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AFFILIATE OF



## Mentoring Matching Grants

Line Item 7061-9634

FY24 Final Summary Report

August 2023-June 2024

75 Kneeland Street, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02111  
[www.massmentors.org](http://www.massmentors.org)  
[info@massmentors.org](mailto:info@massmentors.org)

*The following report contains details and information about the cohort of recipients engaging with Mentoring Matching Grant Line item (7061-9634) from August 2023 to June 2024 = FY24.*

## About Mass Mentoring Partnership (MMP)

Founded in 1992, Mass Mentoring Partnership (MMP) is the only statewide organization dedicated to strategically expanding quality mentoring relationships throughout Massachusetts. MMP serves more than 320 mentoring programs and youth-serving organizations statewide, supporting over 43,000 young people in positive relationships with adults. Our program network includes schools, state agencies, faith-based organizations, community nonprofits, businesses, and colleges.

## What We Do

Mass Mentoring Partnership (MMP) **strengthens and expands mentoring across hundreds of organizations** to reach more young people.

We focus on:

1. **Training and Supporting Mentoring Organizations: We provide training, consultation, and best practices** to youth-serving programs, schools, and workforce organizations.
2. **Advocating for Funding & Policy Support** – We **secure state funding, influence policies, and educate leaders** on the importance of mentoring relationships
3. **Connecting Mentoring to Schools & Workforce Development** – We help **schools, businesses, and youth-serving organizations embed mentoring** into their work.
4. **Strengthening Youth Leadership & Voice** – We equip organizations with tools to **involve young people in shaping mentoring programs** and advocating for their needs.

## The History of Mentoring Matching Grants

Initially created in FY99, the Mentoring Matching Grant (line item 7061-9634) is the only mentoring-specific line item in the state budget. It is a critical support for young people, as funds are distributed to mentoring programs across the Commonwealth to support increased accessibility to the tools and resources they need to establish high-quality mentoring relationships as a valuable support system for youth. In addition, these programs have access to training and capacity-building support from MMP, based on the latest research and effective practices in the field of mentoring. This money is awarded in collaboration with DESE through a competitive RFP process and community review administered by MMP. Every young person deserves the opportunity to succeed, but too many face barriers to education, career pathways, and social support. Strong mentoring relationships provide guidance, encouragement, and access to resources that help young people thrive in school, prepare for careers, and make positive life choices.

### Investing in mentoring helps:

- ✓ **Students** stay in school, graduate, and access college and career opportunities; have an increased sense of belonging and social-emotional health.
- ✓ **Young professionals getting their first jobs** gain the mentorship and networks needed
- ✓ **Youth organizations** run stronger, more sustainable mentoring programs.
- ✓ **Policymakers and funders** recognize mentoring as a critical tool for opportunity.

✔ **Communities** are strengthened through creating webs of supportive relationships benefitting the individual and the collective.

Massachusetts needs a strong, connected mentoring ecosystem to ensure young people have the relationships they need to reach their full potential, and MMP exists to make that happen.

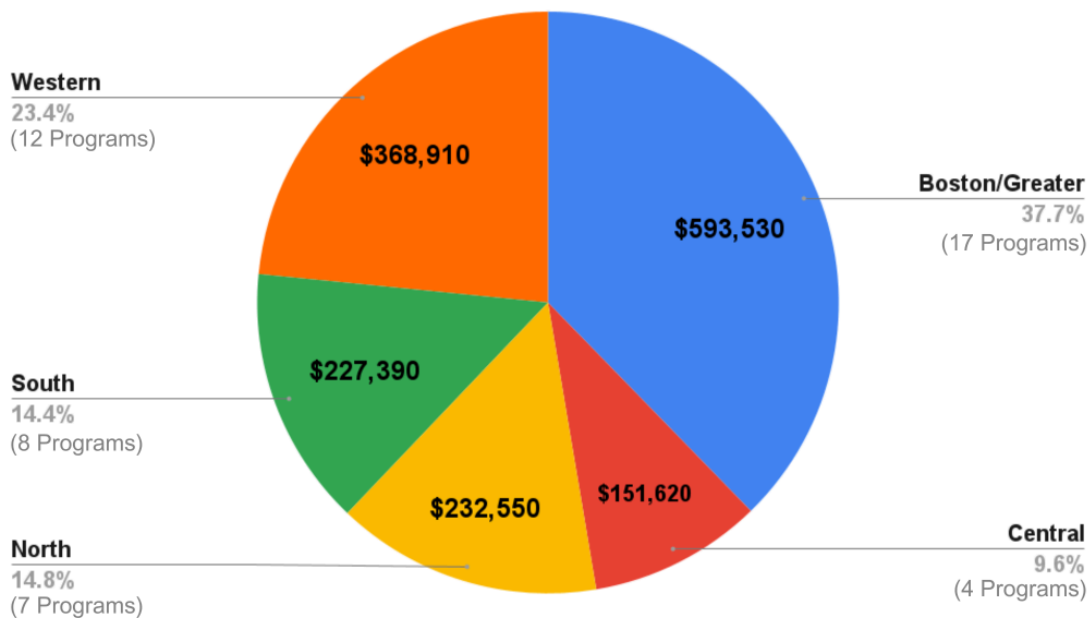
## Regional Distribution of the FY24 Mentoring Matching Grants (MMG)

