

# Workplace Mentoring

## Sample Policies

The *Workplace Mentoring Supplement to the Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring* is most useful to those starting workplace or career-focused mentoring programs, as well as to those who are looking to strengthen existing services.

Each section, from Recruitment through Closure, offers research-informed benchmarks and recommendations that should help workplace mentoring programs implement effective services.

This resource provides sample policies in the six standards found in workplace mentoring programs:

- Standard 1: Recruitment
- Standard 2: Screening
- Standard 3: Training
- Standard 4: Matching and Initiation
- Standard 5: Monitoring and Support
- Standard 6: Closure

Unless otherwise specified, policies that refer to “mentees” are also applicable to “registered apprenticeships” and “youth internships” as well.

“Mentor” is used to refer to anyone who is providing guidance to a less experienced mentee in a workplace setting.

## STANDARD 1: RECRUITMENT

**Standard:** Recruit appropriate mentors and mentees by realistically describing the program’s aims and expected outcomes.

### MENTOR RECRUITMENT

**Benchmark 1:** Program engages in recruitment strategies that realistically portray the benefits (to society, the company, and to mentees), practices, supports, and challenges of mentoring in the program.

### Recommendations:

1. Program should include at least one general message in recruitment strategies about the many potential benefits to mentees of participating such as increased exposure to workplace settings, employment opportunities, employability, workplace retention, and access to college and job training programs; as well as other benefits that may be unique to the specific mentoring program.
2. Program should include information in the recruitment strategies about requirements for being a mentor in the program and specifically, whether the time spent mentoring will

be compensated by the employer as part of the mentor's work schedule or whether mentoring will be conducted outside of work.

3. Program should include information in recruitment strategies about the types of pre- and post-match support that will be provided to mentors, as well as who will provide the support.
4. Program should be clear in recruitment strategies about the roles mentors are expected to play in the program (e.g., a connector, advocate, job trainer or coach, job supervisor, or friend who is available to provide social-emotional support in the workplace).
5. Program should emphasize the commitment and support of mid-to-senior level leadership in the company for the program, making it clear that the program is valued and endorsed by the company.

**Benchmark 2:** Program utilizes recruitment strategies that build positive attitudes and emotions about mentoring.

**Recommendations:**

1. Recruitment strategies should help build positive attitudes and emotions about the work and jobs that mentors do.
2. Recruitment strategies should reflect positive attitudes and emotions about the company sponsoring the mentoring program.
3. Recruitment strategies should include strategies, such as storytelling about mentoring relationships in the workplace, which can build positive attitudes and emotions about being a mentor in the program.

**Benchmark 3:** Program recruits mentors whose skills, motivations, and backgrounds best match the goals and structure of the program.

**Recommendations:**

1. Program recruits mentors from within the company who are passionate about their work and who will share their excitement about the work they do every day and the career path they followed.
2. Program recruits mentors who have an interest in building a relationship with mentees and not just teaching them technical skills.
3. Program identifies and recruits mentors from within the company who have good communications and social-emotional skills.
4. Program recruits company retirees to be mentors within the workplace mentoring program.

**Benchmark 4:** Program encourages mentors to assist with recruitment efforts by providing them with resources to ask individuals they know, who meet the eligibility criteria of the program, to be a mentor.

**Recommendation:**

1. Program provides current and former mentors with recruitment materials and asks them to assist with recruitment by talking with co-workers about also becoming mentors.

**Benchmark 5:** Program trains and encourages mentees to identify and recruit appropriate mentors for themselves, when relevant.

### **Recommendation:**

1. If mentees are employed or interning within a company, then program should teach mentees to locate and develop a system of support beyond their assigned mentor. (See the “Professional Social Capital Mapping” downloadable resource in the Resource Hub for more information on facilitating that process.)

