

Connecticut Juvenile Justice Mentoring Network Year One Evaluation Report

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Juvenile Justice Mentoring Network

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Executive Summary

The Connecticut Juvenile Justice Mentoring Network (the Network) is a formal collaboration of community-based mentoring programs that provide coordinated and tailored mentoring services to juvenile offenders in all court districts. Launched in 2013, the initiative is spearheaded and funded by the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division (CSSD), in collaboration with The Governor's Prevention Partnership (the Partnership), which serves as the lead agency and fiduciary. This report provides process and short-term outcome evaluation findings for the first year of the Network, for the period January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2013, with supplementary data on mentor-mentee matches that were sustained through October 2014 and some process evaluation findings that extend to January 2014.

A. Program Background

Through the Juvenile Justice Mentoring Network, mentoring programs provide quality-based mentoring services to juvenile offenders in Connecticut, with a goal to reduce recidivism rates. Community-based mentoring services, adapted for court-involved youth, is a new initiative of the State of Connecticut and one of the first initiatives of its kind nationally. Mentoring services are provided to "low-medium risk," court-involved youth ages 10-17, referred by probation officer or a Child, Youth and Family Support Center (CYFSC).

The Network is comprised of mentoring program providers, some experienced and some new to mentoring, a CSSD court planner, and a team of experts from the Partnership. In 2013, there were 225 funded slots for youth assigned to nine contracted mentoring providers in the Network, serving twelve court districts statewide.

B. Evaluation Methodology

An outside evaluator who uses an empowerment evaluation approach was contracted by the Partnership. This approach aims to strengthen program results by building evaluation into program administration, involving program staff in planning and implementing the evaluation, and using data to inform decisions. Mixed methods, qualitative and quantitative, were used to evaluate short-term program performance and capacity building outcomes in year one. A data system was established to track program outputs and progress, including number of referrals, number of mentors recruited, length of time to match, number of matches made and length of matches. A score card was developed based on the Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™ to monitor program efforts and quality on a quarterly basis, and for benchmarking toward annual performance goals. Analysis of the data was used to assess success and provide feedback toward achieving short-term performance outcomes.

The formative evaluation for year one also documented efforts of members of the Network and identified challenges and potential areas for quality improvements toward achieving results, through observation notes from bimonthly meetings and one-on-one discussions with staff of the Partnership and program providers. Additionally, a focus group and questionnaire administered to Network providers was used to assess the effectiveness of the Network and the Partnership's role as lead agency in coordinating the Network and providing technical assistance.

C. Short-Term Program Performance Outcomes

The short-term program performance goal for year one was to successfully match and sustain 225 court-referred juveniles with mentors, based on an assigned number of program slots per court district. Collectively, programs achieved 57% of their goal to match youth with mentors and 46% of their goal to sustain matches for one year. Factors affecting this outcome include the length of time (four months) that programs needed to create relationships with probation officers, many for the first time, set up data reporting systems, and recruit appropriate mentors.

Other key findings were that programs received more male referrals (68%) than female (38%), but were more successful in matching females. Programs received the highest level of referrals of Black (29%) and Latino males (20%). They were most successful in matching Black males (60%) relative to other males, and had the least success in matching both Latino males (34%) and Latina females (43%). Males, overall, were more likely to have their matches closed prior to a year compared to females. Also, Latino youth were more likely to have their matches closed prior to a year compared to Black or White youth.

D. Short-Term Program Capacity Building Outcomes

Two key short-term program capacity building goals for year one were to: (1) ensure that providers were well-equipped to provide training and match support to the mentors, and (2) strengthen program functioning through the Network.

The first year capacity building outcomes identified through the formative evaluation were: (1) increased knowledge and ability to implement mentoring best practices; (2) increased knowledge on serving court-involved youth; (3) increased ability to monitor program quality and accountability; (4) level of network participation and satisfaction; and, (5) resource sharing.

Positive results included the majority of program providers using the Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™, and other information provided by Partnership trainings. As a result of what they learned, several providers updated their program objectives, mentor trainings and closure policy. Three providers adopted new procedures for providing match support. Partners also reported increased knowledge on serving court-involved youth, and having developed new practices and procedures for communicating effectively with probation officers. Five providers increased their capacity to monitor program quality using data.

The Network had an average of 90% meeting attendance and high levels of participation. On average, providers rated their time spent as part of the Network both personally and professionally to be a “good value.” Providers noted that top three benefits of being part of the network were: (1) connection with peers from other programs; (2) exchange of ideas; and (3) training workshops. It appears that a level of trust was established among most providers and they reached out to each other for assistance outside of the meetings, and also discussed potentially sensitive issues at the meetings.

E. Mentoring Program Outcomes for Youth

While there were no quantitative youth assessments conducted in year one, several qualitative success stories of youth who had been matched and meeting regularly with a mentor were reported on monthly narrative reports and at Network meetings. Success stories reported by parents included one youth who had “done a 180” regarding his behavior and attitude. Program staff reported several young people who developed success strategies, improvements at school and home, increased ability to get jobs, and expectations of graduating high school.

F. Key Lessons Learned for Serving Court-Involved Youth

Several key lessons for serving court-involved youth with mentoring were identified:

- It is essential to build strong relationships with both probation officers and families of the youth.
- Once a youth is referred, it can be challenging to conduct the intake due to scheduling conflicts; this process takes longer than anticipated.
- Youth who were still on probation and who perceived the program to be a requirement were the most likely to connect with a mentor, but were also potentially most likely to stop seeing a mentor once their probation period was complete.
- Serious mental health issues were present in a small percentage of youth referred to the program, making them ineligible for mentoring services after the referral was made.
- Some families presented barriers to the youth being able to complete the intake process or maintain a connection with the mentor because they were distrustful in accepting a stranger into their child’s life.

G. Key Recommendations for the Network

The following recommendations were identified for strengthening the Network:

Technical Assistance, Trainings and Mentor Recruitment

- Need for high-quality mentor recruitment marketing materials, particularly targeting male and minority mentors.
- Need for on-line trainings and downloadable training materials.
- Ongoing training for best practices in working with court-involved youth and continued sharing of best practices among programs for incorporating this knowledge into mentor training and match support activities.

Data Collection and Assessment

- Streamline data collection processes and preparation for implementation of youth outcome assessments.

Other Administration

- Increase efficiency and timeliness in handling review of provider requests for modifications to individual policies and procedures and/or cases that require special consideration.
- Collect probation officer feedback on the mentoring programs.
- Increase funding to assist programs with the higher cost of serving court-involved youth.
- Address program staff turnover by preparing a program procedure manual to orient new staff.

Introduction

The Connecticut Juvenile Justice Mentoring Network (Network) is a statewide initiative launched in 2013 that aims to provide juvenile offenders with quality, community-based mentoring services. Youth identified for mentoring services are “low-medium risk,” court-involved youth, ages 10-17, referred by their probation officer or a Child, Youth and Family Support Center.

This report provides process and short-term outcome evaluation findings for the first year of the Network. The time period for the output and results reported here is January 1, 2013—December 31, 2013. Supplementary data on mentor-mentee match retention rates from youth referred in 2013 extends through October 2014. The process evaluation findings regarding the Network functioning and The Governor’s Prevention Partnership’s role as lead agency extends through January 2014.

This initiative was launched by the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division (CSSD) with The Governor’s Prevention Partnership (the Partnership) as lead agency and fiduciary. CSSD oversees pretrial services, family services, divorce and domestic violence, probation supervision of adults and juveniles as well as juvenile residential centers. This division also administers contracts with community providers that deliver treatment and other support services statewide. The Partnership is a nonprofit organization operating as a public-private partnership with over 25 years of experience in providing youth substance abuse and violence prevention services, and over 16 years in providing leadership, training, guidance and technical assistance to expand and strengthen quality-based mentoring throughout Connecticut.

The Juvenile Justice Mentoring Network is comprised of 12-16 staff members from nine mentoring organizations subcontracted by the Partnership to provide community-based mentoring services for court-involved youth, referred to in this report as mentoring providers or Network providers. These staff members included mentoring program directors, program coordinators and outreach staff. Additionally, the Partnership’s mentoring program manager and senior program coordinator, along with a court planner II from CSSD, were members of the Network and provided oversight, monitoring and technical assistance to the contracted mentoring providers and facilitated bimonthly Network meetings.

Part I of this report introduces the program background and administration, including the Partnership’s role as lead agency. This section includes an in-depth overview of the program, its approach and outcome goals, including two logic models: one for Network capacity building and one for mentoring program outcomes.

Part II of this report is divided into three areas—development of the Network, development of shared metrics, and trainings.

Part III presents short-term mentoring program performance outcome data tied to quality mentoring standards.

Part IV presents findings on the Network capacity building outcomes. This includes process evaluation findings examining the collaborative functioning of the Network and the leadership and technical assistance provided by CSSD and the Partnership.

Part V discusses the plan for assessing youth outcomes. This includes some Network provider success stories with youth in the program presented in the monthly narrative reports, which were collected in November and December, 2013.

Part VI of the report concludes with a summary of some of the challenges and recommendations based on the process and outcome findings for the first year.

I. Background and Administration

A. Background and Goals for Establishing a System of Community-Based Mentoring for Court-Involved Youth in Connecticut

Connecticut is currently recognized as a national leader in juvenile justice reform. Since 2000, Connecticut has reduced residential commitments for juveniles by nearly 70%. This reduction in residential commitments took place even though most 16 year-olds, who were previously treated as adults, are now handled in the juvenile system.¹ The state's juvenile crime rate has also been in dramatic decline with total arrests for 16-year-olds falling by 48% and for 17-year-olds by 35% from 2002 to 2011. These successes are attributed to a number of key policy changes including: eliminating the admission of youth to detention centers for status offenses in 2005, raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction to 18 in 2007,² and the establishment of Child, Youth and Family Support Centers (CYFSC) in 2007.³ Also, legislation has been passed to reduce overly harsh school discipline, as well as disparities in discipline rates of Hispanic/Latino and African American/Black youth, which led to excessive school suspensions and arrests for low-level misbehavior for minority youth. In 2011, a new law required state juvenile justice agencies to prepare biennial reports on their disproportionate minority contact goals and accomplishments.

Connecticut has invested in an array of new community-based supervision and treatment programs for delinquent and behaviorally troubled youth and their families, such as multi-systemic therapy (MST) and other evidence-based interventions. A system of utilizing risk assessments also was instituted to match juveniles involved with the court with appropriate services. In addition to services for juvenile offenders who scored high on risk assessments, the Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division identified a need to provide services to "low-moderate risk" juvenile offenders to decrease their likelihood of ending up back in the criminal justice system. Mentoring services were identified as an evidence-based practice that could address this need.

Literature has shown that volunteer mentors can provide at-risk youth with a positive supportive adult relationship and help reconnect them to school and community.⁴ Hence, the Connecticut Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division opted to establish a statewide, community-based mentoring program for court-involved youth. While mentoring services have been provided for court-involved juveniles who are incarcerated in juvenile justice systems in other states, the provision of *community-based* mentoring services for court-involved youth who are on probation across all 12 court districts statewide is one of the first initiatives of its kind in the nation.

¹ In 2012, the Raise the Age legislation required most 17-year-olds to also be referred to juvenile court instead of being tried in the adult court system as was previously the case.

² Compromise to repealing the legislation led to a phased-in approach to implementing the legislation beginning with age 16 year olds effective January 1, 2010 and 17 year olds effective July 1, 2012.

³ Formerly called "Family Support Centers," Child, Youth and Family Support Centers (CYFSC) are community-based centers overseen by the Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division that provide comprehensive assessment, intervention, educational advocacy, vocational and life skills development, parent support, family mediation case management and referral services to youth, who are court-involved, truant, have run away or are otherwise out of parents' control. The Connecticut state legislature initially provided funding for just four Centers – located in Hartford, Bridgeport, New Haven, and Waterbury. Beginning in 2010, the state has expanded the Family Support Center services statewide.

⁴ DuBois, D. L., Holloway, B. E., Valentine, J. C., & Cooper, H. (2002). Effectiveness of mentoring programs for youth: A meta-analytic review. *American journal of community psychology, 30*(2), 157-197.

B. Overview of the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Mentoring Network

The overarching goal of the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Mentoring Network is to reduce recidivism for court-involved youth referred to the program by providing high-quality, community-based mentoring services. Mentoring services are delivered by contracted mentoring program providers that are responsible for providing one-to-one, gender-specific, community-based mentoring services to youth referred to the program for a minimum of one year. The mentoring programs are required to track program efforts and results, report regularly on progress and to participate in mentor recruitment and program enhancement practices offered by CSSD and the Partnership.

1. Administration by the Connecticut Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division

The Connecticut Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division, allocates the funding for the Juvenile Justice Mentoring Network and is responsible for ensuring appropriate referrals of court-involved youth to the participating mentoring programs. It also provides trainings to the mentoring staff of the contracted providers through a subcontracted provider, the Connecticut Clearinghouse, as well as information, support and guidance on the needs of court-involved youth.

Prior to contracting with The Governor's Prevention Partnership as lead agency and fiduciary, CSSD asked the Partnership for technical assistance in establishing successful mentoring protocols for court-involved youth. The Partnership identified the following capacities to ensure the success of mentoring programs for court-involved youth:

1. A comprehensive vision, mission and strategic direction that fully embraces mentoring system-involved youth.
2. Understanding of and access to established best practices for youth mentoring.
3. Staff capacity to recruit, screen, match and train mentors and support mentor-mentee pairs.
4. Performance measurement systems.
5. Mechanisms to coordinate mentoring services with youth and families across agencies and organizations.
6. Agency networks that access wrap-around services and systems of care for appropriate referrals.
7. Appropriate level of staff skill to implement services and appropriate leadership within the organization to support the mentoring program.
8. Capacity to provide staff and mentors with the training and support they need to be able to serve in their roles.
9. Plan for funding and sustainability for the mentoring program.

Previous to this initiative, CSSD had issued a series of RFQs to agencies for mentoring services for court-involved youth. The first two times the RFQ was issued, bidders did not meet the threshold for minimum point requirements for a successful proposal. The third time, three agencies were contracted, but only one agency was successful in implementing the program. From this experience, it was determined that a statewide infrastructure was needed to provide technical assistance and support to agencies aiming to provide quality mentoring services for court-involved youth.