Mass Mentoring Partnership (MMP) was awarded \$1.8 million and selected 48 programs to receive MMG grants in FY24. This was done through a competitive process that was based on several criteria: the strength of their program structure, their ability to sustain growth, and the suitability of their program goals and objectives. MMP provided technical assistance, training, and opportunities for mentoring programs to access research to enhance program practices and engage young people and their communities to achieve high-quality mentoring relationships.

All five regions of the state of Massachusetts received funds and assistance from the MMGs line item 7061-9634. Below is a snapshot of the mentoring program recipients across the five regions.

### FY24 MMG Recipient Program Distribution by Region

Regional Distribution of FY24 Mentor Matching Grants



**Direct grants to 48 mentoring programs: \$1,574,000**

**Specialized Training Support: \$10,000**

**\*Total Program Investment: \$1,584,000**

*\*Mass Mentoring Partnership reserves the balance for administrative costs and mentoring events, totaling 12% of the FY24 state allocation.*

## FY24 Grantees

Organization	Program Name	Geographic Area
18 Degrees	Pittsfield Community Connections	Western
African Community Education Program (ACE)	ACE Mentoring for Empowerment and Exchange	Central
Associates for Human Services, Inc.	Taunton Area School to Career	Southeast
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Mass/Metrowest, Inc.	Worcester Area College Mentoring and Mazie (Big Futures)	Central
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Mass	1-to-1 Mentoring on Cape Cod, South Coast, Martha's Vineyard	Greater Boston
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Western Mass (formerly Franklin County)	Community-Based Program	Western
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Western Mass (formerly Hampden County)	Community Based Mentoring	Western
Big Sister Association of Greater Boston	One-to-One Mentoring	Greater Boston
Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center	College Access and Post-Secondary Program (CAPS)	Greater Boston
Boston Partners in Education	Accelerate, Aim High, ILS	Greater Boston
Boston Project Ministries	LevelUP Life Coaching	Greater Boston
Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke	Success Mentors	Western
BUILD Boston	BUILD Youth Entrepreneurship Program	Greater Boston
Center for Human Development	Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hampshire County	Western
Centerboard	T.R.U.E. Mentoring	North
Chica Project	Community-Based Programming	Greater Boston and North
Coaching4Change, Inc.	Expanding Mentoring in the South Coast of Massachusetts	Southeast
Community Teamwork Inc.	Mill City Mentors	North
Crossroads	C5 Leaders: Postsecondary Success Initiative	Southeast
Enroot, Inc.	Enroot's Mentoring Program for Immigrant Youth	Greater Boston
EVkids, Inc.	EVkids Tutoring Program	Greater Boston

