FINAL REPORT ON THE NATIONAL MENTORING PROJECT

2020 – 2021

Prepared for the Schultz Family Foundation by MENTOR

Authored by:
Charline Alexandre-Joseph
Michael Garringer
Saakshi Suri
Samantha Fiori
INTRODUCTION

ABOUT MENTOR

For over 30 years, MENTOR has served as the unifying champion of the mentoring movement focused on building a field and influencing the systems where young people live, learn, play, and work to adopt relationship-centered practices fueled by effective mentoring initiatives and network building. MENTOR’s extensive cross-sector network, longstanding commitment to ensuring programmatic quality and expertise as a national convener has positioned the organization well to attract and support a variety of workforce development employer and community partners in expanding their knowledge of mentoring, engaging and retaining historically excluded workforce populations, developing relationship-centered employer practices and quality workplace mentoring initiatives, and sustaining meaningful nonprofit workforce collaboratives. This work is key to addressing root causes of youth economic and social capital disparities while also increasing support for historically excluded job seekers and early career employees.

The ultimate goal of for the future of MENTOR's Workforce Development systems change efforts is to bolster relationship supports in the workplace for a broad range of young people facing barriers to access and supported pathways with an emphasis on underutilized and disconnected young adults ages 16-24. These young people are often eager to work, but may lack the network and connections to help them to overcome the institutional injustices or challenges that have kept meaningful employment out of their reach. America’s disconnected youth are twice as likely to live in poverty, three times as likely to have a disability, nine times as likely to have dropped out of high school, and more than twenty times as likely to be living in institutionalized group quarters as their connected counterparts1. To ensure this work effectively supports these opportunity youth in securing and maintaining employment within industries that offer career pathways, MENTOR will prioritize engaging employer partners and workforce development programs working within America’s leading industries for projected job growth (such as the Hospitality, Technology, and Healthcare2). Once engaged, MENTOR will support these partners in adopting relationship-centered practices that promote a systems level shift in the design and execution of appropriate public policies, the adoption of more equitable employer practices, and the integration of nonprofit partnerships focused on connecting employers to young people early in their careers. MENTOR will also engage youth and community-based nonprofit partners as key informants across all aspects of this work to ensure tools, resources and content speaks to the unique needs, challenges and experiences of the youth and communities MENTOR seeks to serve.

---

1 Measure of America, “A Decade Undone: 2021 Update” https://measureofamerica.org/youth-disconnection-2021/

ABOUT MENTORING IN THE WORKPLACE

Mentoring relationships, both through formal workplace programs and through the natural connections that junior employees make with more experienced coworkers, have long been a critical component in helping young people find their career paths and experience greater satisfaction and success within the jobs they take along that path. In fact, considering the apprentice models and guild structures that have been prevalent going many centuries back, career-focused relationships are perhaps the earliest uses of mentoring between more experienced adults and young people in western society.

Mentors can help youth find careers that are a good fit for their talents and interests, teach valuable job skills, serve as a source of social and emotional support in the face of workplace challenges, and help young workers connect with other industry professionals to build their social capital and range of opportunities. Workplace mentors can also be especially critical assets to young employees of color, those with disabilities, and those with backgrounds or lived experiences that present challenges in finding a long-term career pathway. Mentors are especially helpful in building career identity and a sense in young workers that they both belong in an industry and can thrive and advance within it over time.

Research suggests that when mentors can provide young people with these things, those young workers experience many internal benefits such as job satisfaction, improved career identity, greater sense of self-efficacy and commitment, and stronger relationships with coworkers. They also exhibit stronger outward signs of career success, such as retention in their jobs, higher rates of compensation, and increased promotion and responsibilities on the job. (For a good summary of the benefits of career-focused mentoring for youth and junior-level employees, see the resources noted in the footnote below.)

This iteration of the National Mentoring Project (NMP) sought to build on this long tradition of workplace mentoring by offering companies, workforce development partners, and the people working and learning in those contexts critical training on how to bring the power of formal mentoring relationships to the “opportunity youth” placed in new positions. The hope was that by providing these young employees with mentors that they might experience personal and professional growth that allowed them to find success in their positions and be retained for longer periods of time, building their work experience and opening the doors to future opportunities. This report details the results of this effort.

In the first iteration of NMP (2018-2019), MENTOR National worked directly with large scale workforce development organizations and large national employers who have hired opportunity youth to test out tools and training that can be replicated. During this phase, MENTOR developed the following:

3 See:
• An app to track mentoring interactions between youth and mentors. MENTOR leveraged Civic Champs: a volunteer tracking system that tracks engagement: https://civicchamps.com/. This app now includes custom features to track mentoring engagement.
• An employer toolkit that includes guidance on how to incentivize employees to mentor, email templates to garner interest from employees and explain expectations, matching activities and other helpful tools to support implementation.
• A review of MENTOR’s Connect/Focus/Grow (C|F|G) curriculum with revisions which increased content accessibility and potential customization for employer needs
• Documentation protocols for writing up preliminary findings and lessons learned.
• Surveys to gather pre/post information on workplace climate and culture to support an analysis of findings.
• Based on all of the work and some lessons learned in phase one, MENTOR is now releasing an RFP to our Affiliate network to work on phase two.

Throughout this work, MENTOR National partnered with MENTOR Affiliates (Affiliates) whom were already engaging in workforce development activations in their region or whom had expressed interest in implementing NMP at the local level. The target success measurements that MENTOR National and Affiliates, workforce development partners, and employers ultimately worked towards throughout the 2020-2021 National Mentoring Project were:

• 1000-1500 youth served through direct work with employers, MENTOR Affiliate projects, and local mentoring events with opportunity youth. This is a total number based on all of our collective work.
• 2-4 national companies engaged in the project. MENTOR’s potential corporate partners are Hyatt, Costco, Microsoft, and AT&T. We are also in deep discussions with national youth development organizations
• 80% of youth report feeling supported by staff
• 75% retention rate post-90 days of employment
• 80% of corporate mentors report feeling job satisfaction and a sense of contributing to a positive work climate
• 80% of supervisors report feeling job satisfaction and a sense of contributing to a positive work climate

Through our RFP process, 9 Affiliates were selected (listed below) to participate in the NMP phase 2:

• MENTOR Colorado
• MENTOR New York
• MENTOR Virginia
• The Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania
• MENTOR Maryland|DC
• Massachusetts Mentoring Partnership
• MENTOR Greater Milwaukee
• MENTOR Rhode Island
• Iowa Mentoring Partnership
ABOUT THE EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL MENTORING PROJECT

The evaluation 2020-2021 National Mentoring Project (NMP) was largely formative in nature — designed to provide information about the perspectives of program participants and to provide valuable feedback on the delivery of program components, such as the Connect|Focus|Grow (C|F|G) training and the mentoring meetings of mentors and young employees. The evaluation also did collect limited outcome information, such as employment data, in an attempt to examine whether the program may be playing a role in the retention and job satisfaction of young employees and the companies that hired them. The outcome tracking did not, however, offer a real-time or even historical comparison group against which program outcomes could be better understood. Such an evaluation design is a recommendation if MENTOR were to explore future iterations of the National Mentoring Project (see section 5 for further information).

The evaluation activities involved several forms of data collection and analysis, as detailed below.

1. **Evaluation of the Connect|Focus|Grow training delivery** — After each local training for supervisors, employee mentors, or young employees an online training evaluation form was distributed. These evaluation forms asked a series of Likert-scale type questions about the quality and effectiveness of the training and about the facilitator and their training delivery. The surveys also captured open-ended comments and feedback about the training. Results of these evaluation forms are presented in section 2 of this report.

