Quality Assurance Standards
For Mentoring Programs and Initiatives
Our **Mission**

Is to be an advocate for the expansion of youth mentoring and a resource for mentors and youth mentoring programs throughout Palm Beach County. Our guiding principle is: “Working alone, no one can meet the needs of our community’s youth in need of mentors, but working together in partnership, we can”.

Our **Vision**

Is to bring qualified, caring mentors to every young person in Palm Beach County who wants one.

What is **Mentoring**?

Mentoring refers to the caring, safe, and supportive Relationship between a trained adult and a child, adolescent, or young parent. Inherent in this definition is the mentor’s commitment and the connection established between the mentor and the mentee regardless of duration (short or long-term), type (one-to-one or family), or activity associated with the mentoring process.

Our **Goals**

1. To establish effective guidelines for mentoring programs in Palm Beach County

2. To remove barriers that prevent mentoring from reaching scale in our community

3. To increase the number of quality mentoring relationships for youth in Palm Beach County

4. To encourage collaborative efforts within the Mentor Center and with other community resources
Membership and Participation

Membership in the Mentor Center of Palm Beach County is open to agencies, programs, and organizations that currently provide mentoring services in Palm Beach County. Applicants for membership must complete an application, accept a site visit and successfully meet and adhere to guidelines set forth by the Mentor Center. In accepting this agreement, the Mentor Center of Palm Beach County provides recognition of the applying member as a full member and will provide active benefits as long as the member remains in good standing. In the event a member at any time fails to adhere to the standards for membership set forth, the Mentor Center of Palm Beach County reserves the right to suspend or revoke membership until standards are met for the protection of the Mentor Center and its members.

Simple attendance at Mentor Center meetings or events is open to any mentoring program or initiative in Palm Beach County. Technical assistance is available to any mentoring program or initiative that is interested in membership, however is not currently able to meet all standards.

Benefits of Membership

Active members of the Mentor Center of Palm Beach County will receive:

♦ Additional recruitment, referral, and training of volunteers

♦ Staff development and training pertinent to the needs of mentoring programs, many of which will provide continuing education credit for licensing boards

♦ Technical assistance and program strengthening

♦ Increased exposure to the community via mass-media recruitment efforts

♦ Participation in Mentor Center Directory, distributed county-wide and available on the website of the Mentor Center of Palm Beach County

♦ Additional opportunities for networking, collaboration and shared resources with other mentoring initiatives or programs in the county

♦ Professional membership certificate recognizing active membership and high standards of practice
Mentoring Program Standards

I. Recruitment
II. Orientation to Program
III. Screening and Assessment
IV. Preparation and Readiness
V. Matching Strategy
VI. Monitoring Process
VII. Support and Recognition
VIII. Match Closure
IX. Evaluation
I. Recruitment

The process of identifying in the community potential volunteers who are interested in your program goals and are able to assist the initiative to reach these goals. The agency or initiative will have clearly stated goals and objectives for the program that will identify the population to be served and the activities planned.

Policies and Procedures will account for the following:

- A written recruitment plan as part of an agency or program manual
- A written description of your program to be distributed to volunteers and participants (i.e. brochure, flyer, etc.)
- Volunteer spokesperson and/or staff who are trained to present the program accurately in the community

II. Orientation to Program

The process of providing clear expectations, guidelines and information to program volunteers and participants regarding your mentoring program or initiative.

Policies and Procedures will account for the following:

- A written program orientation
- Skilled staff to provide orientation
- Clearly identified goals and objectives
- Written procedure for reporting abuse and neglect
- Written procedure for emergency situations
- Suggested list of activities mentors and mentees may engage in
III. Screening and Assessment

The process of determining appropriateness of a volunteer to provide a stable, emotionally and physically healthy relationship with a participant in a mentoring program. Possibly the most important part of a mentoring program, this process must be as thorough as possible, and address risk management procedures designed to protect the organization or agency, volunteers, and participants.

Policies and Procedures will account for the following required measures:

- A written volunteer application
- Law enforcement background checks
- Reference checks
- Documented personal interview using a consistent format
- Plan for acceptance or non-acceptance of volunteers
- Driver’s License background checks (if volunteer will transport clients)
- Proof of personal auto insurance (if driving is involved)
- Photocopy of photo identification
- Agency, organization, or program liability insurance

Additional Procedures strongly recommended:

- Home visit interview
- Child Abuse Registry checks
- Fingerprinting through local law enforcement

IV. Preparation and Readiness

The process of training and preparing mentors and participants for the mentoring relationship prior to matching and providing ongoing measures during the match.

Policies and Procedures will account for the following:

- Orientation for both volunteers and participants
- Guidelines for all parties involved; volunteers, participants, and family members if applicable
- Written and signed confidentiality statements
- Written liability information
- Plan for volunteer attendance at training sessions offered by organization or the Mentor Center
V. Matching Strategy

The process of linking volunteers and participants appropriately to form a successful mentoring relationship.

Policies and Procedures will account for the following:

- Written, or formal process of matching a mentor and participant(s) taking into account some or all of the following:
  - Gender
  - Age
  - Ethnicity
  - Religious affiliation
  - Life Experiences
  - Language requirements
  - Availability
  - Geographical location
  - Individual interests and preferences
  - Temperament

- Signed statement of understanding that all parties agree to conditions of the match and the mentoring relationship
- Pre-match meeting with staff and mentoring parties to determine comfort and acceptance of all parties

VI. Monitoring Process

The process of providing supervision of the match to ensure motivation, successful outcomes and to provide ongoing support to all parties. Monitoring also provides safety and risk management measures. Research indicates that this is a key component in successful outcomes and volunteer retention.

Policies and Procedures will account for the following:

- Written protocol for supervision from the program and the mentor standpoints
- Established format for recording supervisory contacts
- Written policy regarding frequency of supervision
- Supervision that includes contact with mentor, mentee(s), and family members
- Protocol or policy to address grievances, premature relationship closure, concerns and successes of parties involved
VII. Support and Recognition

The process of communicating positive feedback to volunteers for their efforts in a structured way. This component of a mentoring program is vital to the success of a program, helping to ensure volunteer retention.

Policies and procedures will account for the following:

- A program designed way to recognize volunteer efforts; Suggested ideas include:
  - An annual award meeting
  - Certificates of appreciation
  - Recognition of outstanding mentors in newsletter, or plaque
  - Recognition of mentors with longevity in the program

VIII. Match Closure

The Process of appropriately terminating the mentoring relationship with all parties involved. The termination may be timely, or untimely, as a result of non-compliance with program regulations or change in parties’ circumstances. This is a critical piece of the mentoring relationship in order to debrief all participants.

Policies and procedures will account for the following:

- Private and confidential interviews to debrief:
  - Participant(s) and staff
  - Mentor and staff
  - Mentor and participant without staff
- Clearly stated policy for future contacts and rematching procedures
IX. Evaluation

The process of determining success of mentoring program as well as strengths and weaknesses in order to build and maintain a stronger program.

Policies and procedures will account for the following:

- Stated goals and objectives for mentoring relationships in the form of a program plan or individual case plans.
- Process for program evaluation based on program criteria and statement of purpose
- Process that provides information relevant to the needs of the board of directors, program funders, community partners and other supporters of the program (including the Mentor Center)
- Evaluation process that includes information gathered from the participant(s), mentor, and family members