F.O.C.U.S. Academy Mentor Program

Policy and Procedure Manual

Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring

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.About Mentoring

Mentoring is an increasingly popular way of providing guidance and support to young people in need. Recent years have seen youth mentoring expand from a relatively small youth intervention (usually for youth from single-parent homes) to a cornerstone youth service that is being implemented in schools, community centers, faith institutions, school-to-work programs, and a wide variety of other youth-serving institutions.

While almost any child can benefit from the magic of mentoring, those who design and implement mentoring programs also need guidance and support. Running an effective mentoring program is not easy, and there are many nuances and programmatic details that can have a big impact on outcomes for youth. Recent mentoring research even indicates that a short-lived, less-than-positive mentoring relationship (a hallmark of programs that are not well designed) can actually have a negative impact on participating youth. Mentoring is very much worth doing, but it is imperative that programs implement proven, research-based best practices if they are to achieve their desired outcomes. That’s where this series of publications can help.

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**Overview**

**The Importance of a Policy and Procedure Manual**

One of the cornerstones of any mentoring program is a policy and procedure manual that provides governance and guidance in the delivery of services. While most nonprofit agencies and schools have written policies and procedures, mentoring programs within these settings should develop a manual that specifically addresses its purpose, rules, and procedures. There are many important facets to administering a quality youth mentoring program and written policies and procedures can contribute greatly to the long-term stability and safety of your program by:

* **Providing** documentation of your organization’s vision and operating principles. A policy and procedure manual provides a clear statement of your program’s mission, values, and vision and provides the framework that defines your mentoring program’s operating principles and processes.
* **Providing** staff with clear guidelines on how to administer a program. A policy and procedure manual provides detailed, step-by-step instructions on how to administer your mentoring program and clearly defines staff roles, agency expectations, and routine operating guidelines.
* **Addressing** risk management issues. A policy and procedure manual is the cornerstone of your risk management plan because it provides clear and explicit instructions on how every part of your mentoring program will be administered. Developing a policy and procedure manual will help eliminate uncertainties concerning how to *safely, effectively*, and *consistently* run your mentoring program.
* **Ensuring** consistent operations despite possible turnover in key staff. If your policies and procedures are not documented, your organization risks losing crucial program operations knowledge if a key staff member leaves. By clearly detailing, in writing, how your mentoring program is run, you minimize organizational knowledge loss and program disruption.

A policy and procedure manual will help your program maintain continuity of services and will assist you in training new staff members.

**Organization**

The manual is divided into three sections that explain the individual policies and procedures that are essential to managing a youth mentoring program:

**Section 1. Organizational Background**

This section will help you organize essential information about your program and organizational or school setting. This information is important because it helps to define and outline the core structure of your program. If you consolidate these documents into your policy and procedure manual, they will be easy to access and available for quick reference.

**Section 2. Program Policies**

This section identifies core policies that should govern your mentoring program. Included with each policy is a list of key questions that can guide you in creating your own policies, as well as a sample that you can use as a model.

**Section 3. Program Procedures**

This section addresses the mentoring program procedures that *operationalize* your policies. We have included sample procedures and forms for the primary operational components of your mentoring program. Because your program’s procedures will likely differ from the New Insights examples, we have included discussion of key concepts behind each procedure and self-assessment questions to help you modify the examples.

