

ADVOCACY MEETING TIPS

Youth Mentoring Day 2026

BEFORE THE MEETING

You will have about 15-20 minutes with your legislator or their staff member

- **BE PREPARED.** Have a short list of what you want to tell them about your program, including any relevant programmatic data on youth outcomes. If meeting as a group, decide beforehand who will address what.
- **DO YOUR RESEARCH.** Know about the legislator you are meeting with. Start with their profile on the Massachusetts Legislature website (www.malegislature.gov/people). It is helpful to know committee assignments, leadership positions, and career history.

There is a good chance that you will meet with staff rather than the legislator. Meetings with staff are just as important; legislators rely heavily on their staff to keep them informed on a wide variety of issues. A meeting with a staff member can be just as productive as a meeting with the legislator!

DURING THE MEETING

MMP will provide a folder with leave-behind materials for you to present to your legislator or their staff person. Feel free to gather and include additional materials you would like to share about your program.

Remember: **YOU** are the expert on your program and the youth YOU serve!

INTRODUCE YOURSELF. Provide information about the program you are representing, highlighting where you are located and your service area.

FRAME THE MEETING.

“I/We are here to talk about what our program is doing in your district and the importance of continued public funding to support the mentoring field. Now more than ever, we need state government to provide critical funding opportunities for mentoring programs!”

If this is the first time you are meeting with the legislator, give a high-level overview of:

- What your program does
- The number of youth served in the district, the positive impact of mentoring on young people, and your program on your participants

If you have an established relationship with the legislator, give an update on any recent accomplishments, events, or new programming!

If you are currently receiving a grant or have received a grant in the past, state the size of the grant and what you were able to accomplish with it.

- Number of youth served
- Any outcomes achieved



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Now, it's time to move into talking about the mentoring line item!

Funding is a critical part of ensuring that all youth in need of a mentor have one. Continued financial support is necessary to maintain or increase this work across the state, particularly in low-income communities, and communities of color.

THE ASK:

“We understand that the state will need to make some very difficult decisions in the coming months about what to include in the FY27 budget. We hope that you will continue to make the youth of Massachusetts a budget priority, by advocating for the Mentoring Matching Grants during the budget process. Youth in America face serious challenges related to substance abuse, mental health, and community violence or victimization- a trusting relationship with an adult can help them manage these complex and difficult issues. We are also asking that you show your support now, by including the Mentoring Matching Grants line item (7061-9634) funded at \$1,800,000 as a budget priority in your one-on-one meeting with the Chair of the Committee on Ways and Means.”

CLOSING

Ask if they have any questions! Provide answers if you are able, or agree to circle back with them. If they ask about the "leads" on the line item - you can share the names of Sen. Brendan Crighton (Third Essex) in the Senate, and Rep. Patricia Duffy (Hampden County) in the House and refer to the Budget Request Handout you will be leaving behind with their office.

Leave the MMP folder behind and ask them for a card for any follow up items

AFTER THE MEETING

- Ask to snap a photo (if it feels appropriate) and post it to social media about your productive visit!
- Please tag us @MassMentoring and use the hashtag #YMD2026 and #BuildingTheMentoringMovement!
- Send thank you notes to everyone you met with.
- Keep the relationship going by inviting them to meet with youth at your site, speak at events, or add them to your mailing list so you can keep them up to date on your program's activities.

Thank you for supporting the Mentoring Movement!