



MENTORING IN MILWAUKEE

DEVELOPING A REGIONAL MENTORING NETWORK



PUBLIC POLICY FORUM

ABOUT THE PUBLIC POLICY FORUM

Milwaukee-based Public Policy Forum – which was established in 1913 as a local government watchdog – is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the effectiveness of government and the development of southeastern Wisconsin through objective research of regional public policy issues.

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The strategic planning process that culminated in this report was undertaken to assist MPS, the City of Milwaukee, and mentoring agencies throughout Greater Milwaukee in their efforts to develop a mentoring partnership in our community. Report authors would like to thank the many individuals and organizations that participated in that process and provided us with their valuable input. We would also like to thank the leadership and staff of MENTOR, the Midlands Mentoring Partnership, and the Mentoring Center of Central Ohio for patiently answering our questions and providing us with data.

Finally, we wish to thank MPS and the City of Milwaukee for commissioning and funding our participation in their strategic planning effort.



**MILWAUKEE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**





MENTORING IN MILWAUKEE

Developing a regional mentoring network

September 2016

Study authors:

Joe Peterangelo, Senior Researcher

Ben Juarez, Researcher

Rob Henken, President

INTRODUCTION

In 2014, the City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) joined the White House's My Brother's Keeper initiative (MBK), which is aimed at improving the life outcomes of all young people to ensure they can reach their full potential. Since that time, MPS and the City have worked with local public and private sector stakeholders to meet the initiative's goals, which involve implementation of cradle-to-grave strategies aimed at addressing the challenges faced by boys and men of color.

The stakeholders have determined that mentoring should be one of the major elements of Milwaukee's MBK initiative. Mentoring has been recognized nationally as an effective strategy for ensuring that children complete high school, attend college, and refrain from engaging in risky behavior. In addition, the National Basketball Association (NBA) has recognized mentoring and the MBK initiative as vital to the development of youth in our nation, which has led the Milwaukee Bucks to join the City and MPS in their efforts to improve mentoring in Milwaukee.

Mentoring already *is* occurring in Milwaukee, with dozens of organizations providing mentoring opportunities and working to identify Milwaukee children who could benefit from a mentoring experience. However, stakeholders also have identified a substantial gap between the number of young people seeking mentors and the number of mentors available to serve them, and they have determined that a key missing ingredient is the existence of a formal mentoring network that could better coordinate and connect the activities of organizations that perform mentoring in the community.

At the request of MPS and the City of Milwaukee, and to assist them in their efforts to develop a mentoring network in Milwaukee, the Public Policy Forum conducted research on the activities and finances of mentoring networks in other U.S. metro areas. We also facilitated a series of strategic planning meetings with a group of local mentoring stakeholders. Those meetings were designed to engage the stakeholders in determining the characteristics of the mentoring network they wish to develop and to develop a strategic direction that could guide implementation.

This document highlights some of the key insights gleaned from our national research and lays out the decisions the local stakeholders group made for their vision of a future Milwaukee mentoring network. We hope it will serve as a valuable guide as the effort moves forward.



BACKGROUND

Mentoring networks are organizations established to build the capacity of mentoring efforts in a city, region, or state. Numerous such networks have developed throughout the U.S. over the past several decades. Those networks work with agencies that already offer mentoring programs to improve their operations and expand their resources and activities. They also provide guidance for organizations working to develop new mentoring programs.

Since the early 1990s, a national organization has been supporting the development and ongoing work of mentoring networks in the U.S. That organization is called MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership (MENTOR). Organizations with formal ties to MENTOR are referred to as affiliates.

There is considerable variation in the characteristics of MENTOR's 25 affiliate networks. For example, 18 are organizations supporting mentoring on a statewide basis, while only seven are local or regional in scale. Many are nonprofit organizations that were newly created to focus exclusively on mentoring, while others are programs that were placed within larger organizations that already existed when the mentoring networks were formed.



To inform local efforts to develop a mentoring network in Milwaukee, we analyzed the structure, activities, and budgets of six of MENTOR's affiliate organizations. Since the Milwaukee network is not envisioned to serve the entire state of Wisconsin, five of the six organizations we selected are local or regional networks, as shown in **Table 1**. Three of the six have been in existence since the 1990s, while the other three were formed more recently. There also is an even split between those that involved the creation of new nonprofits versus those housed within larger, established organizations.