## FY24 Grantees

Organization	Program Name	Geographic Area
Falmouth Volunteers In Public Schools, Inc.	Falmouth VIPs School-based Mentoring Programs	Southeast
Family Services of the Merrimack Valley	Big Friends Little Friends	North
Follow my Steps	Thrive Over Survive	Western
Girls Inc. of Lynn	Bold Futures: Middle School Mentoring	North
Girls Inc. of the Valley	Junior Varsity College Access Now Mentoring Program	Western
Hyde Square Task Force	Jóvenes en Acción/Youth in Action (JEA)	Greater Boston
Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Boston	Children's Community Program	Greater Boston
Jewish Family Service of Western Massachusetts	Refugee Youth Mentoring	Western
LightHouse Personalized Education for Teens	LightHouse Program	Western
Linked Mentoring	Linked Mentoring	Central
Literations	Sustained Tutoring Program	Greater Boston
Love Transforming Community	Love to Learn Youth Program	Southeast
LUK, Inc.	LUK Mentoring	Central
Melrose Alliance Against Violence	Melrose Youth Mentoring Program	Greater Boston
Old Colony YMCA	Old Colony Y Mentoring	Southeast
Partners for Youth with Disabilities	Mentoring	Greater Boston
Positive Action Against Chemical Addiction	INSIGHT Elementary Mentoring Program (PAACA)	Southeast
Project Coach	Mentoring	Western
Railroad Street Youth Project	RSYP Mentoring Program	Western
Raw Art Works	Project Launch	North

FY24 Grantees		
Organization	Program Name	Geographic Area
School on Wheels of Massachusetts	Tutoring Program for MA K-12 Students Impacted by Homelessness	Southeast
Silver Lining Mentoring	Community Based Mentoring	Greater Boston
Springfield School Volunteers	Springfield School Volunteers	Western
Strong Women, Strong Girls, Inc.	SWSG Core Mentoring Program	Greater Boston
The DREAM Program	Village Mentoring	Greater Boston
Youth Development Organization, Inc.	Mi Sendas	North
YMCA of Metro North (Demakes Family YMCA)	Mentoring Program	North

**Total number of matches supported by this grant: 5,907**

Northeast	FY24	FY23
Matches	219	357
Waitlist	96	203

Central	FY24	FY23
Matches	127	101
Waitlist	270	279

Greater Boston	FY24	FY23
Matches	4,237	2,895
Waitlist	549	331

Western	FY24	FY23
Matches	540	322
Waitlist	328	141

Southeast	FY24	FY23
Matches	784	2784
Waitlist	418	343

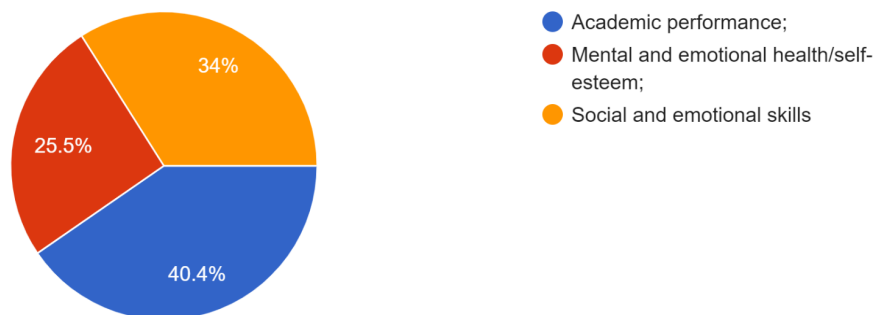
## FY24 Programmatic Outcomes

With all programs employing unique and individual evaluation processes, we provide the below reporting results to share additional successes achieved due to the MMG investment in mentoring programs.

In keeping with regulations set by the DESE, MMP requires all programs to choose one of three outcomes/goals to be met with this funding as their primary goal. These outcomes include measuring an increase in:

- Academic performance,
- Mental and emotional health/self-esteem, or
- Social and emotional needs

**MMP is proud to report that 95.7% (46 programs) of the 48 programs reported that they were able to meet their primary goal. The following graph shares the distribution of the three outcomes and goals chosen by the cohort.**



Programs were also offered the opportunity to choose a secondary goal, whether it be one they have chosen from the primary goal list or a different goal that may represent their specific type or context of mentoring.

- 73% of grantees (35 programs) also chose a secondary goal. **100% met their secondary goal!**
- 70% of these chose goals from the original list offered in the request for proposals.
- 23% (8 programs) offered site-specific outcomes, examples including:
  - The five core areas of Chica Project's anti-racist, anti-sexist program
  - Mental health AND social-emotional skills

Additional program outcomes include:

- **Transformative Relationships:** Mentoring relationships have led to significant personal growth and academic improvement. For instance, Avi and Holly's long-term mentoring relationship provided Avi with a supportive outlet outside her family, which was crucial for her emotional development. Holly, initially unsure about mentoring, found it to be a rewarding experience that brought joy to her life.
- **Academic and Career Guidance:** Mentors have played a pivotal role in guiding mentees through educational and career decisions. For example, a mentor helped a student named He navigate her

interest in hotel management, leading to successful financial aid applications and a hopeful outlook for her future.

