

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2021

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SENATE BILL DRS55044-MVa-6A

Short Title: Youth Mentoring Services Act.

(Public)

Sponsors: Senator Foushee (Primary Sponsor).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE YOUTH MENTORING GRANT PROGRAM.

3 Whereas, mentoring and youth services organizations have played a critical role in  
4 the social, emotional, behavioral, and intellectual development of children and teenagers in North  
5 Carolina for many years; and

6 Whereas, national research shows that mentoring programs are effective tools in  
7 combating substance use disorders, absence from school, criminal activity, and violence among  
8 youth; and

9 Whereas, based on recent national research results, youth who are matched with  
10 mentors for a minimum of one year, thus developing positive relationships, are more likely to  
11 show improvements in academic performance, social skills, and peer relations, and are more  
12 likely to continue to college or careers; and

13 Whereas, many small- to medium-sized mentoring agencies in North Carolina lack  
14 sufficient resources, capacity, and mentoring adults to provide the most effective and efficacious  
15 mentoring services; and

16 Whereas, despite the clear benefits of mentoring, the average mentoring program has  
17 63 young people on its waitlist; and

18 Whereas, one in three young people in the United States currently is growing up  
19 without a mentor, constituting a "mentoring gap"; and

20 Whereas, mentoring services for youth in high-risk situations, through public and  
21 private entities to recruit, train, screen, and supervise mentors, would be beneficial and in the  
22 best interests of the people of North Carolina; Now, therefore,  
23 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

24 **SECTION 1.** This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Youth Mentoring  
25 Services Act."

26 **SECTION 2.** Article 3 of Chapter 143B is amended by adding a new Part to read:  
27 "Part 5C. Youth Mentoring Grant Program.

28 "**§ 143B-152.20. Definitions.**

29 The following definitions apply in this Part:

30 (1) Council. – The Youth Mentoring Services Council.

31 (2) Department. – The Department of Health and Human Services.

32 (3) High-risk situation. – The term includes a situation where any of the following  
33 are present: poverty or low-wealth, residence in a substance use disorder  
34 household, family conflict, association with peers involved in criminal  
35 activity, residence in a single-parent household, exhibition of or inclination



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1 toward delinquent behavior, trauma from child abuse, and trauma from  
2 systemic racism.

3 (4) Mentor. – A natural person at least 18 years of age who acts in a  
4 nonprofessional helping capacity to provide relationship-based support for the  
5 benefit of a youth.

6 (5) Program. – The Youth Mentoring Grant Program.

7 (6) Secretary. – The Secretary of Health and Human Services.

8 (7) Youth. – A natural person at least five years of age and less than 18 years of  
9 age.

10 **"§ 143B-152.21. Youth Mentoring Grant Program; Youth Mentoring Services Council.**

11 (a) There is created within the Department the Youth Mentoring Grant Program. The  
12 purpose of the program is to (i) address the essential need for youth mentoring services in  
13 communities that lack existing youth mentoring programs and (ii) sustain and enhance  
14 established community-based youth mentoring programs, with the goal of reducing substance  
15 use disorders, decreasing the incidence of delinquent and violent activity among youths, and  
16 fostering positive connections for youths.

17 (b) The Youth Mentoring Services Council is established to administer the Program. The  
18 Secretary shall, in the Secretary's discretion, appoint the Council members. The Council shall  
19 consist of at least the following:

20 (1) One representative of the Department.

21 (2) One representative of the Department of Public Instruction.

22 (3) One representative of a local school administrative unit.

23 (4) One licensed teacher.

24 (5) One parent.

25 (6) One representative of the Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice.

26 (7) One representative of a registered North Carolina nonprofit corporation that  
27 trains mentoring organizations in order to expand quality mentoring  
28 relationships across the State.

29 **"§ 143B-152.22. Applications for grants; eligible applicants.**

30 (a) The Council shall (i) develop an application process, guidelines consistent with this  
31 Part, and a time line and (ii) disseminate an application form to be used by organizations that  
32 wish to apply for a grant to provide mentoring services. To the extent funds are made available  
33 for this purpose, the Council shall award grant funds to eligible applicants. After careful  
34 consideration of applicants, the Council may exercise its discretion in determining the number of  
35 grants to award and the amount of each grant, within available funds.

36 (b) Grants shall be awarded to nonprofit organizations that provide mentoring services to  
37 youth in high-risk situations. In order to be considered eligible, an applicant must be a nonprofit  
38 organization with a demonstrated ability to do all of the following:

39 (1) Actively recruit qualified and appropriate mentors willing to (i) serve as youth  
40 mentors for a minimum period of one year and (ii) commit to an average of  
41 two or three hours per week providing direct service to the youth they mentor.

42 (2) Effectively screen adult volunteers to serve as mentors, including, but not  
43 limited to, conducting criminal background checks.

44 (3) Provide training and ongoing support to mentors to prepare them to serve the  
45 individualized needs of youth in high-risk situations.

46 (4) Carefully match each mentor with youth in high-risk situations based on the  
47 unique qualifications of the mentor and the specific needs of the youth.

48 (5) Closely assess the activities of the mentor and the youth to better ensure the  
49 mutual benefit and effectiveness of the mentoring relationship.

50 (6) Make life skills workshops, recreational activities, and community service  
51 opportunities available for youth in high-risk situations and their mentors.

1           (7)   Practice commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion across all services and  
2                   among all staff members.

3           (8)   Implement a method of evaluating the impacts, outcomes, and overall  
4                   effectiveness of the mentoring services provided.

5           (c)   An applicant shall provide certification to the Council that it will match any grant  
6           received under the Program on the basis of one dollar (\$1.00) in non-grant funds for every five  
7           dollars (\$5.00) in grant funds received. Matching funds shall not include other State funds.

8    "**§ 143B-152.23. Program evaluation; reporting requirements.**"

9           (a)   When awarding a grant, the Council shall provide each mentoring organization  
10           instructions for evaluation and reporting requirements. Any organization that receives a grant  
11           under this Part shall report to the Council, in the manner instructed by the Council, on the use of  
12           State funds.

13           (b)   By October 1 annually, the Council shall report to the Joint Legislative Oversight  
14           Committee on Health and Human Services on at least the (i) number of grants awarded, (ii)  
15           number of youth served, and (iii) outcomes of the Program. The report shall include any  
16           recommended modifications to the Program to improve its effectiveness."

17           **SECTION 3.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of  
18           Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services, the sum of one million five hundred  
19           thousand dollars (\$1,500,000) in nonrecurring funds for each year of the 2021-2023 fiscal  
20           biennium to be used to award grants to nonprofit organizations in accordance with this act. In  
21           awarding grants, the Council shall give priority to services that are directed toward mitigating  
22           the effects of and furthering the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

23           **SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2021.