



# National Youth Mentoring Initiative

**Vision Statement:** A person’s circumstances and background shouldn’t determine their access to opportunities and experiences.

## Background

Mentors offer youth guidance, support, experience and much-needed encouragement at a critical time for achieving academic and personal goals. Having steady, positive influences can serve as a major catalyst for growth and accomplishment that can happen in a person’s life and can lead to increased confidence and self-esteem, improved academic performance and relationships, and help a child realize their true potential.



**Every dollar invested in Boys & Girls Clubs returns \$9.60 in current and future earnings and cost-savings to their communities.**

Currently, **one in three young people — an estimated 16 million — will grow up without a mentor.**

**The National Youth Mentoring Initiative** is a critical grant program administered at the Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). This office has a long history of supporting mentoring programs—awarding more than **\$834 million** in grants to mentoring organizations since 2008. Boys & Girls Clubs have long recognized the need and importance of mentors in the lives of America’s youth and utilize high quality mentoring programming to serve more than **34,000** youth and teens in all **50** states.

## Club Approach

As a leader in the out-of-school time space, Clubs meet the needs of local communities across the country, keeping young people safe, providing opportunities for improving academic success, and building character and leadership skills, which helps increase youth resiliency, and reduces high-risk activity. Clubs leverage BGCA’s nationwide network to link at-risk and high-risk youth with caring mentors, positive youth development and skill-building programs.



**Boys & Girls Clubs are now the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest provider of afterschool programs in rural America—second only to public schools. There are 990 rural Clubs that serve nearly 290,000 registered members, which is 1 out of every 3 young people in rural areas where Clubs operate.**

In communities nationwide, Boys & Girls Club National Mentoring Programs provide adult mentors for children from single-parent, low-income, and military households. The Youth Mentoring Program helps strengthen, expand and enhance mentoring curriculum for Club members and focuses on: At-Risk Youth, Native Youth, Opioid Impacted Youth, and Military Youth. Funds are used to promote positive outcomes and reduce the potential impact of poverty, community violence, gang activity and incarcerated parents for youth who attend or are referred to a Boys & Girls Club.

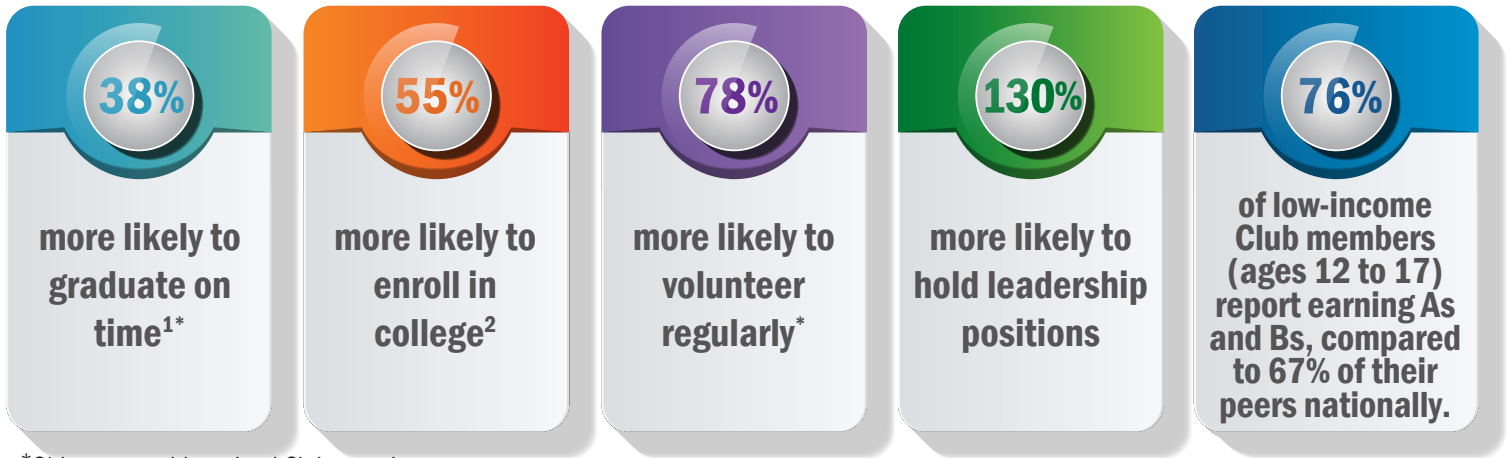


We ask Congress to support **\$120 million** for the Department of Justice **National Youth Mentoring Program** in the FY 2020 Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations bill.

Boys & Girls Clubs utilize a combination of group and one-on-one mentorship approaches, foster the development of peer-to-peer relationships, strengthen the development of critical social skills, and establish close connections to the participants' communities.

## Youth Mentoring is Effective

The National Mentoring Partnership along with Boys & Girls Clubs of America's National Youth Outcome Initiative report confirms the positive impact mentoring has on young people, especially at-risk youth, to help them succeed in school, work, and life. Young adults who were at-risk for falling off track but had a mentor are:



\*Older teens with optimal Club experience.

## Mentoring & The Opioid Epidemic



Mentors support the healthy development of young people, which can help prevent early drug use, and are instrumental support systems when youth are dealing with the addiction or substance use-related incarceration of parents and other adults in their lives.

## Success Story

The **Boys & Girls Clubs of Benton Harbor**, Michigan uses their OJP Youth Mentoring grant to provide opportunities and Club programs to **55 members**. With **30 volunteer mentors** and staff supporting the youth through the Club's programming. Youth attend the Club a minimum of **five hours per week** and the Club is seeing **improved grades**. As a result of the mentoring efforts, participating youth are seeing **improved success** in school and have become **more engaged** in the Club's Sport, Fitness and Recreation programs, showing a marked change in attendance as well as **improved gang resistance behavior**.



<sup>1</sup> Boys & Girls Clubs of America's National Youth Outcome Initiative Report. (2017), 9.

<sup>2</sup> National Mentoring Partnership Data. (2014). <https://www.mentoring.org/program-resources/mentor-resources-and-publications/the-mentoring-effect>