Table 1: Basic characteristics of selected mentoring networks in other U.S. cities

Mentoring Network	Geography	Year Founded	Governance
Indiana Mentoring Partnership	State	2008	Existing Nonprofit
Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern PA (Pittsburgh)	Region	1995	New Nonprofit
Mentoring Center of Central Ohio (Columbus)	Region	1998	Existing Nonprofit
Midlands Mentoring Partnership (Omaha)	Region	1999	New Nonprofit
Newark Mentoring Movement	City	2012	New Nonprofit
Team Up Youth Mentoring Partnership (Memphis)	City	2001	Existing Nonprofit

Table 2 summarizes key financial and staffing characteristics of the six networks. The budgets and staffing of the mentoring networks we analyzed vary significantly. For example, the budgets range from under \$200,000 (Newark) to more than \$800,000 (Indiana). Newark raises most of its funds from one large golf event each year, while the network in Memphis is funded entirely by the Memphis Grizzlies Foundation. Several others pull together funding from a wide range of sources that include government and foundation grants and contributions from individuals and businesses. Staffing levels range from two to five full-time-equivalent (FTE) employees.



Table 2: Financial and staffing information for selected mentoring networks in other U.S. cities

Mentoring Network	Budget (2014)	Funding Sources	Staffing
Indiana Mentoring Partnership	\$835,000	Government Foundations Individuals/businesses	16 employees are involved + consultants (approx. 2.5 FTEs total)
Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern PA (Pittsburgh)	\$744,000	Foundations Individuals/businesses Special events	Executive Director Director of Marketing & Comm. Director of Programs Program Assistants (2) Office Administrator
Mentoring Center of Central Ohio (Columbus)	\$274,000	Government Foundations Individuals/businesses	Executive Director Director Emeritus Administrative Assistant
Midlands Mentoring Partnership (Omaha)	\$672,000	Government Foundations Individuals/businesses	Executive Director Director of Operations Events and Operations Coordinator Youth Initiated Mentoring Coord.
Newark Mentoring Movement	\$188,000	Special events Foundations Individuals/businesses	Executive Director Program Officer (part time) Development Officer (part time)
Team Up Youth Mentoring Partnership (Memphis)	?	Foundation	Executive Director (of foundation) Program Managers (2) Program Assistant



DECISION POINTS

Based on our consideration of the characteristics and activities of the six selected mentoring networks, it became clear to us that there were a handful of key decision points that Milwaukee mentoring stakeholders should consider in determining the basic structure of a local mentoring network. We collected and shared information with the stakeholders group that framed those decision points by summarizing the activities and roles of each of the six networks within their communities/states.

After discussing that information and soliciting feedback from the stakeholders, we honed in on the two networks whose activities most closely mirror those the Milwaukee group envisions for a future network here: the Midlands Mentoring Partnership (Omaha) and the Mentoring Center of Central Ohio (Columbus). We then conducted in-depth conversations with leaders from those two organizations and MENTOR, which gave us valuable perspective that informed additional discussion with the Milwaukee group.

Key findings from those conversations on the decision points we identified are summarized below:

Participation/Membership: Typically, mentoring networks maintain informal relationships with mentoring agencies. Since the network has no role with regard to the agencies' finances or insurance, the network takes on no liability for any legal issues its partner agencies may experience. Mentoring networks tend to be inclusive of programs of varied quality and intensity, but tend to focus exclusively on programs serving *youth*.

The Midlands and Central Ohio organizations are unusual in that they have more formal relationships with a select set of local mentoring agencies. To be a *member* of Midlands, for example, organizations have to demonstrate that they follow a set of best practices established by MENTOR called the Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring.¹ Midlands has just 13 member agencies, but also works with additional organizations in a more informal manner. Central Ohio is similar to Midlands in this respect and has 35 organizations it refers to as *partner agencies*.

Geography: Many mentoring networks, including Midlands, leave their service area somewhat open to allow for participation by a broad set of organizations. Central Ohio is somewhat unusual in providing free services for organizations located within Franklin County (where Columbus is located) and charging agencies located outside of the county for the same services. The rationale is that all of the network's funding comes from organizations located within and specifically focused on Franklin County.

