



MENTOR

VERMONT

SUPPORTING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

During the COVID-19 pandemic, **young people are experiencing high levels of social disconnection and trauma.** These effects have been felt disproportionately by communities of color and other underserved populations, as well as those already living in poverty. **Mentoring is more important now than ever.** Across the state, with the support of their programs, mentors are staying connected with their mentees, providing them with a source of stability and guidance amidst the uncertainty.

MENTOR Vermont's mission continues to be to **provide resources and support to youth mentoring programs in Vermont so they can meet the needs of young people in their communities.** In 2020, however, our role, and the roles of mentoring programs and mentors, have looked different than in previous years. Below is an overview of the additional work MENTOR Vermont and programs have taken on this year in response to the pandemic.



Based on MENTOR Vermont's survey of mentees this fall...

85% said that "during the pandemic, **my mentor was someone I could depend on** to be there for me."

85% said that "**my mentor provides a safe space where I can share my feelings** and experiences related to the COVID-19 pandemic."

74% said that "my relationship with **my mentor has made me feel less alone** during the COVID-19 pandemic."

LEADING THE TRANSITION TO REMOTE MENTORING

- Launched a COVID-19 Resources webpage, to provide programs and mentors with **the information they need to better support youth and families.**
- Created remote mentoring guidelines to help mentoring programs **adjust their in-person program models to account for the current reality of the pandemic.**



SUCCESSFULLY SECURING EMERGENCY FUNDING FOR PROGRAMS

- **Federal Payroll Protection Program (PPP):** Supported mentoring agencies in applying for PPP loans, and **100% of applicants reported receiving funding.**
- **\$50,000 VT Community Foundation COVID-19 Response Grant:** Received funding to provide grants to **help programs maintain current mentor matches and adjust their program models.**
- **Mentoring COVID-19 Response Grants:** MENTOR Vermont and the VT Department For Children and Families (DCF) reallocated **\$174,000 in federal funding to provide grants to programs.**
- **State Funding:** After a \$50,000 cut to the annual DCF mentoring grant this summer, we **organized a statewide advocacy campaign, and funding was restored in full** within 24 hours.

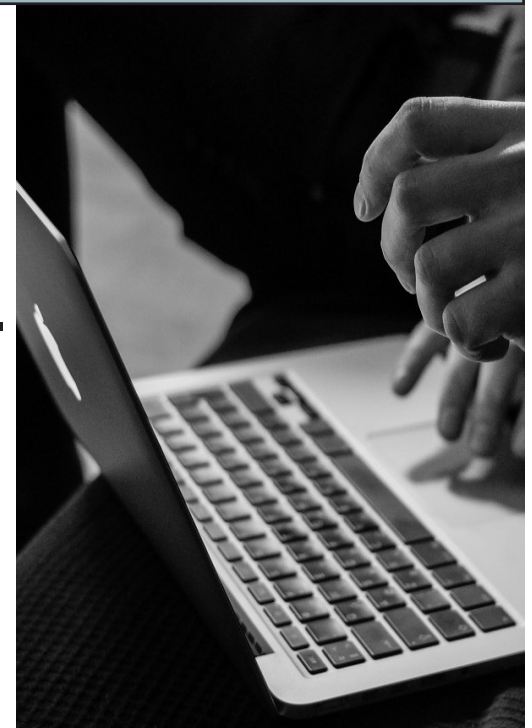
PROVIDING PROGRAM STAFF WITH DIRECT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Held one-on-one check-ins with mentoring agencies, to ensure **staff felt supported and programs had sufficient resources and funding.**
- Facilitated weekly program support calls, **providing a space for program staff and MENTOR Vermont to discuss relevant topics and current needs.**
- Conducted a statewide survey of mentoring program staff, **assessing training, resource, and financial needs of mentoring programs.**



CREATING AND FACILITATING NEW VIRTUAL TRAININGS

- **Hosted a free training on “Trauma-Informed Care”** to help mentors **better support youth impacted by trauma and isolation** caused by the pandemic.
- **Adjusted the Vermont Mentoring Symposium**, our annual conference for mentoring practitioners, to a **virtual, week-long format, with more sessions.**
- **Shared resources from MENTOR National**, including the Racial Equity Toolkit and COVID-19 Trainings, **bringing national expertise to Vermont.**
- **Formed a Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee** to help determine the role mentoring programs can play in **addressing racism in Vermont.**



SUPPORTING ADJUSTMENTS TO MAKE PROGRAMMING SAFE AND EFFECTIVE

- **Remote mentoring:** Helped mentoring programs adopt new policies and offerings, including video meetings, text messaging, and pen pal letters.
- **Physically distanced in-person mentoring:** Assisted programs in creating policies and trainings to enable matches to **safely resume meeting in person.**
- **Guidance for school programs:** Worked with the **Agency of Education** to determine **how school-based mentoring can happen safely this school year.**



PROVIDING FAMILIES WITH ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Throughout the pandemic, programs and mentors have provided the following resources:

- **Food Access** (direct distribution and sharing information on school lunches, food banks etc.)
- **Academic/Educational Support**
- **Multilingual COVID-19 Information**
- **Internet Access** (supporting virtual learning)
- **Mental Health/Counseling and Healthcare Support**
- **Navigating Unemployment and Fuel/Heating Assistance Programs**