2. **Tracking of mentoring activity in the Civic Champs application** — In an effort to gauge the volume of mentoring that was happening at the worksites, MENTOR partnered with Civic Champs to develop an app (The Mentoring App Powered by Civic Champs) (the App) that would allow mentors to schedule their meetings with the young employees they were paired with, collect topics discussed and feedback from both participants, and allow for information to be collected about spontaneous mentoring interactions that happened outside of scheduled meetings. Information collected through the App, such as total number of meetings, topics discussed during mentoring sessions, and mentor and youth ratings of meeting quality, are reported in section 3 of this report.

3. **Employment data provided by corporate and nonprofit partners** — While the app provided insight into what was happening in mentoring sessions in real time, MENTOR also collected employment information on each of the participating young employees. Each MENTOR Affiliate was provided with a simple Excel spreadsheet that was pre-populated with the names of participating young employees drawn from the App. Affiliates then worked with their employer partners and/or workforce development partners to collect new employee start and end dates, the reasons (both good and bad) for a young employee leaving their position prematurely, and whether the young employee received a raise or promotion during their time in the program. Because some of the work was seasonal and short-term, MENTOR reported employment results in two ways: 90-day retention and completion of employment cycle, which gave credit for employment retention to youth whose job inherently
lasted less than 90 days. Aggregate results from these spreadsheets are reported in section 4 of this report.

4. **End-of-Program surveys of youth, mentors, and supervisors** — In addition to examining the training, relationships, and employment outcomes of the project, we also gathered information about participants’ overall experience and feedback about the program in end-of-program surveys for all supervisors, mentors, and young employees. These surveys offered a series of Likert-scale type questions that gauged their perceptions of the impact of the program, the skills gained, and the self-efficacy of mentors and supervisors. True to the formative spirit of the evaluation, these surveys also asked a number of open-ended qualitative questions about participants’ favorite and least favorite aspects of the program, their personal growth from the experience, and their suggestions for improving the implementation and features of the program in the future. These results are also presented in section 4.

In addition to these data collection activities, each participating MENTOR Affiliates, as well as the MENTOR National team, engaged in extensive reporting on the implementation in their local contexts, including tracking key data such as the number of businesses approached to participate and the numbers of supervisors, mentors, and youth they trained. Affiliates also provided extensive information about innovations they found to be successful, implementation barriers and solutions, and their overall experience of bringing this project to employers and youth in their communities. Their local level reporting is aggregated here and was instrumental in creating the lessons learned from this project and how these services can be improved in the future.

1. **IMPLEMENTATION & LESSONS LEARNED**

Affiliates express gratitude for the opportunity to bring workplace mentoring quantifiers to life. Despite the multiple emergencies faced in 2020, including the global health crisis of COVID-19, MENTOR persisted to expand the youth mentoring movement and serve Opportunity Youth, as well as their employers and mentors. Collectively, Nine Affiliates across the nation reached out to 83 employers and potential partners throughout the 12-month project; from the outreach just under one-fourth of the employers and potential partners (21 organizations) followed-through in their commitment to the NMP. These organizations can be categorized as follows:

- 2 Municipalities
- 4 Workforce Investment Boards
- 11 Nonprofit Employers
- 3 Private Sector Employers
- 1 College
A majority of the organizations were nonprofit businesses; there was also impactful collaboration with workforce investment boards that were tied to two municipalities/city governments.

At the close of this project, 1,504 young people were trained in the C|F|G curriculum. Of those young people, 78% of all youth (1,172) who had the C|F|G training obtained employment and 1,117 young people were matched with a mentor. In the NMP model, efforts were made to help young people increase their social capital by having a mentor that was separate from their supervisor, 269 mentors were trained in C|F|G; totaling 500+ caring adults prepared with MENTOR’s curriculum.

**WHAT WENT RIGHT WITH IMPLEMENTATION**

The opportunity for us to revise the C|F|G curriculum to intentionally be more culture responsive supported the participants in being receptive to the concepts of workplace mentoring that MENTOR set out to share. That is evidenced in this survey feedback from youth, supervisors, and mentors.

This project provided a capacity building opportunity for MENTOR. Affiliates across the nation expressed enthusiasm as well as lessons learned in developing quality workplace mentoring models. The most half of all Affiliates noted that it was a welcome opportunity to explore and grow partnerships and spread the mentoring movement to new organizations, specifically employers.

MENTOR Rhode Island engaged with 17 employers. One of the employers, Farm Fresh had three mentees and struggled to engage more young people in the program. However, the engaged young remained consistent in both work attendance and communication with the mentor. For those young people whom remained engaged in their programming, NMP activations in both in Rhode Island in Massachusetts excelled in mentoring relationship quality. A quote from MENTOR Rhode Island:

“What we’ve found is that regardless of the size of the program or the field of work the programs support, the National Mentoring Project is helping create a deeper, more positive experience for young people, their employers, and those that manage these programs.”

MENTOR Rhode Island went on to serve 286 young people spread across 16 employers through a partnership with a Summer Earn and Learn leader- Skills For Rhode Island’s Future.

The categories of participating organizations varied greatly. Summer Learn and Earn programs were proved successful in NMP activations in Rhode Island, Iowa, and Southwest Pennsylvania. These programs provided an opportunity for municipalities to be exposed to the power of mentoring and the significance of increasing social capital for Opportunity Youth (OY) and increased the service area for the project and meet the needs of more OY, a quote from The Mentoring Partnership of Southeastern Pennsylvania staff about this is,
Due to the safety concerns regarding COVID-19, the NMP saw a significant increase in youth engagement the summer 2021. Summer Learn and Earn programs, along with the rest of the nation, were more intentional about the social-emotional health of young people. MENTOR National and Affiliates leveraged this moment in the nation's pandemic journey to weave social capital and mentoring into discussions with employers and workforce development organizations, as part of a strategy for promoting increased support of young people to ultimately result in employee retention. The greatest example of this successful integration of integration a social-emotional and social capital facing employee engagement strategy was with MENTOR Greater Milwaukee, who served 600 youth in the NMP and partnered with EmployMilwaukee.

Nationally, MENTOR increased public awareness messaging throughout the NMP initiative; by Spring 2021, MENTOR began capturing mentoring moments and statewide program progress through a NMP blog series. The ability to make match support a more convenient task by using the App via personal mobile devices increased the potential to monitor the experience of the participants.

In New York and Rhode Island, Affiliates were able to leverage NMP funding to secure additional private/public support - which demonstrates both sustainability and replicability of this pilot's efforts for future Affiliate workforce development growth. A quote from MENTOR New York about how they leveraged this grant to secure corporate support, “We were able to secure an additional $10,000 from ACRES Capital to support the building of their talent pipeline, including partnership development, assisting with interviews and screening processes.”

**CHALLENGES AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS**

MENTOR National's plan to partner with national employers and hand-off local branch connections to Affiliates did not develop as expected because of COVID-19 effects on all the stakeholders involved in this project. But contrary to the plans laid out in late 2019, the COVID-19 crisis resulted in highly localized employer partnerships and youth serving program partnerships which allowed each Affiliate to navigate the unique regional pandemic and post-vaccine environment.

Affiliate NMP activations in Rhode Island, New York, Greater Milwaukee, Southwestern Pennsylvania and Massachusetts had positive experiences in their programs. MENTOR Maryland-DC fared well but lost youth program partners and employer partner commitment.
prior to the program launch; MENTOR Iowa pitched their work to dozens of potential partners and were turned down for 10.5 months of the project. MENTOR Colorado and MENTOR Virginia faced major obstacles with implementing NMP.

