



# Mass Mentoring Counts 2008

## The State of Mentoring in Massachusetts...

- Quantity of mentoring relationships
- Quality of mentoring relationships
- Sustainability, growth, gaps, and future implications



RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS DONAHUE INSTITUTE



## Letter from the CEO of Mass Mentoring Partnership

Dear Colleague,

In 2004, our immediate past board chair Ted Kelly, the Chairman and CEO of Liberty Mutual Group, advised that crafting a strategy to fulfill our mission to expand quality youth mentoring required us to understand the universe of structured youth mentoring in the Commonwealth. Through the Liberty Mutual Mentoring Initiative and with the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute as our research partner, we scratched the surface of this effort in 2005. In 2006, we went a step further and launched *Mass Mentoring Counts*, biennial research aimed at comprehensively capturing the field of youth mentoring in Massachusetts. The research is now a current that runs through all of our work and is at the core of our new five-year strategic plan. It has informed new initiatives from Quality-Based Membership to the AmeriCorps Ambassadors of Mentoring program to our efforts in Western Massachusetts.

Today's economy challenges non-profits to not only deliver quality services but also operate smart businesses. We believe the data contained in this report empowers the field to make sound decisions on both fronts. This level of accountability is a requirement in today's economy. At our recent Youth Mentoring Forum, Mary Walachy, executive director of the Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation, a leading funder in Western Massachusetts, channeled the philosophy of her trustees when she said, "In God we trust; all others bring data."

This undertaking would not have been possible without the program respondents, and the data is representative of the extraordinary work of mentoring programs throughout the Commonwealth. Seventy-eight percent of eligible programs from *Mass Mentoring Counts 2006* also provided us with data in 2008. As our colleagues from the Donahue Institute have pointed out, conducting this research once is valuable but sticking with it and learning the lessons of a transforming field over time is exponentially more powerful. Comparative data reveals developing trends and this year's research finds 11% growth in youth served by programs that completed both surveys. We have also added sections to benchmark integral quality indicators such as screening practices and match support, and quantity indicators on organizational growth predictors and sustainability.

The ability of *Mass Mentoring Counts 2008* to leverage additional resources for the field will only be as effective as our outreach with audiences ranging from elected officials and funders to major employers, practitioners, and researchers. We have undertaken an extensive plan to disseminate the data through regional events, to our partners in the public sector, and through a more extensive Web presence. Mass Mentoring will also train programs to leverage the data in their pursuit of funding, greater public awareness, and increased mentor recruitment.

I am also proud to report that the research demonstrates a substantial increase in programs' usage of Mass Mentoring's services. Our value is in our relevance to program practitioners and this data point reinforces that we are moving in the right direction.

*Mass Mentoring Counts 2008* is a powerful resource in our quest to double the number of youth served in mentoring relationships by 2013. The data empowers all of us to create a more comprehensive statewide network for collaboration, strategic alliances, new initiatives, and critical knowledge-sharing. It also inspires continuous improvement – not just for Mass Mentoring and the programs we serve, but ultimately for our youth, their future, and the social fabric of our communities.

With gratitude and best wishes,



## Executive Summary

Research indicates that, when done well, “mentoring programs can be effective tools for enhancing the positive development of youth.”<sup>1</sup> “Mentoring programs are likely to be effective to the extent that they are successful in establishing close, enduring connections that promote positive developmental change.”<sup>2</sup> As highlighted by Dr. Jean Rhodes of the University of Massachusetts Boston, mentors influence young people in three important ways: by enhancing social skills and emotional well-being, improving cognitive skills through dialogue and listening, and serving as a role model and advocate.

It is important to note that “mentoring is not a one-size fits all proposition. Each child has unique needs: the type of mentoring relationship that addresses one child’s needs may not address another’s.”<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it is critical to learn both about the wide-ranging types and characteristics of youth mentoring programs as well as the youth and communities they serve.

### Mass Mentoring Counts Initiative

In order to assess the state of youth mentoring in Massachusetts, Mass Mentoring Partnership (MMP) launched an important initiative entitled *Mass Mentoring Counts*. Originally launched in 2006, *Mass Mentoring Counts 2008* provides a current snapshot of the state of mentoring in Massachusetts and offers the first comparative analysis of changes in the field over the last two years. On a biennial basis, *Mass Mentoring Counts* depicts the landscape, trends, and needs of youth mentoring, measures progress, and promotes greater strategic investment of human and financial capital.

