

What is mentoring?

Mentoring focuses on a person's untapped potential and the realization of goals, whether they are academic, career centered or related to the development of a specific skill. Successful people have learned how to access resources and work with others to get answers and coaching. Students need to develop these skills in order to set and reach their personal and academic goals.

How are mentors selected, screened, and trained?

The New York City Mentoring Program administers a screening and application process for mentors, which includes a mandatory three-hour initial training session and the submission of personal and professional references. The New York City Department of Education also requires state and federal fingerprinting of all individuals who work directly with students in our schools.

The application covers the mentors' education, work experiences, and interests. Program coordinators use this information to match mentors and students who share common interests.

Can individuals volunteer for this program?

The New York City Mentoring Program of the New York City Department of Education is a partnership program that "partners" groups of volunteers from an organization with a specific high school. Only groups of at least 15 or more volunteers, all from the same business or organization, are accepted into the program.

By sharing information and life experiences, a caring adult mentor can help a young person understand the value of education, gain familiarity with the world of work, solve problems, and accomplish mutually agreed upon goals. A mentor can help a young person to broaden his or her horizons and learn how to navigate a variety of educational, social, and workplace experiences.

What is the time commitment?

Once matched, the mentor is expected to commit to meet one hour a week or two hours bi-weekly with the student after school, during, or after work. The mentor is also asked to make a commitment to the program of at least one year and to participate in an assessment process. These requirements are important to ensure the consistency and continuity that make for a successful mentor-mentee relationship. The activities that a mentor engages in with a student are determined by the specific nature of the mentoring program that is developed at the mentor's organization. Mentors are encouraged to expose their students to the City's vast cultural and social resources, in addition to fostering an awareness of the world of work and providing academic guidance. Field trips and special events are usually provided to expand students' sense of the world.

Since 1983, the New York City Mentoring Program has partnered hundreds of businesses, organizations and government agencies with the City's high schools, trained thousands of mentor volunteers throughout the New York City area, and provided technical assistance to its partners in the development and operation of mentoring programs.

Mentoring makes a difference in the lives of young people. To learn more about becoming a mentor, please contact:

The New York City Mentoring Program

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Photo: Bart Gorin

