

Minneapolis Strengthening Youth Mentoring through Community Partnerships Program

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Abstract

From 2003 to 2005, homicide was the leading cause of death in Minneapolis for victims ages 15 to 24, and half of the homicides in Minneapolis during 2006 took place within a six square mile area of the neighborhoods with the greatest concentrations of poverty in North Minneapolis.

Organized under City of Minneapolis Youth Violence Prevention Steering Committee, the Office of the Mayor and the Department of Health and Family Support will lead this project in collaboration with the Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota, the Minnesota Business Partnership, the Minneapolis Public School System, the Minneapolis Police Department, and the Minneapolis Workforce Center, Peace Foundation, and at least 30 mentoring programs, including Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Twin Cities, and numerous faith-based and community organizations.

This project will match youth living in the five most at-risk Minneapolis neighborhoods with caring volunteer mentors to create and support long-term mentoring relationships that will help these youth to acquire key developmental assets that will lead to improved academic performance, avoidance of negative outcomes (such as engaging in violent behavior, early parenthood, or substance abuse), and lead to positive growth and development. To improve outcomes for youth at sufficient scale to address the epidemic proportion of the problem in Minneapolis, this project focuses on strengthening support services and increasing the capacity of mentoring programs through collaborative community partnerships.

More than 1,000 youth ages 8-17 living in the city's five most at-risk neighborhoods will be served through new or strengthened mentoring relationships. Both site-based and community-based one-on-one mentoring services will be used.

This three-year program is planned to operate from Fall 2008 through the end of the 2010-2011 school year. The City of Minneapolis requests \$498,123 for the full three-year grant period.

Narrative

1. Problem Statement

In 2006 Minneapolis experienced a surge in violent crime, in large part due to a significant increase in violent crime involving young people. From 2003 to 2005, homicide was the leading cause of death in Minneapolis for victims ages 15 to 24.

All five youth violence indicators—homicide victims (age 15-24), felony assaults (age 10-24), misdemeanor assaults (age 10-24), school discipline for violence (age 10+), curfew and truancy pick ups, and firearms possession (age 10-24)—show flat or rising rates of youth violence over the four year period from 2003-2006.

Indicator 1: Homicide

Minneapolis Police Department: Number of homicide victims (age 15-24) in Minneapolis, 2003-2006

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Resident homicides	25	21	15	19
Homicides in Minneapolis	24	19	17	26

Indicator 2: Felony Assaults Age 10-24

Minneapolis Police Department: Number of arrests for Felony Assault Age 10-24

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number	3,486	3,362	3,331	3,698

Indicator 3: Misdemeanor Assaults Age 10-24

Minneapolis Police Department: Number of arrests for Misdemeanor Assault Age 10-24

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number	10,216	8,454	7,939	9,282

Indicator 4: Curfew and Truancy Pick ups

Minneapolis Urban League: Curfew and Truancy Center Pick ups by Year

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Curfews	964	875	1,105	2,246
Truancy	762	387	730	1,463
Other	0	0	396	703
Total	1,726	1,262	2,231	4,412

Indicator 5: Firearms Possession Age 10-24

Minneapolis Police Department: Arrests Involving Firearms Possession Age 10-24

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number	723	693	1,115	1,021

The initial response to this rise in violent crime has been comprised predominantly with law enforcement, public safety, and criminal prosecution strategies. This initial response resulted in a 13% reduction in the overall annual violent crime rate in 2007, including a 27% drop in violent crime with juvenile suspects.

City and community leaders, however, recognize that sustained reduction in juvenile crime requires more than just aggressive enforcement to get and keep young people on a positive track. Prevention and intervention strategies for positive youth development are also necessary. In 2007 Minneapolis defined the problem of youth violence using a public health perspective. From this perspective, youth violence is not inevitable. It can be prevented using a scientific approach similar to the approach used to address other public health problems.

The Minneapolis Mayor and City Council appointed a Youth Violence Prevention Steering Committee in November 2006 to engage a wide range of stakeholders in collaboratively building the city's capacity for youth violence prevention. The Steering Committee, comprised of 30 community leaders, public safety experts, business leaders, and policy makers, reviewed best practices, met with youth, consulted with national experts, assessed existing youth violence prevention programs, and engaged in discussion about the complex issues facing young people, especially those youth living in circumstances that put them at greatest risk for violent behavior.

The result of the Steering Committee's work, the *Blueprint for Action: Preventing Youth Violence in Minneapolis (the Blueprint)*, is an action plan addressing the public health epidemic of youth violence in Minneapolis. The *Blueprint* identifies four core goals that together become a strategy against youth violence shared by multiple sectors of the community:

- (1) Connect every young person in Minneapolis with at least one trusted adult in their family or their community.
- (2) Intervene at the first sign that young people are at risk for violence.
- (3) Restore young people who have gone down the wrong path.
- (4) Unlearn the culture of violence in our community.

The promotion of mentoring through both formal and informal mentoring relationships as the first of these core goals is intentional. Connecting all youth to at least one trusted adult is vital to youth violence prevention, intervention, and remediation strategies.

Define the Problem: Youth violence is an epidemic problem in Minneapolis

The U.S. Surgeon General defined youth violence in 1998 as physical assault by a youth that carries a significant risk of injuring or killing another person. This level of violence is at an epidemic status in Minneapolis similar to many cities in the United States.

Nationally, homicide is the second leading cause of death among young people ages 10-24. In Minneapolis, homicide is the leading cause of death for residents in this age group, accounting for almost half of all deaths in the city.¹ And this violence takes a disproportionate toll on people of color and residents of low-income neighborhoods.

From 2003-2006, 59% of youth victims of homicide were African Americans. This rate compares to 9-12% of youth homicide deaths for each of the other ethnic groups: Hispanics, whites, Asian Americans, and American Indians.

During 2006, half of the homicides in Minneapolis among victims of all ages occurred in a six square mile area in four North Minneapolis neighborhoods that have the greatest concentrations of poverty in the city. In addition to these four neighborhoods, a disproportionate amount of violence, including youth violence, also occurred in one of the poorest neighborhoods on the south side of Minneapolis. Because of the exceptional concentration of violent crime and at-risk factors affecting youth in these five neighborhoods, they have been selected as the targeted communities for the activities proposed for this Strengthen Youth Mentoring program. The five targeted neighborhoods are four contiguous neighborhoods in North Minneapolis—Folwell, Hawthorne, Jordan, and McKinley—and one in south Minneapolis, Phillips.