After preliminary discussions in December 2022, MENTOR Colorado partnered with a local and established nonprofit youth program. In early 2021, the program expanded their reach to youth ages 16-24 who were not connected to school or work; 2021 would be the first year of this new reach. MENTOR Colorado’s assessment of their NMP activation was:

“The single largest contributing factor to the failure of this project to implement C|F|G was that mentor and mentee recruitment, screening and training by [program] staff was unsuccessful. It is obviously impossible to operate the C|F|G training without mentees and mentors in attendance and ready-to-be matched. MENTOR Colorado plans to only make C|F|G program agreements with those organizations who have had a program in existence for at least one calendar year. “

After pitching to 35 companies across the state of Virginia, MENTOR Virginia had 4 program partners and 1 corporate employer fall through after the MOU period but the corporate employer significantly reduces the number of interns that would be allowed into the program to decode those safety restrictions. Additionally, MENTOR Virginia found that many of their professional contacts of the corporate entity transitioned out of their job during the height of the pandemic. This left the relationship fragile in meeting to be rebuilt prior to program implementation. Determined to reach young people labeled OY, this team persisted in the effort to bring MENTOR’s to community-based programs, a quote:

“In the community, partners such as Reestablish Richmond are dedicated to new young refugees obtaining employment are using Connect|Focus|Grow to bridge the gap of cultural humility with mentors and supervisors. These young adults are learning how to have a voice and self-advocate for themselves.”

Each of these unique Affiliate experiences demonstrate two themes across the entire project— low private sector commitment and the ever-evolving shifts in the youth-serving programming in local communities in the waves of the pandemic response from each community.

Lastly, MENTOR learned that partnering with employers is not a model that can be consistently implemented with state agencies. MENTOR Iowa is backed by state government. Their unique circumstance facilitated an opportunity to develop a targeted mentor solution— developing high quality resources that enhance the quality of mentoring happening in the workplace and at career readiness centers State-agency partnerships
allow for a unique customization that benefited the overall program implementation and MENTOR will explore this in future efforts.

LESSONS LEARNED: ENGAGING PARTNERS

NMP implantation across 9 different Affiliate regions and a variety of youth providers and employer partners offered MENTOR a wide-range of learnings to inform MENTOR’s future workforce development efforts:

- **Technical Match Tracking Tools: The Mentoring App**
  with the Mentor App, Powered by Civic Champs (the App) Was developed to allow mentors to schedule a check in with their mentee, set an agenda, and offer a space for point-in-time quality interaction data collection from both the mentor and the mentee. The App allowed employers and mentoring programs to get a quick pulse-check on the health of the mentor-mentee match. However, participants reported that the App also felt like, “an extra thing to do for” by some youth serving organizations. Many youth organizations have existing feedback structures and we’re not clear about the benefits of the mentor app. There were also technical glitches with the Mentor App that confused participants.
  As MENTOR and Civic Champs explore future partnership and explore continued enhancement of the Mentor App. Some initial enhancements to the App implementation include a more detailed orientation of the App use and purpose and clearer onboarding resources that users can use as a reference in their mentoring. MENTOR expects that the tool best-serves employers with HR teams seeking data on mentoring program implementation.

- **Connect|Focus|Grow Training Curriculum:**
The CFG materials were well received by youth participants, but mentor engagement in the training resources lagged. As MENTOR continues to implement this curriculum beyond NMP, MENTOR will integrate feedback from CFG NMP implementation. This includes: supporting Corporate leads with talking points to gain employee buy-in; MENTOR will expand CFG resources to reach career readiness program staff by more fully recommending concrete actions to support workforce development staff integration into the corporate mentor interview/screening process. MENTOR is interested in finding ways to train and reward workforce development staff that are young people naturally gravitate towards for mentorship and transition support. Many Affiliates noted that community program staff went “far beyond what was expected.”

- **Partner Engagement During Challenging Times:**
  Some Affiliates (Virginia and Colorado in particular) noted challenges in finding young people considered “opportunity youth” amid the transitional times of the pandemic. Likewise, recruiting and onboarding employers was an ongoing challenge. For future workforce development activations, MENTOR recommends Affiliates negotiate Summer Learn&Earn contracts up to a year before implementation. MENTOR and Affiliates will continue to seek to encourage municipalities to engage mentoring as an intentional effort with advance planning and collaboration. MENTOR expects that municipalities could work more consistently with existing youth
employment programs to have more intentional mentoring practices throughout their organization and support to help youth find people in the workplace who could be strong early career mentors.

- **Continued Affiliate Support:**
  MENTOR Affiliates are motivated to take this work deeper in their states and want more workplace mentoring support – specifically more tools to share with career readiness programs (staff and youth) and employers. Affiliates also voiced a desire to have more time to work on this project to expand their reach and impact. In future work, MENTOR’s National will facilitate regular workforce development cross-network innovation meetings which will provide Affiliates with specific workforce-development systems planning opportunities to talk across the network about the program models attempted both in NMP and in other workforce development local initiatives. MENTOR will work with Affiliates to finalize the MENTOR workforce development strategy, leveraging both Affiliate learnings and evidence-based tools, resources, and initiatives implemented by youth-serving peers across the mentoring and workforce development movements.

### 2. EVALUATION OF CONNECT|FOCUS|GROW (C|F|G) TRAINING

At the heart of NMP are the trainings that are offered to young people, their potential workplace mentors, and the supervisors who will offer additional support of the course of their mentoring relationships. The C|F|G training curriculum offers customized content for each of these unique audiences and was delivered on this project to:

- 269 employee mentors (see note below)
- 235 workplace supervisors
- 1,504 young people hired into the participating companies

These trainings not only form the foundation for the mentoring relationships sponsored by this project, but are also integral as a first step in building a positive culture of mentoring within the participating companies — an impact that will hopefully extend far beyond the timeframe of this project. Consistent delivery of these trainings allows all participants to adopt that critical “mentoring mindset” and think early and often about how to build genuine collaboration and maximize the relationship. Participants also receive a handbook that can offer additional tips and activity ideas over the course of the relationship and can help inform future mentoring engagements long after this project has concluded.

Given the importance of this training content in the overall success of the project, MENTOR integrated training evaluation into the delivery of every training offered across each of the participating Affiliates. Each Affiliate was provided unique survey links for post-training evaluation forms that could be provided to mentors, supervisors and youth. These surveys
were optional, but participants were highly encouraged to complete them by both Affiliate staff and their employers or program partners. The mentor and supervisor surveys asked a total of 9 quantitative questions, most in Likert scale format with participant perceptions ranging from 1=Poor to 5=Excellent. The youth survey asked 8 of these Likert type questions. Each of the surveys also included a small number of open-ended qualitative questions as detailed below.

Note: It is worth mentioning here that MENTOR National offered this training to potential mentors and supervisors in a wide variety of companies as a way of engaging national-level employers in the work (and paving the way for local-level Affiliate support where there was geographic coverage). However, many of these companies wound up not officially participating in the full project post-training. We have included the training evaluation responses of employees in these companies here as they help illustrate perceptions of the value of the training across a larger sample of mentors and supervisors. Employees in these companies had similar reactions and feedback to the training as did mentors in companies that fully participated and the full results are presented below.

MENTOR TRAINING RESULTS

A total of 231 mentor training evaluations were returned during the timeframe of this project. Because these surveys were anonymous, we are not able to determine what percentage of these respondents wound up matched with a mentee in a workplace context. But based on the geographic locations of respondents the majority of respondents were in companies who fully participated in the mentoring relationships.

One interesting note is that these employees had some prior experience in mentoring roles, suggesting they had some familiarity with what mentoring was about, including, perhaps, in a workplace context. 38% of the respondents had served as a mentor in a formal program context on more than one occasion, with an additional 9% having done so once prior. An additional 29% had experience as a mentor in an informal sense outside of a program. Only 24% of the respondents had no prior experience as mentors. This prior mentoring experience is important to note as it suggests that even for employees who have a background in some mentoring role, the C|F|G training still has considerable value as illustrated in the findings below.