Mentor recruitment: Ongoing mentor recruitment is typically not part of the networks' role, but some networks do lead short-term, community-wide recruitment campaigns. For example, Midlands led a campaign that involved billboard and TV advertisements and a coordinated social media effort with its member agencies. It saw a 30-40% increase in new mentors through those efforts. Central Ohio

¹ MENTOR: Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring, 4th Edition. <http://www.mentoring.org/program-resources/elements-of-effective-practice-for-mentoring/>



hosts two major events each year that generate interest in mentoring throughout the community. Both organizations have web-based volunteer inquiry forms that match interested individuals with mentoring opportunities.

Training: Networks typically do not engage in the direct training of individual mentors. Rather, they provide trainings for agency staff and leave mentor training to the agencies themselves. Certain specialized trainings may be offered by networks that are relevant to mentors, however. (For example, Midlands provides trauma-informed mentor training.) Central Ohio again is an outlier in that most of the trainings it provides are for mentors rather than agency staff.

Screenings/background checks: Most networks do not take on the responsibility of paying for background checks for the volunteer mentors who work with mentoring agencies in their regions or states, and MENTOR does not encourage mentoring networks to do so.

Midlands and Central Ohio differ from the national norm in this regard. After auditing the background check policies of its member agencies and finding a lack of quality and consistency throughout, Midlands took on background checks as one of its core services. That effort involves an investment of approximately \$50,000 per year. Central Ohio provides one free background check for each mentor working with its partner agencies (either state or federal) and requires the agencies to complete the other.

Programming/activities: Mentoring networks typically do not plan programs or activities for mentors to attend with their mentees. Midlands and Central Ohio leave that responsibility to their member/partner agencies as well.

Program evaluation & technical assistance: Most networks expect mentoring agencies to use MENTOR's Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring to complete a self-evaluation. The results of the self-evaluation then are used to develop improvement plans. The networks provide technical assistance to agencies to help them achieve their goals. Midlands and Central Ohio both follow this approach to program evaluation and technical assistance.

Networking/special events: Most networks, including Midlands and Central Ohio, organize annual conferences and sometimes other special events that allow mentoring agency staff to network and learn from experts and one another.

Data collection: MENTOR has developed a national survey that it uses to collect data from mentoring organizations on program scope, capacity, challenges, opportunities, and outcomes. Its affiliate networks typically use that survey to collect and share data nationally. Midlands and Central Ohio both use MENTOR's survey for data collection purposes. Midlands also collects data from its member agencies on new and closed matches each month and conducts an annual analysis of demographics and outcomes that have helped to identify service gaps and target efforts to underserved populations.



MILWAUKEE'S MENTORING NETWORK

Our series of meetings with Milwaukee's stakeholders group involved walking through and reaching general consensus on the aforementioned decision points. Based on the group's discussions, we are able to lay out the agreed-upon characteristics of a Milwaukee Mentoring Partnership,² including the geographic area served, role/purpose, governance, and funding sources of the partnership. Those decisions determined staffing and budget size, which also are summarized below. Collectively, this write-up represents a strategic direction that can be used by stakeholders to establish the partnership expeditiously.

The general consensus by the group of stakeholders was that the Milwaukee Mentoring Partnership will be an organization that plays a broad role in supporting mentoring organizations in the metro area and that has capacity to support those organizations in many aspects, including staff training, mentor recruitment, and organizational development. However, consensus also emerged that the network will not be a governing body, nor will it have direct authority over mentoring programs/agencies. Its main purpose will be to aid agencies in becoming better equipped to serve their mentors and mentees.

To ensure that the Milwaukee Mentoring Partnership is aligned with and progressing toward national standards, it will work to become an affiliate of MENTOR. To do so, the partnership will strive to meet MENTOR's benchmarks in six core functional areas, which include fundraising and resource generation; external affairs; data management; mentoring program development; executive management; and back office functions. The Milwaukee Mentoring Partnership will take advantage of the support provided to mentoring networks nationally throughout their development process.

CONSENSUS ITEMS

Geography/Membership:

The stakeholders group decided that the best way to address service geography would be to undertake a regional approach. The focus of the Milwaukee Mentoring Partnership will be Milwaukee County youth and young adults ages 24 and under, but it will serve mentoring organizations that are active throughout the Greater Milwaukee region, which will be loosely defined as the four-county metropolitan area (Milwaukee, Waukesha, Ozaukee, and Washington counties).

