

What is a Program in Project Management?

What is a program in project management? A program is a collection of projects that are managed as a group in order to achieve efficiencies of scale. Just as project management involves the coordination of individual tasks, program management is the coordination of related projects that are grouped together.

Projects are bundled together into a program when the benefits of managing the collection outweigh managing projects as individual units.

A related concept here is [project portfolio management](#), a method for organizations to manage and evaluate a large number of projects by grouping them into strategic portfolios. Portfolios are then analyzed for overall effectiveness, how their estimates compare with actual costs, and whether they align with the larger, strategic objectives of the organization.

So what is a program in project management? Simply put, it is a group of related projects managed as a whole unit.

Program Starting Procedure

Developing a mentoring program is a great way to get involved and make a valuable contribution in your community. Taking time to plan carefully before the program begins can eliminate a lot of barriers during the implementation process.

1. Assess the needs and resources available in the community and see if there are existing programs with a similar mission or with which you might be able to collaborate. Learn more about [community assessments](#) and view other youth serving programs [in your area](#).

2. Design the parameters of the program.
 - Define the youth population that will be served.
 - Consider age, gender, mentoring need, and common characteristics.
 - Identify who you will recruit as mentors.
 - **Determine the type of mentoring relationships** (e.g., who will be served, and how they will be served?).
 - Determine the focus of the mentoring relationships.
 - Academic
 - School to career
 - **Positive youth development**
 - Determine where the mentoring sessions will occur.
 - Determine how often mentors and mentees will meet and the desired length of the mentoring matches.
 - Determine desired outcomes.
 - Determine if the program will stand alone or collaborate with other programs.
 - Identify key stakeholders and generate buy-in.
 - Plan how the program will be evaluated.
 - Develop policies and procedures to support the program.
 - Establish a case management protocol to ensure communication with mentors and mentees.
3. Plan how the program will be managed (e.g., organizational structure).
 - Identify a management team.
 - Ensure clear roles.
 - Establish policies and procedures.
 - Implement ongoing training.
 - Develop a financial plan (e.g., securing funding streams, establishing internal controls).
4. Implement the program.
5. Continuously evaluate the program and adjust as needed (MENTOR, 2005).

One way to get additional assistance in both the planning and implementation stages is to reach out to a national mentoring organization or **collaborate** with other community organizations,

schools, businesses, and programs in order to access resources and learn from the experiences of others.