Identify Risk & Protection Factors: We know what predicts & prevents youth violence

There is no simple explanation why some youths get involved in violence and others do not. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, exposure to violence and victimization are strongly associated with subsequent acts of violence by victims.² The presence of harmful risk

¹ Vital Records, Minnesota Department of Health

² Commission for the Prevention of Youth Violence. *Youth Violence. Medicine, Nursing, and Public Health: Connecting the dots to prevent violence.* December 2000. American Medical Association

factors and the absence of helpful protective factors both contribute to the problem. Adolescent survey research has identified a number of factors that put youth at risk for violent behavior and other factors, such as mentoring, that appear to protect them from the effects of these risks.³

In addition to the high concentration of violent crime occurring around them, youth living in the five neighborhoods targeted in this grant endure extensive exposure to additional risk factors associated with an increased likelihood of violence or other harmful behavior. Moreover, these same youth lack access to sufficient protective factors in their neighborhoods such as youth mentoring opportunities to offset these risk factors.

Youth Violence Risk Factors in Five Targeted Neighborhoods

Factor
Previous Involvement in violent behavior
Exposure to violence
Household poverty
Failure to graduate or make adequate yearly academic progress

Exposure to Neighborhood Violence. A report to the Minneapolis City Council in May 2006 reported year to date violent crime was up 19% across the city—driven by an increase of 57% in the 4th precinct, which includes the four target neighborhoods in North Minneapolis. In addition, the rate of emergency room visits by Minneapolis residents resulting from firearm assaults increased 226% from 2001 to 2005.

During an informal survey at an all-school assembly in October 2007, more than three-fourths of students in the largest high school located in the targeted neighborhoods indicated that they knew at least one family member or neighbor who had been shot. More than half of the students knew more than one person.⁴

Although overall violent crime rates in the city, including juvenile violent crime, have dropped by as much as 13% in the past year, the incident rate remains unacceptably high. As an example, during September 2007 more than 154 shootings (38), violent crimes (25), and other C-

³ Resnick MD, Ireland M, Borowsky I. Youth Violence perpetration: what protects? What Predicts? Findings from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. *Journal of Adolescent Health.* 2004; 35(5):347-349.

⁴ North High School PeaceJam program report, 2007

4 crimes (91) occurred during the 7-day period of the first week of school in the North Minneapolis neighborhoods of the 4th Police Precinct.

Household Poverty. Sixty-six percent (66%) of students enrolled in the Minneapolis Public School District in 2006-2007 participated in the free and reduced-price lunch program—a leading indicator of childhood and family poverty. Rates for schools in the five targeted neighborhoods are even higher, ranging from 82% to 97%. The statewide rate is only 31%. The concentration of poverty in these five targeted neighborhood is extreme compared to national, statewide, and Twin Cities metropolitan regional rates. The concentration of family poverty in these neighborhoods is matched by similar concentration of racial minorities.

Household Poverty and Race in the Five Targeted Neighborhoods

Minnesota Department of Education, 2006-2007 Enrollment Data

Neighborhood School	Grade	% Participation Free/Reduced Lunch	% Enrollment Students of Color
Afrocentric	6-8	90%	99%
Anderson Elem.	K-5	94%	97%
Anderson Open	K-8	97%	98%
Lucy Laney	K-8	92%	96%
NS Johnson	K-8	95%	99%
Green Central	K-5	96%	99%
North High School	9-12	82%	97%

United States Census Bureau, 2000 Census Data

Neighborhood	Census Tract #	% Children in Poverty	% Non-White
Folwell (North)	1008	18%	61%
Hawthorne (North)	1015	40%	75%
	1016	57%	79%
	1023	39%	78%
Jordan (North)	1013	35%	68%
	1014	39%	75%
	1021	33%	81%
McKinley (North)	1009	32%	66%
Phillips (South)	1060	33%	69%
	1071	42%	56%
	1072	45%	71%

Low Rates of Graduation and Academic Progress. According to the Minnesota Department of Education, the concentration of minority and low-income student enrollment at North High School is rising while the graduation rate is falling:

Graduation Rate and Enrollment Profile for North High School

Minnesota Department of Education, School Report Card

Year	Graduation Rate	% Enrollment Poor	% Enrollment Nonwhite
1992	67	46	56
1997	58	59	69
2005	55	68	73

In addition to graduation rates, other measures showing low academic achievement are widespread among students in these five targeted neighborhoods. At North High School, 71% of students did not meet the state reading proficiency standard in 2007 and 91% of students did not meet the math standard. Across the rest of the city, the rates for students failing to achieve proficiency are only half as high, 40% reading and 53% math. The statewide rates for students failing to achieve proficiency are only a third as high, 23% reading and 31% math.

Similarly low student academic achievement levels are found at every other community school serving the targeted five neighborhoods, with two-thirds to three-fourths of all students failing to achieve grade level proficiency in reading and math.

Reading & Math Proficiency Rates at Community Schools in Targeted Neighborhoods

Minnesota Department of Education, School Report Card

<i>School</i>	<i>Grades</i>	<i>Tested Grade</i>	<i>% Not Proficient</i>	
			<i>Reading</i>	<i>Math</i>
Afrocentric	6-8	7 th	66%	83%
Anderson Elem.	K-5	5 th	66%	63%
Anderson Open	K-8	7 th	62%	47%
Green Central	K-8	7 th	70%	64%
Lucy Laney	K-8	7 th	77%	80%
NS Johnson	K-8	7 th	74%	85%

Missing Protective Factors. Research shows that even when children have one or more potentially harmful risk factors associated with an increased likelihood of violence or other harmful behavior, their resilience to using violence to resolve a problem can be buoyed by an infusion of protective interventions by a caring adult—a parent, teacher, counselor, relative, parole officer, pastor, youth worker, or mentor.⁵

As many as half to three-fourths of the youth in the targeted five neighborhoods live in single-parent households.