**Forms Included in this Manual:**

**Recruitment Procedure, p. 60 Inquiry Procedure, p.**

Mentor Job Description Mentor Orientation Session Outline

Annual Recruitment Plan Mentee Orientation Session Outline

Annual Recruitment Plan Timeline Volunteer Inquiry Tracking

Quarterly Recruitment Activity Plan

**Mentor Screening Procedure, p. 70 Mentee Screening Procedure, P.**

Application Packet: Mentee Referral

Mentor Application Parent/Guardian Referral Letter

Information Release Application Packet

Personal References Mentee Application

Mentor Interest Survey Contact and Information Release

Mentor Interview Mentee Interest Survey

Personal Reference Interview Mentee Interview

Mentor Assessment Summary Mentee Assessment Summary

Mentor Acceptance Letter Mentee Acceptance Letter

Mentor Rejection Letter Mentee Rejection Letter

Mentor Contact Sheet Mentee Contact Sheet

**Training Procedure, p. 104 Matching Procedure,**

Mentor Training Curriculum Outline Match Worksheet

Mentee Training Curriculum Outline Mentor Contact

Training Evaluation Mentee Contact

Mentor Training Completion Worksheet Parent/Guardian Contact

Mentee Training Completion Worksheet

**Match Support and Supervision Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and**

**Procedure, p. 117 Neglect Procedure**

Mentor Report Log Child Abuse and Neglect Report

Mentee Report Log

Parent/Guardian Report Log

**Closure Procedure, p. 128**

Match Closure Summary

Mentor Exit Survey

Mentee Exit Survey

Parent/Guardian Exit Survey

Closure Letter

Organizational Background

F.O.C.U.S. Mentoring program offers after-school and year-round intervention that provides academic assistance, preparation for middle school, high school and college, as well as leadership and character development. Our mentoring program is a gender-specific initiative focusing on civic engagement and community service, and with a goal to prevent substance abuse and reduce involvement in gangs and school violence.

**Characteristics of F.O.C.U.S. Mentors**

Our Mentors are *Active listeners*. They must demonstrate genuine interests in the individual Mentees. It is important that they are compassionate and considerate about the opinions and needs of the individuals Mentees. We expect our Mentors to be Trustworthy and Honest. They must be able to build a trusting bond through their honesty, objective, and fair guidance. We also value the respectability of our Mentors. We would like them to have a network of contacts that can create opportunities for Mentees. This means that they will be *Knowledgeable*: staying abreast to the changes within the communities and lives of individuals which will allow them to offer sound advice.

**Mission**

FOCUS’s mission is to proactively create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships between positive adult role models and at-risk youth by addressing the problems and needs related to their personal, social, and academic lives.

**Vision**

Our vision is to produce extraordinary results, inspire life-long growth, and enhance the lives of at risk youth.

**Purpose and Goals:**

* Build purposeful and intentional relationships between mentors and mentees
* Cultivate and encourage leadership
* Share knowledge, skills, information, and perspective
* Assist in developing Mentee confidence, Awareness, and self-Concepts
* Foster family, civic, and community responsibility
* Encourage personal responsibility
* Explore personal and social values
* Develop and understand personal expectations
* Improve critical thinking skills through creative expression, problem-solving, and decision-making

F.O.C.U.S. Academy History

F.O.C.U.S. (A Foundation of Children United to Succeed) was founded and developed by Dr. Ron Johnson. It began as an after-school program for at risk African American males in the Cleveland Public Schools, in 2003, in Cleveland Ohio. An Instructional Assistant at the time, Dr. Johnson noticed that many of the boys in grades 3, 4, and 5, were displaying disruptive behaviors in the classrooms and teachers were unable to teach as they needed to. Dr. Johnson was given the green light to do something about it. He began an intervention program designed to promote educational encouragement, unity, academic achievement, personal development, positive character traits, self - awareness and a positive self-concept for African American males ages 5 - 16 years old. He began the F.O.C.U.S. program. It began as a program which operated two days a week after school. By providing extra guidance and alternative lessons including positive character building and life skills activities, this program intended to be a stepping stone for a productive educational future for students.

Ron Johnson, the founder and coordinator moved from Cleveland to Richmond VA, in 2007. He has reformed F.O.C.U.S to F.O.C.U.S. Academy, LLC. The restructuring of the program has been inspired by the continuous changes and needs of our youth boys. We are no longer F.O.C.U.S. but F.O.C.U.S. Academy. We now an innovative entity addressing the needs of at risk students in school and focuses on enhancing the overall development of the whole individual child. Our primary target is still the at-risk African American Male.