- **Emotional and Social Support:** Mentors provided critical emotional support during challenging times. For instance, after Janai's mother passed away, her mentor, Karla, consistently supported her, helping Janai navigate her grief and continue her education.
- **Community and Social Capital:** Mentors have facilitated community connections and social capital. A mentor with an entrepreneurial background connected students with industry professionals, providing invaluable exposure and learning opportunities.
- **Long-term Impact:** There are ample stories of mentees who have gone on to achieve significant educational and professional milestones, a few of which are listed below.
  - After being matched with the same mentor since 7th grade, this mentee received a full scholarship to Nichols College
  - The thirteen-year presence of C4C in Massachusetts has created a generational impact and expanded positive effects. One College Mentor serving in Taunton remembers C4C from when she was in middle school. She currently attends Stonehill College and studies Elementary Education. After returning to her hometown of Taunton to support students from her own neighborhood, she said that being a College Mentor with C4C “solidified [her] choice of becoming a teacher in the future.”
  - Blad attended UMASS Lowell, where he studied computer science. During his studies, he interned at his mentor’s company for two summers, gaining valuable experience. Recently, Blad graduated and accepted a Business Analyst role at an IT company. This success story highlights the lasting impact of mentoring and showcases how public investment in youth-serving programs can create meaningful and transformative opportunities for young people.
  - One of our C5 Leaders was diagnosed with leukemia earlier this year, and he is in search of a matching donor for a bone marrow transplant. Empowered by their C5 relationships and belief that they can organize to make positive change happen, this teen’s Crossroads C5 Leaders community organized a special event to get more people engaged with the National Marrow Donor Program Registry. Over 100 people showed up to take a simple swab test that could help their peer and others like him, in hopes of providing a match for patients with life-threatening blood diseases like leukemia, lymphoma, or sickle cell disease.
  - In FY24, Enroot high school seniors applied to 3-5 colleges each and earned \$118,000 in scholarships. Among College Success students, 12 graduated from 2 or 4-year colleges. 37 were in bachelor’s degree programs, 16 in associate’s degree programs, 1 in a certificate program, and 24 were working.
  - We celebrated JEA accomplishments and recognized the hard work of our graduating seniors and all JEA youth in June when youth, families, and HSTF staff gathered to watch JEA's music, theatre, and dance teams collaborate and perform at our year-end celebration. These artistic projects also celebrated the performers themselves and demonstrated creative self-expression and self-discovery, which help our youth develop transferable soft skills through challenging creative projects.
  - One of our JEA high school seniors, Wilson, aspired to work in the military, but after he investigated the military recruitment process, Wilson found he would not be able to join the military in the capacity he had envisioned. Wilson then worked with his volunteer mentor and

one of HSTF's Education Success Coordinators to explore alternative opportunities for Wilson's postsecondary and career journey. As a result of this mentoring, Wilson landed on the goal of a career as a police officer. During this process, Wilson worked with his mentor and HSTF staff to use resources such as career data from the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, as well as NextGen Talent education and career pathways software that helps youth outline a viable career path. Through this process, Wilson discovered that there is no advantage to a 4-year college degree when pursuing a career as a police officer, so he weighed his options and considered his goals with his mentor before ultimately making a decision that worked for him. Wilson will now begin his postsecondary education in a 2-year postsecondary program at Roxbury Community College this fall.

- Another of this year's JEA seniors, Anais, was a longtime JEA and HSTF participant. Anais was considering a career in social work, and Anais and her mentor worked together to explore Anais's options, research schools, and consider aid packages. Anais's mentor encouraged Anais to visit and research local college campuses to make the most informed decision regarding potential pathways to her future goals. As a result, Anais will be attending Lesley University this fall, which she chose based on Lesley University's social work program. Part of what appealed to Anais about Lesley University was based on her findings that Lesley University has an accredited master's degree program that will allow Anais to get her master's degree in the accelerated time frame of 1 year instead of 2.

## Leaning Into Innovation

MMG programs found new and innovative ways to continue meeting the needs of young people.