Overall training satisfaction
Employee mentors rated the overall relevance and usefulness of the C|F|G training topics at 4.50 out of 5. They rated the overall relevance and usefulness of the handbook at 4.35 out of 5. This suggests that the training and materials were well-received by mentors and that they could see the relevance to the mentoring task before them. Very few participants rated the training content or handbook lower than 3=Satisfactory.

Mentor skills
Mentors were asked a series of questions about how well the training prepared them for their role, gave them skills that would help over the course of their relationships (e.g., giving feedback constructively), and whether they felt efficacious around supporting youth in pursuit of their goals and in overcoming obstacles. Each of these was rated highly on average:
Training quality
Mentors also rated the quality of their training facilitators highly and gave similarly high marks to the training activities and the adaptability of the training content to their specific local employer context.

Qualitative observations and feedback
Mentors also provided some examples of things they liked and did not like about the training. A representative selection of quotes is noted below:

Favorite aspects:
- Love the curriculum of connect/focus/grow. I think that sets the stage well for starting a mentoring relationship.
- I enjoyed the interactive components associated with this training. Actually being remote made it easier to share more personal answers.
- The videos were thoughtful and engaging. I also appreciated the activity around
identity.

- Charline created a safe space for us to learn and ask questions. She’s a very clear and effective communicator.
- Presenters were knowledgeable, clear, and sought feedback via Q&A. The content was interesting and some of it new to me, so I learned a lot.

**Areas for improvement:**

- I wished there was more concrete advice and guidance. It would have been helpful to explore more scenarios than just the one.
- I would suggest more advice on how to create trust with teens or mentees outside of the work environment, though I do acknowledge mentorship in the workplace is very important too.
- Perhaps a “wrong” scenario where we can see mistakes and how to fix them using the tools. I realized how many closed type questions I ask and wonder what else I can change.
- Expand the training time by 30 minutes and give a solid 15-20 minutes to have convos in the break out rooms

Some participants also noted that they needed more explanation about how the content of the training related to how mentoring was being operationalized in their workplace, generally, or in the specific program the company was launching as part of the National Mentoring Project. This suggests that there may be a need for more employee mentor preparation by HR departments and supervisors prior to the training delivery.

**SUPERVISOR TRAINING RESULTS**

A total of 84 workplace supervisors completed post-training surveys during the reporting period. As with employee mentors, this group had solid prior experience in coaching, teaching and mentoring roles, with over half of supervisors (52%) having multiple prior experiences as mentors, with an additional 17% having been in the role once before. Only 12% of supervisors reported no prior programmatic or informal mentoring experience.

**Overall training satisfaction**

Supervisors rated the training very highly, with an average overall rating on training content of 4.51 out of 5. The overall training materials and handbook were rated at 4.37 out of 5.

**Supervisory skills and mentoring mindsets**

One of the key aspects of this training is that in some ways, supervisors are positioned to mentor and support both the young employee and their workplace mentor. Because of this multifaceted mentoring role, the supervisor training emphasizes their adoption of a mentoring mindset that brings a developmental focus to their interactions with all junior employees, but also a special emphasis on relational support to those young people who tend to wash out of entry-level positions prematurely.

As noted in the figure below, supervisors suggested that the training provided valuable skill development in these areas:
Training quality
As with mentors, supervisors rated the quality of the facilitator and other training elements quite highly.

Qualitative observations and feedback
Supervisors had similar feedback as mentors as to what they liked about the training and areas where they felt it could be improved:

Favorite aspects:
- It made me think about cultural differences and how that can impact my mentoring.
- The energy and enthusiasm had me engaged!
- [I liked] the knowledge of the trainers and the sharing of information regarding the different personalities. I also enjoyed the interaction and the questions posed to the participants.
- I really enjoyed the fact that we were able to get the perspective from many youth workers, and the space really allowed fruitful conversations.
Areas for improvement:

- Give more examples of how to react in real life.
- Some exploration of adverse conditions, and how to work through those positively? Though that might be something for another training.
- I would say maybe having a youth member to bring the perspective of a young person.

Unlike mentors, the supervisors did not express any confusion or uncertainty about how this training was relevant to their role in general or to the mentoring plans of their company on the NMP. This suggests that these supervisors may have had more general understanding about applications of mentoring or had stronger prior communication with HR or program partners about the purpose of the training.

YOUTH TRAINING RESULTS

A total of 108 young people completed post-training evaluations of C|F|G events. The questions for youth focused, as did mentor and supervisor evaluations, on perceptions of the value and delivery of the training.

Overall training satisfaction

Unlike the adult participants in this project, these young people came to the National Mentoring Project and their current employment circumstances with a wide variety of early career experiences and likely some different backgrounds and life histories. One of the challenges of any mentoring program is figuring out how to bridge the gap between the lived experience of mentors (and in this case their supervisors as well) with the backgrounds, challenges, strengths, and mindsets of the young people being served. Given the focus of this project on so-called “opportunity” youth who have struggled to remain engaged in career and postsecondary education pathways, one might expect that they would bring some hesitancy to mentoring and might view a one-off training of this nature with some skepticism.

Thankfully, their ratings of the training are positive and suggest many positive benefits. Their overall ratings of the quality and relevance of the training content was 4.27 out of 5. They similarly rated the value of the materials and mentoring handbook at 4.11 out of 5. These ratings suggest that most of the youth participants felt like the training was meaningful to not only their participation in this project, but to the mentoring relationships they may have in the future (detailed further below).

Youth skills for mentoring participation

As with mentors and supervisors, we wanted to ensure that youth felt prepared and efficacious for the role that they would play in the mentoring relationships they experienced.
Training quality
We also asked the youth participants how they felt about their training facilitators, the activities they engaged in, and whether this training left them feeling confident about the mentoring they might experience moving forward.

The finding around youth feeling prepared to engage in diverse mentoring experiences in the future is a meaningful one. These are young people who have often had many negative experiences with adults in teaching and helping roles and who are facing great uncertainty about how they will latch onto a career ladder in an increasingly hostile employment context for workers of their age. The fact that this training helped them build their skills around critical steps such as mapping webs of support and setting career goals, as well as building their overall belief that they can receive and benefit from mentoring support along the way, speaks to the power of this training to connect to young peoples’ needs. They want this mentoring support and it seems as if this training helped them see how they could reach out and take it, both within this project and beyond.
Qualitative observations and feedback
As one might expect, our youth participants had a lot of feedback about the training and the opportunities that lay ahead of them. The following is a representative sample of the positive feedback and suggestions for improvement we received.

Favorite aspects:
● I appreciated the analogies. Sometimes these kinds of topics are hard to grasp when they’re presented as an abstract concept, but the analogies and the explanation made it seem like a very simple concept.
● The training aided in engaging me with my mentor, talking about the skills I needed to further invest myself in such as the steps behind it and the final goal. I also enjoyed the examples the facilitator provided, like the parking space thief example and how there’s a reason as to why they’ve stolen the parking spot in such a hasty manner and the initial reaction one would give to such a situation.
● The energy; everyone was in a really good mood and expressing their beliefs and values which I really appreciate.
● [What] I enjoyed most about the training, [was] the fact that we were able to interact with each other and not just sit there and have to listen. We were engaged and taught in a much more friendly and interactive way.
● I enjoyed that he was super inspirational in a time where COVID changed the experience of much of the workforce. I really liked how he talked about leveraging relationships, great advice!

Areas for improvement:
● Try to condense topics, because it seemed to me like there was a lot of repetition on things that had already been covered. Also the topics covered should already be common sense for people, so there was no need to go in depth.
● The length of time sitting down for 2 hours .. maybe more breaks.
● I would change that these sessions to be in person, but I understand the circumstances.
● The training felt very long. If there were more activities or less slides to make it seem shorter.