*Mass Mentoring Counts* is a powerful tool enabling MMP to effectively fulfill the following strategic objectives:

- Offer comparative data to identify gaps, trends, and establish benchmarks for the field to best meet the mentoring needs of youth;
- Use timely, relevant data to raise public awareness and strengthen the case for additional investment with media, legislators, funders and policy-makers;
- Develop a body of knowledge to guide strategic decision making for MMP and for individual programs;
- Create a more comprehensive statewide program network for collaboration, strategic alliances, new initiatives, and knowledge sharing; and
- Demonstrate the need for more people to volunteers as mentors.

*Mass Mentoring Counts 2008* reports findings on **formal** youth mentoring programs that match mentors with youth mentees.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jekielak, S.M. et al. (February 2002). “Mentoring: A Promising Strategy for Youth Development” Washington, DC: Child Trends.

<sup>2</sup> Rhodes, J. and D. DuBois. (2008). “Mentoring Relationships and Programs for Youth”. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 17, no. 4, 254 - 258.

<sup>3</sup> MENTOR Web Site, Research Agenda - [http://www.mentoring.org/program\\_staff/research\\_corner/research\\_agenda.php](http://www.mentoring.org/program_staff/research_corner/research_agenda.php)

<sup>4</sup> Unlike *Mass Mentoring Counts 2006*, this study includes cross-age peer mentoring programs and youth programs with youth-to-mentor ratios larger than 1:4.

MMP conducted extensive outreach to identify youth mentoring programs operating in the state of Massachusetts. As a result, *Mass Mentoring Counts 2008* captures data on the majority of eligible programs that completed the survey in 2006 as well as data from a large proportion of programs for the first time.

#### Comparing 2006 and 2008 *Mass Mentoring Counts* Samples

- **Greater Outreach in 2008** – Survey distributed to 54 additional youth mentoring organizations in 2008.
- **High Response Rate from Eligible 2006 Respondents** – Seventy-eight percent of *eligible* 2006 respondents completed *Mass Mentoring Counts* in 2008.
- **Additional Program Information Captured** – Sixty-four mentoring programs completed *Mass Mentoring Counts* for the first time in 2008. Nineteen of these programs were developed since 2007.
- **2008 Sample Significantly More Likely to be Component of Larger Organization** – Eighty-three percent of mentoring programs completing *Mass Mentoring Counts 2008* were components of larger organizations, compared with 66% responding to *Mass Mentoring Counts 2006*.

Eighty-seven organizations, representing a 51% response rate, completed the *Mass Mentoring Counts* web survey, providing information on single or multiple programs. In addition, 13 organizations, initially unknown to MMP, completed an “open link” survey. Therefore, this report provides information on the 135 youth mentoring programs run by these 100 organizations.

Key findings from the 135 mentoring programs responding to the 2008 *Mass Mentoring Counts* survey include:

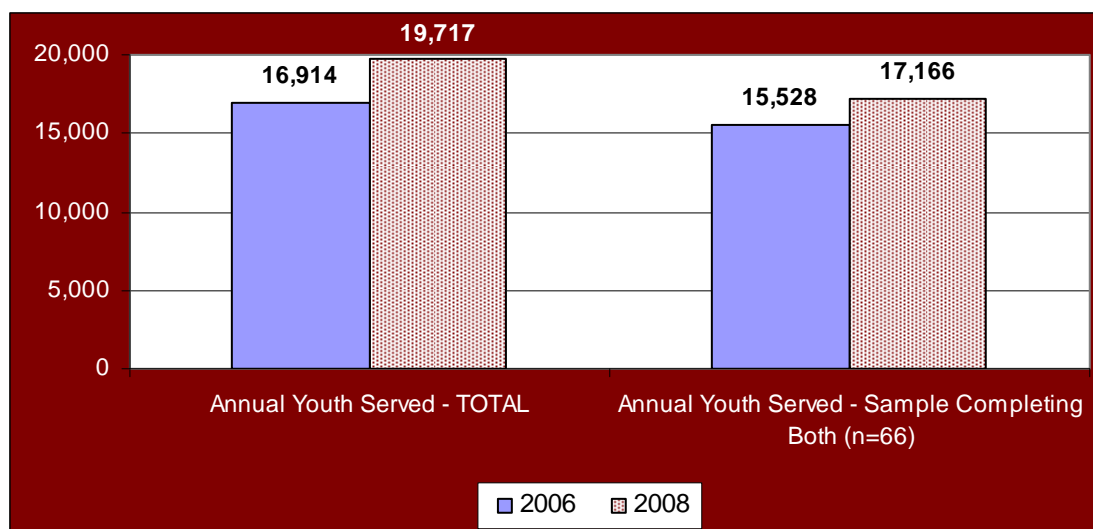
#### Snapshot of Formal Youth Mentoring Programs in Massachusetts

