



FY 2022 OJJDP Mentoring Opportunities for Youth Initiative Grantee Profile

Friends of the Children

Program Overview and Background

Uniquely designed to improve outcomes for the youth facing the highest risks, Friends of the Children employs paid, professional mentors (called “Friends”) and commits to youth for 12.5 years. For 30 years, our model has successfully closed the opportunity gap and broken the cycle of intergenerational poverty for children who have experienced multiple compounding risk factors at an early age. Of youth who participate in Friends of the Children: 91% attend school regularly, 83% earn a H.S. diploma or GED; 93% are not involved in the juvenile justice system; and 98% of adolescents avoid early parenting. Additionally, 92% of program graduates go on to achieve one or more of our three “E”s – enroll in post-secondary education, enlist in the military, or find living wage employment.

Program Services

Friends of the Children’s unique design pairs youth facing the highest risk with salaried, professional mentors (“Friends”) and commits unconditionally to each youth for 12.5 years. Full-time professional mentors annually provide three times more service hours (12 hours per month) to each child than the threshold recommended in Elements of Effective Practice (4 hours of mentoring per month). Friends join the youth in their schools, homes, communities, and virtually using technology to support their academic progress, prosocial development, safety, and overall well-being. Friends engage youth in collaborative goal setting, role-model prosocial relationships, support youth in their classrooms and with homework, advocate in schools for services and promote extracurricular involvement, and support families in system navigation and advocacy while connecting them to stabilizing community health, basic needs, and other resources. Friends engage with caregivers two to four times per month to build trust with and support the whole family’s needs and promote parent engagement in their child’s education.

Friends receive ongoing training to ensure they achieve seven core competencies:

- Collaborative Goal Setting
- Meet Diverse Needs of Every Youth

FR1ENDS of the CH1LDREN

Generational Change,
One Child at a Time

- HQ: Portland, OR
- Founded in 1993
- 3,300 Youth Served
- 33 Program Locations
- 22 Sub Grantees

Grant: JJ FY21 Mentoring: Multi-state

Award Number: 15JDP-22-GG-03830-MENT

Award Amount: \$2,000,000

Mentoring Model & Structure

- Community-based
- One-to-one, school-based, community-based, and e-mentoring
- Partnering with schools, community-based agencies that provide services to high needs children and families, child welfare agencies, and tribe services
- Programs focus on Academics, College Readiness, Youth Victims (Child Abuse or Exploitation), General, Social Emotional Skill Development, Family Engagement, Juvenile Justice Involved
- Intentional “two-generation” (2Gen) approach, measuring youth and caregiver impact



- Reflect and Adjust Practice
- Advocate
- Be Trauma-Informed
- Engage Families
- Be Culturally Informed

We measure the accomplishment of objectives using our Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) database management system, which monitors progress using a monthly, quarterly, and annual program performance scorecard system. Friends are provided ongoing support and supervision based on scorecard data from program leadership and support staff on a weekly basis or more.

Target Population

We aim to provide mentoring under this grant to young people with any one or more of the following:

- Single Parent Household
- Academic Challenges
- Facing Discrimination based on Race, Ethnicity or Gender Identity
- Victimization
- Rural Location
- Urban Location
- Substance Impact or Misuse
- Youth With Adverse Childhood Experiences

Mentor Recruitment & Training

- 3,300 matches and youth served under this grant
- 390 mentors recruited under this grant
- For mentor recruitment, we hire profession mentors who have lived experience and experience in helping profession with youth and families
- Duration of program services: 12.5 years
- Expected intensity of match contact: 12 hours a month
- Expected length of a match: 12.5 years
- Expected frequency of match contact: 3-4 hours a week
- Number of training hours required before a mentor is matched with a youth: 55 hours

Additional Program Information

Friends of the Children currently serves youth and families facing the greatest challenges in 32 diverse communities across the US. Our vision is that one day, all children will have a long-term, consistent relationship with a caring adult who believes in them. As we work toward actualizing this vision, we have set an ambitious goal to scale our national network to 40 locations, including in 25 states and Tribal Sovereign Nations, by 2025. We aim to reduce the number of youth entering the foster care system by 10%.



Additional Resources

- [Friends of the Children](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)

This data is accurate as of April 1st, 2023.

For more information on our OJJDP grant:

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