### **MENTOR RECRUITMENT: *Enhancements***

- Program communicates to mentors about how mentoring and volunteering can benefit them.
- Program has a publicly available written statement outlining eligibility requirements for mentors and mentees in its program.
- Program uses multiple strategies to recruit mentors (e.g. direct ask, social media, traditional methods of mass communication, presentations, referrals) on an ongoing basis.
- Program encourages mentees to recruit other peers to be mentees whose competencies and needs match the services offered by the program.

### **MENTEE RECRUITMENT**

**Benchmark 1:** Program engages in recruitment strategies that realistically portray the benefits, practices, supports, and challenges of being mentored in the program.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Program should use strategies for recruiting mentees that illustrate the myriad benefits of being mentored, such as exposure to a workplace, increased employability (possibly at the company sponsoring the mentoring program), increased workplace retention, increased understanding of the relevance of school, increased credentials for college or job training programs, and increased school engagement.
2. Program should mention in its mentee recruitment materials if there are tangible benefits to mentees for participating in the program, such as being paid to participate in the program; receiving assistance in obtaining a GED, academic credit, or job-related certificate; or prospects for subsequent hiring by the company.
3. Program should communicate the level of time and effort commitment required for participation in the program.
4. Program should communicate in the mentee recruitment materials if accommodations are offered to mentees with a disability.

**Benchmark 2:** Program recruits mentees whose needs, knowledge, skills, and attitudes best match the services offered by the program.

### **Recommendation:**

1. Program defines whether there are specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for mentees to participate in the workplace mentoring program; and informs mentees if competency in specific or general workplace-related skills is required for acceptance or continuation in the program.

## COMPANY RECRUITMENT

**Benchmark 1:** Mentoring program should carefully consider whether the company will provide the time, effort, resources, and supports needed to successfully host or execute the workplace mentoring program.

## STANDARD 2: SCREENING

Standard: Screen prospective mentors to determine whether they have the time, commitment, and personal qualities to be a safe and effective mentor. Screen mentees (and their parents or guardians for minor youth serving as mentees) about whether the prospective mentees have the time, commitment, and desire to be effectively mentored.

### MENTOR SCREENING

**Benchmark 1:** Program has established criteria for accepting mentors into the program as well as criteria for disqualifying mentor applicants.

#### Recommendation:

1. The criteria for accepting mentors should include:
  - Guidelines regarding the acceptable jobs or type of work the potential mentor does at the company and position (e.g. entry level only, upper management only, or support staff only);
  - Whether, or under what circumstances, the mentor can be a supervisor of the mentee;
  - Being designated as an “employee in good standing” in terms of their performance and professional relationships as determined by a review by Human Resources; and
  - The motivations necessary to establish a supportive relationship with mentees in the program.

**Benchmark 2:** Prospective mentors complete a written application that includes questions designed to help assess their safety and suitability for mentoring a youth. *(Note: Safety and suitability pertains to programs that have minor youth as mentees)*

#### Recommendation:

1. The written application should include questions about the following topics to determine if mentors are a good fit for the program:
  - Job position and responsibilities, including whether they have a supervisor role within their workplace;
  - Previous experience or training as a supervisor, job coach, personal coach, or mentor;
  - Length of employment at the company; and
  - What the mentor would like to do with the mentee (e.g. projects they may work on together, tasks the mentor will assist the mentee in completing, or activities

the mentor and mentee may do together) and how the mentor might fulfill the program or mentee's goals.

2. If mentors are working with minor youth, the mentor screening process is highly recommended to include a comprehensive criminal background check, including searching a national criminal records database, along with sex offender and child abuse registries and, when relevant, driving records.
  - The mentoring program or company should work with their HR department to determine if implementing this benchmark is applicable to their program, especially if the mentee is an adult and if a background check has already been conducted by the employer as part of the pre-employment process and the results are available to the mentoring program administrators to review when determining the acceptability of a prospective mentor.
  - If a workplace mentoring program determines it is relevant to conduct a criminal background check on prospective mentors, then the program should also work with the company's HR department to determine if and when any information learned during the background check will be shared with the employer. In addition, programs should determine when and how to notify the prospective mentor that information from the background check might be shared with their employer.
  - If programs decide to implement a criminal history check as part of their screening process, they should gain each prospective mentor's written permission prior to conducting a check. Mentors should be made aware, in writing, of what, if any, information from the screening results will be shared with their employer and what, if any, impact that could have on their employment.

