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WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE - WIC

DIVISION 2.5. YOUTHS [1700 - 2250] (*Division 2.5 added by Stats. 1941, Ch. 937.*)

CHAPTER 3. Governor's Mentoring Partnership [2100 - 2106] (*Chapter 3 added by Stats. 2002, Ch. 355, Sec. 1.*)

2100. (a) The Legislature finds and declares that California's children are growing up under conditions of great stress that are resulting in devastating effects on their development and well-being. Structural changes in society, including the breakdown in the traditional family and erosion of neighborhood community support networks, have taken a toll on their welfare, self-esteem, and academic achievement. While youth struggle with many difficulties, four risk factors stand out: academic failure, substance abuse, involvement in the criminal justice system, and teen pregnancy. To address these challenges, the State of California recognizes quality mentoring as a critical prevention strategy, not as a panacea for the aforementioned problems, but as a cost-effective method of assisting today's youth to become productive, contributing members of society, and as an important source of data for improving the quality of all relationships between youth and adults. Research finds that without the caring support, counsel, and role modeling of more experienced individuals or exposure to natural support networks, young people are much more vulnerable to the destructive forces of apathy, abuse, and neglect. As we acknowledge the increasing numbers of children who do not have the benefit of positive relationships, there has been an increasing recognition of the value of mentoring, an activity that connects a caring and more experienced person with a young person who is in need of attention and support. As a means of maximizing public resources, mentoring is both efficient and effective, relying on volunteers as the core service providers to create collateral improvements in the lives of youth. The public investment in the prevention strategy of mentoring has inspired significant private support at the local level. Mentoring principles may also be used to create mentor-rich environments wherever youth and adults interact on a regular basis, thereby effectively expanding the world of positive adult contacts for youth in their natural environments.

(b) The complexities of supporting mentoring organizations and promoting the formation of positive developmental relationships wherever young people and adults interact requires the coordinated and sustained support of many private and public sector organizations to ensure that their services are available to all young persons who wish to have a mentor. To meet the needs of each young person, mentor services should be available in communities throughout California and mentor-rich environments should be created wherever young people and adults interact on a regular basis. Mentor programs should be culturally and linguistically competent and should embrace the rich diversity of the state. It is the intent of the Legislature and the purpose of this chapter to foster a partnership between the public and private sector for the long-term support of quality mentor programs and mentor-rich environments in which young people can interact on a regular basis with an array of caring adults.

(c) Mentoring California's youth has been carried on by thousands of dedicated volunteers through local mentor organizations and with the very significant contributions of the business community in both time and money. State and local government agencies also operate mentor programs. However, the need far outweighs the current resources. The valuable potential services of many caring adults and older youth continue to go untapped while the waiting list of children in need continues to grow, and distant youth-adult relationships continue to exist where developmental youth-adult relationships could flourish.

(d) This section shall become inoperative on July 1, 2013.

(Amended by Stats. 2013, Ch. 22, Sec. 90. (AB 75) Effective June 27, 2013. Amending action operative July 1, 2013, by Sec. 110 of Ch. 22. Section inoperative July 1, 2013, by provisions from this amendment.)

2104. For purposes of this chapter, the following definitions apply:

(a) "At-risk youth" means an individual under 21 years of age whose environment increases their chance of academic failure, alcohol and other drug use, involvement in the criminal justice system, or teen pregnancy.

(b) "Mentoring" means a relationship over a period of time in which caring and concerned adults and older youth provide support, guidance, and help to younger at-risk persons as they go through life.

(c) "Mentor-rich environments" are environments that create many opportunities for young people to interact with an array of caring adults and where youth feel respected, connected, and affirmed.

(d) This section shall become inoperative on July 1, 2013.

(Amended by Stats. 2013, Ch. 22, Sec. 91. (AB 75) Effective June 27, 2013. Amending action operative July 1, 2013, by Sec. 110 of Ch. 22. Section inoperative July 1, 2013, by provisions from this amendment.)

2106. It is the intent of the Legislature that all youth mentoring programs shall be afforded all of the following:

(a) The adoption of quality assurance standards by school- and community-based mentor programs.

(b) The provision of mentor program technical assistance.

(c) The provision of technical assistance to any organization that wishes to improve youth-adult relationships.

(d) The provision of a mentor program clearinghouse and library service.

(e) The preparation and periodic updating of a statewide directory of mentor program services.

(f) The provision of mentor program referrals to the general public.

(g) The coordination of the state employee mentor recruitment campaign.

(h) The development of a coordinated and coherent reporting form and requirements.

(i) (1) In order to obtain funding appropriated by the Legislature, mentor programs shall have adopted the California Mentor Initiative Quality Assurance Standards and shall provide data regarding mentee outcomes as requested by the state funding agencies consistent with subdivision (h).

(2) Adopted in 1997, the Quality Assurance Standards can be found in the State Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs Publication Number 99-1121. The requirements of these standards are summarized as follows:

(A) A statement of purpose and a long-range plan.

(B) A recruitment plan for both mentors and mentees.

(C) An orientation for mentors and mentees.

(D) Eligibility screening for mentors and mentees.

(E) A readiness and training curriculum for all mentors and mentees.

(F) A strategy that matches the provider program's purpose.

(G) A monitoring program that includes ongoing assessment.

(H) A support, recognition, and retention component, including ongoing peer support, training, and development.

(I) Closure steps that include confidential exit interviews.

(J) An evaluation process based on an outcome analysis of the mentor program, program criteria, and statement of purpose.

(j) This section shall become inoperative on July 1, 2013.

(Amended by Stats. 2013, Ch. 22, Sec. 92. (AB 75) Effective June 27, 2013. Amending action operative July 1, 2013, by Sec. 110 of Ch. 22. Section inoperative July 1, 2013, by provisions from this amendment.)