2. The Governor's Prevention Partnership Role as Lead Agency

In October 2012, the Partnership was contracted by CSSD to serve as the lead agency to identify quality-based mentoring providers capable of serving court-involved youth across the state, and to contract with, oversee and provide technical assistance to these programs. In November 2012, the Partnership issued an RFQ and successfully identified five providers covering different court districts in Connecticut that met the qualifications for the subcontract. Of these, one provider had previously contracted with CSSD and thus had a head start in implementing their mentoring program for court-involved youth. The remaining four initial providers contracted were new to working with court-involved youth. An additional four providers were later

subcontracted (in June, July and August) to ensure statewide coverage, bringing the total number of providers in the Network to nine.

In addition to contracting with the mentoring providers, the Partnership was responsible for launching and supporting the Juvenile Justice Mentoring Network, comprised of contracted providers and staff from the Partnership and CSSD. The Network was established to increase provider capacity to deliver high quality mentoring services for court-involved youth and foster shared accountability toward achieving results statewide. Towards this end, the Partnership provided ongoing trainings and technical assistance on best practices for mentoring based on the Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring.^{TM 5} These elements covered the following areas: 1) recruitment, 2) screening, 3) training, 4) matching, 5) monitoring, 6) support, and 7) closure. The Partnership developed a database system for Network providers to track efforts. The Partnership also assisted providers in recruiting qualified mentors by leveraging its existing partnerships with key institutions including universities, faith-based organizations, municipal employees, and the media. Additionally, the Partnership planned to launch a statewide advisory group of key stakeholders for the Network to help advocate for mentoring at a state level, set direction for the program, improve programming and help guide management decisions.

The Partnership staffing for the Juvenile Justice Mentoring Network in its first year included a program manager, senior program coordinator, database systems associate and outside evaluation consultant. The management team, comprised of the Partnership's president and CEO, the director of programs and services, a consultant on court support services programming, and the process evaluator, also met on a regular basis to receive progress reports and to monitor and advise the staff members who oversee the Network. The Network was coordinated and facilitated by the senior program coordinator, utilizing a participatory approach that engaged Network providers in establishing a shared vision and common goals, collaborative decision-making, and knowledge, resource, and data exchange to inform quality improvement efforts and accountability towards achieving results.

3. Contracted Mentoring Program Provider Requirements

With the exception of one provider,⁶ the Network providers were contracted to serve juveniles, ages 10-17 years, who were referred to Superior Court, Juvenile Matters. This includes both juveniles classified as delinquents and those who were Family with Service Needs (FWSNs). Juveniles appropriately referred for mentoring services are classified as "low-medium" risk, with mild to moderately challenging behaviors. Their classification was determined by the referral source, generally a juvenile probation officer or other Judicial Branch, CSSD-contracted service provider. Each referring organization utilized the appropriate Judicial Branch, CSSD-approved risk assessment tool (JAG, MAYSI-2).

The juveniles referred to the mentoring providers might also be engaged in other services (e.g., Children, Youth and Family Support Centers, YES!), based on risk and needs. The strengths and needs of those referred and exclusionary criteria for the program were as follows:

Strengths and needs:

- Juveniles with a primary need in "family" or "peers/stake in conformity"
- Juveniles who demonstrate interest in having a mentor
- Juveniles with few and/or poor connections to positive adults
- Juveniles with little to no pro-social involvement

⁵ MENTOR, & United States of America. (2009). Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring.

⁶ Policies of Big Brothers Big Sisters at the national level restrict the upper age limit of youth served to age 15, so an exception to the upper age limit of 17 was granted for the Nutmeg Big Brothers, Big Sister's contract.

Exclusionary criteria for participation by a juvenile in mentoring services:

- Actively homicidal, suicidal or psychotic
- Requires detoxification due to substance abuse (juveniles can be referred once detox is concluded)
- Sex offender
- Pose threat of serious assault as determined by CSSD
- Mental instability, as determined by CSSD
- Current, active clinical depression

Providers agreed to accept all juveniles appropriately referred, and to work with families of the youth. Mentors were expected to spend at least four hours per month with their mentee in a community and/or on-site setting. It was noted in the RFQ that some families may be reluctant to participate and may, at times, be uncooperative. Each provider assumed the responsibility for the day-to-day program operations of the mentoring program in accordance with six essential standards based on The Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring.^{TM 7} These were the minimum standards to meet program requirements, although it was anticipated that some standards may need to be adapted to meet the needs of court-involved youth.

4. Program Performance and Capacity-Building Goals

i. Short-Term Program Performance Goals

The primary short-term program performance goal for year one was to successfully match and sustain 225 court-referred juveniles with mentors, based on an assigned number of program slots per court district.

An additional mentoring program goal was to increase the social and personal competencies and educational outcomes of the youth. Each program was expected to address at least one of the following risk and protective factors:

Risk factors:

- Low bonding to family, school, community
- Early and persistent behavior problems
- Academic failure
- Alienation and rebelliousness
- Peer rejection
- Association with delinquent peers

Increases in personal and social competencies, demonstrated by: Community connectedness

- Life skills domains
- Pro-social involvement
- Involvement with pro-social peers
- Educational involvement/attainment, demonstrated by: school connectedness, educational achievement, attendance, disciplinary actions

⁷ MENTOR, & United States of America. (2009). Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring.

ii. Program Capacity Building Goals

The key short-term program capacity building goal for year one was to ensure that providers were well-equipped to provide training and match support to the mentors and the following factors were identified: (1) knowledge and ability to implement mentoring best practices; (2) knowledge on serving court-involved youth; (3) ability to monitor program quality and accountability; (4) network participation and satisfaction; and, (5) resource sharing.

The key long-term capacity building goal was to ensure effective Network functioning and sustainability, resulting in reduced rates of recidivism for those juvenile offenders successfully matched in the program.

C. Evaluation Approach and Methods

The Partnership initially worked with CSSD and Network providers to develop methods for tracking and assessing progress toward its established goals. The Partnership designed several Excel databases to track and monitor the Network provider efforts and results. Agencies submitted monthly status reports to the Partnership. A monthly narrative report documenting program successes and challenges was also initiated by the Partnership in November.

An empowerment evaluation consultant was hired in May 2013 to support the process and outcome evaluation. The Partnership adopted an empowerment evaluation approach with the aim of strengthening program results by building evaluation into the ongoing process of program administration and involving provider staff and clients in the evaluation process. Empowerment evaluation was introduced by Fetterman and Wandersman (2005)⁸ and is based on the following ten principles designed to strengthen collaboration and the achievement of program results: 1) community ownership, 2) inclusion, 3) democratic participation, 4) community knowledge, 5) evidence-based strategies, 6) accountability, 7) improvement, 8) organizational learning, 9) social justice, and 10) capacity building. Approaches drawn from mentoring best practices, asset-based programming, an understanding of risk and protective factors, positive youth development, resiliency, and trauma-informed care also informed technical support provided to the mentoring programs and the evaluation plan.

The empowerment evaluator served as a critical guide in assisting the Partnership and the Network providers in developing shared metrics and outcome evaluation goals and measures, and in documenting the process and analyzing the results. The empowerment evaluator supported the development of a program logic model and evaluation instruments. An evaluation subcommittee was formed as part of the Network involving the Partnership senior program coordinator and two providers with experience in evaluation to jointly design the outcome evaluation instruments.

Mixed, qualitative and quantitative, methods were used to evaluate the Partnership's role in overseeing and providing technical assistance to the Network. Specifically, the evaluation for year one documented efforts required for launching this initiative, and identified challenges and potential areas for program management improvement toward achieving high quality results. The process evaluation covered the following areas drawn from the elements of effective practice: referrals, mentor recruitment and training, monitoring, as well as mentor-matching and match support.

Qualitative methods used for the process evaluation involved the empowerment evaluator in regular communication with the senior program coordinator. Participant observation methods were used to document the activities, successes and challenges in forming the Network in its first year. The evaluator attended all Network meetings and joined the senior program coordinator on at least one site visit to each provider, with

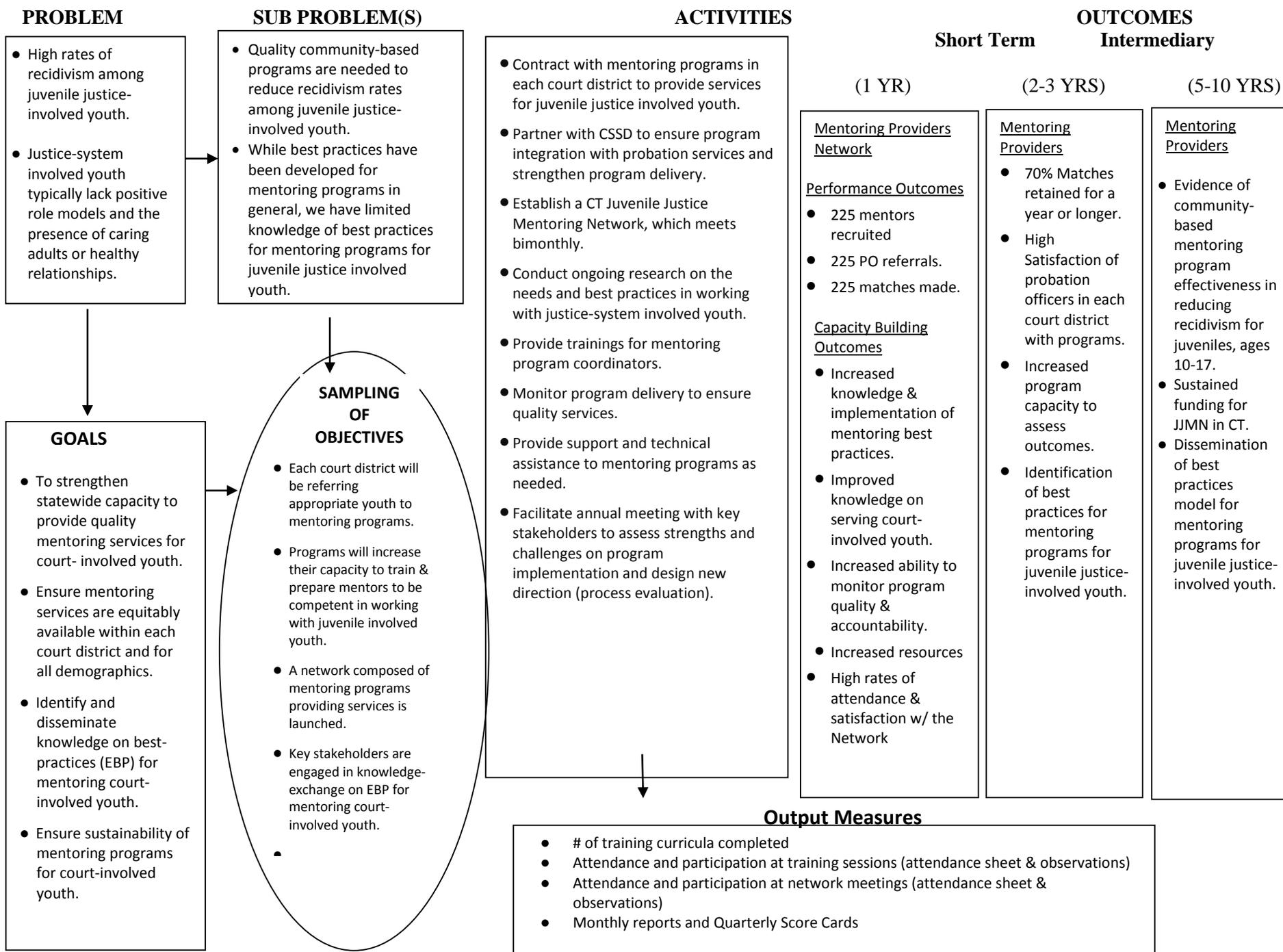
⁸ Fetterman, D.M. & Wandersman, A. (1985) *Empowerment Evaluation Principles in Practice*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

the exception of the two new providers that joined in October 2013. In January 2014, the evaluator also requested providers fill out an anonymous questionnaire and participate in an hour-long focus group about their experiences as part of the Network.

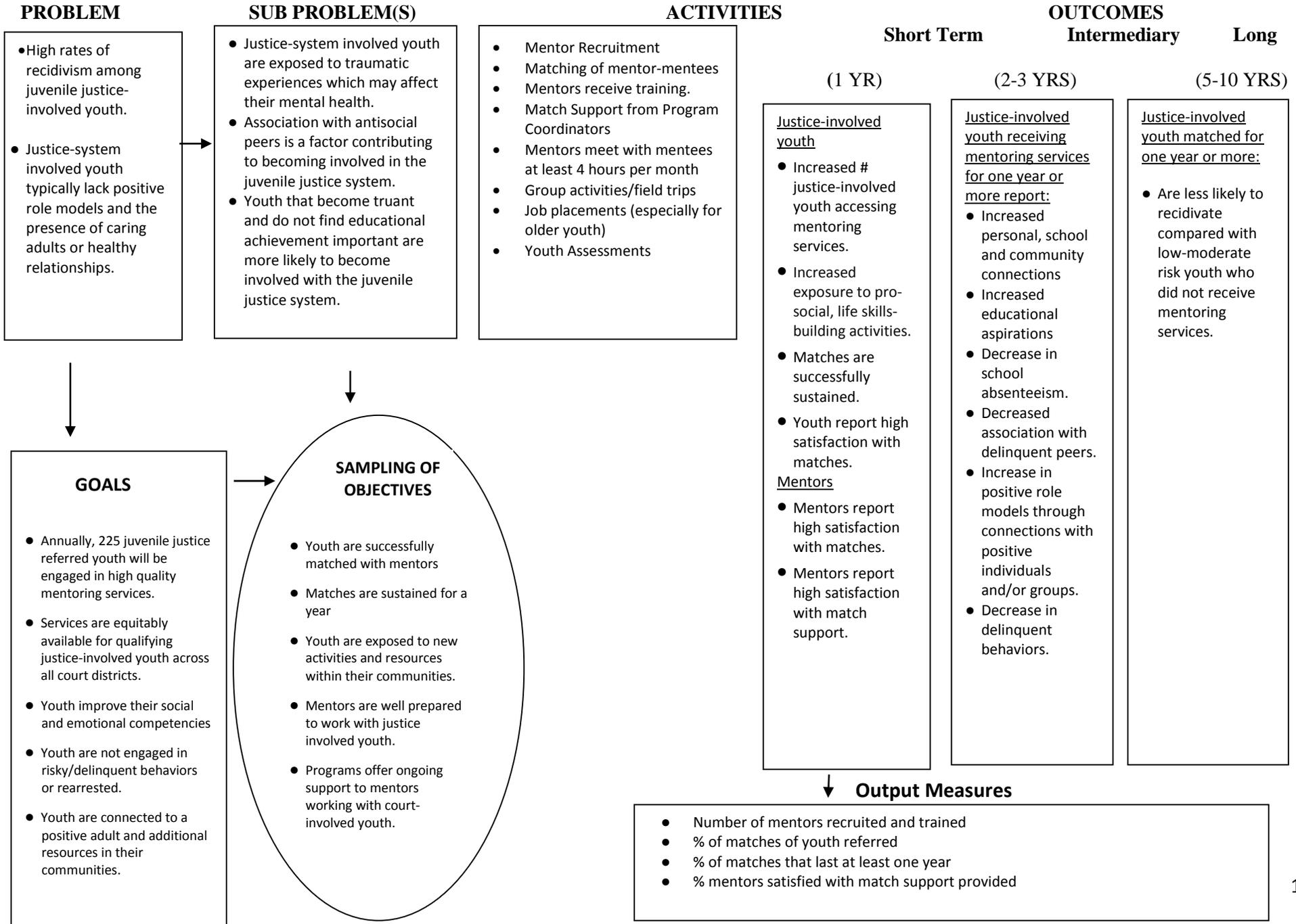
D. Logic Models

Logic models for the Network are provided on the following two pages. The first logic model focuses on the program performance and capacity building outcomes of the Network. The second logic model focuses on the youth outcomes anticipated for the participating mentoring programs.