**Benchmark 3:** Program conducts at least one face-to-face interview with each prospective mentor.

**Recommendation:**

1. The criteria for prospective mentors should include:
  - Whether mentors need specific technical or job-related skills to participate as a mentor in the program, and,
  - The attitudes and motivations that are needed for mentors to be successful in the program.

**MENTEE SCREENING**

**Benchmark 1:** The following procedures should be followed if a mentee participant is a minor youth:

1. Parent(s)/guardian(s) complete an application or referral form. (Not required if mentees are 18 years old or older.)
2. Parent(s)/guardian(s) provide informed permission for their child to participate.
3. Parent(s)/guardian(s) and mentees agree in writing to a one-year (calendar or school) minimum commitment for the mentoring relationship, or the minimum time commitment that is required by the mentoring program.

4. Parents(s)/guardian(s) and mentees agree in writing that mentees participate in face-to-face meetings with their mentors that average a minimum of once a week and a total of four or more hours per month over the course of the relationship, or at a minimum frequency and number of hours that are required by the mentoring program.

## STANDARD 3: TRAINING

Standard: Train prospective mentors and mentees in the basic knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to build an effective and safe mentoring relationship using culturally appropriate language and tools. This mentoring relationship is known as a “match.”

### MENTOR TRAINING

**Benchmark 1:** Program provides a minimum of two hours of pre-match, in-person mentor training.

**Benchmark 2:** Program provides pre-match training for mentors on the following topics:

1. Program requirements (e.g., match length, match frequency, duration of visits, protocols for missing, being late to meetings, and match termination).
2. Mentors’ goals and expectations for the mentee and the mentoring relationship.
3. Mentors’ obligations and appropriate roles.
4. Relationship development and maintenance.
5. Ethical and safety issues that may arise related to the mentoring relationship.
6. Effective closure of the mentoring relationship.
7. Sources of assistance available to support mentors.
8. (When applicable with minor youth as mentees) Opportunities and challenges associated with mentoring specific populations of youth (e.g., children with an incarcerated parent, youth involved in the juvenile justice system, youth in foster care, high school dropouts), if relevant.

### Recommendations:

1. Program will train mentors in any job-related requirements in the mentoring program.
2. Program will train mentors to:
  - Help their mentees to identify their educational and professional goals;
  - Articulate their own goals for their mentoring relationships, and ensure that mentors’ goals include relationship development and not just instrumental or job performance goals; and
  - Support their mentees, who may be unfamiliar with workplace norms, so that their mentees will successfully integrate into the company culture and learn professional norms more generally.
3. Program provides training to mentors about the unique obligations and roles associated with being a workplace mentor, as well as how to balance providing their mentees with both emotional support and job performance feedback.
4. Program provides training to mentors on the importance of relationship development and maintenance, especially given issues related to the context of mentoring in a workplace.

5. Program should train mentors to contact a designated staff person at the mentoring program immediately when faced with an ethical or safety dilemma.
6. Program should train mentors on potential ethical dilemmas that may arise related to having dual roles with their mentees.
7. Program should train mentors about how to close their mentoring relationship with their mentee, especially if their mentee is hired as an employee at the company when the mentoring program ends.
8. Program should train mentors about whether support will be available to them during the mentoring program, who will provide the support, and whether monitoring, support, and advice provided to mentors will be kept confidential or will be shared with the employer.
9. Program should provide training to mentors on providing support to diverse populations, recognizing their own cultural biases, and how to teach their mentee about workplace culture, behavior, and professionalism.
10. Program should train mentors in strategies to prepare the workplace and co-workers to welcome mentees, so that the workplace is a comfortable and appropriate setting for young people to work and learn.
11. Program should provide mentors with training on focusing initially in the mentoring relationship on relationship development rather than giving their mentees work to do immediately, especially if assigning work or tasks to mentees is part of the mentoring program.