One other thing to note about the qualitative feedback was that youth seemed to very much enjoy going through the training with their mentors. This was not commented on in mentor training evaluations, so it’s hard to tell how pervasive this approach was. But several young people commented that they enjoyed how the session allowed them to talk with their mentor about who they were as people and the strengths they each brought to the relationship. This is a training modification that should be considered for future iterations of the project.
We conclude this section with some quotes that we feel capture the energy and enthusiasm expressed by our younger participants:

- Great information I am able to continue to apply this to my life and live on with a greater mindset.
- It’s a nice thing that you all are doing. In our neighborhood theirs [sic] nothing but negative so other youths in the hood grow up negative so it’s nice to see some positive going on.
- This is Amazing keep doing it!
- Overall, I was very pleased with the training and I would encourage my fellow colleagues to join the mentorship program.

3. INSIGHTS ABOUT THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

While the Connect|Focus|Grow training laid the groundwork for successful mentoring experiences, there is no guarantee that mentors and young people will find common ground and connection with one another once their mentoring relationships actually begin. The mentoring research literature is filled with examples of well-designed mentoring programs where mentors and youth have trouble scheduling meetings, struggle to define meaningful activities and goals, and don’t ever build the “working alliance” that allows them to do the work needed.

To ensure that matches were meeting and that the nature of mentor-youth interactions was happening along the lines hoped for in the National Mentoring Project model, MENTOR partnered with Civic Champs to develop an app that could capture information about each session the pair engaged in. The app was designed to allow for both scheduling of mentoring time and the collection of information about how the meeting went, what they discussed, and perceptions as to the positive (or negative) nature of the interaction. The app also allowed for collecting information on spontaneous, unplanned mentoring interactions, knowing that mentors and youth might be interacting frequently at the worksites and that mentoring was likely to occur outside of scheduled meetings.

A total of 480 mentoring pairs were registered on this app over the course of the project. Unfortunately, many participants handled the scheduling of their mentor-young employee meetings through regular work communications channels, such as their internal work email and calendars or through other company systems. Only 23% of those registered mentoring pairs had mentoring interactions through the app, but those matches did provide us with the following information:

- 362 unique mentoring interactions were captured in the app, with 260 (72%) of those interactions reflecting planned meetings. An additional 102 interactions (28%) were
spontaneous, but meaningful enough that the mentor and youth provided information on their unscheduled time together.

- The mentoring pairs using the app recorded 2.8 interactions on average over the course of the project, suggesting that meaningful mentoring interactions were happening roughly once a month, although we suspect that the frequency was much higher in reality given the positive feedback from young employees detailed in the next section of this report.

- The average mentoring interaction lasted 37.6 minutes, which implies that these engagements were commonly held during lunch times or other short breaks during the workday.

- In total, the Civic Champs app captured information about 112 hours of mentoring interactions. It is worth noting here that not all interactions had a duration provided.

FEEDBACK ON MENTORING INTERACTIONS

Matches submitted information about how their time together went after 49% of the total mentoring interactions captured through the app. While we had hoped for more complete data, the results of the reported interactions are encouraging:

- A full 100% of those mentoring interactions were rated as positive by both the mentor and youth. While we don’t expect that every interaction was positive (as evidenced by some of the negative feedback detailed in the next section), it is telling that no mentors or youth reported negative interactions. Some of this may have been the result of mentors not wanting to report negative engagements out of fear of consequences or disappointing their supervisor. But we believe that this app mostly captured authentically positive interactions from the matches that were most engaged and for whom the experience was positive.

- The most common topics discussed by matches were related to (1) Mentee’s current job tasks/skills, (2) Current job performance/quality, (3) Career goals and planning, (4) Setting goals/progress, and (5) Work relationships. These topics all make sense given the role of mentors in the project and in the context of the end-of-program feedback provided by mentors and young employees. Even though current job performance was the second most common topic, the fact that these conversations were rated as positive implies that mentors were giving constructive feedback and offering advice to improve performance in ways that youth found satisfactory.

- Of the young employees who gave detailed feedback on their mentoring interactions, 77% indicated that the interaction with their mentor would help them a lot in succeeding in their current job, with an additional 66% noting that their session was very helpful towards long-term plans and goals. This suggests that mentoring engagements were focused on both in-the-moment performance-related feedback, but also longer-term discussions about future career plans and aspirations, just as intended in the Connect-Focus-Grow framing participants were grounded in.
MENTOR certainly wishes that the app had been more robustly used by participants. However, and as discussed elsewhere in this report, participants often struggled to see the value of the app to their mentoring experience, and coupled with little incentivization from the employers or supervisors, it may have been a bit “out of sight, out of mind.” Future iterations of this work can increase use of match tracking apps like this by creating a stronger incentive structure and by using the app as a source of mentoring information and relationship tools (e.g., a place to track career goals or explore post-secondary education or credentialing options).

While participants did not provide the holistic information we wanted, the data we did get suggests that these relationships were meeting regularly and for meaningful amounts of time and that participants found these interactions helpful and enjoyable.

4. IMPACT OF THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

While the Civic Champs data showed that mentors and youth engaged in a lot of positive interaction over the course of their relationships, those relationships were not the ultimate end goal of the National Mentoring Project. This was a body of work designed to improve the employment outcomes of marginalized young people and the ultimate value in this work were the real-world results of retaining young people in their jobs and helping them build their resumes in service of more stable career pathways. This section details our findings around how the project supported those big-picture outcomes, as well as detailed information from the post-program surveys from mentors, supervisors, and youth about how their experience in the program impacted their lives.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT RETENTION

We received full employment records for 1,504 young employees paired with a mentor through this project. Given that the core goal of the National Mentoring Project was that 75% of the young employees would be retained 90 days in their positions, we are happy to report that 88% of the youth who were in positions that lasted 90 days were retained in their jobs.

However, many youth participants were placed in positions that were inherently shorter-term than our 90-day metric, such as seasonal summer jobs that may have only lasted 6-8 weeks during the summer months. When we include those retention numbers, we find that 89.5% of the youth paired with a mentor were fully retained either through the completion of their employment or through the 90-day window. We feel that this is a
tremendous accomplishment given the lower percentages of opportunity youth who are historically retained in employment opportunities such as these. It is heartening to know that 9 in 10 of these young people have demonstrated that they can stick with a job and have built meaningful new parts of their resumes that will further help them in their career journey.

We also wanted to see if youth were going beyond just retention by thriving enough in the role to warrant some kind of raise or promotion. A period of 90 days (or less) is a fairly narrow window to see that kind of employee promotion or recognition and, unfortunately, we only received employer data on raises/promotions for 4% of the participating youth. However, 25% of young employees for whom we do have records did, in fact, receive some form of promotion or wage increase during their time in the program. This suggests that at least some of these young employees were thriving in their roles and made a very favorable impression on their employers.

While these retention numbers are encouraging, we wanted to more deeply understand the contribution of mentoring to these results. The sections that follow detail youth perceptions of the impact of mentoring, as well as the perceptions of mentors and supervisors, as captured in end-of-year surveys.

**YOUTH PERCEPTIONS OF MENTORING IMPACT**

End-of-Program surveys for young employees asked several Likert scale or Yes/Maybe/No questions about their experiences in the program and the quality and impact of their mentoring relationships. It also presented a few open-ended questions that gave more space for qualitative feedback about mentoring and their suggestions for improving the NMP experience. A total of 120 youth completed an end-of-program survey.

**Overall ratings of relationship quality**

Young employees rated the overall quality of their relationship with their mentor at 4.13 out of 5, with 77% of them rating their mentoring experience as “excellent” or “quite good.” Only 9 respondents of the 120 rated their relationships as “adequate” or “poor.”