Logic Model — The Juvenile Justice Mentoring Network Performance & Capacity Building Outcomes



Logic Model: The Juvenile Justice Mentoring Network Programmatic Mentor & Youth Outcomes

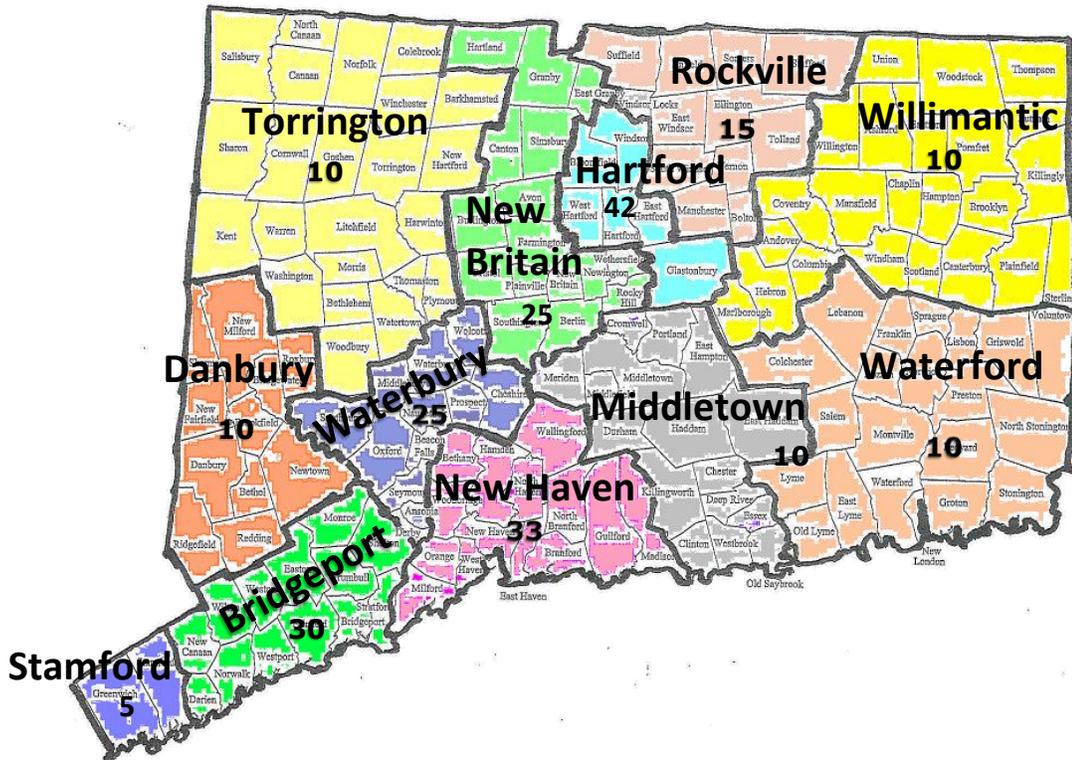


II. Launching the Network, Data Systems and Training Activities

A. CSSD Partnership and Working with the Court System

In order to develop a referral system and effective partnership with the court systems across the state, the Partnership staff and CSSD court planner II arranged face-to-face meetings with probation supervisors in each of the court districts to notify them about the program. These initial meetings were critical to establishing buy-in and support for the mentoring initiative, and to address any issues and concerns probation officers (POs) may have had about volunteer, community-based mentoring programs. For example, some POs in the past were concerned about whether the volunteer mentors would be sufficiently screened prior to being allowed to work with a child. Next, the management team then presented the program to the POs. These initial introductions took place from October 2012-June 2013. POs were given forms for the program including: 1) mentor information, 2) youth information, and 3) release of information--agreement with the family. The Partnership did not have much direct contact with the Child, Youth and Family Support Centers. In the majority of the cases, POs made the connection with the Centers.

Figure 1: Map of Mentoring Slots Per Court District



B. Development of Shared Metrics

The Partnership developed a comprehensive system for program data management and reporting for its contracted providers. Data across providers needed to be comparable and aggregated at the state level. Also, the system was created to ensure program delivery achieved sufficient quality to warrant continued funding. A database system for tracking and monitoring program efforts and results was developed utilizing Microsoft Excel and comprised of a monthly report and a scorecard for each provider. The data was merged into a single file that tracked overall results.

Monthly Report. The monthly reporting system is a database that contains information on the youth referred, mentors recruited, and tracking of various stages from referral to match closure. The system was developed with input from each contracted provider to tailor the system to their requirements. For example, several providers requested the ability to track and monitor referrals as well as mentor recruitment using the database. While larger agencies such as Nutmeg Big Brothers, Big Sisters had their own data system to manage programs, smaller agencies planned to utilize this database as their primary program management tool.

Score Cards. This report documented program efforts and quality metrics on a quarterly basis against benchmarks. The score card system was developed by the senior program coordinator and program manager, with input from CSSD. The score card was also used for quarterly benchmarking for the number of matches, according to providers assigned number of slots per year and their maintenance of quality standards. Quality standards were based on a check list adapted from *The Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*.^{TM 9}

- Matches made of the # of slots available
- Match support activities (i.e., monthly contact with mentor and mentees/families)
- Recruitment activities
- Quality of mentor-mentee relationship
- Relationship with CSSD staff/probation officers
- Knowledge on juvenile justice and youth involved in the justice system (i.e., staff trainings and network meeting attendance)

Providers were given some flexibility in tailoring these metrics according to the specific activities/efforts they were using to maintain quality standards.

To ensure quality of the data being collected, the Partnership followed up with agencies about any missing data or inconsistent data for the monthly reporting requirements. The cumulative program data was presented to the entire network as well as the CSSD executive director at a meeting on July 25th, 2013. Another presentation of the cumulative data was presented to the Network in early January 14, 2014, which reported out preliminary year-end results, including breakdowns by age, gender and ethnicity. Analyses were conducted by the senior program coordinator using Microsoft Excel.

C. Preparation of Program Quality and Outcome Assessment Tools

As part of the empowerment evaluation approach, staff from two mentoring programs volunteered to be part of the evaluation team to help design an outcome evaluation instrument for the mentoring programs. Both staff were licensed clinical social workers, and expressed a comfort-level with the evaluation process. It was agreed that there would be a pre and post instrument to assess mentee outcomes, based on positive youth development principles, risk and protective factors for youth delinquency. There was also a plan to develop a separate instrument for assessing mentor-mentee match quality that would be utilized on a quarterly and annual basis.

Later it was decided that a survey to assess probation satisfaction with the programs was needed. Since POs have other options for referring youth in their care, a key to ensuring ongoing referrals is for the program staff to consistently maintain communication with the probation officers and to deliver high quality mentor matches in as timely a fashion as is possible.

⁹ MENTOR, & United States of America. (2009). Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring.

As this program is statewide and its longer-term goal is to reduce recidivism rates, CSSD also will be analyzing recidivism data over a three-year period for those youth who received services through the mentoring programs.

D. Establishing The Juvenile Justice Mentoring Network

The senior program coordinator from the Partnership visited each contracted provider at least once a quarter and sometimes more than once for troubleshooting, or to help retrain new staff, depending on the need. She also corresponded over email and phone with the providers almost every week. Network meetings were held bimonthly and there were a total of five meetings over the course of the first year, followed by one in January of 2014. The meetings were facilitated by the senior program coordinator with active involvement from the program manager and CSSD court planner, along with the Network providers. Meetings provided an opportunity for the Partnership to introduce any policy or procedural changes to the program, upcoming trainings, reporting requirements, and share results and initial findings of the data from monthly reports. Providers were given the opportunity to demonstrate the progress they were making initially with referrals and then with matches per assigned slot. This reinforced their mutual accountability towards the goal of reaching 225 matches statewide.

The providers held their first meeting in February. At the second meeting, three subcommittees were established to complete work activities: The Data Subcommittee, Curriculum Subcommittee and Recruitment Subcommittee. A fourth subcommittee was added later to prepare a program manual. The responsibilities for each are described in Table 1. This is followed by Table 2, which provides an overview of the Network meeting agendas from the first meeting in February 2013 to the meeting in January 2014.

Data Subcommittee	Curriculum Subcommittee	Recruitment Subcommittee	Program Manual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting and reviewing evaluation instruments • Selecting most appropriate evaluation tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying and collecting information on key issues mentors need to be trained • Designing a curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing creative recruitment strategies • Present these strategies to the group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare program policies and procedures guidebook and recommended practices

Table 2: Network Meeting Schedule	
Network Meeting Schedule 2013-Jan 2014	Agenda
Meeting 1-February 4th, 2013 Host: The Governor's Prevention Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introductions of Programs and Network Members ● Creating – Community of Practice, Shared Goals, and Structure ● Intro to Empowerment Evaluation
Meeting 2-March 20, 2013 Host: The Governor's Prevention Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Success & Challenges ● Logic Model Training ● Recruitment Role Play & Methods for Male Recruitment
Meeting 3-May 15, 2013 Host: Klingberg Family Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review Mentor Recruitment #s ● Subcommittee Updates ● Resource Sharing Around Activities for Mentor/Mentees; New England Regional Mentoring Conference ● Relationship with Probation Officers QI Discussion ● Background Checks & Other Challenges
Meeting 4-July 17, 2013 Host: Children's Community Programs of CT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Subcontract Addendums ● Data Presentation & July 25th CSSD Meeting ● Subcommittee Updates ● Youth Photo Voice ● PACT 360 Opportunity
Meeting 5-September 18, 2013 Host: Waterbury Youth Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Report of # of Matches ● Monthly Reports Data Entry Issues ● Brief Case Reviews
Training-November 12-13, 2013 Location: Graustein Memorial Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Trauma Training
Meeting 6-January 14, 2014 Host: Children's Community Programs of CT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff Changes at the Partnership ● Review of Data (e.g. Matches by Gender, Ethnicity, Discharges) ● Focus Group with Network Providers

E. Continuous Quality Improvement and Trainings

This section describes the trainings that were provided as a means toward achieving the following short term goals in capacity building for Network providers in year one: 1) Improved knowledge on serving court-involved youth, 2) Increased knowledge of mentoring best practices, and 3) Increased ability to monitor program quality.

As part of their contractual agreement, the Network provider program directors/coordinators were required to attend the following trainings provided by the Connecticut Clearinghouse¹⁰: 1) Juvenile Frameworks for Effective Treatments Interventions, 2) JAG¹¹ Overview, and 3) Overview of Juvenile Justice. The quality of these trainings were not formally assessed in this evaluation, however during the focus group with provider staff, many of them reported being highly satisfied and utilizing the knowledge from these trainings. The Partnership also provided a series of trainings for the contracted providers to learn about mentoring best

¹⁰ The Connecticut Clearinghouse is contracted by the Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division to serve as a training vendor.

¹¹ JAG refers to the Juvenile Assessment Generic instrument used for risk assessment by the Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division.

practices, program evaluation and trauma-informed care. Attendance was not required, but highly recommended. The next section below includes descriptions of the trainings provided by the Partnership and, where available, information from a post-test survey of trainees that was developed and implemented by the senior program coordinator to assess self-reported knowledge gains. The Network curriculum subcommittee also met twice to make recommendations for additional trainings.

1. Mentoring Program Training

The providers were invited to attend two mentoring trainings provided by the Partnership, which are part of ongoing trainings for the Connecticut Mentoring Partnership, an initiative of the Partnership. The first training, held on May 3, 2013, was “Designing and Building A Successful Mentoring Program: Elements for Effective Practice for Mentoring.”TM This training was based on a toolkit titled, “How to Build a Successful Mentoring Program Using Elements of Effective Practice,” developed by MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership. Four of the contracted providers attended the first training.

The second training was “Mentor Training of Trainers” and was held May 17, 2013. This training also utilized resources from MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership (Mentoring.org/mentor training). This training of trainers session was designed to equip the program staff member with the skills and resources needed to lead a mentor training, including an outline for a two-hour mentor training session and a generic mentor handbook that can be tailored for the program. Six contracted providers attended this training. In addition, the Partnership program manager conducted “train the trainer” workshops for the mentors at several of the programs sites with less experience in mentoring.