**Benchmark 3:** Program provides pre-match training for the mentor on the following risk management policies that are matched to the program model, setting, and population served.

**Recommendations for risk management policies:**

1. Appropriate physical contact
2. Contact with mentoring program (e.g., who to contact, when to contact)
3. Relationship monitoring requirements (e.g., response time, frequency, schedule)
4. Approved activities
5. (When working with minor youth as mentees) Mandatory reporting requirements associated with suspected child abuse or neglect, and suicidality and homicidality
6. Confidentiality and anonymity
7. How to handle incidents involving mentee's violating company rules or regulations.
8. Training on the proper use of company equipment, as well as whether and how to train mentees on the proper use of equipment.
9. How to prepare their mentees for any lockdown or emergency response procedures.

**MENTEE TRAINING – Enhancements**

**Program provides training for the mentee on the following topics:**

1. Purpose of mentoring
2. Program requirements (e.g., match length, match frequency, duration of visits, protocols for missing or being late to meetings, match termination)
3. Mentees' goals for mentoring
4. Mentors' obligations and appropriate roles



5. Mentees' obligations and appropriate roles
6. Ethics and safety in mentoring relationships
7. Initiating the mentoring relationship
8. Effective closure of the mentoring relationship

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Program should clearly define the purpose and goals of their mentoring program, particularly related to mentee employment and career advancement.
2. Program should train mentees on how to build an identity in their new role as a worker, in general, and in a particular career or profession.
3. Program train mentees about other sources of support within the company or program in addition to the mentor.
4. Program should train mentees to identify potential relationships with other co-workers in addition to their relationship with their mentor to help them build skills and advance their career goals.
5. Program provides training for the mentee on risk management policies of the company.

## **STANDARD 4: MATCHING & INITIATING**

**Standard:** Match mentors and mentees, and initiate the mentoring relationship using strategies likely to increase the odds that mentoring relationships will endure and be effective.

**Benchmark 1:** Program considers the characteristics of the mentor and mentee (e.g., interests; proximity; availability; age; gender; race; ethnicity; personality; expressed preferences of mentor, mentee, previous experiences) when making matches.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Programs that partner with multiple companies must take into consideration the characteristics of the companies (e.g. types of work opportunities, skills required of mentees, supports available) when matching mentees to a specific company.
2. Program must have clearly established criteria for how gender and age will be considered when making matches, based on their program model, target populations, and program goals.
3. Specific mentee characteristics that should be taken into consideration when making matches include:
  - Career goals and interests
  - Existing career-related skills
  - Prior work experience
  - Schedule and availability
4. Specific mentor characteristics that should be taken into consideration when making matches include:
  - The mentor's experience and skills to ensure the mentor has the relevant and sufficient experience to support the mentee's interests and goals.
  - The positions of mentor and mentee within the organization



- Schedule and availability
5. Mentee preferences should be carefully considered during the matching process. Programs should have procedures for soliciting mentee preferences and obtaining mentee feedback on the selected mentor, prior to the initiation of the mentoring relationship.

**Benchmark 2:** Program arranges and documents an initial meeting between the mentor and mentee as well as, when relevant, with the parent or guardian for programs working with minor youth as mentees.

**Benchmark 3:** Program staff member should be on site and/ or present during the initial match meeting of the mentor and mentee.

## **STANDARD 5: MONITORING & SUPPORT**

**Standard:** Monitor mentoring relationship milestones and support matches by providing ongoing advice, problem-solving, training, and access to resources for the duration of each relationship.

**Benchmark 1:** Program contacts mentors and mentees at a minimum frequency of twice per month for the first month of the match and once a month thereafter.