As illustrated below, the mentored employees also rated their relationships with their supervisors highly.
Young employees also expressed a desire to continue to stay in contact with their mentors beyond the window of the current project. It is worth noting that these young people had varied work contexts and employment circumstances, and that the certainty (or possibility) of future mentor engagement may have been somewhat undetermined when youth completed the survey. Nevertheless, when asked whether they will keep in touch with their mentor now that this phase of NMP has concluded, 86 of the 120 youth (72%) said “yes” or “maybe”, as illustrated below. Only 13 of the 120 youth said they would not be keeping in touch over time.

These numbers are encouraging as it suggests that the C|F|G curriculum and other features of the NMP (e.g., The App, additional onboarding support by MENTOR Affiliates and community partners, HR department engagement at the job sites) created a solid foundation for relationships that had value and did good work in their time together across a variety of youth employment contexts. It also suggests that low quality relationships were somewhat rare.

**Ratings of mentor support**
We also explored whether mentors were engaging in the types of supportive behaviors that were consistent with the C|F|G curriculum and the overall goals of the project. Using a 5-point Likert scale, we asked young employees to rate their mentor’s effectiveness in providing specific forms of support that research suggests are important in career-focused mentoring. As illustrated below, young employees felt positively about mentors’ support in
three key areas: providing good advice, providing emotional and social support, and getting to know them as full individuals (e.g., knowing their identity and personal journey).

On each of these core skills, over three-quarters of all respondents rated their mentors as “excellent” or “quite good” at offering meaningful support.

**Ratings of the programmatic experience**

We also asked young employees to reflect on some big-picture benefits of having participated in the program:

DID PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROGRAM MAKE FOR A MORE MEANINGFUL AND POSITIVE EXPERIENCE DURING YOUR TIME WITH THE COMPANY?

- Yes: 81%
- No: 7%
- Maybe: 7%
- Unsure/NA: 5%
It is heartening to see the very high percentages of young people who would recommend this program and project to their peers. Only 2 youth out of 120 indicated they would not suggest other young employees participate in future offerings. 72% of participants thought that their mentors and supervisors helped them determine the next steps on their career or educational journey, an impressive number considering that many of these youth may have had solid plans for where they wanted to go when entering the program. Clearly these mentors and supervisors provided meaningful support and a positive mentoring experience.

**Qualitative feedback**
The end-of-program survey also captured some qualitative data from participating young employees. A selection of their favorite and least favorite aspects of the program and their overall feedback for improvements are shared below in some representative responses.

**Favorite elements of the program:**
- I enjoyed getting to meet people of different backgrounds and getting close with them. At the park I worked at, I was treated as if I were part of their family and it was overall an amazing summer experience.
- It was quite interesting with the fact that I’ve never worked a job before and now I know about one of the many jobs in the workforce and I am very happy that I had
this experience.

● What I enjoyed the most about my mentoring experience was obtaining new skills that would allow me to work a similar position in the future. I also enjoyed creating a bond with my supervisor and working with her team to assist them with their info sessions every week.

● I really enjoyed how much support I had throughout my internship experience, in encouraging me to try new things, make mistakes, and learn from them. I really felt free to explore and discover.

● What I enjoyed most about my mentoring experience was my mentor was also there to help and support me. My mentor also giving me advice, what I can do to have a great job experience.

● Not only making a business connection, but making a friend and connecting with my mentor on a more personal level. I picture myself in contact with my mentor for the foreseeable future.

Least favorite elements of the program:

● I least enjoyed how short of a time we had with each other.

● I wish the program extended beyond the summer. It ended too soon.

● Not being able to communicate with other staff members much as [I] would like, because my position doesn’t require a lot of collaboration.

● The only thing I didn't enjoy was the lack of time we were able to spend meeting in person. It was difficult because both our stores had staffing issues. At one point she had to dual manage stores. I also temporarily transferred to another store over the summer. We still did our best to make it work though.

● Something I enjoyed least about my mentoring experience was the fact that my mentor was always busy and didn't have an adequate amount of time to assign us work, and sometimes unable to answer our questions.

● Mostly weather. There are days where working in the heat and humidity can be unbearable, and some stormy days make it hard to get out and about.

● Not knowing the location until the day of and the site being changed daily. Without having my own transportation, it was rather expensive to uber every day. So, some days I have to pay the money I made just to get to/from work.

Overall feedback:

● Make the app more collaborative and integrated into daily tasks.

● This is a great program and opportunity and I hope they continue it.

● It should be longer than the summer.

● Nothing, I think it is a great program that will help young people who are timid.

● Yes, I think the National Mentoring Program is very important for young students/people, because it’s a great experience and job for outgoing individuals.

● I had an amazing experience, and I am very thankful for the group of people I got to work with.
• Make sure mentors are consistent.
• It was a great experience. I had a lot of fun working with the people I worked with and created new relationships and overall it was great.

It is worth noting that several of the negative aspects of the experience were things beyond the control of the project, such as work site conditions, transportation challenges, and employment opportunities that were seasonal or time-limited in nature. But even in the feedback here about those challenges, you can sense that they had healthy perspectives about these challenges (e.g., “We still did our best to make it work”) and that perhaps this experience has given them new perspectives related to career pursuit and the ups and downs of the world of work. Clearly these quotes reflect that this was a very positive growth experience for these young people, generally.

MENTOR PERCEPTIONS OF IMPACT

Mentors were also asked a similar set of questions in their end-of-program surveys, offering their perspective on the quality of their relationships, their provision of support, and the ways in which the program impacted their job satisfaction and growth. A total of 37 mentors completed the survey.

Overall mentor ratings of relationship quality
Mentors rated the average overall quality of their relationship with their young employee at 3.54 out of 5. On a positive note, 62% of mentors rated their relationships as “excellent” or “quite good” — unfortunately, almost a quarter (24%) rated their relationship as “somewhat adequate” or “poor.”

On a more positive note, 30 of the 37 respondents indicated that they planned on keeping in touch with their mentee (21 “yes” and 9 “maybe”). This suggests, especially when considering the high percentage of youth suggesting ongoing mentor contact, that even mentoring relationships that were not terribly strong still provided youth with career connections and “social capital” that would continue on at some level in their early career years.

![Pie chart showing mentor plans to keep in touch with mentee in the future.](chart.png)
Ratings of mentor support
While mentors felt very efficacious upon completion of the C|F|G training, they reported lower effectiveness when reflecting back on their actual relationships. As noted in the figure below, mentors rated themselves highest in their ability to get to know the young employee they were paired with. But their ratings in all three skill categories are lower than the perceptions of the mentored youth. This may be the result of mentors judging their own performances more critically or being unsure as to whether they had provided sufficient support. There are strong themes in the mentoring research literature of mentors feeling unsure as to whether their efforts have had the intended impact or been well received by youth, especially when working with youth with elevated needs and traumatic lived experience. It might also reflect that the C|F|G content gets these relationships off to a good start but that workplace mentors need additional support on handling certain situations and aspects of the role as their relationships progress.

Ratings of the mentors’ programmatic experience
The mentor survey also asked a series of questions about the impact their participation may have had on their own job satisfaction and career path.
It is clear that participating as a mentor, both in the new skills acquired through the C|F|G training and their application in a real-life mentoring experience, was something that mentors found great satisfaction in and felt enhanced their perceptions of their own jobs and work experience. Unsurprisingly, it did not shift the career path or expectations for mentors, as most of them were likely at relatively stable and satisfying places in their professional lives. But the fact that over 80% of them indicated they would recommend the program to their colleagues is a meaningful indicator that they found this to be a valuable experience.

**Mentors’ qualitative feedback**

Mentors were also asked to share their thoughts on their favorite and least favorite aspects of the program, the impact this had on them as employees, and their overall feedback on their experience.

