

Building the Mentoring Movement

BUILDING A MENTORING MOVEMENT: STRENGTHENING SYSTEMS, EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES

Initially created in FY99, the Mentoring Matching Grant 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 Mass Mentoring Partnership, 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 the Mass Mentoring Partnership.

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.

Without programs focusing on mentoring relationships:

- Students struggle with academic success and career readiness.
- Young people lack access to role models and professional networks.
- Opportunity gaps widen for historically marginalized youth.
- Communities miss out on a generation of leaders, workers, and engaged citizens.

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.

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

92%



more likely to volunteer regularly in their communities.

*with a Mentor

75%



more likely to have held a leadership position in a club or sports team.

*with a Mentor

22%



more likely to have experienced a strong sense of belonging while growing up.

*with a Mentor

74%



of those who had a meaningful mentor say that person contributed significantly to their success later in life.

85%



of young people with a mentor say this key relationship has helped them with issues related to school and their education.

58%



of young people say their mentor has supported their mental health.

60%



of those under 40 years old are still drawing advice from their childhood mentors.

*From the research study **Who Mentored You?** A study examining the role mentors have played in the lives of Americans over the last half-century. Commissioned by MENTOR, with support from EY, and created in partnership with the Custom Insights Team at Pacific Market Research (now Olympic Research and Strategy), Dr. Sam McQuillin of the University of South Carolina, Shaun Glaze and Kathleen Perez at Inclusive Data, Cecilia Molinari, and Jenni Geiser.

SO, WHY MENTORING?

- Almost 70% of today's young people could remember a time when they wanted a mentor for support but didn't have one. The mission of the mentoring movement is to expand investment in programs to ensure every young person has at least one trusting relationship with an adult in their life.
- Mentoring is one of the few prevention and intervention strategies that can effectively address multiple risk and protective factors simultaneously.
- The average American gives the mentors they had growing up more than 50% of the credit for their success in life. That goes up considerably for those who grew up in poverty or faced serious trauma.
- There is strong public support for government investment in youth mentoring. A public survey in 2019 found that 83% of all Americans expressed some agreement that government funds should be used for youth mentoring.
- 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.
- By supporting over 350 youth-serving organizations, MMP amplifies mentoring's impact far beyond what any single program could achieve.

At MMP, we believe mentoring changes lives—and we are committed to making sure every young person has the opportunity to connect with a caring, supportive adult who can guide them toward success.



MENTORING MATCHING GRANT

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In FY26, the Mentoring Matching Grants line item (7061-9634) was level-funded by the Governor and State Legislature at \$1,500,000. This was a decrease from the FY24 \$1,800,000, continuing to impact MMP’s ability to reach more programs, which in part affected the number of mentor matches and youth sitting on a waitlist. Now more than ever before the need for strong, healthy mentoring relationships for the Commonwealth’s youth continues to grow. **We respectfully request that the House and the Senate return the line item to \$1,800,000 in the FY27 budget.**

PROGRAMS FUNDED STATEWIDE THROUGH THE MENTORING MATCHING GRANTS IN FY26

826 Boston (Boston)
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Massachusetts (Boston)
Arkanum INC. (Arlington)
Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (Boston)
Boston Partners in Education (Boston)
Boston Project Ministries (Boston)
BUILD (Boston)
CHICA (Boston)
Enroot Inc. (Cambridge)
EV Kids (Boston)
Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Boston (Newton)
Jóvenes en Acción/Youth in Action (JEA) (Jamaica Plain)
Literations (Boston)
Partners for Youth with Disabilities (Boston)
Silver Lining Mentoring (Boston)
African Community Education Program, Inc. (Worcester)
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Mass Metrowest (Worcester)
LUK Crisis Center, Inc. (Fitchburg)
Centerboard (Lynn)
Community Teamwork, Inc./ Mill City Mentors (Lowell)
Family Services of the Merrimack Valley (Lawrence)
Girls Incorporated of Boston and Lynn (Lynn)
Raw Art Works (Lynn)

Coaching for Change (Taunton)
Crossroads (Duxbury)
Dessalines S.T.E.A.M Academy (Brockton)
Falmouth Volunteers In Public Schools, Inc. (Falmouth)
Love Transforming Community (Brockton)
Old Colony YMCA (OCY) (Brockton)
School on Wheels of Massachusetts (East Bridgewater)
Stone Coast Community Church (Seekonk)
TASC - Associates for Human Services, Inc. (Taunton)
18 Degrees, Inc. (Pittsfield)
Big Brother Big Sister - Hampshire - Center for Human Development (Springfield)
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Western Massachusetts (West Springfield)
Boys & Girls Club of Greater Westfield (Westfield)
Holyoke Young Men’s Christian Association (Holyoke)
Jewish Family Service of Western Massachusetts (Springfield)
LightHouse Holyoke (Holyoke)
Project Coach (Springfield)
Railroad Street Youth Project (RSYP) (Great Barrington)
Springfield School Volunteers (Springfield)
MOCAH Youth Mentoring (Springfield)

ABOUT MMP

Founded in 1992, Mass Mentoring Partnership (MMP) is committed to ensuring that all young people in Massachusetts have the mentoring relationships they need to develop into thriving, engaged adults, resulting in vibrant communities.



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Survey of Mentor Matching Grantees

Effect of Line Item Budget Cuts

In the 2024 State budget, the Mentoring Matching Grant (MMG) line item was **decreased** by \$300,000 (16.7%), from \$1.8 million to \$1.5 million. This cut affected all mentoring programs funded through this grant. In 2025, the impact of this decrease was felt in that the total number of programs able to be funded was **decreased, with the average grant award amount also being further reduced.**

Total Grantees 42 Programs (6 less than previous year)	Average Grant Amount (of 42 programs total) \$31,184	Grant Reduction Percentage (for 42 programs total) a further 3.9% reduction over the prior year's 16.7% cut
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Many areas of mentoring programs were impacted by the FY24 funding cut. The top three areas, named MOST impacted:

50%
MATCH ACTIVITIES

- A reduction in funding is impacting the ability to fully staff the team, particularly for training and supporting mentors.
- There are cuts to staff hours, stipends for mentors, and the programs are feeling the strain as a result.

65%
STAFFING

- Our funding from the MMG directly funds the activities that [our] youth do in programming with their mentors, and with this decrease, there are concerns regarding the activities that they are able to do as these activities require materials.
- All match support activities requiring out-of-pocket costs are being re-evaluated.

40%
RECRUITMENT

- Reduced staffing affects critical tasks such as:
- Volunteer interviews, background checks, reference checks, and placements.
 - Coordination with schools for referrals and intake scheduling.
 - Adequately staffing volunteer recruitment and tabling at community events is made more difficult.

"I have been saddened by the timing of the cuts to state funding for mentoring in particular because after several years of struggling against the programmatic obstacles that the pandemic brought, as well as the challenges of engaging young people and mentors, there has been a palpable and exciting sea change and people seem ready again to be back in positive youth development contexts. As a program, we have capacity, bandwidth, and participants to make things happen again...and so much imagination, too. We are really only limited by resources. This is not the time to cut funding...it is exactly the time when programs need it most."

- Mentor Matching Grantee