the information in the “grantee” portion of the website, you’ll need to enter the username “grantee” and the password “success.”)

Some of you may be asking: “What is a listserv anyway and how can it help me?” Read on!

What is a Listserv? According to Webopedia, a listserv is an automatic mailing list server. When e-mail is addressed to a listserv mailing list, it is automatically broadcast to everyone on the list. The result is similar to a newsgroup or forum, except that the messages are transmitted as e-mail and are therefore available only to individuals on the list.

For example, since you are reading this message you are a member of the U.S. Department of Education Mentoring Resource Center (MRC) Listserv called "ED Mentoring Forum." The ED Mentoring Forum is exclusively for ED Mentoring grantees. For the most part, using a listserv is as simple as using your regular email.

How can the ED Mentoring Forum Listserv help me and my program?

There are currently 531 members on the MRC Listserv who you can tap for ideas. Are you curious about how other ED grantees are structuring their career development programming? Looking for ideas for volunteer recognition? Do you want support around a situation where you had to reject a volunteer? Post your question to the ED Mentoring Forum Listserv and learn how other grantees have tackled these same issues. Program updates and upcoming training information are also posted on the listserv by the MRC staff. The more people who use and read the listserv, the better it becomes as a resource tool. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

Further information about the ED Mentoring Forum can be found on the MRC site at: <http://www.edmentoring.org/grantee/listserv.html>

## 2. Help is Just a Phone Call Away: ED Mentoring Technical Assistance Services

By now you probably know how to access the free technical assistance services available to all ED Mentoring programs, including the Technical Assistance Request Form on the website ([http://www.edmentoring.org/grantee/ta\\_services.html](http://www.edmentoring.org/grantee/ta_services.html)), the MRC hotline (1-877-579-4788), and the ED Mentoring Forum, accessible through the MRC website at <http://www.edmentoring.org/> The TA provider team, headed up by Elsy Arevalo, is eager to help you work through whatever challenges your program may be facing as you move from start-up to full implementation. This can be a particularly sensitive time in the life of a new program as the reality of day-to-day operations takes over. If you have not yet taken advantage of the wealth of resources available through the TA service, you might like to know what kinds of assistance others have requested. Last month, for example, TA requests included:

- >>> Advice on effective assessment and screening of mentees and their families
- >>> How to work effectively with schools
- >>> How to include cultural diversity issues in mentor training
- >>> Program evaluation
- >>> Mentor screening, background checks, and child molestation concerns
- >>> Volunteer recruitment strategies
- >>> Best practices in mentoring
- >>> Activities for matches to do in school-based programs

The technical level and length of assistance can range from a one-time phone conversation to an in depth, face-to-face visit by the TA provider. For example, one program requesting assistance with their volunteer recruitment process will receive a targeted recruitment plan that includes a month-by-month work plan for achieving the goals they have established for recruiting volunteers. Another, seeking activities for matches in a school-based program, was sent specific activities and

directed to a number of online resources. Calls from people who just want to “think out loud” about a particular issue are also welcome.

The online form works fine for those who know what they are asking for, but in many cases a phone call to talk the issue through can be most productive. Again, that number is 1-877-579-4788.

### 3. Resource Spotlight: The Handbook of Youth Mentoring

This quarter’s featured resource is an easy choice. April marked the release of the Handbook of Youth Mentoring, edited by David L. DuBois, Ph.D., and Michael J. Karcher, Ed.D., Ph.D. This long-awaited publication offers the mentoring field a comprehensive look at the research and best practices around youth mentoring of all types.

Specific chapters deal with key issues, such as what we know about the relationships that form through mentoring, the best practices in designing a program, how mentoring can fit in with other youth services and programming, and how mentoring works in school settings. All of these are topics that are relevant to the work of ED-funded programs.

Dr. Karcher provided an excellent plenary sessions at the March San Antonio conference and May San Diego conference, where he discussed mentoring research and some of the findings from his evaluation of a school-based peer mentoring program. His talk highlighted the need for “developmental” mentoring relationships rather than “prescriptive” or “instrumental” ones. This distinction has profound implications for ED programs and the types of relationships they encourage their mentors to build within schools and community settings.

The Handbook for Youth Mentoring gives the mentoring field something it has needed for quite some time: a text book. It’s a tremendous gateway to the world of mentoring research. Everyone wants to know what the research tells us about mentoring and how that can get translated into program practices. This book can help mentoring programs develop more effective, research-based programs, and makes an excellent starting point in the professional development of your staff.

The book can be ordered directly from Sage Publishers here: <http://www.sagepub.com/book.aspx?pid=10596>. It is also available through most online book retailers.