Dr. Ron has been a part of the education field in several different capacities from being a Home Child Care Provider to an Instructional Assistant to a substitute teacher in the Juvenile Corrections facilities to an Exceptional Education Teacher to a Teacher Mentor. He currently operates a tutoring program called Transitional Middle School Tutoring, which is preparing boys for Middle School. He his beginning the journey of starting a Private Home-schooling Program for Middle School boys.

Organizational Structure

**F.O.C.U.S. Academy, LLC President Job Description**

Duties - General:

* Chair both Board and Annual Business Meetings.
* Oversee the planning and implementation of all programs.
* Determine the need for and appoint committee members as needed.
* Represent the Program meetings of other groups when necessary.
* Ensure that the Programs purpose is met and that its activities are accomplished.
* Appoint non-voting Board members as per Bylaws.
* Appoint Committee on Bylaws as needed.
* Appoint members as per Bylaws.
* Contribute to the program newsletter.
* Submit annual report to all F.O.C.U.S Chair Persons
* Report statistics to all F.O.C.U,.S. Chair persons
* Perform other duties as necessary.

**Duties - Board Meetings:**

* + Establish meeting dates/times at the beginning of term.   
    The Board meets at least four times a year. These meetings are scheduled for two hour blocks of time.
  + There is one Annual Business Meeting that is held during the spring. ·
* Establish locations for the meetings.
  + Board meetings are scheduled to meet in a reasonable location enabling all board members to attend. ·
* Set Agendas:
  + Solicit items for the agenda a month in advance of the meeting.
  + Send agendas at least two weeks prior to a meeting.
  + Content of agendas may include:
    - Announcements
    - Approval of minutes
    - Treasurer’s report
    - Program planning
    - Membership
    - Updates

**F.O.C.U.S. Academy, LLC Executive Administrator Job Description**

**Term:** elected position, 2 years or until successor elected. Voting privileges.

**Duties:**

* Create list of board members and contact information for the archives. ·
* Take notes at meetings and write minutes. Distribute minutes by email within one week. Take copies of minutes to subsequent Board meeting. ·
* Take notes at the Annual Business Meeting and prepare minutes for membership approval at the following year’s Annual Business Meeting. ·
* Deposit all agendas and minutes with the archives. ·
* Elections:   
  + Receive nominations slate, nominee biographies and vision statement from the Nominating Committee, not less than 3 months before the commencement of terms of office.
  + Receive “write-in” nominations for elections.
  + Publish nominations slate 2 weeks after receipt from Nominating Committee.
  + Request mailing labels from the Treasurer.
  + Determine maximum printing amount based on membership plus one copy for the Archive.
  + Create and mail ballot, and biography/vision document, to the membership.
  + Mail one ballot to the Archivist.
  + Receive and count completed ballots.
  + Notify Board of election results.
  + Deliver completed ballots to the Archivist.
  + Submit printing and postage receipts to the Treasurer. ·
* Contribute to the planning and implementation of the mentoring program in a given year.
* Attend as many F.O.C.U.S. board meetings and programs as possible ·
* Perform other duties as necessary.

**F.O.C.U.S. Treasurer Job Description**

**Term:** elected position, 2 years, or until successor elected. Voting privileges.

**Duties - General:**

* Maintain balance for checking account.
* Maintain a spreadsheet for payments and income.
* Prepare “Financial Activity Report” for Board meetings, and for Annual Business Meeting.
* Reconcile bank statements.
* Prepare budgets as requested.
* Prepare balance sheets for all programs.
* Maintain all financial records for appropriate retention periods (seven years).
* Forward all financial documentation and records as requested.
* Attend as many F.O.C.U.S. board meetings and programs as possible.
* Receive and acknowledge all membership dues.
* Receive and acknowledge all program registrations.
* Perform other duties as necessary.

**Duties - Income:**

* Receive funds for members’ dues and other miscellaneous income.
* Deposit funds to F.O.C.U.S. checking account (at BB&T Bank).
* Upon request, issue receipts for funds collected.
* With assistance from the President, obtain annual F.O.C.U.S. reimbursement funds.

**Duties - Payments:**

* Issue check payments for receipted costs.