The group also debated whether there should be general membership qualifications and decided to address this issue via a two-tier system. Any agency that engages in mentoring for youth and young adults would be eligible to become a member at an initial tier (tier 2). To the extent that the agency meets quality standards adopted by the partnership, it would move into tier 1. A responsibility of the partnership will be to assist the efforts of tier 2 organizations to move into tier 1.

The standards will be based on the Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring agency checklist. Using this checklist as a program evaluation tool, tier 2 agencies will be able to track their progress, tailor partnership-executed trainings, and grow toward tier 1. Because tier 1 recognition by the

² This is a tentative name for the network that we have selected for purposes of this report; the actual name will be determined by stakeholders.



partnership would be viewed as an important indicator of quality, mentoring agencies that participate in the partnership would be incentivized to achieve that designation.

Activities/Purpose:

- **Recruitment of mentors:** The group decided that the Milwaukee Mentoring Partnership should model its recruitment activities after those utilized by the Midlands Mentoring Partnership and the Mentoring Partnership of Central Ohio. These include advertisements to encourage mentorship, coordinated efforts on social media, special events that celebrate mentoring, agency training on recruitment, and web-based online volunteer inquiry forms. Outside of the web form, the partnership will not be responsible for ongoing recruitment for all member agencies, but rather will lead region-wide campaigns to recruit mentors.
- **Training of mentors:** The stakeholders group felt strongly that training by the partnership should not be duplicative of training already provided by mentoring organizations. There was agreement that the partnership should consider providing broad and basic training, but not specialized training (e.g. for special youth populations), which should be reserved for the individual organizations. Three specific concepts emerged: 1) Basic mentor training should have standards based on the Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring document and checklist; 2) the partnership should offer supplemental training, such as anger management and cultural dynamics; and 3) the partnership should communicate all training opportunities taking place in the region to all mentoring organizations in the network.
- **Screenings/background checks:** Per state law, mentors enrolling in a formal mentoring program must be subject to background checks before interacting with mentees. Because of the differences in background check standards across the mentoring agencies, it was agreed that the partnership will set minimum background check standards for members. Also, while background checks still will be conducted on an individual agency basis, assistance will be provided for member agencies that cannot afford to conduct background checks on their own.
- **Programming/activities:** Programming/activities will be limited to a handful of large annual events that involve mentors and mentees, such as a shoot-around with the Milwaukee Bucks where all agency volunteers are encouraged to attend. The partnership will not conduct regular programming or activities for mentors and mentees, leaving that function to the individual agencies.
- **Program evaluation:** Utilizing MENTOR's Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring checklist, member agencies will be required to evaluate their programs annually to discover any challenges or opportunities they may be facing, and to monitor growth. The results will be shared with the partnership for further evaluation and to determine strategies for technical assistance. As noted above, tier 2 agencies would use this as a tool for moving into tier 1 status.
- **Technical assistance:** Assistance in starting a mentoring program, agency improvement programs, and staff trainings typically are key functions of a mentoring partnership's technical assistance services. The Milwaukee Mentoring Partnership will offer these services to member agencies. For example, the partnership could play an important role in assisting agencies identified as having poor data collection practices to develop sound data collection programs.



- **Staff training/development:** The partnership will provide training options for staff along the lines of the Midlands Mentoring Partnership, i.e. targeted training for individual agencies found lacking in specific areas, as opposed to regular, broad training sessions offered to all member agencies. The trainings will be based on program evaluation results utilizing MENTOR's self-assessment tool for member agencies. Additionally, the partnership aspires to host an annual conference that could include workshops for agency staff.
- **Networking/special events:** Networking opportunities for agency staff will be limited to the aforementioned annual conference and special events held as part of mentor recruitment campaigns.
- **Fundraising/resource development:** Our research found that it is rare for partnerships to conduct fundraising and resource development on behalf of member agencies. While the Milwaukee Mentoring Partnership obviously would need to engage in fundraising and resource development for its own operations, it was determined that it will leave the role of fundraising for individual mentoring programs to the organizations that administer them.
- **Data collection:** It was agreed that the Milwaukee partnership's focus should be on collecting data that will be required to support requests for support from funders for *its* activities, and to inform communications regarding unmet needs for mentors in the community. Mentoring partnerships typically adhere to MENTOR guidelines and utilize MENTOR-provided surveys to acquire member agency data on a biennial basis, and the Milwaukee partnership also will use those surveys. Survey data not only would be helpful in capturing information on regional mentoring trends, demographic data, and gaps in volunteerism, but also would be provided to MENTOR for its national assessment.