⁵ Ibid. Resnick MD, Ireland M, Borowsky I.

Single Parent Households in the Five Targeted Neighborhoods

United States Census Bureau, 2000 Census Data

Neighborhood	Census Tract #	% Children in Single Parent Household
Folwell (North)	1008	45%
Hawthorne (North)	1015	74%
	1016	61%
	1023	71%
Jordan (North)	1013	61%
	1014	59%
	1021	46%
McKinley (North)	1009	56%
Phillips (South)	1060	47%
	1071	64%
	1072	45%

Too few young people in these five target neighborhoods seeking additional contact with a committed caring adult through a mentoring relationship are currently able to be matched. The City's largest mentoring program, Big Brothers Big Sisters, reports a wait list of more than 167 at-risk youth, including 46 from the four targeted neighborhoods in North Minneapolis. Every other mentoring program serving youth in at-risk Minneapolis neighborhoods reports a significant wait list for young people seeking a mentor.

Promoting Best Practices and Implementing Widespread Adoption

The high level of risk factors for youth violence in the five targeted neighborhoods, combined with a severe deficiency in mentoring resources to serve as a buffering protective factor, provides a clear explanation for the high level violent crime involving youth. But increasing the 'quantity' of mentoring resources in these neighborhoods is not enough. Program 'quality' must also be improved through the adoption of best practices to ensure youth truly benefit from a mentoring relationship.

Best practices in mentoring program administration have been defined in the field-rest, research-based quality standards known as the *Elements of Effective Practice (EEP)* developed by MENTOR/ National Mentoring Partnership in 2005.

Unfortunately, data from the Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota (MPM) annual prevalence study on the status of mentoring and mentoring programs shows a significant lack of progress adopting EEP quality standards by mentoring programs in the state, especially smaller,

community based programs. For example, only 58% of mentoring programs report that they require training for their mentors before matching with youth mentees, a critical best practice in program administration. This absence of widespread adoption of mentoring program quality standards, combined with significant growth in the number of mentoring programs, undermines much of the effort of volunteer mentors and mentoring programs to achieve lasting positive outcomes for youth in mentoring relationships.

Prevalence of Quality Standards in Minnesota Mentoring Programs

Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota, Mentoring Prevalence Survey 2002 and 2006

<i>Minnesota Prevalence Measure</i>	<i>2006</i>
Number of Reported Mentoring Programs	600
Number of programs reporting ‘Quality Practices’	348
% of Mentoring Programs using “Quality Practices”	58%

Larger mentoring programs operating in the Twin Cities, including those affiliated with national organizations, have fully adopted the EEP best practices. An increasing body of research is showing that pressure or enthusiasm to expand or start new mentoring programs can unintentionally have a negative affect on the quality of the relationships they foster if attention is not given to best practices in program administration. Jean E. Rhodes and David L. DuBois, two national leaders in research on mentoring, underscore this point:

In this climate of heightened pressure to show numbers, mentoring programs can fall prey to trivializing what is at the heart of their intervention: caring relationships. A “placeholder mentality” has emerged in some programs—a set of beliefs that the most important goal is simply to get disadvantaged children off wait lists.

(Rhodes and DuBois, 2006; *Social Policy Report, Society for Research and Child Development*)

There is strong evidence that the level of program quality or effectiveness is far from uniform across active mentoring programs in Minnesota, and the nation. A study in 2002 lead by David DuBois reported that the average effects from about 10 percent of mentoring programs were negative (i.e., youth who received mentoring were worse off) and another one-third yielded effects that were close to zero (i.e., neither positive nor negative).

Mentoring programs put considerable staff and financial resources into recruiting volunteers, preparing them for their mentoring role, matching them with young people, and monitoring their

mentoring relationships. Despite those efforts, according to national figures as many as 20% of volunteer mentoring relationships terminate within the first few months. Statewide, mentoring programs report that a significant number of mentors prematurely terminate their mentoring relationships, including many within the first three months.

Early termination of a mentoring relationship is a critical problem mentoring programs must avoid if positive outcomes for youth are to be achieved, according to two recent studies.

Recent meta-analysis suggests that low-quality programs may have no effect on adolescent outcomes. Improving program quality at the point of service – where youth and adults interact – has the biggest impact on youth outcomes.

(Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; *Impact of After School Programs*, Chicago IL, Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning)

“Dosage and duration” matter. Young people who participate regularly in (mentoring) programs over a sustained period of time show gains in targeted outcomes. Those who attend sporadically don’t. Program quality also matters. Controlling for participation, young people who participate in high quality (mentoring) programs achieve greater gains than those who do not. . . This means that increasing funds for program expansion and participation, without increasing funding and monitoring for quality, may net mediocre results.

The Forum for Youth Investment, 2008

To ensure that increases to mentoring resources in the five targeted neighborhoods results in positive outcomes for the youth who live there, adoption of best practices in program administration must be a part of any expansion to mentoring services. Community leaders, public officials, and program managers must work collaboratively to ensure that the link between best practices and program expansion is widespread and sustainable.

Previous and Current Attempts to Address this Problem

The designation of Minneapolis as “Murder-opolis” in a 1996 *Time* cover story was one factor that led to the creation of the Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota as means to help increase mentoring resources for at-risk youth in the city and across the state. That initiative increased mentoring in the state by more than six-fold over the past decade, but a shortage of qualified mentors remains in areas with the need is most severe.

Current efforts by the City of Minneapolis to address youth violence again feature mentoring as the predominant strategy, but this time it is coupled with a specific focus on improving program quality while also expanding mentoring program quantity. To ensure sustained success in this initiative, the City formed an extensive collaboration among community, public, non-profit, faith-based, and business organizations in its Youth Violence Prevention Steering Committee and the committee's *Blueprint*, a multi-faceted, multi-sector, multi-year comprehensive action plan to address the public health epidemic of youth violence in Minneapolis. The first goal of the *Blueprint* is "to increase the number of quality mentoring opportunities for young people, along with proper training for mentors of all ages and backgrounds." An additional action item is to "create specific mentor programs for young people with an incarcerated parent." The four *Blueprint* goals incorporate 33 action items that require active involvement and coordination among multiple levels of government, community, faith, business, and neighborhood partners.