2. Evaluation Training

In March 2013, several mentoring program provider staff attended a training on developing a program evaluation logic model offered by the Partnership. Those staff who were not able to attend this supplementary training were given a similar training at the next Network meeting. A Network provider staff person who took part in this logic model training assisted in facilitating a portion of this training for other providers at the following Network meeting.

3. Northeast Regional Mentoring Conference

The third biennial 2013 Northeast Regional Youth Mentoring Conference (NERC) was held October 17-18 at the Connecticut Convention Center, Hartford, CT. Since the conference’s inception five years ago, a different state partnership in the region plays host to mentoring coordinators, business leaders, funders and providers of the community interested in learning about quality mentoring and networking with colleagues. Along with the Network providers, more than 150 people gathered to celebrate mentoring. The keynote speaker was Michael Karcher, Ed.D., Ph.D., Professor at the University of Texas at San Antonio, author and researcher on school-based and cross-age peer mentoring as well as adolescent connectedness. David Shapiro, CEO of MENTOR, led a mentor/mentee panel discussion and fifteen concurrent workshops focused on current and innovative mentoring topics. Four providers of the Network along with the CSSD court planner II hosted a panel on providing mentoring services for court-involved youth.

4. Trauma-Informed Care Training

On November 12th and 13th, 2013, the Partnership conducted a two-day training on the Impact of Trauma for System-Involved Youth in partnership with the Center for Trauma Recovery and Juvenile Justice of the University of Connecticut Health Center. Monique Marrow, Ph.D., a national trauma-informed care expert, facilitated the first day, and the Partnership senior program coordinator facilitated the second day. The training helped providers to understand the relationship between trauma and delinquency, and its impact on child/youth development. The training also provided tips on helping youth develop positive coping mechanisms and

identify the impact of stress on their bodies and minds. Fifteen staff from mentoring programs in the Network attended the first day's training along with 49 additional participants. Self-evaluations from day one of the Trauma Training ($N = 42$) demonstrated that 79% of the participants reported that they learned a lot from the training and 86% reported that they learned to recognize the impact of trauma on youth development.

F. Statewide Mentoring Advisory Group

The Partnership agreement with CSSD included plans to form a statewide mentoring advisory group. The role of the advisory group is to help advocate for mentoring at a state level, set direction for the program, improve programming and help guide management decisions. Understanding that youth should be involved in a variety of wrap-around services across the state and should have a strong network of individuals supporting them, it is equally important that the advisory group is diverse and represents those same sectors. Representation will ideally include key stakeholders from CSSD, the Partnership, Connecticut Department of Children & Families, and Juvenile Probation. A formal advisory group, apart from the Partnership management team, was not established in year one, however a group of mentoring experts from across the state were convened to meet with Dr. Michael Karcher, a national expert on mentoring, for a discussion of mentoring evaluation.

Also, a Network subcommittee was formed to begin compiling a program implementation policies and procedures guidebook. This committee met twice, and developed a basic outline for the guidebook.

III. Mentoring Program Performance Outcomes for Year One

A primary goal for the first year was for the mentoring programs to achieve the following performance outcomes: 1) 225 mentors recruited, 2) 225 PO referrals, 3) 225 youth matched with a mentor. Achievement towards these goals was tracked on a monthly basis using the newly established data tracking system. During bimonthly Network meetings, programs also reported on the number of PO referrals and number of matches made for each court district. This data was utilized to inform quality improvement efforts and to hold programs accountable to achieving program results. Aggregate results were presented to the entire Network after six months to identify progress toward the goals of receiving at least 225 referrals, intakes, and successful matches of youth and to identify areas for program improvement.

Below, first we report on the six-month program outputs, and then year-end program outputs based on the monthly data collection system, as well as lessons learned from these findings.

A. Program Efforts

1. Mentors Recruited

By the end of the second quarter (June, 2013), 90 mentors had been recruited, which was 63% of the total number of referrals that had been received at this time. By year-end (December 31, 2013), 183 mentors had been recruited, which was 81% of the goal.

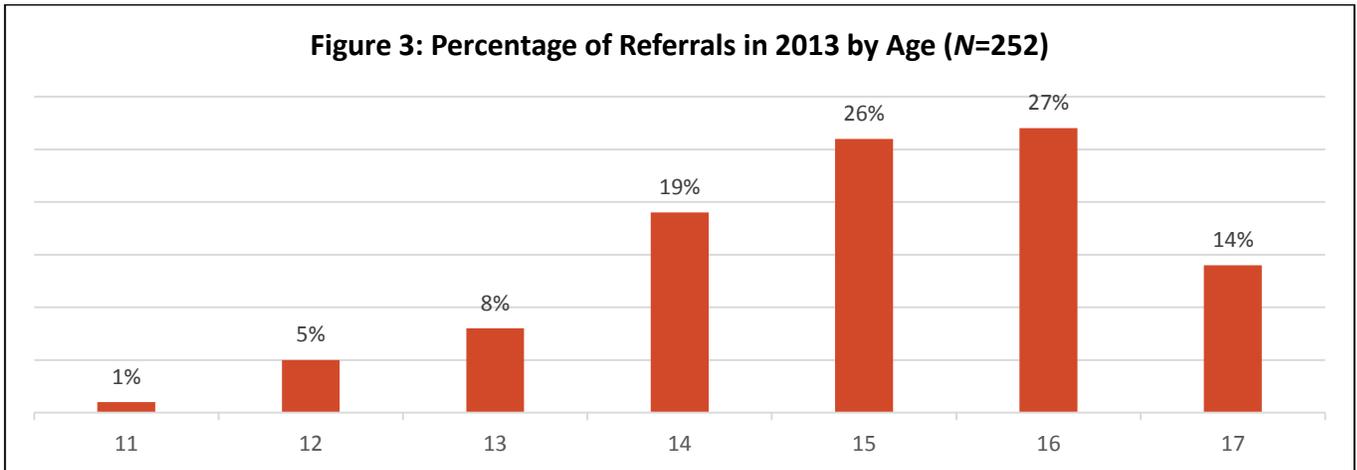
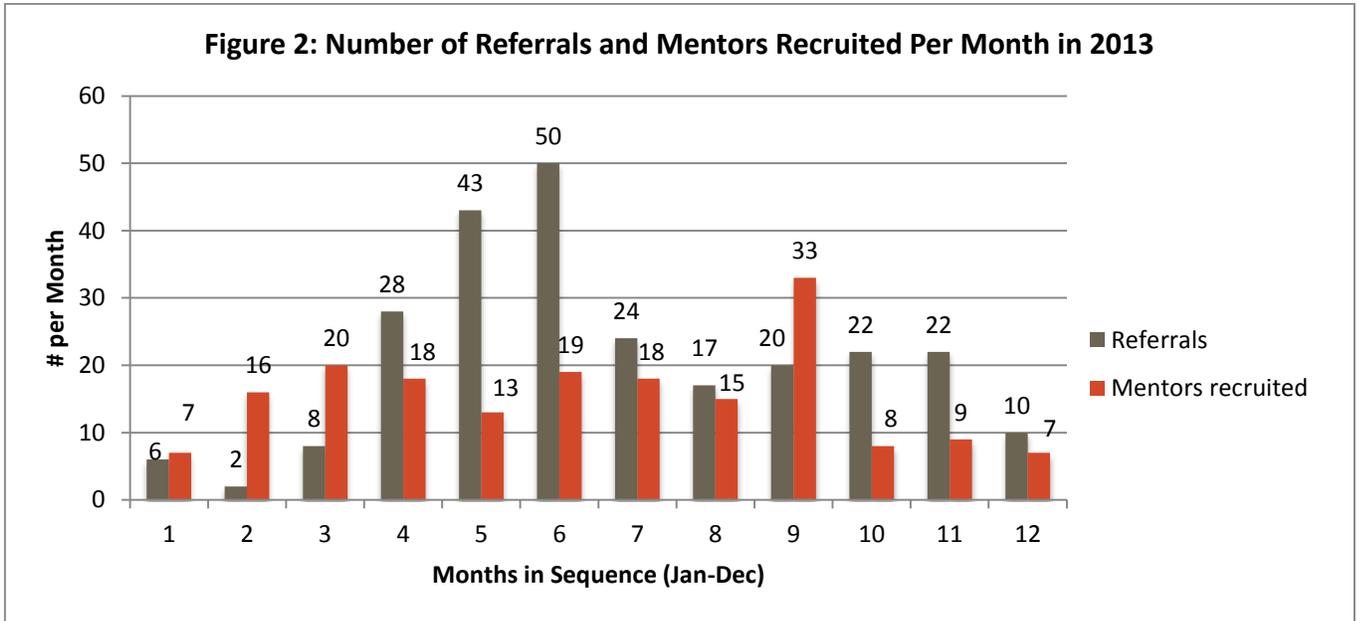
Mentor recruitment improved after one month from the start of the Network (see Figure 2 in the next section below), and remained at similar levels until September when the numbers more than doubled. After September, mentor recruitment slowed down again.

2. Referrals

After six months of launching the Network, providers collectively had received 144 referrals of youth to the mentoring programs from probation officers and CYFSC, reaching 64% of the annual goal. By year-end (December 31, 2013), the providers had received 252 referrals, 12% above the goal.

A monthly breakdown of the number of referrals (Figure 2) shows that it took about four months for the programs to increase the rate of monthly referrals, and this increase lasted through June. After June the number of referrals slowed down, reaching its lowest point in December.

- Age: 13% of referrals were between 11 and 13 years old. 82% were between 14 and 17 years old, and 3% were age 18. The median age was 16 (See Figure 3 for a breakdown of referrals by age).
- Gender: Providers received more referrals of males (67%) than females (33%).
- Ethnicity: The highest percentage of referrals were of African American/Black youth (44%), followed by White (22%) and Hispanic/Latino (22%). A small percentage were of biracial youth (4%), West Indian (1%), or Other (7%).



3. Intakes

The total number of intakes to the program was 215 by the end of Year One. By the second quarter, the average number of days from referral to intake was 18 days. By year-end (December 31st, 2013), the average number of days from referral to intake had increased to 27 days, an increase of 9 days from the 2nd Quarter.

Ineligible referrals: Of the total referrals, 15% ($N = 37$) were determined at intake not to be eligible for the program due to youth lack of interest or the youth presenting at too high a risk-level (e.g., having a serious mental health issue requiring treatment).

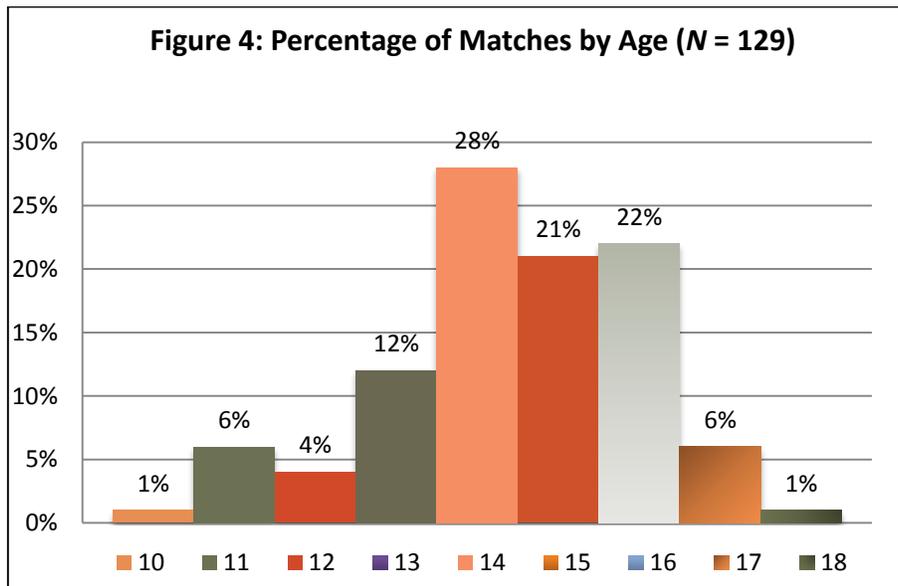
Closed Prior to Match: Another 8% ($N = 19$) of intakes were closed prior to match due to lack of youth or family interest or relocating.

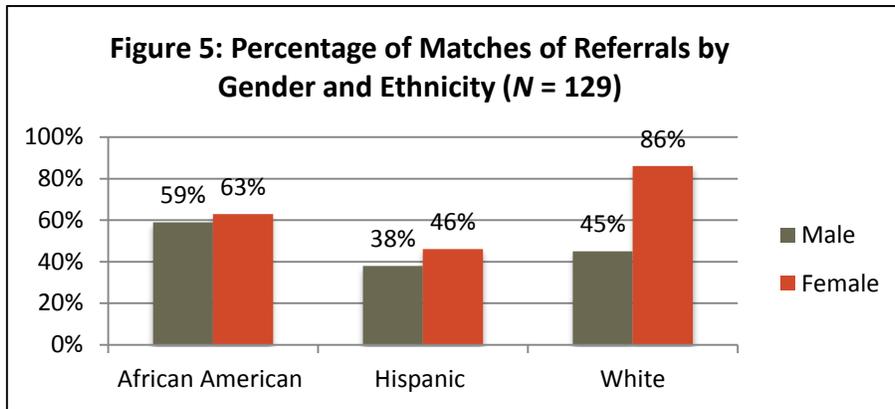
4. Matches Made

By the end of the second quarter, providers reported 71 matches of youth with a mentor, which was 32% of the annual goal of 225. By year-end (December 31st, 2013), providers reported 129 matches, which was 57% of the annual goal of 225. For providers with 5 or more matches, the average number of days from intake to match was 40 days.

About 2 out every 3 children (66%) that were eligible for the program at intake in Year One were matched at some point in the year.

- Age: 71% of the matches were for youth between the ages of 14 and 16. 22% were between ages 11 and 13. (Figure 4)
- Gender: Providers had a higher rate of matching females than males. The percentage of referrals that were matched was 67% for females and 49% for males.
- Ethnicity: The ethnic breakdown of total matches was 39% African American/Black, 29% Hispanic/Latino, 21% White, 3% biracial, 6% Other, 2% West Indian.
- Ethnicity and Gender (Figure 5):
 - African-American and Hispanic/Latino males comprised the majority of matches (46% of total matches). However, Hispanic/Latino males were less likely to be matched compared with White males, and African American/Black males. Of those referred, 38% of Hispanic/Latino males were matched compared with 45% for White males and 59% for African American/Black males.
 - Hispanic/Latino females comprised the next largest number of referrals. However, Hispanic/Latino females were less likely to be matched compared with females from other ethnic groups. White females were the third largest number of referrals, but they were more likely to be matched compared with females from other ethnic groups. Of those referred by ethnicity, 46% were matched for Hispanic/Latino females, compared with 63% for African American/Black females and 86% for White females.