**Duties - Membership:**

* Maintain database of current members.
* Create and maintain email contact lists.
* Distribute email announcements to members and other contacts as appropriate.

Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) made this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ managed by F.O.C.U.S. Mentoring Program. This MOU establishes that F,O,C,U,S, Academy, LLC will:

* Identify, solicit, and recruit volunteer mentor applicants
* Manage programmatic activities including but not limited to development of policies and

procedures, fund development, and case management

* Oversee all operational activities including screening, training, matching, support and

supervision, recognition, and closure procedures

* Coordinate one-to-one mentor and mentee matching to meet the goal of 25 new matches

per year

* Manage all fiscal requirements including fund development, budget management, and fiscal planning
* Provide evaluation summaries of the project to all partners

**Section II.**

**Program Policies**

**What to include in this section:**

* Recruitment Policy
* Inquiry Policy
* Eligibility Policy
* Screening Policy
* Training Policy
* Matching Policy
* Match Support and Supervision Policy
* Recognition Policy
* Record-Keeping Policy
* Confidentiality Policy
* Transportation Policy
* Overnight Visits and Out-of-Town Travel Policy
* Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect Policy
* Use of Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco, and Firearms Policy
* Unacceptable Behavior Policy
* Closure Policy
* Evaluation Policy

**Recruitment Policy**

The recruitment policy should provide clear direction regarding the development, implementation, and review of a mentor recruitment plan. A recruitment plan is critical to obtaining volunteer mentors and instrumental to the success of your program. Your recruitment policy should indicate how the recruitment plan will be managed as well as the roles and responsibilities of staff and board in doing these activities. This policy serves to ensure that effective recruitment of volunteer mentors is continuous and well managed. Note that this is different than your eligibility policy, which simply stipulates the qualifications for participation.

**Key Development Questions:**

* What types of individuals are you targeting to be mentors (such as those of a specific gender, race, ethnicity, age, occupation, or background)?
* What are the recruitment goals of the program?
* Who (both on your staff and in the community) should be involved in developing the recruitment plan? Implementing the plan?
* What is an effective and reasonable timeframe for developing and updating the recruitment plan on an ongoing basis?
* What resources are available to implement the recruitment plan?
* How will the plan’s effectiveness be reviewed and measured?

Board Approval Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Revision Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

It is the policy of the F.O.C.U.S. Academy, LLC Mentoring Program that there be ongoing recruitment activities for new mentors. As such, an Annual Recruitment Plan will be developed and will include recruitment goals, strategies to achieve those goals, an annual timeline, and budgetary implications. This plan will be kept current with any ongoing adjustments. Additionally, a detailed Quarterly Recruitment Activity Plan will outline specific tasks and activities.

The program coordinator assumes lead responsibility for the recruitment of new mentors. Other mentoring program staff, the executive director, and advisory board members will support the program coordinator in these activities as required.

**Inquiry Policy**

This policy provides program staff with clear direction on how to handle inquiries from potential mentors and mentees and their parents, including what initial information to provide them. The inquiry policy has two important functions: ensuring the mentoring program staff provides excellent customer service to potential program participants; and serving as an early screening tool for those participants who wish to continue in the process of becoming a mentor.

At this stage, an overview of the program, key requirements of participation, and highlights of the screening procedure are provided, and it is determined if there is initial interest in participating in the program.

If interested, inquiring participants are given an application packet and invited to attend an orientation session (see the inquiry procedure in the next section for more details).

**Key Development Questions:**

* How are mentor and mentee inquiries processed in your program?
* What structure needs to be in place to handle inquiries?
* Who handles inquiries for your program? Are they provided with training for handling inquiries?
* What is a reasonable response time to inquiries by potential mentors?
* What information should be given to prospective participants during their initial contact with the program?
* Are your program participants required to attend an orientation session prior to going through the screening process?

**Inquiry Policy**

Board Approval Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Revision Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

It is the policy of the F.O.C.U.S. Mentoring Program that all inquiries regarding participation in the mentoring program are responded to within one business day.