The Minneapolis Youth Coordination Board (MYCB) is working with community organizations and groups of young people to assess the current state of youth programs in the city. While Minneapolis is a city rich in youth programs, data from the MYCB study shows the number of youth programs has decreased over the past decade. The study reports that one-in-three youth in Minneapolis have never participated in an after-school youth program, and teens ages 13 and older have the fewest opportunities and the lowest participation rate. Through the *Blueprint*, this Strengthening Youth Mentoring program will be coordinated with MYCB.

While the City of Minneapolis established the *Blueprint*, other public jurisdictions serving Minneapolis residents have provided targeted resources for youth at risk for violence. This has included keeping parks and libraries open for additional hours in higher-crime neighborhoods. Beginning in January 2008, Hennepin County juveniles who are picked up by law enforcement for low-level offenses such as truancy, curfew violations, or vandalism are taken to the new

Juvenile Supervision Center (The Center) in the Minneapolis City Hall. The Center is part of a model for dealing with youth offenders ages 10 to 17. The Center provides consistent data collection and on-going monitoring of outcomes for the estimated 4,000 youth —primarily from Minneapolis—who will be brought there during 2008. The Center is staffed by The Link, a Minneapolis non-profit agency that will be a key partner in identifying youth from targeted neighborhoods for referral to mentoring services through this new program.

2. Impact/Outcomes and Evaluation

This project will match at least 1,000 youth ages 8 to 17 living in the city’s five most at-risk neighborhoods with caring volunteer mentors to create and support long-term mentoring relationships that will help these youth to acquire key developmental assets that lead to improved academic performance, avoidance of negative outcomes (such as engaging in violent behavior, early parenthood, or substance abuse), and lead to positive growth and personal development.

To improve outcomes for youth at sufficient scale to address the epidemic proportion of the problem in Minneapolis, this project focuses on strengthening support services and increasing the capacity of local mentoring programs through collaborative community partnerships.

Program Goal

The overarching goal for both this Strengthening Youth Mentoring program is to reduce juvenile violent crime rates in Minneapolis for homicide, assault, and violent behavior resulting in school suspensions by significantly strengthening and expanding mentoring programs serving youth in five targeted neighborhoods with the greatest need.

Program Objectives

The Strengthening Youth Mentoring program will accomplish this goal through these objectives:

Objective 1.a Increase the availability of quality mentoring programs for youth in the five targeted neighborhoods by recruiting more caring, committed adult volunteers with ethnicity or socio-economic backgrounds similar to the youths living in those neighborhoods.

Objective 1.b Increase the availability quality mentoring programs for youth in the five targeted neighborhoods by recruiting more caring, committed adult volunteers from traditional corporate, community, and faith-based sources of volunteer mentors.

Mentors Recruited	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
New mentors recruited, ethnicity/socio-economic profile match	25	50	100
New mentors recruited, traditional	100	200	300
Total New Mentors Recruited	125	250	400
Existing mentors transferring to program	50	75	150
Total Mentors	175	325	550
% increase in the number of mentors	350%	186%	169%
<i>Measurement Tool</i>	# of new mentors recruited since grant award		

Objective 2 Increase referrals to mentoring programs for youth in the five targeted neighborhoods who are exhibiting or experiencing significant risk factors associated with increased youth violence

Youth Referrals	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
New youth served by project partners	125	250	475
Existing youth served by project partners (continuing matches from previous years):	50	75	75
Total youth served	175	325	550
% increase in youth enrolled in program	350%	186%	169%
<i>Measurement Tool</i>	# of youth served reported on standardized form used by all project partners		
% of youth successfully completing one full year in a mentoring relationship	70%	75%	80%
<i>Measurement Tool</i>	# of youth successfully complete program requirement/full year in program		
% increase in youth enrolled since the beginning of the program start	350%	650%	1,100%
<i>Measurement Tool</i>	# of youth matched during the program # of youth currently enrolled		
% of program youth who exhibit desired changes in targeted behaviors**	70%	75%	80%
<i>Measurement Tool</i>	# of youth exhibiting behavior changes		
% of program youth who offend/re-offend*	15%	12%	10%
<i>Measurement Tool</i>	# of youth offend/re-offend		

* Measurements of program youth who offend or re-offend will include the following offense categories: (1) homicide, (2) felony or misdemeanor assault, (3) violent behavior resulting in school suspensions, (4) curfew violations, (5) truancy, and (6) gun possession.

** Measurements of program youth who exhibit desired changes targeted behavior will include the following behavior categories: (1) school attendance, (2) school adequate yearly progress or graduation, (3) absence of negative/risky behaviors (curfew violations, vandalism, and drug use).

Objective 3 Increase adoption and successful implementation of best practices in mentoring program administration by providing extensive training and technical support to mentoring programs serving youth in the five target neighborhoods.

Adoption of Best Practices	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
% of youth served by a mentoring program using evidence-based quality practice(s)	50%	75%	90%
<i>Measurement Tool</i>	# of youth served by a program using evidenced-based practices		
% of new recruited mentors in partner programs who receive at least 3 hours training	50%	75%	85%
<i>Measurement Tool</i>	# of mentors enrolled prior to start of project # of mentors enrolled in the project # of mentors trained		
% of new recruited mentors in partner program who increase knowledge of . . .			
mentoring competencies	60%	75%	85%
cultural competencies	50%	65%	85%
working with at-risk youth competencies	30%	40%	50%
<i>Measurement Tool</i>	# of trained mentors with increased knowledge in each of the program areas		
% of newly recruited mentors cleared for match with youth	50%	55%	75%
<i>Measurement Tool</i>	# of mentors completing all requirements & cleared for match with a youth mentee		
average tenure of mentor volunteer service	1.5 year	1.75 year	2.0 year
<i>Measurement Tool</i>	average length of time, in days, mentors remain in the program		
% of matches that last at least one year	50%	65%	80%
average hours spent together per month	6 hrs	8 hrs	10 hrs
% of matched mentors participating in 2 or more follow up trainings	65%	75%	85%
<i>Measurement Tool</i>	Quarterly mentor contact reports and training records		
% increase in youth matched with qualified mentors	315%	167%	152%
<i>Measurement Tool</i>	# of youth enrolled before project start # of youth awaiting mentor match before project start		

Objective 4 Sustain quality in mentoring programs for youth in these five target neighborhoods by establishing and strengthening collaborative community partnerships among organizations that share a common interest in serving and supporting at-risk youth.

