

# Mentoring in America: A Summary of New Research

*Both MENTOR and the Corporation for National and Community Service have released new studies that shed new light on mentors and the “mentoring gap”—the number of young people in need of a caring adult to help them succeed in life—as well as Americans’ attitudes, motivations and behaviors toward mentoring. Findings from the Corporation’s survey, titled **Volunteers Mentoring Youth: Implications for Closing the Mentoring Gap**, are designated by an asterisk (\*), while the findings from MENTOR’s study, titled **Mentoring in America 2005: A Snapshot of the Current State of Mentoring**, are designated by a double asterisk (\*\*).*

## One-on-One Mentoring Is on the Rise\*\*

- ▶ Approximately 3 million adult volunteers are involved in formal, one-on-one mentoring relationships with young people, an increase of 19% (500,000 mentors) since 2002.
- ▶ While a growing number of youth have mentors, an additional 14.6 million young people could benefit from having a mentoring relationship. This unmet need constitutes the “mentoring gap.”

## Most Mentors Work Full Time\*

- ▶ 59% of all volunteers who engage in mentoring work full time—a higher percentage than for volunteers who are not engaged in mentoring (53%).
- ▶ Despite having less discretionary time, these adult volunteers are more inclined to mentor youth than people who do not work. Thus, workplace mentor opportunities are important for recruiting more mentors.

## A Substantial Amount of Mentoring Takes Place through Religious Organizations\*

- ▶ 43% of all volunteers engaged in mentoring youth volunteer in or through religious organizations, making religious

organizations a primary place to recruit additional mentors. The next most prevalent site for mentoring is educational organizations, at 31%.

## Millions of American Adults Are Willing to Mentor\*\*

44 million American adults who are not currently mentoring a young person say they would seriously consider mentoring. Some key factors that would encourage them to take the next step include:

- ▶ The availability of expert help when needed (83%).
- ▶ The convenience of mentoring a young person near their home or office (83%) or with programs that offer a variety of schedules and interests (79%).
- ▶ Employer sanctioned time off to mentor (70%).

## Mentors Are Willing to Work with Youth from All Backgrounds\*\*

- ▶ Current mentors are very willing to work with special populations of youth, including youth with disabilities (83%), children of incarcerated parents (78%) and immigrant youth (77%).

*(Continued)*

## College Age Adults Are Prime Candidates to be Recruited as Mentors\*

- ▶ The propensity to be a mentor declines with age. Volunteers 16 to 24 years old are the most likely to be mentors, making college age adults and even high-school students prime candidates to be recruited as mentors.
- ▶ 41% of volunteers who engage in mentoring youth are baby boomers (born 1946-1964), making them another prime target for recruitment.
- ▶ Volunteers age 65 and older are the least likely group to mentor.

## Black Volunteers Are More Likely Than White Volunteers to Be Mentors\*

- ▶ 25% of black volunteers are engaged in mentoring, compared to 17% of white volunteers. (However, African Americans volunteer at a lower rate overall, 22% to 30%.)

## Mentors Are Extremely Committed Volunteers\*

- ▶ Volunteers who are engaged in mentoring serve a median of 80 hours annually, while volunteers who do not mentor serve a median of 40 hours annually.

## Mentoring Relationships Are Long-Lasting\*\*

- ▶ The average mentoring relationship lasts 9 months.
- ▶ 38% of mentoring relationships last at least one year.

## Mentoring Is a Rewarding Experience\*\*

- ▶ 96% of volunteers engaged in mentoring would recommend mentoring to others.
- ▶ Volunteers engaged in mentoring are motivated by a desire to help young people succeed (82%) and to make a difference in someone's life (76%).

## METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH SPONSORS

The Corporation's report is an analysis of the 2005 Volunteer Supplement to the Current Population Survey, a comprehensive survey of 60,000 American households that has been sponsored by the Corporation and conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics each September since 2002. The 2005 survey was the first time respondents were asked whether one of their volunteer activities was mentoring youth.

MENTOR's report is a follow-up to the first national poll on mentoring, which it commissioned in 2002. The new poll, conducted by Tele-Nation, was an omnibus telephone survey of American adults, 18 and over. The survey employed two waves of 1,000 participants each, followed the standard and approved practices for public opinion polls and is accurate within plus or minus three percentage points at a confidence level of 95%.

The Corporation for National and Community Service provides opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve their communities and country through the AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Learn and Serve America programs. Together with the USA Freedom Corps, the Corporation is working to build a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility in America. For more information, go to [www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov).

MENTOR is leading the movement to connect young Americans with caring adult mentors. A national advocate and expert resource, MENTOR delivers the research, policy recommendations, and practical performance tools needed to make quality mentoring a reality for more of America's young people. For more information, go to [www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org).