Whether you get access to the book or not, ED grantees should know that the MRC is here to help you wade through the research to get the information you need to run a better program. So if you have questions about the evidence base for things you are already doing or are considering doing, please call the MRC hotline at 1 (877) 579-4788.

ED grantees should note that we will be getting a limited number of copies of the Handbook of Youth Mentoring for the Lending Library.

#### 4. Resource Spotlight: Program Evaluation Tips and Tools

All ED mentoring grantees are required to develop and implement a comprehensive evaluation of their programs to determine effectiveness in meeting stated outcomes and whether or not the program is being implemented as intended. Program evaluation is more than just a task to fulfill a grant requirement; however, done right, it can help you find continued funding, increase your volunteer pool, and provide the best possible services for your clients.

Many programs choose to hire an outside evaluator to set up and administer their evaluation plan, while larger organizations may have internal evaluation units that can provide this service. It's important to remember that once an evaluation plan has been set up and is being implemented, changes or additions to the plan can seriously invalidate your results. If you are working with an evaluator, check with them before making any significant changes to both your evaluation plan and your mentoring program.

That said, program managers may be interested in learning more about the evaluation process and may also want to find specific tools to supplement their evaluation plan, such as a parent satisfaction survey or a tool to evaluate your training activities. Program managers who have limited formal training in program evaluation may want to learn some "evaluation jargon" and develop a working knowledge of the essential components of a quality evaluation plan. With this in mind, here are a few good resources for program evaluation in a mentoring or school-based program.

##### **Gauging the Effectiveness of Youth Mentoring.**

For a concise discussion of evaluation in the mentoring context, read the article: Gauging the Effectiveness of Youth Mentoring, by Dr. Jean Rhodes, written for MENTOR's Research Corner and provided on their website in its entirety. Dr. Rhodes includes discussions of using benchmarks to compare your own program with other research, and implementing process and outcome evaluations of programs. To read the article, go to:

[http://www.mentoring.org/program\\_staff/evaluation/program\\_evaluation.php?pid=1](http://www.mentoring.org/program_staff/evaluation/program_evaluation.php?pid=1)

##### **What's Working? Tools for Evaluating Your Mentoring Program.**

Based on tools developed by the Search Institute to evaluate the Schools Plus Mentoring Program (a partnership between Pillsbury and Big Brothers Big Sisters), *What's Working?* includes surveys, focus group questions, and interview protocols that allow you to gather information from mentors, mentees, parents, and teachers/other adults. This resource also points out the powerful connections between mentoring programs and the asset categories. Available for purchase (\$24.95) at:

[http://www.search-institute.org/catalog/catalog/product\\_16214\\_Whats\\_Working.html](http://www.search-institute.org/catalog/catalog/product_16214_Whats_Working.html)

ED Mentoring programs can also borrow this resource, and many others, from the lending library housed at the National Mentoring Center. You can access the library through the MRC website at:

[http://www.edmentoring.org/lending\\_library.html](http://www.edmentoring.org/lending_library.html).

##### **Evaluating Your Program: A Beginner's Self-Evaluation Workbook for Mentoring Programs.**

Published by Information Technology International (ITI) and Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) (2002), this publication was prepared as part of the Office of Juvenile Justice and

Delinquency Prevention evaluation of their Juvenile Mentoring Programs (JUMP). It is a valuable workbook for programs to use to plan and build their own evaluation, and its step-by-step format makes it an excellent learning tool as well. Available for free download at [http://itiincorporated.com/sew\\_dl.htm](http://itiincorporated.com/sew_dl.htm).

**Out-of-School Time Program Evaluation: Tools for Action.**

Author(s): Geiger, Elke & Britsch, Brenda (2003). This downloadable toolkit was developed for use by out-of-school-time programs, so much of the advice and many of the instruments are easily adaptable to ED mentoring programs. This resource manual includes surveys for students, parents, teachers and staff, and community partners. Baseline surveys and focus group tools are also provided. Available for free download at:

[http://www.nwrel.org/ecc/21century/publications/ost\\_tools.pdf](http://www.nwrel.org/ecc/21century/publications/ost_tools.pdf)

**Measuring the Quality of Mentor-Youth Relationships: a Tool for Mentoring Programs.**

Linda Jucovy, Public/Private Ventures. Published by Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (NWREL) (2002). This step-by-step packet is an evaluation guide for programs to gauge the effectiveness of their mentor/youth matches by using a simple 20-question survey. The Packet walks the evaluator through the process of administering, scoring and interpreting the surveys, and it comes with reproducible surveys and scoring sheets. Available for free download at:

<http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/packets.html>

5. Technical Assistance Questions of the Quarter:

\*\*\* “OK, the program is funded and operational, now how can I train and support my new staff? How do I get them up to speed?” \*\*\*

It happens to the best of us. We have the grant, we know what we want to accomplish, volunteers are eager to begin, youth are waiting to be served, and community partners are ready to roll. In the midst of program planning and community relationship building, we may forget to prepare for the influx of one of our most important resources: the program staff. The mentoring field has developed many wonderful resources for training and retaining quality mentors and for orienting new mentees, but there are far fewer resources to help us develop quality orientation, training, and supports for new staff. Yet high staff turnover can plague an otherwise successful program, and a staff member who doesn't understand the mission, values and operating principals of your program can be a liability rather than a resource.