Strengthen Support Systems	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
% of mentoring programs participating in the project that have <i>active</i> partnerships w/ organizations in each required categories	50%	65%	75%
<i>Measurement Tool</i>	# of program partners with MOU in place/type of organization; # of program partners that provide direct support/type of support		

Program Outcomes

By building collaborative community partnerships as an integral strategy for this program, program activities will be sustained following the end of the grant period and expanding levels of youth mentoring services in the five targeted neighborhoods will continue, along with continuing increases in volunteerism by residents and collaboration among organizations serving neighborhood youth. Long term outcomes from this program will include reduced rates for juvenile violent crime indicators (homicide, felony or misdemeanor assault, violent behavior resulting in school suspensions, curfew violations, truancy, and gun possession) in the five targeted neighborhoods. An additional significant outcome from this program will be improved academic progress (reading and math proficiency, graduation) for youth in the mentoring programs.

3. Program Design and Implementation

This program is designed to provide prevention and intervention strategies through one-to-one mentoring services for youth in five targeted neighborhoods that have the highest rates of youth violence in the city. Implementation will be achieved by forming and strengthening collaborative community partnerships comprised of non-profit and faith-based youth serving organizations, private industry, secondary education providers, and post-secondary education and vocational training providers. To ensure quality outcomes for youth, mentoring programs providing services through this program will improve their capacity through training and technical support on best practices in program administration. Expanding mentoring relationships for youth in the five targeted neighborhoods will be achieved by recruiting additional volunteer mentors and by engaging more youth through improvement of referral protocols among partners in the collaboration.

The program proposed in this application to OJJDP Strengthening Youth Mentoring through Community Partnerships (Strengthening Mentoring) results directly from the research and

planning on youth violence prevention performed by the City of Minneapolis during 2006 and 2007, and this project is a vital, integrated core component of the City's comprehensive plan for preventing youth violence (the *Blueprint*) as well as the City's five-year strategic plan.

Specific Strategies for this Program Proposal

Forming the collaboration. The City of Minneapolis, through its work with the *Blueprint*, has brought together an impressive collection of community partners already working in collaboration to reduce youth violence by expanding and strengthening youth mentoring opportunities. This citywide effort is lead by the *Blueprint's* Steering Committee chaired by the City Mayor and leaders of the General Mills and Minneapolis Foundations.

The City's lead partner in this proposed Strengthening Mentoring program is the Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota (MPM). MPM brings to the project an extensive collection of mentoring programs and other partners actively supporting mentoring for youth. These collaborators include the member programs of the Metro Mentoring Network, an association of more than 200 mentoring programs currently serving youth in the Minneapolis metropolitan region, and the member businesses in the Minnesota Business Partnership *Connections* program, a group of the 100 largest employers in Minnesota committed to promoting volunteer mentor service among their employees.

Supporting MPM's work in this program will be the members of its new Advisory Board for Mentoring Program Quality Standards, an initiative begun in 2007 to create training and support services to promote adoption of quality standards and best practices in program administration among mentoring programs in the state.

Through the oversight of its *Blueprint* Steering committee, the City of Minneapolis will form a Advisory Board of community partners directly supporting this Strengthening Mentoring program serving the five targeted neighborhoods.

Adopting evidenced-based practices. MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, the national body representing mentoring programs in the United States, established the *Elements of Effective Practice* (EEP) to describe best practices used by high-quality youth mentoring programs.

MPM is one of the leading regional mentoring associations of MENTOR and it has employed the EEP in its training programs for years, developing many innovative curriculum, tools, and training procedures based upon the EEP standards. MPM has a 9-stage model to implement evidence-based quality standards based on the EEP that will promote adoption of best practices by youth mentoring programs serving the targeted five neighborhoods.

The quality standards used in the MPM model are well-established, field-tested, and based upon research. The innovation in this project is the application of these standards in a regional system of program peer review coupled with professional development and training support. Through this model, MPM is able to help mentoring programs and other stakeholders (public policy makers, community groups) determine how well various mentoring programs are meeting the needs of children by developing a method for measuring quality in the mentoring system.

The professional development provided to mentoring program partner staff will be comprised of 32 hours on the EEP material, delivered during the second quarter each year of the program by MPM staff trainers. This will be supported by 1:1 technical assistance and consultation, also from MPM staff trainers. Staff from the targeted programs will be able to learn together in a cohort format, allowing them valuable networking time as well. This training program will follow the EEP Training Manual from MENTOR and will be supplemented by MPM Training Quality Mentors: train-the-trainer workshop, participation in the MPM Minnesota Mentoring Conference, and more topical trainings such as Building Culturally Smart Relationships, Tools for Mentoring Adolescents, etc. All training delivery, training materials, networking and professional development events will be offered to mentor program partners through funding provided by this grant.

The Mentoring Model Promoted Through this Project. The one-to-one mentoring model for this project is designed to allow for weekly meetings between the mentors and mentees throughout the calendar year. Weekly activities will allow mentors and mentees to meet for approximately eight to ten hours a month in a structured setting that allow for a balance of planned academic and social/enrichment activity time spent between the matches. This is the best practice for creating successful mentoring programs and matches according to MENTOR.

MPM trainers will work with mentoring program partners during EEP & Training Quality Mentors training modules to develop high quality mentor training. Quality mentor training defines the roles and responsibilities of mentors, including the four tasks MPM has established for mentors before entering into a mentoring relationship; engage mentors in discussion of real-life mentorship scenarios and encourage them to think about how to maximize their impact should those scenarios arise; familiarize mentors with stages of the mentoring relationship; and inform mentors of program policies & requirements. MPM staff will also be available to deliver and assist with delivery of mentor training and/or caregiver and mentee orientation.