**Favorite elements of the program:**

- Gave me the opportunity to improve my leadership and managerial skills while also being able to enhance the mentees' knowledge of real estate.
- The trust we were able to build.
- The knowledge and wisdom I obtained and experience with dealing with different personalities.
- Working with a young person who was open to experiencing new things and also teaching them how to become a valuable human being as they prepare to enter the real world.
• I always enjoy learning from our young adults and, hopefully, having them learn something from me during our conversations and work.
• It was great being able to have conversations with my mentee to get his perspective on his experience with the company.
• I enjoyed creating a roadmap my mentee could use and pass on to others. This roadmap will help my mentee be successful in completing college and landing a job afterwards.

**Least favorite elements of the program:**
• It was done remotely during COVID. Made it much harder to get to know someone.
• What I enjoyed the least was having to mentor virtually because of the pandemic. I was truly not prepared for it, especially since our organization is a hands-on experience.
• The length of the program. Six weeks is too short.
• Mentee’s discipline and attendance issues.
• Working through bad excuses for slip ups.
• Trying to schedule the connects without the SMs support was difficult. Ensuring that time was set aside and paid was the biggest barrier.

**Impact on themselves:**
• I think it improved my job in that it allowed me to teach young people about the parts of the library that they do not see and made [me increase] effort to create a better perspective of libraries and what we do.
• Communication skills were enhanced.
• I do think it improved my ability to do my job as it helped me understand all different types of situations I never would have experienced myself.
• I don't think it improved my satisfaction as I already love being a part of this company.
• I have become a lot more empathetic.
• Yes, this mentoring experience improved my feelings of satisfaction with my job. I feel like I'm helping to give a tool for success to our youth and impacting our future.
• I felt the program was beneficial in my professional development and managerial skills. Going forward I would like having the opportunity to train people under me.

**Overall feedback:**
• The app can be improved to make it less cumbersome to use.
• This program is great. It won't help or save some maybe but I've met people before they joined this program and even if they didn't finish it. They see things differently and better their lives as a result of the aftermath of this program.
• Mentoring program was good but it needed to start sooner in the year. Because our work experience program is during the summer months, I feel that the youth participants would have had a better interaction with the mentor. More time with the youth could have created a more positive bond.
• I hope that the program continues, as in listening to other mentors, we are all in agreement that the program is excellent. Also, the mentees need to understand that we are here to work with and help them in any way needed.
• Ensure that mentees are really ready to do the work.
As noted in the quotes above, mentors expressed a desire for a longer program experience and better utility from The App. Mentors generally expressed enjoying their time with the youth, but it’s worth noting that several mentors expressed frustration with the behavior and work performance of young employees, suggesting that increased training on taking a nonjudgmental approach, perspective-taking, and offering constructive feedback may be needed. Mentors may have understandably been frustrated when youth were not engaged or got into trouble at the jobsite, but it is important for those frustrations to not be directed at youth or have a negative impact on the relationship.

**SUPERVISOR PERCEPTIONS OF IMPACT**

Finally, we also asked supervisors to reflect on their experience in the program. Their surveys focused on their supervisory role and how they felt about the support that they offered to both mentors and the young employees being mentored. A total of 34 supervisors completed the end-of-program survey.

**Overall supervisor ratings of relationship quality**
Supervisors rated their relationships with young employees at 4.35 out of 5, suggesting that they were able to build strong relationships with these youth. 30 of the 34 supervisors who responded (88%) rated their relationships as either “Excellent” or “Quite good.”

Because supervisors were not expected to develop especially close relationships with young employees, they were not asked about whether they planned on engaging with the youth they supervised in the future. However, because the C|F|G curriculum was designed to give supervisors some global relationship-building skills, they were asked to reflect on whether they would use the approaches taught in this program to their future supervision of younger employees. **29 of the 34 respondents (85%) indicated that they would use these skills with junior employees in the future**, with no supervisors indicating they would not.
Ratings of supervisor support
As with mentors, supervisors were asked how well they applied the skills taught by the C-F-G curriculum in practice. These questions focused on career advice and support, social and emotional support, and their efforts to get to know the young employee as a full person.

As shown above, supervisors rated their success in these areas slightly higher than did mentors. This may be due to their experience and comfort level in supporting employees, generally. It might also reflect the fact that they had more “light touch” relationships with the young employees that brought fewer opportunities for conflict and misunderstandings than the relationships that the more deeply involved mentors experienced. But it seems noteworthy that supervisors generally felt like their support was more impactful than mentors did.

Supervisors’ ratings of the programmatic experience
Supervisors were also asked about whether this experience improved their own job satisfaction, facilitated them rethinking aspects of their own career path, and whether they would recommend this program to other supervisors. As illustrated below, supervisors largely reported that the program had a positive impact on their own job satisfaction but did not generally spur them to reconsider their own career paths — this is unsurprising, as one would expect employees who had risen through the ranks to management and supervisory positions to generally be happy with the career path they were on and willing to stay the course.

But perhaps the strongest endorsement of the program came from the fact that none of the survey respondents indicated that they would not recommend this to other supervisors.
Supervisors’ qualitative feedback
Supervisors were also asked about their favorite and least favorite aspects of the program, details of how this may have enhanced their own careers, and their overall thoughts and feedback on the program experience. The quotes below represent the common themes in their responses.
**Favorite elements of the program:**

- I appreciated the CUNY Service Corps program, including the matching process. We had a very strong corps member this year, and she was able to have a great contribution to our work.
- The ability to provide young employees with real on the job experiences towards their career goals.
- The chance to mentor youth in a variety of new and challenging situations is fun. It also helps me see what I do through fresh eyes.
- Watching my member grow in her abilities to deal with situations that come up.
- Opportunity to connect with the youth who were mostly working their first job ever, and at the end knowing that one was hired on at their workplace.
- I felt that the framework created and shared in the initial meetings set the tone for the program and the participants.
- Working with the more mature students who understood why they are in the program and what future they are planning for themselves. Willing to help out when needed.
- Getting to know the young people and seeing how they view the world.

**Least favorite elements of the program:**

- Documentation on Civic Champs was a challenge. The app interface could be better. I wish we had the option to complete the documentation on the Civic Champs website.
- I did not find any of the resources, training, or support provided by the Mentor program specifically to be of use. It was not tailored to the remote environment, the context or constraints of CUNY service corps, or the past experiences of us as supervisors.
- Stress associated with extra people to supervise. I took on more than ever before, but that was due to COVID and wanting to provide opportunities. Not sure if I would take 5 YouthCorps and 3 AmeriCorps at the same time again.
- I would have also liked on the app’s end to have an opportunity to document group mentoring opportunities with the youth. A youth app would have been more accessible and readily available opposed to an email, since not all youth have email on their phones. With the limited ability to use this app, I am not sure we fully got the whole mentoring experience. I think we also would have benefited from more of an in person training to use the app.
- The sessions were good but the program never got running as promised. Also it seemed too short to be profitable.
- This was the first year in memory that we had several youth that were somewhat difficult to supervise. In the past, we were almost exclusively dealing with "priority hires" and we had a previous relationship with those youth. This year we took on several referrals and a good percentage of those youth were much more difficult to work with.
- Not enough help, the youth sometimes require individualized support. Small business owners should receive monetary support during these sessions because it can take away from client work when bother mentoring and managing a business.
- Many different negative attitudes about working, did not want to do what was needed to be done, horse playing and the cell phones would not be put up for long. Disappearing and taking very long breaks.
Impact on themselves:

- Much of what I know now, I had to learn and figure out on my own. I appreciate and enjoy the opportunity to impart my knowledge to the next generation and help them better prepare for the professional world.
- Made me appreciate and value what my team does more. Also, fresh energy always invigorates the team as a whole and keeps us on our toes.
- It has improved my employer experience because the mentoring program opened doors for me to model what relationship building with diverse groups of youth look like on the work front which carries over to life overall.
- I felt that this experience really gave perspective and context to how we can connect in intentional and mutually rewarding ways with our newer and/or younger team members. These connections furthered the buy in on the intern side while also deepening my engagement with the workforce!