5. Match Length

Of the 129 matches that were made in 2013, 97 (75%) were sustained at the end of Year One, and 59 (46%) reached the one year mark as of October 2014. Of the total matches that were made in 2013, 67% lasted six months or more, 50% lasted at least eleven months (6 matches were still ongoing as of the publication of this report), and 46% were sustained for a year or more (Table 3). The youth in the younger age group of 10-13 were more successful in sustaining their matches compared with the youth in the older age group of 14-17, but due to the large confidence intervals, these findings should be considered preliminary.

Matches Closed: In total, 64 matches (50%) closed before a year.

Months	# Closed	% of Total Closed Prior to One Year	Months	# Closed	% of Total Closed Prior to one Year
0	5	8%	7	3	5%
1	8	13%	8	2	3%
2	9	14%	9	4	6%
3	6	10%	10	6	9%
4	7	11%	11	3*	N/A
5	4	6%	12	59	N/A
6	7	17%			

*An additional 6 matches at 11 months were also still open as of 10/31/2014.

Age Group	No. of Mentees Matched (2 missing)	No. of Matches Closed (3 missing)	% Matches Closed Early	Confidence Interval ¹²
10-13	29	10	35%	20%-53%
14-17	98	50	52%	42%-61%
Total	126	60	48%	40%-57%

B. Summary of Short-Term Program Performance Outcomes

A short-term goal established for Year One was for providers to successfully match 225 court-referred juveniles with mentors, based on an assigned number of program slots per court district. The number of slots was determined by the CSSD according to their estimate of the number of juvenile offenders per court district that would most benefit from these services. Programs achieved 57% of their goal of successfully matching 225 youth in Year One, and at least 46% of their goal of sustaining these matches for one year.

It was evident that for the first four months most programs were just getting established and that efforts were focused on building relationships with the probation officers to obtain a steady flow of referrals. Referrals increased significantly in April through June. After June the number of referrals slowed down, however the number of referrals at year-end exceeded the number of available slots by 12%.

Two-thirds of the youth that were referred and were eligible for the program were matched in the first year. Programs received more male referrals than female referrals, but were more successful in matching females than males. This was likely due at least in part to the fact that programs had more success in recruiting female mentors than males, and the matches were required to be gender-specific. The programs received more referrals of African American/Black males than of Hispanic/Latino or White males. However, for males, the programs had the least success in matching Hispanic/Latino males, and the most success in matching African American/Black males. For females, programs had the least success in matching Hispanic/Latino females and the most success in matching White females, with African American/Black females falling slightly below the rate of Whites.

Of the total matches that were made in 2013, approximately 70% lasted six months or more, 53% lasted at least eleven months, and 46% lasted for at least a year. Matches in the 10-13 age range closed at a slightly lower rate than matches in the 14-17 age range. Males overall were more likely to have their match closed prior to a year than females. Also, Hispanic/Latino youth were more likely to have their match closed prior to a year.

¹² The confidence interval was derived using Wilson Score Interval (1927) as explained in Newcombe (1998). Newcombe, R. G. (1998). Interval estimation for the difference between independent proportions: comparison of eleven methods. *Statistics in Medicine* 17, 873–90.

IV. Network Capacity Building Outcomes

The main purpose of the Juvenile Justice Mentoring Network is to ensure the delivery of high quality mentoring services for court-involved youth statewide. The Network aimed to accomplish the following short-term capacity building goals in its first year listed below:

- Increased knowledge of mentoring best practices.
- Improved knowledge on serving court-involved youth.
- Increased ability to monitor program quality and accountability.
- Increased program resources
- High rates of participation and satisfaction with the Network

In order to document the functioning of the Network as a collaborative and the oversight and technical assistance provided by the Partnership, the empowerment evaluator attended all of the Network meetings and took process observation notes (See Appendix A for a summary of these process notes). The evaluator also accompanied the senior program coordinator to site visits for each provider as the Score Card system was implemented for them to report on their efforts in applying mentoring best practices. Lastly, the evaluator met regularly (approximately once a month) with the senior program coordinator to discuss the progress that was being made and challenges or obstacles that were encountered as the Network providers were establishing their programs.

In mid-January of 2014, a focus group was conducted with eight of the nine providers present. The program evaluator facilitated this discussion. Six of the nine providers also completed an anonymous questionnaire rating their satisfaction with the Network, and answering questions about quality improvements that they made as a result, and resource sharing within the Network (See Appendix B).

Below we describe the capacity building outcomes that were achieved as was evidenced by this process evaluation.

1. Increased Knowledge and Implementation of Mentoring Best Practices

- 100% of Network providers ($N = 8$) in the focus group reported that they were using materials from the *How to Build a Successful Mentoring Program Using the Elements of Effective Practice*TM provided from the Partnership trainings¹³.
- 38% ($n = 3$) of the providers found new, creative ways to recruit mentors (e.g., advertising in the Patch and other online sites).
- 38% of the providers adopted new procedures for providing support to matches (e.g., giving a list of free or low-cost activities to mentors, planning group activities for mentor/mentees).
- As a result of what they learned from participating in the Network, 50% of the providers ($n = 4$) reported having made one or more operational changes to their programs, including:
 - a. Using data to assess what works and refocus objectives.
 - b. Implemented new forms/policy for community mentoring.
 - c. Begun to update/supplement mentor training with trauma informed information.
 - d. Changed the way programs have been implemented and closure policy.

¹³ Mentor/National Mentoring Network. (2005) *How to Build a Successful Mentoring Program Using the Elements of Effective Practice*.

2. Increased Knowledge on Serving Court-Involved Youth

- 100% of the providers developed new practices and procedures for communicating effectively with the probation officers (e.g., sending a list of mentors to probation officers with basic information on mentors that have been recruited).
- Technical assistance by the Partnership’s senior program coordinator and program director, and CSSD court planner II, ensured knowledge and resources were provided to help programs overcome challenges in obtaining referrals.
- Most programs contacted the Partnership when they needed assistance, and the court planner only handled issues that could only be dealt with by CSSD.
- The trainings on the juvenile justice population and the trauma training received high ratings and trainees reported improved knowledge on serving justice-involved youth.
- In a free-list of the top three things they learned from their involvement in the Network, providers reported learning the following related to increased knowledge of serving court-involved youth: Ways to incorporate trauma informed care into mentor training (rated #1 in frequency of responses), and understanding how probation officers assess potential participants using the JAG risk assessment tool (#3 in frequency of responses).
- Several providers mentioned the Network had helped them to learn patience in dealing with the issues they were having in working with this population. They learned that these issues were not a reflection of their organization, but were due to systemic problems all providers were confronting. Issues that were mentioned were:
 - ‘The disappointment in failed matches and the reluctance or lack of cooperation from the parents in terms of scheduling appointments, intakes, and meeting with the mentor. Also, we were having to re-contact the probation officers and still appointments were not met.’

3. Increased ability to Monitor Program Quality and Accountability

- Extensive data was collected via the monthly and quarterly reporting system, which providers helped design. Several providers were relying on the Excel database created by the Partnership for much of their day-to-day mentoring program management as well as for reporting purposes.
- Two mentoring programs were more advanced in tracking and monitoring of mentoring prior to joining the Network. Judging from one-on-one meetings with providers, at least five of them increased their capacity in this area. Three were site-based programs that were new to providing community-based mentoring.
- 75% of providers ($N = 6$) that responded to the questionnaire thought the information collected on the quarterly reports was of ‘**Good Value (4),**’ with a mean of 3.7 on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5.¹⁴
- Collective data was reported back to programs in a relatively timely and ongoing fashion helping reinforce accountability to achieve results.
- Data-informed decision-making was used by the Partnership and the Network providers (e.g., Score Cards were being used for quality improvement efforts and technical assistance).
- One of the top three things the providers said they learned from the Network on an open-ended response item included the “Importance of using data to inform program improvements” (ranked #2 in frequency of responses in a free listing of what they had learned).

¹⁴ Response options were as follows: 1=little to No Value, 2=Some Value, 3=Fairly Good Value, 4=Good Value, 5=Excellent Value.

4. Network Provider Participation and Satisfaction

- Juvenile Justice Mentoring Network meetings had an average of 90% attendance and high levels of participation.
- On average, providers ($N = 6$) rated their time spent as part of the Network, both personally and professionally, to be a **Good Value (4)**. The mean score was 4.0 on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5.
- Provider staff reported that the top three benefits of being part of the Network were: 1) the networking, 2) exchange of ideas, and 3) training workshops. All but one provider said they valued the networking opportunities and learning.
- Observations notes of Network meetings documented the use of participatory facilitation by the senior program coordinator to involve the providers in decision-making and knowledge exchange. Network meetings provided a venue for the Partnership, the CSSD court planner II and providers to trouble-shoot, engage in collaborative decision-making, and report back on progress toward results. The court planner and the Partnership staff had regular communication and were consistent in the information they provided to the providers during Network meetings.
- There were some concerns around Network administration that are described in the section on challenges below.

5. Resource Sharing

- Participant observation during Network meetings and site visits showed that providers were openly sharing resources and knowledge on how to strengthen the quality and overall success of this mentoring initiative. Also, they were engaged in problem solving around individual cases and systemic programmatic issues.
- Providers ($N = 9$) participated actively on subcommittees to assist with training, evaluation, recruitment process, and program guidelines.
- Providers reported having made the following contributions to the Network ($N = 6$) on the questionnaire.
 - Offered support and guidance to other providers ($n = 2$).
 - Onsite resources shared with other programs (e.g., one program has a horse farm).
 - Sharing of recruitment tools.
 - Participation on several committees (e.g., the Evaluation Committee and Program Guide Committee).
 - Acted as a model program for other programs.

V. Mentoring Program Outcomes for Youth

A. Youth Outcomes

Quantitative assessments were not implemented to assess youth outcomes in year one. The survey instruments took time to develop using participatory methods and were completed in September 2013, after a small pilot of the evaluation was done. The Partnership determined that some of the programs were still getting established and staff already had many demands on them to get the programs fully up and running and meet their performance benchmarks.

B. Individual Success Stories

Several success stories about youth matches that were achieving desired results were gathered qualitatively as part of the monthly reporting system beginning in November. The following individual success stories were reported by providers on the monthly narrative reports:

- Destiny is a mentee who did not want a mentor; she said her probation officers strongly encouraged her to try. I am pleased to say Destiny and Katie are so happy as mentor/mentee. They do fun things along with homework assignments together. Destiny's mom says she loves her mentor. Destiny opened up expressing her fears as far as when the mentoring relationship would end.
- One mom called to share that her son has “done a 180” with regards to behaviors and attitude. He is better engaged with the family & extended family. Providers and family friends have remarked to the mother how they are pleasantly surprised by his turnaround. Mother reports that the mentor relationship is very important to her son and believes they will be connected for a long time.
- A 16-year-old who lives with her grandmother – has had tremendous difficulties over the past several years in controlling her emotions, which have led to issues at home, in school, and in her social life. However, with tremendous investment of time, energy, and love, her mentor – who shared a very similar personal history- has been able to get her to open up about these feelings and begin to process her frustrations, fears, and anxieties. This has helped the mentee develop success strategies, begin to visualize a future for herself, and has led to improvements at home and school.
- A byproduct of all these efforts was she recently secured – and is currently maintaining – her first part-time job at a local grocery store. Along the way, her mentor has helped her search for jobs, draft a resume, prepare for her interview, and is continuing to coach her on soft job skills that have helped her find success with her supervisors, co-workers, and, generally, her job. These experiences have not only provided her with disposable income, but have also worked to boost her self-esteem, helped her begin to think about steps she would like to take after graduating high school, and provided her with her first real taste of adulthood. When considering the mentee was discharged from probation just six short months ago, she has come a very long way in her personal – and now professional – development.
- The CSSD referrals that we've matched have worked pretty well because they are not only coming to meet with the mentor, they've actually been coming to our site. One of the kids applied for Youth At Work, a program that hired teens for the summer programs. He said he'd like to work here. He's impressed me as to his maturity and how he handles the younger kids here.

VI. Juvenile Justice Mentoring Network and Provider Challenges and Recommendations

The process evaluation includes an evaluation of the strengths and challenges of the Network providers in meeting their performance goals, and the challenges of the Partnership in overseeing program administration and providing technical assistance for the Network.

A. Start-up Challenges for the Network Providers

During the start-up of the Juvenile Justice Mentoring Network, the following challenges were observed and/or mentioned repeatedly by the providers during bimonthly meetings, site visits and communications with the senior program coordinator and evaluator:

1. General Program Capacity Building

- Two Network providers were new to mentoring. These providers required additional technical support to get the programs up and running. These were both site-based programs that were less accustomed to the community-based outreach required for mentoring. While their program sites offered considerable resources to youth, they had to learn how to effectively manage the time and effort required for recruitment, intakes, etc.
- Two providers were experienced in mentoring, but were less experienced in serving court-involved youth. These provider expressed frustration over the additional effort required to serve the needs of this population, although they were motivated to do so. It involved a significant learning curve on the part of program directors/coordinators to adjust their expectations for program performance and expend the additional efforts required.
- The senior program coordinator noted that most provider staff did not have social work backgrounds or training. Therefore, the terminology used in the trauma training was new to many staff, and the training provided a good introduction for them.

2. Referrals

- Building relationships with the probation officers required continuous communication and providers had to learn the proper method of communicating with the probation officers (e.g., phone or email, attached documents or inline messages).
- Some programs in certain court districts had difficulty getting any referrals from POs.
- The program manager needed to clarify with POs that programs were willing to serve youth up to age 17. (Initially the Network program manager had told probation officers that youth younger than 13-15 years were most likely to have successful outcomes from mentoring. However the probation officers' caseload has a higher number of older youth who are in need of community supports, and for whom this program was intended to serve. So the message had to be revised to let probation officers know that services were open to these older youth as well).