**Benchmark 2:** At each mentor monitoring contact, program administrator should ask mentors about mentoring activities, mentee outcomes, the quality of the mentoring relationship, and the impact of mentoring on the mentor and mentee using a standardized procedure.

### **Recommendation:**

1. Program should ask mentors about the quality of his or her mentee's work and workplace behaviors, the mentee's progress towards achieving his or her goals, and how the mentee is responding to feedback about his or her work performance and workplace behaviors.

**Benchmark 3:** At each mentee monitoring contact, program should ask mentees about mentoring activities, mentee outcomes, the quality of the mentoring relationship, and the impact of mentoring on the mentee using a standardized procedure.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Program should offer mentees an opportunity to reflect on their experiences in the workplace by asking mentees about any interpersonal or performance concerns or questions, and the mentee's progress towards achieving his or her goals.
2. Program should provide feedback to mentees about their performance at the workplace obtained from the mentor and other coworkers or supervisors who have worked with the mentee. This feedback could be about their job performance, the mentoring relationship, or the mentees' progress in meeting goals established during the program.

**Benchmark 4:** Program follows evidence-based protocol to elicit more in-depth assessment from mentors and mentees about the quality of their mentoring relationships and uses of scientifically tested relationship assessment tools.

**Benchmark 5:** Program regularly assesses all matches to determine if they should be closed or encouraged to continue.

## **STANDARD 6: CLOSURE**

**Standard:** Facilitate bringing the match to closure in a way that affirms the contributions of the mentor and mentee and offers them the opportunity to prepare for the closure and assess the experience.

**Benchmark 1:** Program has a procedure to manage anticipated closures when members of the match are willing and able to engage in the closure process.

### **Recommendation:**

1. Program should notify employees within the company that the match is ending in order to reduce possible disruptions to the company's day-to-day operations. If relevant, the program should also advise the company's HR department and the mentee's supervisor when the match will be ending.

**Benchmark 2:** Program has a procedure to manage unanticipated closures when members of the match are willing and able to engage in the closure process.

**Benchmark 3:** Program has a procedure to manage closure when one member of the match is unable or unwilling to engage in the closure process.

**Benchmark 4:** Program conducts exit interview with mentors and mentees.

**Benchmark 5:** Program has a written policy and procedure, when relevant, for managing rematching.

**Benchmark 6:** Program documents that closure procedures were followed.

**Benchmark 7:** Regardless of the reason for closure, the mentoring program should have a discussion with mentors that includes the following topics of conversation:

1. Discussion of mentors' feelings about closure
2. Discussion of reasons for closure, if relevant
3. Discussion of positive experiences in the mentoring relationship
4. Review of program rules for post-closure contact
5. Creation of a plan for post-closure contact, if relevant
6. Creation of a plan for the last match meeting, if possible
7. Discussion of possible rematching, if relevant

### **Recommendation:**

1. Program should request that mentors keep details about their mentoring relationship and their mentees confidential, especially if their mentees continue to work at the company or in the same industry or field, when the mentoring program ends.

**Benchmark 8:** Regardless of the reason for closure, the mentoring program should have a discussion with mentees, and when relevant, with parents or guardians that includes the following topics of conversation:

1. Discussion of mentees' feelings about closure
2. Discussion of reasons for closure, if relevant
3. Discussion of positive experiences in the mentoring relationship
4. Procedure for notification of mentor, if relevant, about the timing of closure
5. Review of program rules for post-closure contact
6. Creation of a plan for post-closure contact, if relevant
7. Creation of a plan for the last match meeting, if possible
8. Discussion of possible rematching, if relevant

**Recommendations:**

1. Program should help mentees develop short- and long-term plans for their educational and vocational futures.
2. Program should discuss new skills mentees acquired in the program and in their mentoring relationships, and whether their career goals have changed.
3. If a company with a workplace mentoring program has a history of hiring mentees as employees, then, prior to match closure, someone from the company should discuss with each mentee whether they will be offered a job or how to pursue job opportunities at the company (if applicable).