**Strategic Downsizing and Efficiency:** Big Sister Association of Greater Boston took proactive measures to safeguard its fiscal health by downsizing its workforce, which allowed for more efficient programming and opportunities for innovation. This included expanding school-based mentoring programs and successfully piloting a bilingual program at East Boston High School and Mario Umana.

**Enrollment and Mentor Pool:** Programs achieved full enrollment and maintained a robust pool of mentors, ensuring comprehensive support for students. This was complemented by the appointment of dedicated full-time staff to enhance program quality and growth.

**Innovative Models and Events:** The introduction of hybrid mentoring models and group mentoring events, such as monthly gatherings and community service projects, fostered a sense of community and increased mentor-mentee interaction.

**Curriculum and Training Enhancements:** Programs like "Chicas in Bloom" were revamped to include trauma-informed and social justice content. Additionally, mentor training was updated to better cover developmental relationships and behavior management.

**Community Engagement and Partnerships:** Programs expanded their reach through partnerships with local schools and organizations, such as the collaboration with the Museum of Science and the establishment of a Youth Advisory Board to empower youth leadership.

**Infrastructure and Capacity Building:** The acquisition of new facilities and the expansion of physical capacity allowed programs to serve more students and enhance learning environments. This included the creation of specialized learning spaces and extended programming hours.

**Recognition and Awards:** Programs received national recognition, such as the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America Platinum Award, for their community-based retention rates and growth in active matches and volunteer diversity.

## Mentor-Mentee Match Testimonials

*Project Coach has taught me that my voice matters. [The] program taught me that I can be a leader to youth but also to myself; there was never a time that I wasn't learning something new. Project Coach is so much more than an afterschool program, it's a family. - Project Coach Teen Participant*

*This academic year, BUILD engaged a first-time mentor with an entrepreneurial background who also works for the city of Boston. He came to BUILD with an interest in investing in young people of color and building meaningful relationships with them. He also is a community builder and went above and beyond to build community between his existing connections and BUILD students. The mentor was placed at New Mission High School in Hyde Park. During the first semester, he worked with a group of students who were passionate about sneakers and created a sneaker cleaning kit as their product. The mentor had contacts at Converse with whom he connected with the students so that they could share their love of sneakers and learn more about the retail world. Additionally, in the second semester, when the mentor worked with a group that created an energy cookie, the mentor reached out to a local cookie company to meet with the students. The company graciously hosted the students at their store and factory, providing a tour, background of their business, and lots of free cookies! This was an invaluable opportunity only made possible by the mentor and his priority of keeping students at the center (one of BUILD's core values). This mentor truly embodied the meaning of sharing networks with students and making connections by supporting and building social capital.*

*At Morton Middle School in Fall River, a seventh-grade student and her College Mentor connected through playing basketball. The student started asking lots of questions about the College Mentor's experience but admitted that she had never dreamed of going to college. After a few weeks of basketball, the student told her College Mentor she had changed her mind about college. She said, "I'm going to get a scholarship and go to Providence College and be a Division 1 basketball player!" Her College Mentor fostered both an interest in sports and in pursuing higher education through C4C's after-school program.*

## Mass Mentoring Partnership Supported Events for FY24 MMG Grantees

All Mentor Matching Grant recipients are invited to participate in the annual events and offerings hosted by MMP. The Kickoff event was required attendance and served as an opportunity for grantees to receive important information on the grant process, get to know other members of the cohort, share best practices and challenges, create a sense of connection and community, and receive information on MMP's advocacy plans for the year. Throughout FY24, **264 MMG cohort members attended MMP events with 100% member participation.**

## FY24 Mentoring Matching Grant (MMG) Kickoff Event



In October of 2023, the FY24 cohort of MMG recipients gathered in person to discuss ***The Resilience Equation*** with Dr. Sherry Hamby, Distinguished Research Professor of Psychology at the University of the South and Director of the Life Paths Research Center. Her research has focused on what makes people resilient in the face of adversity. She shared with the over 80 participants the importance of prevention efforts that can and do insulate young people from traumatic events before they happen. Many people have researched trauma and have created tools to measure trauma doses. Dr. Hamby shared with us the importance of focusing on resilience and measuring the doses of resilience. Dr. Hamby shared both theoretical concepts and built the skills of the participants to apply these concepts directly to their work.

