



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS  
OF AMERICA**

## ***National Mentor Recruitment Collaborations*** **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

1. **Question:** Can you tell me a little more about Boys & Girls Clubs of America?

**Answer:** For more than 100 years, Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) ([GreatFutures.org](http://GreatFutures.org)) has enabled young people most in need to achieve great futures as productive, caring, responsible citizens. Today, nearly 4,000 Clubs serve some 4 million young people through Club membership and community outreach. Clubs are located in cities, towns, public housing and on Native American lands throughout the country and on U.S. military installations worldwide. They provide a safe place, caring adult mentors, fun and friendship, and high-impact youth development programs on a daily basis during critical non-school hours. Club programs promote academic success, good character and citizenship, and healthy lifestyles. In a Harris Survey of alumni, 57 percent said the Club saved their lives. National headquarters are located in Atlanta. Learn more at [bgca.org/facebook](http://bgca.org/facebook) and [bgca.org/twitter](http://bgca.org/twitter)

2. **Question:** What are the *National Mentor Recruitment Collaborations* and *National Mentoring Programs* and how are they funded? Am I expected to donate money or help pay for the program?

**Answer:** For each of the past several years, BGCA has received federal *National Mentoring Programs* funding through the US Office of Justice Programs (OJP) to pass-through to local Boys & Girls Clubs to provide mentoring programs and services to thousands of youth, with an emphasis upon those youth living in distressed and disadvantaged areas. Concurrently, BGCA has made a commitment to assess and address the minority male mentor recruitment needs of Club members and to make a significant positive impact in reducing the minority male mentor gap that presently exists in the US.

BGCA and a small number of like-minded national organizations have mobilized *National Mentor Recruitment Collaborations* to expand the number of appropriate mentors that local Clubs may recruit to mentor Boys & Girls Club members, while concurrently addressing specific strategic programming emphasis areas of the respective collaborative partner. There is no expectation that volunteer mentors, nor local partnering organizations, will be asked to donate money to fund the *National Mentoring Programs*.

3. **Question:** What is purpose of my organization's collaboration with Boys & Girls Clubs of America and what is expected of my local group?

**Answer:** BGCA encourages all of its local affiliates to initiate, develop and maintain partnerships with reputable community-based organizations, agencies and individuals to serve as volunteers to support the programs and services it provides for youth. In recent months, BGCA and a small, select group of organizations with national scope and whose missions are aligned, have formed collaborations to encourage their local affiliates to consider working together to effectively address their respective missions. For local Boys Girls Clubs, the desired outcome is for the local affiliates of the collaborating national organizations to assist local Boys & Girls Clubs in identifying potential volunteer mentors. The specific expectations of the relationship between the national organizations may be varied slightly to address the desired outcomes and the strategic emphasis for collaborating organizations. Ultimately, the need for and viability of collaborations at the local level will be determined by the local organizations and within the parameters of the national partnership agreement or MOU.

Please contact your organization's local or national representative or Boys & Girls Club contact for more information.

4. **Question:** Who is eligible to participate from organization; can it be our members, volunteers, staff, etc?

**Answer:** Volunteer mentors for local Boys & Girls Clubs can be anyone affiliated with the national or local collaborating organization as long as they are appropriate and suitable candidates to work closely with children. Appropriate background checks will be administered through the local Boys & Girls Clubs for all volunteer mentors at no cost to the mentor candidates.

5. **Question:** Are there other organizations collaborating in this effort to provide mentors to local Boys & Girls Clubs and if so, who are these organizations?

**Answer:** Presently, *National Mentor Recruitment Collaborations* have been formalized with the US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis International, Junior Achievement USA and the Morehouse College Alumni Association, with the intent that these collaborations may be implemented by the respective local agencies.

6. **Question:** Should we initiate contact with our local Boys & Girls Club or wait for them to contact us?

**Answer:** Most local Boys & Girls Clubs selected to receive grants to administer *National Mentoring Programs* will be notified of their grants beginning in early December. You may wish to contact your local Boys & Girls Club or may wait to hear from them. A listing and contact information of *National Mentoring Programs* participating Boys & Girls Clubs will be posted on [bgca.org](http://bgca.org) in early December. You may also visit *Find a Club* at [www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org) for contact information of local Boys & Girls Clubs in your area.