3. Intake

- Scheduling intakes with youth and families was difficult.
- In some instances, families were resistant to enrolling their child in the program.

4. Mentor Recruitment

- Recruitment of male mentors was difficult.
- Recruitment in less densely populated court districts was difficult.
- The time it takes for background checks slowed down the matching process.

5. Matching

- Sometimes finding the right match took additional time.
- Gender-specific matching was difficult because programs have more male than female referrals, but were able to recruit more female than male mentors.

6. Match Support

- Providers were concerned about lack of funding to support matches lasting beyond one year.
- Some youth with mental health issues were in need of additional services and mentors required additional support in serving these youth. Program coordinators without social work degrees and mentors could use additional support from licensed clinical social workers to provide advice in these cases, and wrap-around services.
- Some youth went in and out of juvenile detention, making it harder to retain these matches.

B. Network Administration & Technical Assistance Challenges

During the focus group and one-on-one conversations, Network providers expressed the following concerns and recommendations regarding the administration of the Network.

1. Data Management and Data Informed Decision-Making

- Although the data system using monthly reports and the quarterly score card was successfully utilized and valued by the providers in the first year, it was time consuming for programs to collect and input all the required data. One of the issues for the larger agencies was that they were working with two different data management systems and basically needed to enter the same data twice. Another larger agency was not required to record their data for this program in their other existing system.
- Several providers wanted to get started with collecting outcome data. One noted it would be difficult to obtain the outcomes given the fact that prior mentoring research has shown that a mentor relationship of two to three years was needed for there to be successful outcomes. Based on their experiences thus far, several providers anticipated that it would be difficult for them to maintain many of their matches even for one year.
- There was a learning curve to meet all the contractual and reporting requirements for The Connecticut Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division, especially state auditing requirements.

2. Network Collaboration

- Temporary staff leaves and turnover led to the need to train new staff over the course of the year for both Network providers and the Partnership.
- There were a few occasions when a provider expressed concern that providers in the Network were competing with each other. For example, the senior program coordinator recalled that when she combined a meeting with the probation officers across three providers in an urban court district, one staff person complained she perceived the providers were competing with one another. However, the senior program coordinator emphasized that she had “done a lot” to promote sharing, although

she recognized that each provider also functioned autonomously. She also provided several specific examples of providers that she observed were providing support to each other. On the questionnaire, one of the providers expressed the desire to see less competition and better collaboration.

3. Fiscal Concerns of Providers

During the focus group, a majority of the providers stated that the compensation per match was not sufficient for the time and effort required. One staff person cited a national Big Brothers, Big Sister's study that said the cost for each match was \$2,000 for the first year and \$1,000 the second year, and noted that this was more than what they were getting for this program. Another staff person estimated that each match took double the amount of time compared with matches for other mentoring programs. There were a number of factors contributing to the additional cost of running this program. Explanations for the additional effort and resources were as follows:

- Having to build and maintain the relationship with the probation officers.
- Having youth referred who did not want the program.
- The outreach required to get in contact with the families.
- The level of match support required to maintain the matches.
- Additional time required to meet all the data reporting requirements.
- Being able to provide mentor incentives (e.g., obtain passes/gift cards).

At least four organizations stated that they were not sure their organization would be able to continue with the program with the current level of funding. Many provider staff were employed only part-time for this program. One staff person from a smaller agency noted he was not being compensated for mileage costs for the program and other expenses. One provider staff commented, "It will be far too un

C. Recommendations for Improving Network Administration and Technical Assistance

These recommendations are mainly derived from the Network providers' ideas for how to address the challenges that they identified.

1. Technical Assistance Recommendations

1. Produce branded, professionally-designed marketing materials, particularly for the recruitment of male mentors.
2. The Mentor "Train the Trainer" should include approaches for conducting one-on-one mentor trainings, as well as the group trainings.
3. Trainings from CSSD and the Partnership be made available online (e.g., in the form of a webinar), so that the provider staff can complete the training according to their own schedule, or access notes from the training online.
4. Compile a list of free activities and successful mentor recruitment strategies for providers.
5. Develop a single Facebook group and host periodic joint mentor training events for mentors to learn from one-another and feel connected to a larger statewide initiative.
6. Continue providing trainings on how best to work with court-involved youth and document and share how programs are incorporating what they learn into their mentor training and match support activities. Future activities or trainings requested by providers:
 - Assistance with mentor recruitment—advertising and press release in all areas.
 - Brainstorming on how to keep matches alive; what's working, what's not!
 - First aid-mental health training for staff.
 - Having probation officers and supervisors present their views and ideas on best practices.

2. Data Collection and Assessment Recommendations

1. A review of the monthly reporting system should be undertaken to determine if the process can be streamlined, especially for those larger agencies working with several database systems. The reporting system should include newly identified reporting requirements regarding referrals (e.g., offense categories). Also, develop a secure method of making this reporting system available to programs on the web to help eliminate the back and forth emails.
2. Score Card: Greater standardization of the score card would allow agencies to compare efforts and help streamline the data collection process. Several items on score card are not being accurately tracked (# of contacts with mentees/family) and therefore are of limited usefulness. They, however, do serve as reminders of expectations for maintaining program quality. Possibly a formula could be used to automatically populate this information based on the number of current matches per month, or more accurate information could be kept on number of mentee/mentor matches in which managers have not successfully made contact within a given month.
3. Implement a standardized system to let agencies know that they are at risk of losing their funding due to lack of performance, and inform them of the basis for this decision.
4. Begin implementing outcome assessment as soon as possible. The more mentees assessed, the more feasible it will be to measure program outcomes.

3. Network Administration Recommendations

1. The Partnership develops a systematic method of reviewing requests for modifications to program procedures or policies, or cases that warrant special consideration, so these requests can be managed in an efficient and timely fashion. Network providers should be instructed that all requests for special cases to be reviewed be sent to the program director, and the program director should be the one to refer them to CSSD when appropriate. There should be a record kept of these requests by the program director.
2. The Partnership asks the probation officers to complete the Satisfaction Survey and meets with them to identify any potential issues/concerns they may be having about the mentoring programs. This would also be a good time to revisit the criteria of the youth who are appropriate as referrals and any procedures related to making referrals.
3. Providers requested an increase in funding to cover the actual costs for agencies to run this program.
4. Staff turnaround has been a challenge for providers, CSSD, and the Partnership. Develop a program procedural manual/guidebook to help prepare new staff.
5. For any future contracts with mentoring providers, it is best to select those that have a strong presence in the community of the court district to which they are assigned.

D. Summary of Lessons Learned

1. Key Lessons Learned Regarding the Provision of High-Quality Mentoring for Court-Involved Youth

Building and maintaining strong relationships with the POs and the primary caregiver of referred youth was important to achieving the goals of matching a youth with a mentor and having the match sustained. The POs needed to trust in the program and its understanding of the needs of the youth in order to be willing to make the referrals. The providers were very successful in the majority of court districts in building these relationships; however in two of the 12 court districts the referral process was not successful. It was not entirely clear why, but a possible explanation for one of the districts was this was due to prior negative experience with mentoring in this court district.

Mentor recruitment was more challenging in some of the more rural court districts of Connecticut, especially if the provider did not already have an established presence in that region (this was the case for one of the providers that was assigned to cover two court districts). Mentor recruitment of males was challenging despite program attempts to tailor some of their mentor recruitment messaging to appeal to males. The requirement for gender-specific matching led to higher rates of matching for females than males, despite the higher number of male referrals.

Once youth were referred, conducting intakes was sometimes challenging, and this took much longer than was initially anticipated. One of the criteria for referral to this program was that the youth had an interest in establishing a relationship with an adult mentor. In actuality, the interest shown by many of the youth who were referred was inconsistent. The youth's own struggles—socially and emotionally, as well as other competing demands on their time, could sometimes get in the way of their ability to follow-through and meet with their mentors. Some youth may have had a prior history of abandonment or abuse at the hands of an adult, or felt threatened by adult authority figures, and thus it required greater effort and sensitivity for the mentoring providers and mentors to gain their trust. Thus, some youth did not complete the intake, or chose not to follow-through after the intake in meeting with their mentor. Until a strong mentoring relationship is established, the mentoring program coordinators learned that it was all the more essential that they developed a strong relationship with the POs and families, to help gather information on the youth's particular needs and for the adults to help reinforce the youth's commitment to meeting with the mentor.

Generally, matches with youth between ages 10-13 closed at a somewhat lower rate than youth in the 14-17 age range. Those youth who were still on probation, and who perceived the program to be a requirement, were the most likely to connect with a mentor, but also potentially were more likely to stop seeing a mentor once their probation period was complete. Those cases that were referred by Child, Youth and Family Support Centers also tended to stay matched longer because those families were more involved in the life of the youth.

Some families had trust issues in accepting a stranger into their child's life, and these families presented barriers to the youth being able to complete the intake process or maintain their connection with a mentor. It was noted that Hispanic/Latino families were likely to have their mentoring cases closed, due possibly to mentoring not being something they were familiar with. Also language barriers could be an issue with some Latino/Spanish caregivers if the program coordinator and/or mentors were not proficient in Spanish. Another barrier on the part of both youth and the families is what has been referred to as "service fatigue," a result of having had frequent contact with other service providers as well as the court-system itself.

Despite the challenges and lessons learned providers also reported having experienced success with youth they had matched. These successes served as an inspiration to all the providers participating in the Network. They reminded providers that the effort required to engage the youth and families could have a wonderful payoff in the youth's lives, and that all their ongoing efforts were able to produce the desired results. With this population, many of the lessons learned revolved around gaining trust, being persistent and maintaining communication with the POs and the family, so as to be able to effectively engage the youth and to identify the best match for that particular youth. Another general observation was that for programs to be successful they had to have a strong presence in the community.

2. The Juvenile Justice Mentoring Network Successes and Challenges

Based on the findings in this report, below is a summary the Partnership's role as lead agency in overseeing the administration and functioning of the Juvenile Justice Mentoring Network. The Network served a key purpose in helping to build individual program capacities and accountability toward achieving performance goals and results. The senior program coordinator was able to establish and facilitate a high level of cooperative learning, support, and democratic decision-making among providers in the Network. Providers were given the opportunity to take on leadership roles in facilitating skills building activities during the meetings.

The Network provided a source of support and guidance for the providers. It appears a level of trust had been established among most of the providers, such that they were able to reach out to each other for assistance outside the meeting, and also discuss potentially sensitive issues at the meetings. A democratic-decision making process enabled the group to reach consensus on several recommended protocols and procedures associated with program quality improvement. Improvements included providing POs with brief descriptions of the mentors they had recruited, revising their forms used for intake and matching of youth, incorporating trauma-informed care into training of mentors, and hosting match support gatherings. The Network was also very effective in capitalizing on the different strengths that each of its providers brought to the overall shared goal and vision of delivering high-quality mentoring services to 225 court-involved youth across CT. There was resource sharing among mentoring providers on successful ways of recruiting mentors, group activities, methods of providing match support and in other areas.

The trainings on the JAG assessment tool, as well as the trauma-informed training were very beneficial in helping programs build their capacity to serve this population. The information helped to prepare the mentors for the needs of the youth being served and how best to provide support to them. Program coordinators found that a small percentage of the youth that were referred had more serious mental health issues, and thus did not meet program criteria. For these higher risk youth, most of the mentoring programs were not in a position to provide the wrap-around services that were required and the mentors were not equipped with the skills to serve these youth. Two providers, however, with program directors that were licensed clinical social workers were better equipped to assess the mental health needs of the youth at intake so as to make appropriate referrals and determine whether or not they were likely to benefit from mentoring. This area warrants further exploration to ensure adequate wrap-around services are available for referred youth with mental health issues who still could benefit from mentoring services.

A lot was accomplished in this first year in establishing mentoring services for court-involved youth statewide in Connecticut. Most programs were able to build capacity to improve their performance over time. However, most continued to face challenges in recruiting male mentors and in establishing and maintaining the matches for a full year. The fact that programs were able to match 57% of the youth that were referred and to retain at least 46% of the 129 matches for a year can be considered a success given the many challenges in working with court-involved youth and volunteer mentors. Continued efforts to increase the recruitment of male mentors, so as to increase the ability to match more male referrals, will likely lead to an increase in this success rate in the second year. Also, efforts to communicate more effectively with Hispanic/Latino families and youth about the benefits of mentoring, and find Hispanic/Latino mentors to volunteer, will likely also result in performance improvements over time. Other recommended program administrative changes may also boost performance rates. The success of these mentor relationships in improving youth outcomes still remains to be demonstrated in the next phase of the evaluation. However, prior research on mentoring outcomes combined with this year's program success stories lend support to the idea that this program will make a significant positive difference in the youth's lives and will hopefully help them transition successfully into young adulthood.

Appendix A: Observation of Network Meetings, Site Visits & Interview

The main purpose of the Juvenile Justice Mentoring Network is to ensure the delivery of high quality mentoring services for court-involved youth statewide. In order to document the functioning of the Network as a collaborative and the oversight and technical assistance provided by the Partnership, the empowerment evaluator attended all of the Network meetings and took process observation notes. The evaluator also accompanied the senior program coordinator to site visits for each provider as the Score Card system was being put into place for them to report on their efforts in applying mentoring best practices. Lastly, the evaluator met regularly (approximately once a month) with the senior program coordinator, one-on-one, to discuss the progress that was being made and challenges or obstacles that were encountered as the Network providers were establishing their programs.

Meetings were held bimonthly and there were a total of six network meetings over the course of the first year. The meetings were facilitated by the senior program coordinator with active involvement from the program manager and CSSD court planner, along with the Network providers. Meetings were an occasion for the Partnership to introduce any policy or procedural changes to the program, upcoming trainings, reporting requirements, and share results and initial findings of the data from monthly reports. Providers were given the opportunity to demonstrate the progress they were making initially with referrals and then with matches per assigned slot. This reinforced their mutual accountability towards the goal of reaching 225 matches statewide.