Initially, member organizations would be expected to report *output* data to the partnership (e.g. number of new mentors; number of mentees served), and the partnership would work to standardize the data being collected by the mentoring agencies. The partnership also has a goal of eventually collecting and analyzing *outcomes* data that could shed light on mentoring's impact on students' academic progress (grades, graduation rates), interactions with the criminal justice system, and other factors at both the individual and community levels. The partnership also eventually could maintain data on volunteer mentors and the trainings they have completed.

- **Advocacy:** Several partnerships around the nation participate in advocacy for mentoring, which includes public awareness/education activities and efforts to gain support for increased resources from local, state, and federal sources. The stakeholder group agreed that such advocacy should be within the scope of the Milwaukee Mentoring Partnership.

Governance:

As noted above, there are several governance options for mentoring partnerships, including being housed in a public sector agency, an existing organization, or becoming its own nonprofit. It was decided that the Milwaukee Mentoring Partnership should be established initially in an existing organization or institution located in the City of Milwaukee. The organization preferably will be one that is not directly connected to mentoring services to avoid showing favoritism to any individual



mentoring agency. Depending on the growth and perceived sustainability of the partnership, the goal will be to set it up as its own nonprofit organization within three to five years.

Staff:

The staff size of the mentoring networks/partnerships we reviewed varied widely and is predicated on the mission, activities, governance, and geographic scope of the individual organizations.

Based on the decisions outlined above, the Milwaukee Mentoring Partnership is envisioned to require a staff of two to four full-time equivalent employees. Initially, the staff would consist of an executive director and at least one other position that together could handle fundraising, communications, technical assistance, event planning, and administration. In the future, additional staff may be needed for data analysis and/or other functions. Stakeholders will consult with MENTOR regarding the start-up experience of other affiliates as a means of further informing a decision on initial staffing.

Also, depending on where the partnership is housed, staff support may be provided by the host organization in areas such as IT/data services or administrative assistance, which could reduce staffing needs for the partnership.

Budget:

The size of the annual budgets of the mentoring networks/partnerships we reviewed also varied widely and ranged from about \$200,000 to more than \$800,000. Staffing, of course, is a key determinant of budget size. Based on the envisioned staffing and activities of the Milwaukee Mentoring Partnership, an annual budget in the range of \$250,000-\$400,000 is envisioned for the initial start-up years of the partnership, though that range could be refined based on further discussion with MENTOR and any support that may be available from the entity that houses the initiative.

Funding Sources:

Funding structures among mentoring partnerships around the country vary; however, most have a mix of private individual and business contributions, grants from foundations and governments, and fee revenues. The Milwaukee Mentoring Partnership will seek funding from local governmental bodies, foundations, individual/business contributions, special fundraising events, and fees.

As suggested above, decisions on staffing, budget, funding sources and other organizational matters should be informed by further consideration of the experience of similar partnerships throughout the country. A subgroup of the partnership will work with MENTOR to refine these plans in the near future.



CONCLUSION/NEXT STEPS

This report lays out a blueprint for developing a mentoring network in Milwaukee based on input from more than a dozen stakeholder organizations. It is now up to the stakeholders group to determine how to move forward in implementing this plan.

As the partners undertake this task, they have agreed that the next steps will include:

- Reaching out to MENTOR (the National Mentoring Partnership) for technical assistance in refining and building upon the framework provided in this report;
- Beginning to seek community support for the network, including determining the best sources of start-up and operating funds; and
- Determining which organization will house the network.

Increasing the number of mentors available for Milwaukee's youth and improving the quality of mentoring in Milwaukee are the overarching priorities of the stakeholders who contributed to this plan. It is their hope that the broader Milwaukee community will rally around their efforts as they seek to provide a mentor for every child that needs one.



APPENDIX

Organizations represented at strategic planning meetings

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Milwaukee

Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee

Burke Foundation

Center for Youth Engagement

City of Milwaukee

City Year Milwaukee

MATC Men of Color Initiative

Milwaukee Bucks

Milwaukee Christian Center

Milwaukee County Executive's Office

Milwaukee Public Schools

Running Rebels

TRUE Skool

United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County

UW-Milwaukee African American Male Initiative