During third quarters of the project, after delivery of EEP training, MPM will offer quality standards program assessment for mentor program partners. Using an online quality assessment tool, programs will be able to self-assess their progress towards achieving all quality mentoring standards. Support and consultation will be then be provided by MPM to assist and guide programs toward achieving all or most standards by the end of the fourth quarter. If they still have not achieved them, they can opt to participate again in the subsequent program year.

MPM will also prepare program partners to deliver and can assist with delivery of orientations and trainings for caregivers and youth participating in the project.

Recruitment of more volunteer mentors. This Strengthening Youth Mentoring program will promote mentor recruitment for 1:1 relationships, matched with youth ages 8 to 17 residing in the five targeted neighborhoods, with a requirement that programs expect a mentor match

commitment to last at least one year. School-based programs can be considered if they require weekly contact and include a summer component to meet the one year/12-month length of relationship requirement. Mentoring program project partners will work to assign mentors to youth with the highest-need or greatest at-risk for violence profile. The project will encourage continuing relationships between mentors and youth beyond the initial recruitment commitment in order to give both a greater sense of connection and impact.

Mentor program partners will receive training on best practices for mentor recruitment and will be encouraged to, at minimum, incorporate three key facets into the mentor recruitment process: (1) post opportunities on searchable databases, (2) send mailings/electronic mailing, and (3) establish and maintain partnerships with local corporations, schools, universities and churches. The Twin Cities regional Hands On Network and MPM also maintain listings of opportunities for potential volunteers and regularly provide referrals. MPM will conduct targeted recruitment campaigns with select MBP member companies coordinated with the Minnesota Business Partnership (MBP). The project will recruit new mentors by utilizing multiple media sources. As the project grows and becomes established, mentors with experience in the program will become ambassadors in the recruitment process.

Recruitment will also occur through outreach campaigns with community organizations (faith-based and non-profit) located in the target neighborhoods that are participating in the program, continuing a successful approach currently being used by MPM in a community mentoring program for students in five North Minneapolis elementary schools and in a second project for schools in similarly at-risk neighborhoods in St. Paul. In both projects, new volunteer mentors are successful recruited from neighborhood faith congregations. MPM is also developing a toolkit with Search Institute for educating community members about mentoring as a part of the Healthy Communities Healthy Youth national initiative.

To support recruitment for this program, MPM use the Pass It On program where high school students from the five targeted neighborhoods nominate for recognition non-family member adults who guide, inspire and help develop their strengths. The students will then interview and photograph their mentors, who can come from all walks of life. Some might be well known in their communities; others might be known only to the people whose lives they directly touch. In addition to promoting opportunities for volunteer mentors, the program helps youth practice journalism skills by framing good questions, interviewing, taking photographs, transcribing, editing, and shaping their material into essay form.

In 2009, the local community group MADDADS in partnership with MPM, will link this program to the Essence Cares Mentoring Movement, a recruiting campaign led by Susan Taylor, former editor of *Essence* magazine, focused on recruiting African American male mentors. The recruiting effort in Minneapolis will also involve local agencies of Big Brothers Big Sisters, YWCA, Boy Scouts, Urban League, and NAACP. MADDADS has a strong presence in the five targeted neighborhoods and has helped recruitment mentors from those neighborhoods.

Improved referral to mentoring programs. Through new levels of coordination and communication among the project partners created as a result of this Strengthening Youth Mentoring program, public and private agencies encountering youth demonstrating at-risk factors for youth violence will be able to make prompt, accurate placement referrals to select mentoring programs that meet all or most quality standards and are prepared to work with these youth through new protocols and procedures.

Key referral partner agencies participating in this program include the following:

(1) Minneapolis Public School System, working in collaboration with the Minneapolis Police Department, will refer students in grades 6 - 12 who meet the following conditions: (a) disciplined or suspended for violent behavior during the school day; (b) disciplined or suspended for repeated truancy and tardy incidents; (c) failing to make adequate yearly progress.

(2) The Minneapolis Police Department will refer students in grades K-5 contacted through the Knock-Talk program which has school staff contact police to visit a home when students in grades K-6 are absent from school without excuse).

(3) The Link, a community-based non-profit organization contracted to operate the new Minneapolis Juvenile Suspension Center where youth ages 10 -17 who are picked up by police for curfew and other violations are detained.

(4) Hennepin County and Minnesota Corrections, identifying new inmates with dependent children living in Minneapolis, will contact project partners (via City of Minneapolis) to refer children of new inmates to mentoring program.

(5) The Minneapolis Police Department will refer youth who are a victim of or witness to violence.

(6) Minneapolis Public School system staff (including teachers, counselors and principals) from neighborhood community schools may refer youth to this project who they believe would most benefit from having a mentor. Staff will complete referral forms for students who meet at least one or more of the criteria developed for this project, including poor academic performance, poor attendance, poor classroom preparation, inappropriate or negative attention seeking, difficulty in relating to peers and adults, mistrustfulness and/or poor communication skills. Referral forms will go to the project advisory committee for referral to a mentoring program that meets all or most quality standards.

Direct Services Provided by Partner Mentoring Programs. Grant funds provided for this program will support individual mentoring programs participating in the program collaboration by providing training and support, including stipends of mentoring program staff participating in the training. In turn, each mentoring program partner in this project will offer the following basic services to youth mentors: (1) mentor recruitment, screening, and training; (2) youth mentee recruitment and orientation (includes families); (3) mentor and youth matching; (4)

support to the match, including on-going training; opportunities for activities between mentors and their matched children; regular interaction with all parties (mentors, children, parents/teachers); (5) building relationships with schools, community organizations, other referral agencies to ensure program success; (6) gather and maintain confidential data on all matches and evaluating the successes of interactions with children; and (7) ensure the safety of the children and volunteers engaged in the programs at all times.

Select mentoring program partners will develop an innovative new initiative to serve children who have a parent or a sibling who is a convicted and/or incarcerated offender. According to the Bureau of Justice (2002) as many as 30% of households in North Minneapolis have an incarcerated household member and over 10,000 children in the metropolitan region have an incarcerated parent. The program will offer specialized training to mentors, offer workshops and information sessions to the family members of the mentee, and use special match activities and other services to help the child deal with this difficult family situation, as well as avoid activities that leading to negative outcomes for the mentee (such as incarceration and criminal activity).