Superb public relations and customer service must be provided to all potential program participants at all times, from first contact throughout the screening process and beyond, regardless of the final screening outcome. All program staff handling calls from prospective mentors must be patient, courteous, and respectful in all interactions.

A system, including backup support and staff training, must be in place to ensure this policy is enforced. Confidentiality for all potential participants will be upheld from this point of contact forward.

**Eligibility Policy**

Board Approval Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Revision Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

It is the policy of the New Insights Mentoring Program that each participant must meet the defined eligibility criteria. Mentoring staff should be knowledgeable of and understand all eligibility criteria required for mentor and mentee participation in the program.

Extenuating circumstances may be reviewed at the discretion of the program coordinator and acceptance may then be allowed with the written approval of the executive director and representative of the board of directors when all eligibility requirements are not clearly met. These instances are expected to be rare.

**Mentor Eligibility Requirements:**

* Be at least 18 years of age
* Be willing to adhere to all F.O.C.U.S. Academy, LLC Mentoring Program policies and
* procedures
* Agree to a one-year commitment to the program
* Commit to spending a minimum of eight hours a month with the mentee
* Be willing to communicate with the mentee weekly
* Complete the screening procedure
* Agree to attend mentor trainings as required
* Be willing to communicate regularly with the program coordinator and submit monthly meeting and activity information
* Have access to an automobile or reliable transportation
* Have a current driver’s license, auto insurance, and good driving record
* Have a clean criminal history
* Have never been accused, arrested, charged, or convicted of child abuse or molestation
* Not be a convicted felon. If the applicant has been convicted of a felony then they may be considered only after a period of seven years with demonstrated good behavior and an appropriate and corrective attitude regarding past behaviors.
* Not be a user of illicit drugs
* Not use alcohol or controlled substances in an excessive or inappropriate manner
* Not be currently in treatment for substance abuse. If a substance abuse problem has occurred in the past the applicant must have completed a non-addictive period of at least five years
* Not currently be under treatment for a mental disorder or have been hospitalized for a mental disorder in the past three years
* Not have falsified information during the course of the screening process

**Mentee Eligibility Requirements:**

* Be 5–16 years old
* Demonstrate a desire to participate in the program and be willing to abide by all F.O.C.U.S.
* Academy, LLC Mentoring Program policies and procedures.
* Be able to obtain parental/guardian permission and ongoing support for participation in the
* program
* Agree to a one-year commitment to the program
* Commit to spending a minimum of eight hours a month with the mentor
* Be willing to communicate with the mentor weekly
* Complete screening procedure
* Agree to attend mentee trainings as required
* Be willing to communicate regularly with the program coordinator and discuss monthly
* meeting and activity information

**Screening Policy**

Board Approval Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Revision Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

It is the policy of the New Insights Mentoring Program that each mentor and mentee applicant completes a screening procedure. All staff members must be trained and required to carefully follow the screening procedures.

At minimum, the following screening procedures are required for mentor and mentee applicants. Program staff must ensure that each applicant completes these established minimum screening procedures:

**Mentor Screening Procedures:**

\_ Attend the two-hour mentor training

\_ Complete written application

\_ Check driving record and gain copy of current insurance coverage

\_ Check criminal history: state criminal history, child abuse registry, sexual

offender registry. Same checks must be performed in all states resided in as

an adult.

\_ Provide three personal references

\_ Complete personal interview

**Mentee Screening Procedures**

\_ Attend the two-hour mentee training

\_ Complete written application

\_ Obtain parent/guardian consent

\_ Complete personal (mentee) interview

The decision to accept an applicant into the program will be based upon a final

assessment done by program staff at the completion of the mentor or mentee

screening procedure. The program coordinator has final approval for an applicant’s

acceptance into the program. No reason will be provided to mentor applicants

rejected from participation in the program.

All mentors are expected to meet the eligibility criteria. However, extenuating

circumstances may be reviewed at the discretion of the program coordinator and

acceptance may then be allowed with written approval of the executive director

and representative of the board of directors when all eligibility requirements are not

clearly met. These instances are expected to be rare.

Documentation of the screening process must be maintained for each applicant and

placed in confidential files.