A. Capacity Building Objectives Achieved According to Network Meeting Observation Notes

1. Increased Knowledge of Mentoring Best Practices.

- The latter half of the first session in January was devoted to sharing knowledge on recruitment strategies. A provider skilled at recruiting was invited to facilitate this session. All of the providers also shared examples of recruitment strategies that had worked well for them.
- By the second meeting in March, it was evident that the staff were benefitting from learning from each other. When asked about a challenge and a success in the past two months, one of the staff stated, “I learned something new from Jane (another site coordinator).”
- During the latter half of the third Network meeting in May, the topic of background checks was discussed and several of the agencies shared information about what services they use for the background checks.
- The other topic that came up during the May meeting was mentoring program’s practices in giving out gift cards to mentors.
- The last activity for the September meeting was “Case Study Reviews.” Providers were asked to come prepared with a challenging and a successful case. They divided into two groups for smaller discussion of the case review. The groups discussed challenges and considered ways of managing the situations and provided support and encouragement to each other.

2. Improved Knowledge on Serving Court-involved Youth.

- At the March meeting, a provider asked about dealing with mandated reporting if a mentor learned something that was of concern. Critical information about protocols for mandated reporting were exchanged.
- At the March meeting, discussion came to focus on one of the biggest challenges they faced in getting their programs off the ground, which was building relationships with the probation officers. The CSSD court planner emphasized the importance of building this relationship and to reassure the probation officers that they were prepared to work with youth on the older end of the spectrum, up to age 17.

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- At the May meeting, there was a group discussion of recruitment strategies that were working best and some of the challenges in getting the probation officers to make referrals. Providers agreed to send brief descriptions of their mentors to the probation officers. The group discussed and came to a consensus about what information was to be sent.

3. Increased ability to Monitor Program Quality and Accountability.

- During the first meeting, the Partnership program manager and senior program coordinator jointly presented an overview about the program and their expectations for the Network. Staff from the contracted providers introduced themselves. Each provider staff was encouraged to write down their goals and vision for the Juvenile Justice Mentoring Network. Common goals were identified and a vision statement was developed collectively.
- During the May meeting it was announced that now all of the juvenile court districts and slots for referrals across the state were covered.
- During the September meeting, the Partnership database systems associate went over data for the required monthly report. She gave each provider a copy of their last report with missing data and requested agencies complete all information on matches and explain why any matches were closed in the comment section, and enter the date terminated. She explained that the category “Removed” is for when a referral does not work. There is still some confusion over definitions and the senior program coordinator agrees to send the providers a list of definitions. She also announced the Partnership will perform an annual audit of each of the programs.
- During the May and July meetings, each provider put their number of matches on a map, so they could visually assess how much progress the Network was making towards the goal of matching 225 court involved youth with mentors. A map was used to visually give each provider an opportunity to report on their progress in recruiting mentors and in matching these mentors. Six month aggregate results were reported out on July 31, 2013 and January 15, 2014.

4. Increased program resources

- During the July meeting, one provider talked about success in procuring a sponsor for the youth in the program to attend a water sports camp and offered information on this camp to other programs.
- During the May meeting, at least one provider staff requested a field trip outing for their mentors and mentees to one of the other new mentoring program sites, which is based on a horse farm.
- Several providers were in communication about recruitment strategies and decided to share a booth at a college career fair.

5. High rates of participation and satisfaction w/ the Network

- By the end of the first year, it was evident that the Network was functioning extremely well as a collaborative effort. There was 100% attendance by contracted providers at the first five meetings. Provider attendance ranged from 80%-90% for the following meetings.
- Level of participation was also high during the mentor meetings, with providers openly sharing their successes and challenges with each other, as well as trouble-shooting issues.
- Network provider staff were called upon to lead some brief training activities during the meetings, including role playing mentoring recruitment strategies, and preparation of a logic model.
- Four of the six meetings were located at Network provider sites, so as to encourage more ownership of the collaborative effort by the contracted providers.

Brief summaries of the process observations for each meeting and site visits are provided below to give an understanding of what it takes to establish quality community-based mentoring programs for court-involved youth. Process observation also examined the strengths and weaknesses in the collaborative process of the Network.

B. Summary of Meeting Observation Notes by Month

1. January Meeting

During the first meeting, the Partnership program manager and senior program coordinator jointly presented an overview about the program and their expectations for the CSSD program. Staff from the contracted providers introduced themselves. Initially the plan was that the meetings would be held monthly, but the providers requested that this be changed to bimonthly and to utilize email to exchange information between meetings. Each provider staff was encouraged to write down their goals and vision for the CSSD mentoring program. These were posted up for all to see and presented to the group. Common goals were identified and a vision statement was developed collectively.

2. March Meeting

The second meeting was held in March 2013. At this meeting, it was evident that the staff were already benefitting from learning from each other. When asked about a challenge and a success in the past two months, one of the staff stated, "I learned something new from Jane (another site coordinator), we had a student post on the university website and we have gotten ten plus new mentors, that has been a big success." The discussion came to focus on one of the biggest challenges they faced in getting their programs off the ground, which was building relationships with the probation officers. The CSSD court planner emphasized the importance of building this relationship and to ensure the probation officers that they were prepared to work with youth on the older end of the spectrum, up to age 17.

The group divided up for a training exercise in logic model development. One of the provider staff with experience in evaluation helped facilitate the activity.

The latter half of this session was devoted to sharing knowledge on recruitment strategies. Another of the providers skilled at recruiting was invited to facilitate this session. A role-play strategy was used to demonstrate some of the recruitment methods. All of the providers also shared examples of recruitment strategies that had worked well for them, such as using their own social networks and community relationships, and also outreach through publicizing the mentoring opportunity on the internship page of a local university website.

Towards the end of the second meeting, when asked if they had any additional questions, a question was raised about dealing with mandated reporting if a mentor learned something that was of concern. Critical information about protocols for mandated reporting and how to handle real life situations that are likely to occur in mentoring programs with court-referred youth were exchanged during this Network meeting. At the end of this meeting it was agreed to divide the groups up into subcommittees so that more progress could be made in the work that needed to be done in three areas: evaluation, curriculum development and recruitment.

3. May Meeting

The May meeting was located at one of the program sites, so as to encourage more ownership of the collaborative effort by the contracted providers. Several new staff joined this meeting. They were given an opportunity to introduce themselves and explain their mentoring programs to the others. It was announced that now all of the juvenile court districts and slots for referrals across the state were covered.

Next a map was used to visually give each provider an opportunity to report on their progress in recruiting mentors and in matching these mentors with mentees referred by their court(s) by putting a sticker on their region with the #s they had achieved. Varying progress was noted and each provider received encouragement by the other providers for their efforts.

This was followed by a group discussion of recruitment strategies that were working best and some of the challenges in getting the probation officers to make referrals. Each provider was encouraged by the Partnership senior program coordinator and the CSSD court planner to send brief descriptions of their mentors to the probation officers to let them know that they were ready to serve their kids and foster more trust and commitment on the part of the probation officers in making referrals. A discussion ensued about what to include and not include in the description. Several of the providers raised concern about providing too much information to the probation officers. It was thought that this might lead them to request specific mentors to be matched with the youth that they referred. It was widely understood and agreed that the providers, not the probation officers, were the ones responsible for matching the mentors to the youth who were referred. Questions arose over whether or not it was important to include the mentor's race/ethnicity, age, and profession on the descriptions sent to the probation officers. Eventually, the group came to a consensus about what information was to be sent.

During the latter half of the May meeting, the topic of background checks was discussed and several of the agencies shared information about what services they use for the background checks, how much they cost, how long it generally takes to receive the results, and whether or not they require drug screening. Only one provider screens for drugs, and it was speculated that this was because this used to be a requirement for CT Department of Children and Families (DCF) subcontractors. During this meeting, an official from DCF was present, and it was learned that drug screening was no longer a requirement of DCF's subcontractors. It was also noted that a DMV background check was required for community-based, but not site-based, programs.

The other topic that came up during the Network meeting was the practice of mentoring programs giving out gift cards to mentors. At least one provider had a practice of providing gift cards on a weekly basis without any spending accountability for its mentors. A provider staff questioned whether or not this practice was something that should continue. Most of the providers seemed to feel that it was more appropriate to give out gift cards less regularly. A question was raised as to whether or not the programs should require receipts be given to them before reimbursing the mentors for meals. Also, related to "perks" to the mentors, the group discussed how to handle the fact that a youth may run into issues at home with siblings because of being given special opportunities. Several providers gave suggestions on how the mentors could prepare their mentees for handling this so their siblings would be less likely to get upset. The providers all agreed that gift giving should not be permitted as a general rule and that this topic should be addressed in the trainings with the mentors.

There were opportunities for relationship-building among the different providers during the afternoon break as well as prior to and following the meeting. At least one provider staff requested a field trip outing for their mentors and mentees to one of the other new mentoring program sites, which is based on a horse farm. During other meetings, it was also observed that providers were exchanging information about other potential site visits for their mentees.

At the end of the May meeting, the training committee reported out on its initial recommendations for the mentor training series and the evaluation committee reported on its progress in selecting the evaluation tools.

4. July Meeting

This meeting was held at the Children’s Community Programs of CT. The meeting began with West-African “Grio” storytelling by one of the providers with a unique talent in this area as an ice-breaker. Next, each provider was asked to talk about one success they had since the group last met. Most of them discussed successes they had had with matching youth with mentors. One provider talked about success in procuring a sponsor for the youth in the program to attend a water sports camp. Another had success with increasing the number of referrals, but still was having challenges recruiting mentors in one of the more rural court districts. Another site-based provider had a youth who was getting into a lot of trouble and was at risk of getting involved in another fight that was broadcast on the Internet by his friends. The fight did not take place, in part, because the mentor was able to intervene. The mentor also encouraged him to stay away from his friends who were trying to get him to fight.

At this meeting the Network program manager from the Partnership announced that they were increasing funding per slot to \$1,500, but the hope was that programs would be able to maintain the matches for two years instead of just one. She explained that research shows that matches sustained for at least 18 months lower the risk of recidivism. The costs to maintain the match should go down the second year. It would still be necessary to follow up by email with the mentors. A provider asked whether or not they still have to participate in group activities, noting that this is where the expense comes in for the second year. The CSSD court planner explained that CSSD is working hard to improve the discharge planning for youth whose probation period is about to end. They have made some progress in reducing recidivism rates at three and six months out, but they still need to improve rates at twelve and twenty-four months out.

For the next group activity each provider put their number of matches on a map, so they could visually assess how much progress the Network was making towards the goal of matching 225 court involved youth with mentors.

Next, it was proposed for providers to involve youth in a photo voice project about mentoring that would be shared at the upcoming New England Regional Mentor Conference in CT. Several providers had questions about the logistics such as accessing the cameras and how to explain the purpose of the project to the mentees. In the end, only one staff person offered to do this activity. Subcommittees also briefly reported out on their progress.

5. September Meeting

At the start of this meeting, the providers were asked to write a six-word sentence about mentoring. The sentences they came up with were as follows:

1. Kids come, have fun and laugh.
2. Mentoring brings hope to our kids.
3. Youth seek, find and inspire.
4. No way this match could have worked.
5. Inspiring youth one at a time.
6. Making it this far, that’s success.
7. I met him and kept him.
8. Mentoring adds to love, connection and community.
9. Mentoring can change a youth’s life.
10. Life is a cliff, climbing partner needed.
11. Love is all our world needs
12. Plant a seed, see a harvest

This exercise was used to illustrate how they could succinctly pitch their mentoring program to potential mentors. Next the groups reported out on the number of matches per agency. The Network had reached a total of approximately 92 matches out of the 225 total slots available.

The second half of the meeting was spent discussing successes and challenges each program had experienced since their last meeting two months ago. These are summarized in the table below, with a section on some of the potential solutions that were proposed during the discussion.

What is working?	What is not working?	Recommendations/ Solutions
Referrals		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with probation officers. • We see probation officers every week. • We are getting referrals. Took persistence but we got female referrals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller PO offices harder to engage (i.e. Stamford). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passing baton to mentors to contact the probation officers on an individual basis.
Recruitment		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Really selective in how we are recruiting mentors. • We put in specific ad for a mentor for a kid in the Patch. Got a response. • Had an article in N. Haven register. • YouTube video made by a group of youth. • Mayor of Meriden featured mentoring on his show. Used to be on the board of our agency. • Site-based is an asset. Recruited 20 students from university. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a lot of area to cover for limited hours. Weeks fill up. Challenging to get out there. Able to get more females than males. • Have to recruit more male mentors. • I have mentors from Yale Law School who don't have transportation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Patch is recommended for Mentor Recruitment ads. Three sentences about the kid. It humanizes. • Site based would probably work well for Yale mentors. • DCF is allowing males to be matched with females now. (Another Network member confirms this).
Intake		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview with family was great. They thought the mentoring was mandatory. The family wants it to succeed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to get hold of families for intake. Can sometimes be more difficult to win mom over than the child. • We have a foster home situation, where a family can't be bothered. • Scheduling can be a huge problem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents have work, mandatory to be at court, also PO appointments. Jump on PO appointment if you can. • One program staff stated, "I work nights & weekends. Not sure that is possible for everyone else."
Matching		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot of our kids have mental health issues. Trying to select mentors with some experience and knowledge, more than just your avg. person in the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentors may have to be prepared to do work to help win over the moms or families.

What is working?	What is not working?	Recommendations/ Solutions
Match Support		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resiliency of volunteers is amazing. • Learning about the different towns and making connections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealing with frustration from mentors. Even though “reactive attachment disorder” has been explained to them. Surprised by the hand holding needed for the mentors. Male providers very challenging. • Even those mentors with experience in a mental health field still need a lot of match support. • Cases where there have been sabotage by the guardian. • Trying to keep the kids motivated to stay in the community. Mentees go in and out of the system. • Keeping the mentors engaged when there is no funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of free activities. • Hold agency activities onsite. • Provide gas card, monthly activity cards. • We have an upcoming series of trainings on trauma and Motivational Interviewing for our mentors. • Accessing Flex funding from PO and family support programs also have flex funds.
Administration		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not being able to put in 100% because of other work responsibilities. • Making all the phone calls and the paper work is cumbersome. Need to get an intern to help with minutia. • DCF clearance takes 5-6 weeks. • ABH fee for service takes six months (Required for therapeutic mentors). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCF Fatherhood program-trying to get men. Invited to be at Naugatuck Valley. Every semester we will present to the class for a year commitment. • One agency does Child Protective Services check. Gets results in 48 hours from specific person. (Not sure whether or not this is a special arrangement).