- **The programs are primarily located in urban areas.** Nearly 80% of the formal youth mentoring programs are located in urban areas with populations of 50,000 or more people; the highest concentrations are found in Boston.
- **More than one-half of the programs are located in the Greater Boston Region.** The remainder are well distributed across the regions of western (15%), southeastern (13%), northeastern (12%), and central (4%) Massachusetts.
- **There is a wide diversity in the programs’ length of time in operation.** Thirty-one percent of the programs completing the survey have been in existence for less than 5 years, 18% have been in existence between 5 and 10 years, and 51% have been in existence for 10 or more years. Recently developed mentoring programs are significantly more likely to be site-based and to be smaller in size.
- **The majority of youth mentoring programs are components of larger organizations.** More than four-fifths described their mentoring program as a component of a larger organization and nearly one-fifth as a stand-alone mentoring organization.
- **Approximately two-thirds of the youth mentoring programs are site-based**, with youth–mentor meetings taking place at a designated location rather than in the community at large. More than three-quarters of site-based programs take place at either local schools or community centers. **The remaining one-third of programs reflect the community-based model**, with youth and their adult mentors planning their activities on an individualized basis and meeting at varied locations in the community.

- **One-to-one matches of a young person with an adult comprise the largest segment of mentoring program models.** Approximately one-third of the programs reported promoting other mentoring models (i.e., group, team, and cross-age peer mentoring). Community-based programs promote one-on-one mentoring services almost exclusively. Site-based programs are significantly more likely to offer other mentoring models.
- The **primary goals** of youth mentoring programs are to increase self-esteem, to provide educational and academic support, and to improve social competence.

### **Snapshot of the Youth Served at Formal Mentoring Programs in Massachusetts**

- **Youth Served Annually** – More than 19,700 youth, ages 5–24, participated in formal mentoring relationships in 2008.
- **Increased Youth Served Counts in 2008** – Mentoring programs reported an additional 2,800 youth in formal mentoring relationships in *Mass Mentoring Counts 2008*. This represents a 17% increase in the number of youth reported in formal mentoring relationships between 2006 and 2008. Further analysis was conducted on the 66 programs that reported annual youth-served counts in both the 2006 and 2008 *Mass Mentoring Counts* surveys. More than 1,600 additional youth were served in 2008 by these 66 programs. This represents an 11% increase in youth served by these 66 programs.



- **Age and Gender** – Mentoring is fairly equally utilized as a youth development strategy across age ranges and is evenly divided by gender. Reported age breakdowns of youth served are as follows: ages 5–9 (23%), 10–14 (46%), 15–19 (31%), and 20–24 (1%).
- **Race/Ethnicity** – In terms of racial/cultural identity, youth of color are more likely to be engaged in mentoring relationships. Survey respondents cited that nearly three-quarters of those mentored are youth of color, with the majority being Hispanic/Latino(a) (27%) and African American (26%).

- **Trend To Serve Older Youth Participants** – The mentoring programs completing *Mass Mentoring Counts* in 2008 were significantly more likely to serve larger proportions of older youth than in 2006. In 2008, programs reported that 31% of all youth participants were 15–19 year olds, compared with 24% in 2006. Conversely, programs reported that 23% of all youth participants were 5–9 year olds in 2008, compared with 32% in 2006. Similar findings occur when solely examining the 51 programs that provided demographic data for youth participants in both 2006 and 2008.
- **At-Risk Subgroups Served** – Massachusetts mentoring is successfully reaching youth populations in need of mentors. Mentoring programs were asked to report the youth subgroups (at least 25% of their youth population) they serve. The most frequently cited subgroups included: youth from low-income families, from single parent households, and those at academic risk. All of these circumstances are correlated with at-risk factors for youth.
- **Where Youth Reside** – Nearly one-half of the mentored youth in the Commonwealth reside in Boston, primarily in the neighborhoods of Dorchester and Roxbury. Beyond Boston, youth in formal mentoring relationships are fairly equally divided by region with a concentration in large urban areas, particularly the cities of Worcester, Cambridge, and Springfield.

#### **Snapshot of the Adults Serving as Mentors at Formal Mentoring Programs in Massachusetts**

- **Mentors Matched Annually** – More than 13,000 individuals (14+) served as mentors in formal mentoring relationships in 2008.
- **Age and Gender** – Mentors are well represented by both genders and across broad age ranges. Program respondents cited that 57% of mentors are female and 43% are male. Reported age breakdowns of mentors are as follows: 14–22 (28%), 23–35 (37%), 36–49 (19%), 50–64 (14%), and 65 years or more (2%).
- **Race/Ethnicity** – Approximately three-quarters of individuals serving as mentors are Caucasian. In addition, 10% of mentors are Black/African American, 6% are Hispanic/Latino(a) and 4% are Asian.