Following the presentation by Dr. Hamby, the Distinguished Research Professor of Psychology at the University of the South and Director of the Life Paths Research Center, attendees broke out into small groups by region, allowing them to network and discuss their work and the morning's panel.

Kickoff Event evaluation data revealed the following:

**79% of respondents reported an increase in knowledge**

**95% of respondents reported that presenters presented ideas and concepts in a clear manner**

**85% of respondents reported that the exercises/activities helped them engage in the presentation**

**90% of respondents reported that they learned something that they can bring back to their practice**

**97% of respondents reported that they would recommend this training**

The following feedback was collected:

- This training inspired me to:
  - “Revamp my mentor training and bring back my newly gained knowledge to my program.”

- “Review our mentor training to ensure it incorporates some of the key takeaways from the session (for example, how to listen without judgment).”
- “Include some of this in our training and/or build out as a supplemental training/resource for mentors. Use the resilience toolkit.”
- “To amplify the message about resilience as a process rather than a personality trait.”
- “Think about my own approach to trauma and resilience in a different way than I had before.”
- “It’s nice to hear from other professionals in the agencies in the state. It also helps me reset to look at methods and procedures that we have been doing for so long and ask, ““Why do we do it this way?””

## 32nd Annual Mentoring Night at Fenway Park



**32nd Mentoring Night:** Mass Mentoring Partnership is proud to be a partner for over 30 years with the Boston Red Sox through Mentoring Night at Fenway Park. In May 2024, MMG grantees had a chance to join in on MMP’s largest annual match activity event with 1,000 attendees in the stands and on-field activations amplifying the mentoring movement, including singing the National Anthem and throwing the first pitch. It was an incredible day with over 971 attendees amplifying the mentoring movement and celebrating the power of quality youth-adult relationships. [Mentoring Night at Fenway Park](#)

## Closing Reflection: FY24 Challenges and Opportunities

While the pandemic may have been declared “over” during FY 24, its impact on young people, the systems they rely on for learning, working, and playing, as well as the broader economy and national employment landscape, continued to be felt. FY 24 marked a year of transition and transformation, where programs were forced to adapt, restructure, and adjust their strategies, staffing, and delivery models. Moving from fully remote to hybrid and, eventually, to fully in-person interactions was a significant yet rewarding challenge.

Despite these challenges, the data paints a clear picture: Nonprofits, while resilient, are still grappling with workforce shortages. This workforce gap has had a ripple effect, reducing capacity and prolonging waiting lists for vital services. Some services have been cut, and in some cases, positions have gone unfilled or have been

eliminated. This strain has put immense pressure on the remaining staff and stretched the capacity of mentoring programs to their limits.

Below are examples of some of the challenges faced by MMG Grantee's captured at the midyear point:

- **Organizations experienced operational challenges that impacted program delivery.** To illustrate, throughout this period, multiple challenges have impacted the Big Sister Association of Greater Boston and its programs. The organization proactively downsized its workforce by eliminating 14 positions to ensure long-term stability, using part of its endowment to position itself for success in 2024. Despite this, understaffing, particularly within the Partnerships Team, has been a significant challenge, especially after the departure of a Partnerships Manager in August 2023, which was not filled until March 2024. Staff transitions have also required team members to take on additional responsibilities.
- **Post-pandemic, volunteer mentor recruitment was (and continues to be) difficult.** National trends show a volunteer shortage, compounded by the increasing need for support from new immigrant students. Scheduling complexities with schools, particularly their condensed calendars, have added to the challenges of matching students to mentors, and difficulties in arranging guest speakers from colleges and job programs have persisted.
- **Student attrition due to financial pressures has also hindered efforts to engage and retain mentees,** with some students choosing employment over participation in programming. Despite these challenges, programs continue to show resilience by adapting to these obstacles and striving to create new recruitment and program improvement strategies.

However, amidst these trials, programs have demonstrated remarkable innovation, adaptability, and collaboration. Through creative problem-solving, flexibility, and the forging of new partnerships, organizations have redefined how they recruit and support staff. FY24 was undeniably a year of rebuilding, reimagining, and laying a strong foundation for the future.

The groundwork laid in FY24 will result in a renewed sense of purpose and growth. With the lessons learned, the resilience built, and sustained funding, FY25 promises to be a year of revitalization, bringing a significant increase in mentor matches and a brighter future for the young people we serve.