



FY 2024 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 over 30 years, our model has been successful at closing the opportunity gap and breaking 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, and 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

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 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 involvement in extracurriculars, 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 are provided ongoing support and supervision based on performance data from program leadership and support staff on a weekly basis or more.

FR1ENDS of the CH1LDREN risks,

Generational Change, One Child at a Time

Headquarters in Portland, OR

Founded in 1993

1,932 Youth Served

1 Program Location

16 Sub Grantees

Grant: JJ FY24 Mentoring: Multi-State

Award Number: 15PJDP-24-GG-03833-MENT

Award Amount: \$1,120,000

Mentoring Model & Structure

- Community-based
- One-to-one, community-based
- Partnering with Schools, Community-based agencies that provide services to high-needs children and families, Child welfare agencies
- Programs focus on Academics, College Readiness, General, Youth Victims (Child Abuse or Exploitation), Youth with a history of significant adverse childhood experiences, at-risk youth, social emotional skill development, family engagement, juvenile delinquency and risky behavior prevention



Target Population

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

- Academically Challenged
- Rural
- Single Parent Household
- Victimization
- Youth with a history of significant adverse childhood experiences, including parents impacted by incarceration and substance abuse
- Youth living in high crime/violence urban areas

Mentor Recruitment & Training

- 224 mentors recruited under this grant
- For mentor recruitment, we target Professional, full-time paid mentors with both lived experience similar to that of the children and families to be served, as well as experience in helping professions with youth and families
- Duration of program services: 12.5 years
- Expected intensity of match contact: 3-4 hours per week
- Expected length of a match: 12+ years
- Expected frequency of match contact: 8 times per month
- Number of training hours required before a mentor is matched with a youth: 30 hours

Additional Resources

- Friends of the Children Website: <https://www.friendsofthechildren.org>

this data is accurate as of January 2025.

For more information on our OJJDP grant:

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