For the next activity, the Partnership database systems associate went over data for the required monthly report. She gave each provider a copy of their last report with missing data and requested agencies complete all information on matches and explain why any matches were closed in the comment section, and enter the date terminated. She explained that the category “Removed” is for when a referral does not work. There was still some confusion over definitions and the senior program coordinator agreed to send the providers a list of definitions. She also announced the Partnership will perform an annual audit of each of the programs.

The last activity for the meeting was “Case Study Reviews.” Providers were asked to come prepared with a challenging and a successful case. They divided into two groups for smaller discussion of the case review. Some of the cases that were discussed were: A mentee started cutting herself during an outing with her mentor. The mentor called the program director in a panic to ask if she should call 911. The mentor brought the mentee to the CT Children’s Medical Center (CMC). Mom had said during the intake that the mentee cut herself in the past. The mentoring program director commented, “What support do you need to bring for the mentor in a case like this? Even if you are a social worker it is difficult.” Another provider described a case involving a mother of the mentee who had serious mental health problems. This mother was refusing to allow the mentor to visit the child in detention. A third case was of a youth who had threatened to commit suicide and had to be admitted to treatment. The mentor was willing to continue working with this youth and said, “That’s why I am needed for this kid.” The groups discussed these challenges and considered ways of managing the situations and provided support and encouragement to each other.

6. November Meeting (A Trauma Training was held in lieu of this meeting)

C. Site Visits for Monthly Progress Reports and Technical Support

Following the first Network meeting in April, 2013, the senior program coordinator visited each program site and met with the mentoring provider staff to review plans for monthly progress reports, based off of a list of best practices criteria that she had given them. The empowerment evaluator accompanied the coordinator on several of these site visits to learn more about the organizations and to conduct process observations.

During the site visits it became very evident that providers had been contacting each other and collaborating between meetings. For example, one program coordinator stated to us, “[I]enjoy meeting the others in the Network since we all share the same goals, and it’s helpful to be able to ask questions from them as we are shifting from a school-based to a community-based model.” Another provider was considering trying to incorporate sports activities into their program and was encouraged by the Partnership senior program coordinator to talk to the staff at another program about how they ran their sports activities. Several providers had been in communication about recruitment strategies and had decided to share a booth at a college career fair. This arrangement proved beneficial because some interested mentors who lived outside of the catchment area could be referred to the other agency that provided services in their area. Another illustration of how well the Network was collaborating is that at least four staff from different providers had travelled to visit a program at another site. It was evident that the staff felt very comfortable seeking support from the Partnership as well as from the other providers in the Network with more experience. Several staff mentioned that they had spoken with other providers over the phone as well. One staff planned to visit the new mentor training at another provider as a way to improve their own mentor training.

D. Interview with the Senior Program Coordinator

By the end of Year One, in conversation with the evaluator, the senior program coordinator observed that those cases that were referred by Family Support Centers tended to stay open longer, because those families were more involved in the life of the youth. She also noted that for programs to be successful they had to have a strong presence in the community. Another general observation was that providers believed there was redundancy in the monthly reporting and the Score Card. She also noted that starting in October, the Network progress slowed due to provider staff turnover, and it was difficult to sustain momentum with subcommittees. Regarding the trauma training, she noted that most provider staff did not have social work backgrounds or training. Therefore, the terminology used in the trauma training was new to many staff, and she explained this provided a good introduction for them. She noted that when she combined a meeting with the probation officers across three providers in this urban court district, one staff person complained she perceived the providers were competing with one another. However, the senior program coordinator emphasized that she had “done a lot” to promote sharing, although she recognized that each provider also functioned autonomously. She also provided several specific examples of providers that were providing support to each other.

Appendix B: Network Provider Feedback

Providers were asked to complete an anonymous questionnaire about their experiences in the Network. Their feedback was overwhelmingly positive as is illustrated by the summary of their responses below. Six provider organizations completed the questionnaire and eight out of the twelve provider staff were present at the focus group.

The information presented below begins with a question from the questionnaire followed by the provider's responses. Then this is followed by a brief summary of information from the focus group pertaining to each question.

1. Benefits of being part of the Network.

The top three benefits on an open-list question were:

- The networking (n = 5)
- Exchange of Ideas, knowledge and experiences (n = 5)
- Training workshops (n = 4)

Other benefits listed were:

- Great resources (3 ring binders with mentoring training content)
- Camaraderie.
- Methods for recruiting.
- There is someone to contact for questions.

During the focus group the following comments were made about the benefits of the Network:

With one exception, all providers said they valued the Network opportunities and learning. As one stated: "The affiliation provides information, resources, a sense of camaraderie and idea sharing." Another program director stated: "I have learned so much from other people and I really like how these meetings have been structured so that people get a chance to share different things about their own programs and about what is happening, what the successes are and what the problems are, that's all helped us a lot." The providers also expressed their appreciation of the information and support they received from the senior program coordinator from the Partnership. As one person stated: "There is always someone to contact us for questions...I had her on speed dial for heaven sakes." Several mentioned that they appreciated the data sharing and ability to compare their program with others so as to make improvements. In the words of another staff person: "The give and take, getting information and giving has been great. I think meeting as a group to see what other parts of our state is doing and then comparing it to us and how we could tweak ours and how we could give others information that would help them."

2. What was learned?

The following learning points were reported on an open-response item by multiple providers:

- Ways to incorporate trauma informed care into mentor training (n = 4).
- Importance of using data to inform program improvements (n = 2).
- Understanding of how probation officers assess potential participants using the JAG risk assessment tool (n = 2).

Other learning points:

- Patience.
- How to host a mentor training.
- Utilizing the ‘building a successful mentoring network’ manual to answer questions regarding the mentoring program.
- Discovering the existence of various other programs.
- Not to take failed matches personally.
- Mentors need so much support and validation.
- Improved the understanding for the mentor that the relationship is the intervention and that what they do is important and helps the mentee.
- How to converse with probation officers using their lingo.

During the focus group, most provider staff reported they really benefitted from the trainings they received, including the CSSD training on the JAG and also the trauma training. Several mentioned the Network had helped them to learn patience through understanding that issues they were having in working with this population were not a reflection of their organization, but were due to systemic problems all providers were addressing. As one program coordinator said: “I would add the disappointment in failed matches and the reluctance sometimes from hearing other peoples stories about lack of cooperation from the parents in terms of scheduling appointments, intakes, and meeting with the mentor. Also, we are having to re-contact the probation officers and still appointments are not met. So I think we all are experiencing that and going through that. It’s nice to know someone else is experiencing the same things as you.”

Another provider emphasized that they benefitted from the CSSD court planner being present during the meetings. This staff person stated, “I was really surprised to hear that you might have to engage the probation officers...so that gave us a different approach.” Another lesson was that “It was okay to talk with the probation officers and close a case if the referral was not right for the program and to ask for another referral.”

3. Program Improvements

As a result of what they learned from participating in the Network, providers reported the following procedural changes¹⁵:

- We use data to assess what works and refocus objectives (n = 2).
- Implemented new forms/policy for community mentoring.
- Begun to update/supplement mentor training with trauma informed info.
- Changed the way programs have been implemented and closure policy.

During the focus group discussion, one provider explained they have modified some program forms based on discussions or other forms that were shared from other providers. Another provider stated that as a result of what they learned, they began to structure the post match trainings differently. Prior to working with this specific population, this provider did not really provide any post match trainings. But now the provider is holding them quarterly in a workshop format.

¹⁵ Some items in response to this question were moved to the above section on what they had learned.

4. Contributions providers have made to the network.

The providers reported having made the following contributions to the Network.

- Offered support and guidance to other providers (n = 2).
- Onsite resources shared with other programs (e.g., one program has a horse farm).
- Sharing of recruitment tools.
- Participation on several committees (e.g., the Evaluation Committee and Program Guide Committee).
- Acted as a model program for other programs.

5. Value of Time Spent.

A majority of providers rated their time spent as part of the Network, both personally and professionally, to be a **Good Value**; the mean score was 4.0 ($N = 6$) on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. Response options were as follows: 1=little to No Value, 2=Some Value, 3=Fairly Good Value, 4=Good Value, 5=Excellent Value.

Explanations they gave for this score were that they found the trainings and workshops to be valuable in enhancing their mentoring programs. One provider expressed the view that collaborating to create new policies was helpful, and several mentioned that networking and building professional relationships was highly valued. One provider especially noted their appreciation of the assistance they received from the Partnership program manager and senior program coordinator. One provider did raise concerns about the meetings being too long and having unnecessary materials. Another provider felt that organizations were competitive with one another, which limited their sharing of best practices.

6. Value of Quarterly Score Cards.

The majority of participants thought the information collected on the quarterly reports was of **Good Value**, with a mean of 3.7 ($N = 6$) on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (Response options were same as the previous question).

As an explanation for these scores, several providers mentioned that sharing results helped them identify what was working and what was not working throughout the Network. One noted the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods as a strength, and another noted the value of the narrative page (used with the monthly reports) to help present “a full picture.” One person stated the Score Card required too much effort. Another said some data entries are tedious to track and needed to be approximated (i.e., contacts made with the probation officers), since there is not enough time to review case notes.

7. Provider Recommendations for Improvement.

Several providers expressed the view that the “Network has developed well and is serving its purpose” and recommended to continue with the work going on/providing information and resources. Other comments and recommendations for improvements were as follows:

- Travel to meetings can be challenging as it requires more time out of the office.
- Less turnover in staff, at the Partnership as well as internally within programs.
- Score/Report Card has some cumbersome areas that take too much time to track (e.g., # times contacted).
- Organizations could partner more and benefit from each other’s strengths. I see that each member has success and struggles that could be better managed.

During the focus group, one staff recommended that the train-the-trainers of mentors be revised to be suited for one-on-ones instead of a group training format. But another provider stated their agency does both group

trainings and one-on-ones occasionally to accommodate a mentor. There was also a comment that the materials needed to be customized to the program based on what their volunteers needed. Another recommendation was that the CSSD trainings be made available online (in the form of a webinar), so that the program coordinators could complete the training according to their own schedule or, at the very least, access notes from the training when needed.

8. Benefit of case review.

During several network meetings, providers were asked to share a particular case that they found challenging with the network. When asked about the benefit of this sharing cases and how often to do it, most felt it was a good thing to do (n = 6) for the purposes of troubleshooting issues, and as a future guide for similar cases that might arise. One recommendation, however, was that the presentations be briefer, in the form of a single paragraph, to make the process less time consuming. Regarding recommended frequency of doing this, one provider stated, “it does not matter so long as it continues.”

9. Future activities or trainings.

The providers requested the following trainings or activities for the Network:

- Assistance with mentor recruitment—advertising and press release in all areas (n = 2)
- Brainstorming on how to keep matches alive; what’s working, what’s not!
- First aid-mental health training for staff.
- Having probation officers and supervisors present their views and ideas on best practices.

10. Other Comments from Network Providers.

One central concern raised in the comment section was whether or not funding for the program was secure given recent turnover in the Partnership staff. Another program requested additional funding to assist with mentor incentives (e.g., obtain passes/gift cards) as well as funds to cover administrative costs for data and programming. One provider staff commented, “It will be far too unrealistic to keep doubling the amount of matches every year, while still maintaining the previous year.” One of the newest providers expressed the desire to see less competition and better collaboration among the providers. Lastly, another staff person stated, “I’m glad to be part of it [the Network] and hope to be an integral participant in the future.”

During the focus group, a majority of the providers stated that the compensation per match was not sufficient for the time required. There were a number of factors contributing to the additional cost of running this program, including the time it took to record the data, as well as the extra steps required for serving court-involved youth. The providers all commented that the data requirements for the monthly report and quarterly Score Card were very time consuming. Several staff mentioned how much they value the data for assessing how well they are doing and none suggested that the data not be collected. One of the issues for the larger agencies was that they were working with two different data management systems and basically needed to enter the same data twice. As one staff person stated, “We have our procedures to documenting and we have to turn around to get it out of our system and then we have to turn it around and get it into the report.” Another larger agency was not required to record their data for this program in their other existing system. This provider and several other smaller agencies were relying on the Excel database created by the Partnership for much of their day-to-day mentoring program management as well as for reporting purposes.

One of the larger organizations mentioned steps it was taking internally to improve the process of gathering the data from their staff. Two staff estimated that it takes them five hours to prepare the monthly reports. One mentioned that her staff also probably each spent two hours gathering the data as well. Another remarked that as he was the only staff person at his agency assigned to the program, he estimated that he spent a week recording and gathering the data for the report. Another concern related to the data management, had to do with the revisions to the Excel file on the part of the Partnership, which sometimes would delay their ability to enter the data.

All providers agreed this program required far more work for less pay compared with their other mentoring programs. One staff person cited a Big Brothers, Big Sister's study that said the cost for each match was \$2,000 for the first year and \$1,000 the second year, and noted that this was much more than what they were getting for this program. Another staff person estimated that each match took double the amount of time compared with matches for other mentor programs. Explanations for the additional time were as follows:

- Having to build and maintain the relationship with the probation officers,
- Having youth referred who did not want the program,
- The outreach required to get in contact with the families, and
- The level of match support required to maintain the matches.

One staff person from a smaller agency noted he was not being compensated for mileage costs for the program and other expenses. At least four organizations stated that they were not sure their organization would be able to continue with the program with the current level of funding. Several noted that in order for the program to be successful they needed more resources to cover the added expenses.

Several providers also asked about when the Partnership would initiate the outcome evaluation process. They wanted to get started with collecting outcome data. One noted it would be difficult to obtain the outcomes given the fact that prior mentoring research has shown that a mentor relationship of two to three years was needed for there to be successful outcomes. Several anticipated, based on their experiences thus far, that it would be difficult for them to maintain many of their matches even for one year.

Another recommendation was that if additional funds were not available that the number of slots per agency might be reduced. When asked if this would make it feasible to run the program, it was noted by several providers that this would have to be discussed with each provider independently (since agencies had different capacities and numbers of slots).