Overall feedback:

- This was a great experience, so blessed to have been a part of it!
- One addition that would be great for the curriculum is an intentional touch point by the mentoring program midway through. It will need to be something that is so ingrained in the training that it ensures it will be executed on at the midway point. These programs go SO fast!! Once we got started, we found it tricky to coordinate the schedules of everyone. Given the value that we got from our final session with MentorNY, it would have been fantastic to have them in midway through as well!
- I believe that matching the job description and the kids abilities, skills and aptitude to learn the job will help the kids have a more successful and fun work/learning experiences.
- Send students names a few weeks before starting. Letting company know if any have special needs. The company [can] set up interviews with students before the program starts and if we will keep or not.
- I believe that this was a good model that was met by challenges a lot in part due to the pandemic. Please continue to create these types of opportunities for employers and community members to support and engage our youth. Thank you!

It is worth noting that while a few supervisors, like mentors, were frustrated by young employee behavior, they expressed far more concern about the Civic Champs app and its use than mentors or youth did. It is unclear why supervisors found the app frustrating, but several noted that they would have greatly preferred a computer-based (rather than mobile) application would have helped with integration into the workday. They also noted that the app seemed to be a poor fit for group mentoring interactions and that not giving direct access to young employees also limited their engagement and hindered scheduling.

When looking across the responses from young employees, their mentors, and their supervisors, several themes emerge:

- Participants highly valued the relationships that were made and many of them will continue past the formal point of the program.
- Young employees felt like this was beneficial to their career development, with very few of them having a negative experience.
● All participants wanted a longer and more intensive relationship experience.
● The C|F|G curriculum gave all participants a solid grounding to build on, but mentors, in particular, may benefit from ongoing training on how to handle specific challenges and circumstances.
● The app was a good tool for collecting data for the purposes of this evaluation, but was not as helpful or as easy to use for participants.
● The implementation contexts of this project were incredibly varied and there may be a need to build more formal programmatic components and tailor them for specific jobs and industries to maximize the effectiveness of this model.
● All three groups of participants were emphatic in reporting that they would recommend this program to their peers and colleagues.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As detailed throughout this report, the NMP was successful in meeting several goals: offering a training that provided a solid foundation for mentoring relationships in a variety of workplaces; giving young employees mentoring relationships and supervisory supports that were meaningful both personally and professionally; offering employee mentors and supervisors a programmatic experience that was a value add to their job satisfaction and career paths; and, most importantly, retaining a high percentage of youth in these positions for 90 days or through the intended duration of their seasonal employment so that they could gain valuable work experience, build their resumes, and make lasting connections to those who could provide career-related social capital. Based on this project, we want to expand MENTOR Affiliates’ capacity to engage in workforce development systems strategies by:

● Sharing regional Labor Market Information to promote Affiliates in developing independent corporate partners who can be leveraged as additional champions of the movement
● Sharing key insights and recommendations from NMP to support Affiliates in identifying and engaging local partners
● Providing pass-through funding for MENTOR Affiliates engaged in workforce development to host statewide workplace mentoring convenings to lift up promising local practices, encourage cross-sector local engagement and networking
● Developing and maintaining a guide for Affiliates on how to train mentoring programs to work with employers to ensure a high-quality experience for youth

For future work with companies, MENTOR will seek deeper engagement of HR and company leadership, along with resources for them, so that employers can build long-term programmatic capacity to implement this on their own. Including:

● Enhance recommendation for ways to improve matching of youth based on job experience and improved matching of mentors and youth based on job type and career expertise the mentee might be interested in exploring
● Provide more training for mentors on what to expect and handling frustrations in nonjudgmental ways ongoing training for mentors on how to handle common scenarios (e.g., youth seeming indifferent to the relationship at first)
• Developing direct connection to technological solutions to increase the quality of mentor-mentee match support

One of MENTOR's greatest lessons learned from the NMP was that systems-level change requires multiple avenues of influence to effectively implement relationship-centered workplace practices. These avenues of influence include open dialogue and implementation time with employers and workforce development community leaders to manage expectations on balancing business expectations and effective human capital management. Private sector approval protocols and limited risk tolerance in piloting new recruitment or employee engagement practices can often hinder the speed of innovative idea adoption. One approach to mitigating the corporate buy-in process is for MENTOR National and Affiliates to work with employers we have existing partnerships with to introduce MENTOR to employer peers and to collaborate with MENTOR to share best practices and lessons learned from this project and other workforce development efforts. Another approach to mitigating this challenge is to build out additional resources for workforce development nonprofits who engage a variety of employer partners to ensure their programs include relationship-centered interventions aimed at deepening the impact of their work with Opportunity Youth. Lastly, MENTOR has also seen the incredible value main stage presentations and thought leadership opportunities can play in attracting interest from additional partners. Participating in and speaking to the Hire Opportunity Coalition is just one great example of this. Over the next couple years, MENTOR will continue to prioritize promotional opportunities that allow the organization to showcase the incredible impact and momentum of this work.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR EVALUATION

As noted in the Introduction, the evaluation for this iteration of the NMP was primarily formative and designed to capture participant experiences and assess whether the broad elements of the program were effective in fostering meaningful mentoring experiences.

The prospects for future evaluation of this initiative are largely dependent on the changes to the C|F|G training offerings and to the overall model being offered to employers (or perhaps to workforce development partners). If the model is greatly enhanced by additional programmatic features, a more robust Mentor App, and increased match support service from MENTOR Affiliates, then perhaps another round of more formative or process-oriented evaluation is needed to make sure providers and clients can implement the new model as intended. Similarly, if the new approach involves partnering more deeply with workforce development nonprofits to strengthen the relationship and mentoring components of their work with clients, future evaluation should focus on ensuring that the revised approach is something that works for supervisors, mentors, and young employees and can be delivered effectively by all partners.

Potential future implementation evaluation recommendations

There are several elements of this initiative that might be worth examining in the years ahead:

• Comparing and contrasting delivery of services in different industries or among different local partners.
● Deeper examination of mentoring relationship characteristics, particularly the activities and mentor traits associated with stronger relationships.
● Examining the impact of personal history on program participation (e.g., do certain young employees fare better in this model based on their backgrounds or prior experiences)
● Evaluation of approaches to building employer capacity so that we can understand how companies can build a culture of mentoring by offering variations on this model that are sustainable for their companies over time.
● Testing improvements in the C|F|G curriculum, including ongoing training that builds on pre-match content.
● Evaluating train-the-trainer models of C|F|G where HR or other worksite professionals are trained to deliver the content.
● Examining implementation challenges and what types of support from MENTOR Affiliates seem to facilitate strong programming at the job sites.
● Developing and testing new app and data collection tools.

**Potential future outcome or impact evaluation recommendations**
These activities primarily make sense once the model has been further tested and solutions to implementation challenges addressed.

● Conduct a rigorous experimental-design outcome evaluation, ideally a random-control trial, that assigns youth to a mentor or no-mentor condition and tracks outcomes such as:
  ○ 90-day retention
  ○ Overall employment longevity
  ○ Workplace discipline or misbehavior
  ○ Promotions and wage increases
  ○ Certifications and licensing for professional tasks/roles
  ○ Pursuit of ongoing education
  ○ Solidification of career paths
  ○ Sense of worksite belonging
  ○ Job satisfaction
  ○ Perceptions of workplace support

● Building off of a rigorous evaluation, tracking the longer-term career outcomes of mentored youth. This would help us understand whether mentoring in the early career boosts long-term career achievement or is simply meaningful only within the context of the current job. This would also help clarify whether small-scale mentoring interventions like this have potential to nurture long-term shifts in employability at scale and the additional factors that might facilitate or constrain the impact of mentoring.