

Independent mentoring consultant shares benefits of using online mentor training developed by Mentoring Central



“ I know firsthand about the lack of research-based training for foster youth, foster alumni, and justice-involved youth, so I felt that offering Mentoring Central’s courses to let others learn their value and the importance of implementing them was essential. ”

Beverly Woodrome

Independent Mentoring Consultant and former Mentoring Director for the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence’s Boren Mentoring Initiative.

The Challenge

The desire to make a difference in the life of a child is a common and very important motivation in a mentor. While this is a valuable attribute, it’s not enough to become a truly successful mentor; or to help organizations develop a successful mentoring program. Training is an important (and ongoing) step towards giving mentors the tools and resources to understand, connect, and advocate with their mentees, so they can develop successful and effective relationships.

Training can take various forms, ranging from basic orientation sessions to share the rules and requirements of a mentoring program to more advanced training to learn positive skills for supporting specific populations of mentees. The level and frequency of training provided to mentors can be impacted by accessibility, cost, and willingness on the part of mentors to see the value in spending time working on their mentoring skills through in-person and online training.



“ Once I found an online, nationally researched, and approved mentor training, I knew we had to have that for Oklahoma mentors! I wanted to do everything we could to give our mentors the best training and on-site support, and that was Mentoring Central. ”

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The Background

Beverly Woodrome is currently an independent mentoring consultant focusing on positive youth development in Oklahoma. She's also a former high school and college teacher, and served as the Mentoring Director for the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence's Boren Mentoring Initiative from 2012 until 2019. Beverly was first introduced to Mentoring Central's online and in-person mentor training programs while attending the 2012 National Mentoring Summit and immediately saw the value and importance of requiring pre-match mentor training, as well as offering mentors in her program as much training as possible.

The Results

After returning from the National Mentoring Summit, Beverly promptly purchased the Mentoring Central program, **Building the Foundation** for her site-based mentoring program. She also encouraged mentoring programs in rural and urban areas of Oklahoma to use the courses offered by Mentoring Central.

Since that time, Woodrome uses every opportunity to share information with her colleagues about the valuable resources and training available from Mentoring Central. In October 2021, Beverly was invited to participate in the Strengthening Youth Custody and Transition Services Advisory Committee for the Oklahoma Commission for Children and Youth (OCCYS). Following Beverly's participation in that meeting and her glowing reviews of Mentoring Central's research-based courses, **Mentor4OK** purchased the suite of pre- and early- match research-based, online mentoring courses from Mentoring Central including: **Building the Foundation, Ethics and Safety, and Building and Maintaining the Relationship.**

Beverly appreciates that the courses are not too lengthy and that they are composed of a set of brief lessons. The design of the courses gives mentors flexibility to complete the courses when it's most convenient for them. Beverly found the online training to be perfect for busy college students who wanted to become mentors while juggling challenging course loads. Mentoring programs can also use training as an ongoing

screening tool to measure mentors' level of commitment to the program. Beverly used Mentoring Central's administrative dashboard to easily enroll volunteers in online courses, follow mentors' progress in completing online training, and nudge mentors to finish courses, when needed. Beverly found that the ability of volunteers to complete (or not complete) training was indicative of their seriousness to stick to their commitment to the mentor program.

Requiring mentors to complete pre-match training not only identifies potential red flags regarding which mentors may not fulfill their commitment to the program, but also answers many of the questions volunteers may have about mentoring. It sets clear expectations and goals, so everyone is on the same page, and mentees experience the greatest benefits.



“The Mentoring Central administration dashboard is a helpful tool for program administrators to quickly enroll volunteers in training and monitor their progress. It's a helpful way to see who's really serious about becoming a committed mentor.”

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“Training is an important screening tool. If they can't complete their online training, then that's an indicator that they're not going to be able to follow through with their commitment and work with the mentee.”

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