

The National Agenda for Action: How *YOU* Can Help Close America's Mentoring Gap

Youth development experts now agree that mentoring is a critical element in any child's social, emotional and cognitive development. It builds a sense of industry and competency, boosts academic performance and broadens horizons.

Today, thanks to the commitment and dedication of mentoring advocates, 3 million young Americans are now enjoying mentoring's many benefits. That's a six-fold increase in formal mentoring relationships since the national mentoring movement galvanized the nation in the early 1990s. It's an impressive accomplishment. But, 15 million more young people who need mentors are awaiting their turn. They make up our nation's mentoring gap.

The National Agenda for Action was created to rectify this situation. It represents a comprehensive roadmap detailing the realistic steps necessary to bring the power of mentoring to all the young people of our nation who need mentors. The agenda incorporates the input of hundreds of individuals representing every aspect of the mentoring field. Its recommendations were crafted by an exceptional group of leaders.

The National Agenda for Action is an actionable plan designed to overcome the impediments to growth and close the mentoring gap. It identifies 21 action items focused on five strategic solutions:

- Generate adequate and sustainable funding;
- Foster a culture of mentoring;
- Safeguard program quality;
- Elevate the role of research; and
- Build necessary infrastructure.

Inside this companion to the National Agenda for Action, you will discover specific ideas about how you can help bring the National Agenda for Action to life. Regardless of your background, professional position or area of expertise, you have a role to play in the future of mentoring. If we each challenge ourselves to take action, we can change the future for an entire generation of young people.

Clearly, it will require an extraordinary commitment of resources and effort to realize this goal. But considering that the lives of millions of young people and the future vitality of our nation are at stake, that commitment of resources and effort seems not only feasible, but essential.

Pragmatists will correctly point out that even if it takes several years – or decades – to achieve the movement's ultimate goal, a growing number of young people will have their lives transformed along the way. Let's begin the transformation now. Read this agenda, study it and consider what you can do. Then, act.

With your help, we can create "a mentored America," where no young person would feel that he or she faced the challenges of growing up alone. In a mentored America, the encouragement, support and guidance of a trusted adult would help steer young people through the challenges and toward their true potential. The journey would still be difficult for many; but in a mentored America, it would be a journey of hope, and a journey that would lead to a brighter future for millions of young people.

The plan of action is in all of our hands. The time to act on it is now. Please join us.



MENTOR is leading the national movement to connect young Americans with caring adult mentors. As a national advocate and expert resource for mentoring, MENTOR delivers the research, policy recommendations and practical performance tools needed to help make quality mentoring a reality for more of America's young people.

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What Can I Do?

Action Steps by Sector

Regardless of your background, professional position or area of expertise, you have a role to play in the future of mentoring. Below are some ideas of the roles each sector can play in making the National Agenda for Action a reality. Please visit Mentoring.org for the latest information on the campaign to close the mentoring gap. Please join us in creating a “mentored America.”

	Generate adequate and sustainable funding	Foster a culture of mentoring	Safeguard program quality	Elevate the role of research	Build necessary infrastructure
Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn more about mentoring programs in your area at Mentoring.org and consider donating funds or services Advocate for greater funding for mentoring at the state and federal levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer for a local mentoring program or be a more purposeful informal mentor for youth you already know Be the best mentor you can by accessing the virtual community for mentors at Mentoring.org 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for the “Elements of Effective Practice” before volunteering or donating to a local mentoring program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for a greater public investment in mentoring research at the state and federal levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in the regular summit for the mentoring field Learn about the work of the State Mentoring Partnership in your area
Corporations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a workplace mentoring program or partner with an existing organization Provide funding and/or in-kind services to area mentoring programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide paid time off for your employees to volunteer with area mentoring programs Raise awareness about mentoring by including messages on your products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for the “Elements of Effective Practice” when selecting programs to partner with on funding and volunteering Provide expertise and knowledge to area mentoring programs in the areas of risk management and liability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest funds in carrying out high-profile research projects Support the work of the Research and Policy Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide leadership and resources to your State Mentoring Partnership – or help create one if it doesn’t exist Sponsor a regular high-profile summit for the mentoring field
Philanthropists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicate a greater percentage of resources to supporting mentoring programs Host forums to explore mentoring issues and mentoring’s relevance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underwrite key market research into effective mentor recruitment messages and development of recruitment toolkits for local programs Support the development of resources that will help youth workers add mentoring to their programming...or strengthen it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for the “Elements of Effective Practice” when selecting programs to fund Utilize standardized evaluation to track outcomes for funded programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest funding in greater research on mentoring Work with leading mentoring researchers to carry out high-profile research projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide for the development or strengthening of State Mentoring Partnerships in every state
Policymakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide greater funding for mentoring programs Embed mentoring as a strategy within existing positive youth development and prevention programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide paid time off for government employees to volunteer with area mentoring programs Ensure that government agencies involved in volunteer service utilize effective and diverse mentor recruitment messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make the SafetyNET background checks pilot permanent and universally accessible Utilize standard evaluation to track outcomes for programs receiving public funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carefully consider policy recommendations issued by the Research and Policy Council Ensure that federal and state agencies carry out high-priority research projects on mentoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the development or strengthening of State Mentoring Partnerships in every state Support the establishment of a federal coordinating council on mentoring
Local Mentoring Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make use of current mentoring research to present a more compelling case for funding mentoring Ensure that funding is diversified among public, corporate, foundation and individual donors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employ the latest recruitment messages to approach local businesses and organizations and make a “top-down” appeal for volunteers Point mentors in your community to Mentoring.org for more support and information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend training conferences to stay up-to-date with the latest program best practices, thereby providing the best outcomes for young people Utilize standard evaluation to track and assess your program outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for a greater public investment in mentoring research at the state and federal levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tap into the resources and support by your State Mentoring Partnership – or help create one if it doesn’t exist Participate in the regular summit for the mentoring field