The Minneapolis Workforce Center will support youth and their mentors in the program by providing career exploration, job training and post-secondary institution visits.

Target population

The target population for this project is youth ages 8 to 17 living the five targeted Minneapolis neighborhoods: Folwell, Hawthorne, Jordan, McKinley, and Phillips West.

Communities can be described using a variety of indicators. The index known as “community disadvantage” is commonly used by social scientists to summarize the general socio-economic conditions of an area. The Community Disadvantage Index (CDI) used in the OJJDP SMART System uses a 10 point scale to measure disadvantaged conditions in a community, with 10 being the most severe level of disadvantage. Nine of the eleven US census tracts that comprise these five targeted neighborhoods score 10 out of 10 on the CDI,

representing 68% of the total population of children age 5-17 living in these neighborhoods. The other two tracts score a 9.

The three weighted factors used to determine the CDI score for a community correlate directly with risk factors associated with youth violence: household poverty, limited adult presence in the household, and financial stress in the household.

The five targeted neighborhoods for this project had a total youth population (ages 5 to 17) of 9,499 according to 2000 census data, representing nearly one third of the entire population of these neighborhoods. This large proportion of youth relative to the total neighborhood population decreases the opportunity for informal adult mentoring opportunities to occur within the neighborhoods, increasing dependence on formal mentoring programs and volunteer mentors from outside the neighborhood to meet the needs of all youth.

Community Disadvantage Index (CDI) for Targeted Neighborhoods

OJJDP SMART System Report, US Census Bureau Data 2000

<i>Neighborhood Census Tract</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>% Ages 5-17</i>	<i>Population Ages 5-17</i>	<i>CDI Level</i>
Folwell (North) 1008	4,386	28%	1,228	9
Hawthorne (North) 1015	2,289	28%	641	10
1016	3,168	33%	1,045	10
1023	1,597	27%	431	10
Jordan (North) 1013	1,876	32%	600	10
1014	2,393	32%	958	10
1021	3,064	35%	1,073	10
McKinley (North) 1009	5,603	32%	1,793	9
Phillips West (South) 1060	3,462	20%	692	10
1071	2,721	15%	409	10
1072	2,514	25%	628	10
TOTAL	33,073	29%	9,499	

Achievable and Cost Effective

Building on its previous work developing the training curriculum for the EEP best practices, MPM will be ready to deliver training in this proposed Strengthening Mentoring program within the first two quarters of the 12-quarter grant period. During this grant period, at least 1,000 mentoring relationships will be created or strengthened through the capacity building of mentoring programs and the improved mentor recruitment and youth referral systems created at

an average cost per youth served of less than \$500. As the program begins to increase in scale in year three, cost per youth supported through this program drops 40% to just over \$300 per youth.

MPM staff will hire a Strengthening Mentoring program manager, a thirty-two hour per week, to fulfill its obligation in fulfillment of this program. Minimum qualifications include Bachelors degree in Social Work, Education or related field and prior experience with project management. Teaching experience and mentoring program management experience preferred, along with knowledge of the five targeted neighborhoods.

Evidence-Basis that Proposed Strategies will Achieve Goals & Objectives

At the core of any prevention program designed to reduce youth participation in negative or risky behavior is the role of caring, trusted adults in the life of every young person. While not discounting the importance of natural mentoring relationships, a number of studies have demonstrated that structured mentoring that occurs within the context of a formal youth development program is particularly beneficial to youth confronted with multiple risk factors in their life. These studies have demonstrated that effective, high quality, enduring mentoring is very successful in improving the academic achievement of students, reducing school truancy and drop out rates, and reducing risky behaviors such as drug or alcohol use—all common risk factors associated with youth violence.⁶ This same analysis further established that the magnitude of estimated effects on positive youth outcomes increased as programs utilized a greater number of best practices. This Strengthening Mentoring program in Minneapolis will incorporate the four program practices from the EEP that are essential for strong and effective mentoring relationships established by MENTOR: (1) conducting intensive screening of potential mentors, (2) making matches based on interest that both mentor and mentee share, (3) providing training and support for mentors and (4) offering post-match training and support.⁷

⁶“Making a Difference: An Impact Study”, 1995: Tierney, Grossman, Resch. “Mentoring: A Promising Strategy for Youth Development”, Jekielik Moore, Hair, Scarupa, 2002 among others.

⁷ Rhodes, Dr. Jean, report to MENTOR, 2003

When more mentoring programs serving at-risk youth in the five target neighborhoods have adopted and successfully implemented the EEP standards, more mentoring relationships with at-risk will last longer. When more at-risk youth in the five target neighborhoods experience long-term mentoring relationships, more youth will exhibit positive behaviors. Working collaboratively and in partnership with local community groups, MPM can help to identify and fill gaps in mentoring opportunities where they might exist (in particular neighborhoods, age groups, gender, etc.). Also delivering training in a cohort model can help programs recognize overlaps and inspire collaboration and perhaps more innovation.

Increasing collaboration among community partners committed to serving at-risk youth will increase the number of caring adult recruited to serve as mentors for youth in the five targeted neighborhoods. This increased collaboration will also improve referrals for at-risk youth to quality mentoring programs.

Data Gathering

The City of Minneapolis will track progress in this program through the mandatory performance measures OJJDP has developed for this grant program. These measures are described in section #2, Goals and Objectives. The data collected to support these measures conform to GPRA P.L. 103-62. Appropriate program-specific data collection methods will be developed in collaboration with the individual mentoring program partners participating in the program. Programs will utilize a standardized reporting format prepared by MPM and supported by MPM training and technical support to the program partners. Data elements will be collected through standardized, close-ended response categories to facilitate comparison over time.

Community Partners in the Strengthening Mentoring Program

The project will operate under the City of Minneapolis, with leadership provided through the Office of the Mayor and program support provided through the Department of Health and Family Support. MPM will provide core services in assessing and training mentoring program partner. Through it roles with the Metro Mentoring Network, numerous community-based outreach

programs, and the Minnesota Business Partnership Connections program (supporting volunteer mentor recruitment among the largest employers in the state), MPM will provide leadership and support to activities to recruit new mentors.