#### **Drivers of Quality Youth Mentoring Relationships**

- **The vast majority of the mentoring programs reported expecting their matches to last at least one school year, and 42% of programs set their commitment from mentors for at least 12 months.** Programs promoting one-on-one relationships are significantly more likely to expect longer match commitments.
- **Consistency was also valued by the state’s mentoring programs**, with 79% of the mentoring programs requiring weekly meetings between mentors and youth, and another 15% requiring mentors and mentees to meet 2–3 times a month.

### **Challenges to the Growth of Quality Youth Mentoring**

- **Programs with Waiting Lists<sup>5</sup>** – More than 40% of the youth mentoring programs reported currently maintaining a waiting list. Of those programs with waiting lists, nearly 40% reported wait lists of 1–3 months, approximately 30% reported wait lists of 3–6 months, and approximately 30% reported wait lists of more than 6 months.
- **Youth on Waiting Lists** – For every six youth benefiting from a formal mentoring relationship, there is one young person on the waiting list. More than 3,000 youth are currently waiting to be matched with a mentor in Massachusetts.
- **Male and Younger Youth Disproportionately Represented on Program Waiting Lists** – Compared to the youth engaged in formal mentoring relationships, youth on the waiting lists are significantly more likely to be males and younger youth (age 5–9).
- **Program Needs** – Mentoring programs identified the need to build their financial resource development infrastructure as the number one challenge that confronts Massachusetts mentoring programs. In addition, mentoring programs reported the challenges of mentor recruitment, capacity building to identify and diversify funding opportunities, and match support and mentor retention.

### **Mapping Risk Factors**

This report provides maps to illustrate the current needs and gaps in the mentoring field. Maps of annual number of youth served are based on the following risk factors by place of residence:

- **Median Household Income** – While youth are engaged in formal mentoring relationships in towns representing all income levels, the towns with large numbers of their youth residents engaged in formal mentoring relationships (100 +) have average median household incomes well below the state average.
- **Youth in Poverty** – Towns with poverty rates higher than the state average are significantly more likely to have any youth engaged in formal mentoring relationships. Youth residents are engaged in formal mentoring relationships in 81% of towns with youth poverty rates *above* the state average as compared with 63% of towns with youth poverty rates below the state average.
- **Single Parent Families** – Towns with above average percentages of single parent families are significantly more likely to have any youth engaged in formal mentoring relationships. Youth residents are engaged in formal mentoring relationships in 81% of towns with the percentage of single parent families *above* the state average as compared with 62% of towns with the percentage of single parent families equal to or less than the state average.

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<sup>5</sup> Staff were asked to provide the number of youth currently on their programs' waiting list. The survey stated "*If your program does not have a waiting list, please enter "0"*". Consequently, the data does not differentiate between those programs that do not maintain a waiting list (i.e., not applicable) and those that currently have zero youth on their waiting list.

- **Single Parent Families in Poverty** – Towns with above average percentages of single parent families in poverty are significantly more likely to have any youth engaged in formal mentoring relationships. Youth residents are engaged in formal mentoring relationships in 88% of towns with the percentage of single parent families in poverty *above* the state average as compared with 62% of towns with the percentage of single parent families in poverty equal to or less than the state average.
- **Disconnected Youth (Youth, aged 16–19, who are Unemployed and Not Attending School)** – Towns with above average percentages of disconnected youth are not significantly more likely to have any youth engaged in formal mentoring relationships. This map illustrates a potential area of need in the mentoring field, working with these young adults in the areas of drop-out prevention and transition to the workforce.

### Forecast for Participant Services

- **More than Half of Programs Predict Growth in Participant Services** – Nearly three-fifths (57%) of programs predict growth in the number of youth served within two years. More than one-third predict participant services to remain stable, and less than 10% forecast a reduction in number of youth served in two years.

### MMP Services

- **The Majority of Mentoring Programs Reported Utilizing MMP Services** – More than 80% of respondents reported utilizing one or more of MMP’s services. The most frequently cited services include training, networking, and program consultation and technical assistance.
- **Increased Utilization of MMP Services Over the Last Two Years** – Comparisons between MMP services utilized in 2006 and 2008 reveals a significant increase in the number of mentoring programs utilizing MMP services – specifically, training, networking, and ongoing program consultation and technical assistance – over the last two years.