So how can you deal with your sudden growth of staff, providing them with quality training and support during your busiest program start-up time? Programs may not have the luxury of offering a full day of training, and sometimes that isn't the best way to go anyway. What is needed is a plan that will make new employees feel welcome, needed, and informed. Here are some tips:

Before new staff start:

- 1) Be sure your job descriptions are as accurate as possible, duties and supervision clear. The Friends for Youth Mentoring Institute has some sample job descriptions you can review at: [http://www.homestead.com/prosites-ffy/files/Job\\_Descriptions.pdf](http://www.homestead.com/prosites-ffy/files/Job_Descriptions.pdf) . If you have trouble accessing these resources, please contact Elsy Arevalo at [elsy@mentoringinstitute.org](mailto:elsy@mentoringinstitute.org).
- 2) Assign someone in your organization to coordinate basic new staff orientation. Develop a checklist and time line for achieving each step, from the tour of facilities to how the phone system works.
- 3) Assign someone to be in charge of training in work-related areas: i.e. program purpose, youth development, mentoring principals and practices, volunteer management, community partners, and so on. Ideally this should be a supervisor, but others can also help.
- 4) Have the staff person's space ready and welcoming, even if it's just a cubicle or the room down the hall that used to be storage.
- 5) Be sure everyone in the program knows when new staff are coming, and schedule opportunities for new staff to meet their co-workers during the first few days.

#### The First Day/Week:

The slickest orientation session in the world can't compensate for the fact that new staff are pretty unlikely to absorb all the volumes of new information they receive on their first day, or even in their first week. Start with the basics. People become productive sooner if they are firmly grounded in the basic knowledge they need to understand their job, and they feel more comfortable when they know who they are working with and how things work at their agency. That said, there are many things you will need to cover during the first week of employment, including:

- 1) Welcoming greeting, either formal or informal, by supervisor and key staff when new staff arrive at the site. Flowers, a sign, or coffee and treats may sound corny, but they go a long way towards making new staff feel appreciated.
- 2) Basic new-hire paperwork and personnel policies and procedures, including benefits, vacation and sick leave, and other human resource items. Knowing right away when payday is can be a reassuring piece of information for new staff. Meeting the people who handle payroll and personnel matters is also important.
- 3) Meeting with supervisor and/or other program staff to cover program and job-related information, such as:
  - >>> Program overview, history, mission, goals and objectives
  - >>> Job expectations, supervision, program structure, organizational charts
  - >>> Community and education partners and how they fit in
  - >>> Immediate tasks, short term goals, schedule for the coming week or two

4) Staff introductions and tour of the facilities. This may be quick or take a few days, depending on the size and locations of your program. Allow time for staff members to talk briefly about what they do and how it relates to the staff's area of responsibility.

5) Introductions of partnering agency staffs, volunteers, board members and others. This may occur over time, but new staff should meet key partners as soon as possible to help them develop positive relationships with them.

It's also important to give new staff something concrete to do early on, to allow them to learn by doing. Most new staff members are eager to get going and feel useful. Just make sure that they have the information they need to make their first tasks successful.

And don't forget to:

>>> Notify your program officer at the U.S. Department of Education about any staff changes (especially if you have hired a new program director) and send your new staff members resume.

>>> Email us your new staff person's contact information at [edmentoring@emt.org](mailto:edmentoring@emt.org).

>>> Sign them up for the ED Mentoring Forum Listserv by emailing [garringm@nwrel.org](mailto:garringm@nwrel.org)

>>> Have them poke around the MRC website to see the wealth of resources and information they have access to.

Ongoing Support:

The Golden Rule of staff orientation is "Keep the door wide open for questions and discussion." This is especially important in programs where staff may be jumping into job duties quickly, where the program is highly visible in the community, and where issues of safety and risk management are vital. Ongoing support should include:

>>> Setting a regular time to meet and allow for reflection and questions, and to provide constructive feedback and praise;

>>> Scheduling formal training opportunities in key areas, such as volunteer recruitment, youth development, team building, or other skill-building topics. Staff development is a HUGE part of running a successful program, so make sure that you provide opportunities to learn and help your staff fill in the gaps in their knowledge.