The following mentoring programs will participate as partners in this program. Each represents a unique neighborhood or cultural group within the five target neighborhoods. 1. New Salem Baptist Church, 2. READY Program of Hennepin County, 3. Minneapolis Public Schools program for homeless/highly mobile children, 4. Minneapolis Park Board youth workers, 5. Neighborhood Involvement Program (NIP), 6. Twin Cities Healthy Nations, 7. Plymouth Christian Youth Center, 8. Cookie Cart, 9. YMCA Achievers' Program, 10. Big Brothers Big Sisters, 11. Kinship of Greater Minneapolis, 12. Bolder Options 13. YouthCare (Young Women's Mentoring Program) 14. Project for Pride in Living, Tutor/Mentor Program and Homework 'n' Hoops Program. 15. Shiloh Community Church Block Mentors 16. Centro, Inc. La Palabra mentoring program.

Sustainability and Leveraged Resources

The City of Minneapolis has allocated funds through its federally designated Minneapolis Empowerment Zone to support mentoring programs in the targeted five neighborhoods (four are in the Empowerment Zone). The City of Minneapolis has created a new position for Youth Violence Prevention Coordination that directly supports this Strengthening Mentoring program.

Several philanthropic organizations serving Minneapolis have committed and will continue to commit funds to support youth services in the targeted neighborhoods, including mentoring programs. Staff leadership from the General Mills Foundation and the Minneapolis Foundation served along with the Minneapolis Mayor as co-chairs of the Youth Violence Prevention Steering Committee. General Mills Foundation has sustained funding and leadership services for 25+ years to support the Hawthorne neighborhood, one of the five neighborhoods targeted in this program. Target Foundation staff have announced to the Minneapolis Mayor that it will support new funding for mentoring programs in support of the City's *Blueprint*.

The majority of program costs funded through this grant support capacity building costs that do not recur over the long-term. Philanthropic and public policy leaders will be apprised of the outcomes of this initiative to promote continued public and private support in effective mentoring programs that are based upon best practices and that demonstrate effective outcomes for youth, especially those most at-risk to offend.

4. Applicant Capabilities & Competencies

Roles and Responsibility

All of the partners have successful track records providing quality programming for youth. Each entity's management has guaranteed commitment of staff, time, space and in-kind contributions to help ensure the success of the project. A multi-disciplinary team will work to develop and implement this program. Specific roles for the partners are as follows:

The City of Minneapolis, Department of Health and Family Support will provide overall project leadership and coordination through its newly appointed coordinator for youth violence prevention. This city department will connect the Strengthening Mentoring program to the larger *Blueprint* action plan. This city coordinator will facilitate development of new referral protocols among the key community agencies listed earlier. MPM will provide initial assessment of mentoring program partners, deliver training to program staff, and provide on-going technical support to each program partner. MPM will also all cooperative campaigns for new mentor recruitment as well as support customized campaigns for select mentoring programs when appropriate. Mentoring programs that choose to become partners in this program will make staff available to participate in this program, as well as commit to support new mentoring matches as recruitment success is achieved.

Experience and Capabilities of the Lead Program Partners

Since 2005, the **Department of Health and Family Support** has supported a full-time Youth Development Specialist to ensure the department is aware of and engaged in working to

address the needs of underserved populations of youth. The department is the lead agency for the *Blueprint*. Since April 2008 it began supporting a full-time Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator to implement the 34 goals within the *Blueprint*. This includes working with elected officials to inform public policy related to youth violence, seeking funding for initiatives, and working with the department's research staff to develop a data tracking process for monitoring, measuring and reporting results. The Department is an experienced, responsible contractor of Federal formula and discretionary grant dollars. Its formula dollars include the Maternal Child Health Block Grant program (2008 allocation \$856,510) and the Community Development Block Grant program (2008 allocation \$1,649,200). It is also receives \$5,901,441 in federal discretionary grants for maternal child health and community health programs and research.

The *Blueprint* Steering Committee is responsible for oversight of the programmatic, strategic and fiduciary activities related to the *Blueprint*. The Steering Committee is comprised of representatives of the highest levels from the following sectors: (1) Financial/Business, (2) Health Care, (3) Academic, (4) Minneapolis Public Schools, (5) Law Enforcement, (6) Foundations, (7) Community Organizers, (8) Faith, (9) Local, County and State Elected Officials, (10) Students.

The **Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota** (MPM) brings 14 years of experience promoting and supporting mentoring in Minnesota, as well as the research-based knowledge and experience required to bring long-term, sustainable success to the mentoring programs. MPM is a statewide resource to mentoring programs throughout Minnesota, supporting over 400 mentor programs that served 170,000 youth (ages 8-18) in 2005. Nationally, MPM is one of the leaders amongst regional mentoring partnerships in regards to total number of youth, mentors, and mentor programs served. Its Training Institute has an 11-year track record of quality technical assistance and training support to help programs start, maintain and sustain quality mentoring initiatives, as well as prepare mentors and mentees for their mentoring relationships.

In consideration of space constraints, a profile of three organizations representative of the project partners is provided here:

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities (BBBS) is the largest of the mentoring program partners in the Strengthening Mentoring program. It is a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization serving greater Minneapolis and St. Paul since 1920. It is the sixth-largest affiliate of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) the largest and longest-operating mentor program in the country. In 2007, BBBS served 3,364 children, matching them with volunteer mentors. Agency-wide, approximately 90% of the children BBBS serves are from single-parent homes, 70% are low-income and approximately 70% are children of color.

The PEACE Foundation is a local non-profit based in the North Minneapolis. It builds a grassroots support among neighborhood residents, businesses, congregations, and community organizations to support programs that reduce violence in neighborhoods where pronounced disparities exist. Founded by a City Council member and other local leaders in 2003, it is governed by an independent board of directors and is fully compliant with non-profit regulatory agencies and is supported by established corporate and community foundations.

Men Against Destruction Defending Against Drugs and Social Disorder (MAD DADS) is a community-based non-profit organization working in north and south Minneapolis to provide street patrols in distressed neighborhoods, working with the Metropolitan Transit Commission to provide youth with safe passage on Minneapolis bus lines, and providing crisis intervention, homicide vigils, gang intervention, and other support following a neighborhood tragedy.