7. **Question:** Can you tell me more about the mentoring model at a local Boys and Girls Club?

**Answer:** As a mentor to a Boys & Girls Club youth, you can work with a youth via the traditional One to One (one adult in a mentor/mentee relationship with one youth); or with a small group (one adult mentor forming a mentor/mentees relationship with a small group of young people.) Your local Boys & Girls Clubs will work with you to determine which method is best for your skillset and availability. All mentoring relationships and interactions are to be site-based and must take place at the local Boys & Girls Club.

8. **Question:** What is expected of me as a mentor at a Boys & Girls Club? What is the time commitment? Will I be able to select or meet the child or children before being paired? Where and how often do we meet and will there be other people around when I meet with my mentee?

**Answer:** Mentors must be appropriately screened and have successfully passed all required background checks per BGCA Membership requirements. Each mentor may be assigned more than one mentee. Mentors will be matched with the child(ren) based upon interviews with Club staff, the prospective mentors, and meeting the child(ren). We are also mindful of matching mentors and mentees by gender and race, in particular in regard to addressing the minority male mentor gap. The hours of mentoring will be dependent upon the availability of the mentor and child; however, it is encouraged that mentors may meet with mentees twice weekly for 45 minutes, if possible. Mentoring relationships that last at least a year or more are proven to be most effective, and that is the goal. All mentoring activities and interactions will occur at the Boys & Girls Club.

9. **Question:** I am a little nervous or unsure as to whether or not I am qualified to be a mentor. What do I need to know and do?

**Answer:** Mentor training is required for all Boys & Girls Clubs receiving federal funds to conduct mentoring programs. BGCA offers an online distance-learning course as well workshops at BGCA supported training events outlining the type of training mentors should receive and recommendations to assist Clubs in providing mentor training.

The local Boys & Girls Club organization will provide prospective mentors with orientation and training, as well as monitoring along the way, to support mentors and to ensure a successful and meaningful mentoring experience—both for mentors and mentees.

- 10. Question:** Will mentors have a Background Check, and if so, how will that be administered and paid for?

**Answer:** As a requirement of membership in BGCA all Clubs must ensure regular, annual background checks are conducted on any individual having access to young people who participate in Club programs and activities. BGCA has developed national partnerships with agencies that can conduct the necessary background checks at a reasonable cost. The local Boys & Girls Club should cover the cost of background checks.

- 11. Question:** How will we know if our collaboration is successful—how do we measure success?

**Answer:** This will depend upon the specific deliverables and expectations established by your organization and the local Boys & Girls Club. They may vary between or be a combination of individual or group accomplishment that should address the mission and programmatic needs of both local partnering organizations.

- 12. Question:** How will this collaboration help my local organization grow and meet goals that are strategically important to us?

**Answer:** It is important for the local partnering organizations to have candid conversation at the start of their collaboration to ensure that mutually satisfactory and beneficial goals are established. Again, these goals and mission needs will vary across localities, and the national MOU will also be integral to the establishment of mutual goals and objectives.

- 13. Question:** Will the local Boys & Girls Club help us to track participation so that we can report on and recognize our volunteers?

**Answer:** Yes, both the local Boys & Girls Club and the BGCA national office will track and provide quarterly information detailing the level of engagement of local collaborations. Program best practices will also be tracked and disseminated.

- 14. Question:** How do I know I will enjoy and benefit from the experience and can I choose not to continue as a mentor if it's just not for me?

**Answer:** Successful and rewarding mentoring relationships are developed through a combination of many factors including personality, interest, context, time investment and commitment. Any one of these elements can make or break a good mentor/mentee relationship. However it is important to note that not all matches will be successful. Through proper recruitment, selection, orientation, training, participation and assessment, a gauge can be determined to rate how well mentoring is going, for both the mentor and the participant (mentee). The local Club should provide you with opportunities to give and receive feedback on the progress of your mentoring experience and guide you along the way.