>>> Encouraging other staff to check in with staff to see if they need anything.

A good (and free) resource for staff training in mentoring best practices is available through the EMT Online University. These one-hour trainings enable staff to select courses that are most relevant to their jobs and to work at their own pace. EMT Online University is currently offering five courses, including Promoting Positive Adolescent Development, Starting a Mentoring Program,

Orientation for Mentors, Finding Mentors, and Mentee Training. For more information, contact Elsy Arevalo at 310-543-5312 or through email at [elsy@emt.org](mailto:elsy@emt.org).

#### Must Reads for New Mentoring Staff:

All new staff should be familiar with their own programs' grant proposal, program materials, policies and procedures, and other agency documents that are relevant to the project. In addition, here is a brief list of recommended reading to enhance staff knowledge of youth mentoring.

Stand by Me, Jean Rhodes (available from the Lending Library:  
<http://www.nwrel.org/resource/singleresource.asp?id=14156&DB=res>)

BBBS Impact Study, PPV (available online at:  
[http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/111\\_publication.pdf](http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/111_publication.pdf))

Elements of Effective Practice, NMP (online at: <http://www.mentoring.org>)

Much of the content on the Program Design and Management section of the MRC site:  
[http://www.edmentoring.org/online\\_res5.html](http://www.edmentoring.org/online_res5.html)

#### The Don'ts . . . :

For a great checklist of what NOT to do when new staff come on board, check out this web page, courtesy of About.com. (there's a lot of other good information linked from this article as well):  
[http://humanresources.about.com/od/orientation/a/top\\_turnoffs.htm](http://humanresources.about.com/od/orientation/a/top_turnoffs.htm)

\*\*\* What is Megan's Law and how can it help us screen mentors? \*\*\*

What is the law?

Simply put, Megan's Law requires registry of convicted sex offenders and public access to these registries for the purpose of reducing the risk of sexual abuse to children.

The 1994 Jacob Wetterling Act requires states to register individuals convicted of sex crimes against children. Megan's Law, enacted in 1996, requires that every state make private and personal information on registered sex offenders available to the public. The law also allowed states some discretion in establishing criteria for disclosure, so that laws and procedures for accessing the information vary from state to state.

How does Megan's Law work?

According to the federal law, individuals who have been convicted of specific sexual crimes (defined by state statute) are required to register when they live in the state, when they work in the state, and within a defined number of days (specified by state statute) of moving into a new state. Convicted offenders are responsible for their own compliance, and each state has some mechanism in place for tracking unregistered offenders.

What information is provided?

Each state provides different information in different formats, and each state sets its own definitions for which specific sex crimes are subject to the law. Some states provide details such as whether the person is currently wanted for a crime, while others limit the information to which zip code the person resides in.

How do I access my state's registry?

Depending on your state's confidentiality laws you may be able to access the Megan's Law registry through the Internet. In certain states such access is not available. If that is the case for your community, you can go to the local sheriff's department with the name and birthday of your current applicants to conduct a search. This service should be available at no cost to you.

Two websites provide details about accessing state registries and obtaining other details about each state's criteria:

**Missing Kids.com** has fact sheets for every state's Megan's Law registry, describing the scope of the state program and how to access the information:

[http://www.missingkids.com/missingkids/servlet/PageServlet?LanguageCountry=en\\_US&PageId=1545](http://www.missingkids.com/missingkids/servlet/PageServlet?LanguageCountry=en_US&PageId=1545)

**KlaasKids Foundation**, whose mission is to stop crimes against children, includes a state-by-state assessment of sex offender registration and community notification statutes, including the number of sex offenders registered in each state, who the law applies to, and how it is enforced. They also list states where Internet access is available. <http://www.klaaskids.org/pg-legmeg.htm>

Why should I use Megan's Law Registry if I conduct a federal and state criminal background check?

There are several reasons to check the sex offender registry. First, they are generally updated more frequently than background checks. Second, unlike most state criminal records checks, they include information on people who have committed their crimes in other states and then relocated. Third, access is free, so adding it to your list of checks won't cost anything except your time. Finally, when it comes to protecting your mentees against sexual predators, you can never go too far.

A final word of caution: Many things can go wrong with the state registries, including the offender's failure to register, lack of sufficient personal data to positively identify the offender, or a conviction prior to the enactment of the law. Checking your sex offender registry should not take

the place of accessing federal and state criminal records. Also, records can be incomplete. Not all offenders have been caught.

A thorough discussion of background checks will be available later this year in an upcoming MRC publication on screening mentors.

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That's it for this issue of the e-Newsletter. As always, stay in touch and let the MRC know if there's anything you'd like to see in the next e-Newsletter.

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