

Missouri Mentoring Partnership Required Policies and Minimum Standards Young Parent Program

I. Missouri Mentoring Partnership Mission

Missouri Mentoring Partnership (MMP) assists in preparing youth for personal success in employment, education, healthy lifestyles and self-sufficiency through mentored support.

II. Introduction to Required Policies and Minimum Standards (RPMS)

Required Policies and Minimum Standards (RPMS) are the hallmarks of great social services. These RPMS are designed to give organizations and mentoring programs funded by the Missouri Department of Social Services (DSS) guidelines for serving children and youth in quality mentoring programs.

These standards address the overall management of the mentoring programs and give direction to the sponsoring agency and funded programs for sustaining their affairs in a professional manner.

The creation of this document represents the ongoing commitment of DSS to improve mentoring services and create a strong foundation for quality and success in the State of Missouri. This document is considered a “living document” and will be regularly reviewed by The Family and Community Trust (FACT) and addendums for change will be distributed as necessary.

III. Program Management Manual (PMM)

The Program Management Manual (PMM), which is created in part by DSS and the local agencies and programs, is designed to provide governing Boards and staff with an overview of the Missouri Mentoring Partnership (MMP) programs, their adopted policies, procedures and forms.

The manual shall contain, at all times, the information needed to operate a successful program. A copy of the PMM should be available to all staff members.

The manual is set up by individual programs and divided into “policy sections”. Each section must contain the: (1) approved policy, (2) current procedures, (3) current forms.

Any changes that are made to the approved policy, procedures or forms should be memorialized in the PMM.

This historical record is also critical to understanding the history of the program and will serve as support to any issues that might arise.

IV. History of Missouri Mentoring Partnership

MMP began as a demonstration project in 1993. The model was adapted from a nationally recognized program in San Diego, California administered by the Coming Together Foundation. That program brought the public and private sectors together in a joint venture to assist young people aging out of foster care. Their goal was to assist these young people in achieving self-sufficiency by providing a positive work experience.

MMP program began in the State of Missouri as a collaboration between the Missouri Department of Social Services and the Family Resource Center in St. Louis. MMP is currently a state and federally funded initiative offered through DSS. MMP operates in multiple sites in Missouri and may have two components: Young Parent Program and Work Site Program.

V. Missouri Mentoring Partnership and The Family and Community Trust (FACT) Organization

FACT serves as the liaison for DSS to the Community Partnerships and other organizations to assist in the development and monitoring of the youth mentoring programs. Their work involves consultation and coordination with program sites. Ensuring that the programs are adhering to the (1) scope of work, (2) adopting best practices, (3) collaborating with the State and Community Partnerships and (4) developing sustaining strategies are the paramount responsibilities of FACT.

Specifically, FACT:

- Will review and monitor annual program proposals
- Will review and oversee budgets
- Will review and evaluate program progress reports
- Will facilitate meetings for MMP staff
- Will provide technical assistance to programs

VI. Fees

MMP shall not charge a fee to any program participant, families of program participants or any individual, agency or organization referring youth to the program. In those instances where it is determined that a prospective participant is not eligible for services, no fee shall be charged for a referral to another agency, organization, service or individual.

VII. Young Parent Program Overview

This component of MMP works with young mothers and fathers who are up through 26 years of age and younger to develop sound parenting skills. Each expecting or parenting participant is matched with a caring adult mentor. Each mentor is trained to assist the youth in developing effective parenting skills, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, keeping their child(ren)'s immunizations updated and staying in school.

Regular support meetings are used to educate young parents on issues relevant to them and their children and to provide encouragement and support.

Education is priority for all young parents. Mentors work closely with MMP staff to encourage the young parents to stay in school, obtain a diploma or High School Equivalency Test (HSET) and pursue post-secondary education opportunities in order to have greater skills and knowledge to obtain better and more sustainable employment.

VIII. Young Parent Program Required Policies

1. The sponsoring organization and funded program must operate in compliance with applicable laws.

1.1 The sponsoring organization must be incorporated within the state of Missouri

1.2 The sponsoring organization must be a not-for-profit tax-exempt status

1.3 The sponsoring organization must keep minutes of all corporate meetings and specifically not when the funded program policies and standards are accepted or altered.

2. The sponsoring organization must adopt the MMP mission for the funded program and ensure that all decision making and assessment of the program are in alignment with the program's mission.

3. The sponsoring organization must ensure that the program maintains an up to date Program Management Manual (PMM) that contains (1) all Board approved policies in accordance with the RPMS (2) current program procedures for each RPMS and (3) program forms for each RPMS.

The following is a list of the RPMS:

3.1 Young Parent Eligibility Policy:

- Must be expecting or parenting
- Must be 26 years of age or younger
- Must not be subject to income requirements
- Policy must address eligibility for special needs youth, mental health concerns and/or history of substance abuse and/or justice involvement

3.2 Mentor Eligibility Policy:

- Must be at least 21 years of age
- Must not have a substantiated child abuse and/or neglect charge
- Must be willing to give a 12-month consulting/engaged commitment to the program
- Must have a policy to address the eligibility of mentors who have a criminal background, history of mental health concerns and/or history of substance abuse

3.3 Young Parent Intake and Assessment Policy:

- Must complete an Application
- Must sign the Program Agreement form with parent's consent, if a minor
- Must sign the Release for Liability Agreement form
- Must sign the Services Providers Authorization for Release for Information form
- Must sign the HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices Acknowledgement
- Must participate in an Interview
- Must sign the Permission to Use Photograph, before image or audio can be used by the organization
- Must complete an assessment on each young parent

3.4 Mentor Intake and Assessment Policy:

- Must complete an Application
- Must complete a Young Parent Preference form
- Must complete a Child Abuse and Neglect Check and Missouri Highway Patrol Check
- Must complete an assessment on each volunteer mentor and make recommendation to accept or deny
- Must participate in an interview and orientation
- Must attend an initial mentor training before matched up with young parent
- Must complete three references
 - One from an immediate family member
 - Two from friends the mentor has known for at least two years.
 - If an immediate family member cannot be identified, a third friend the mentor has known for at least two years can be substituted

3.5 Young Parent/Mentor Matching Policy:

- Must match with appropriate gender mentor or appropriate family member
- Must sign a Match Agreement form

3.6 Match Supervision and Support Policy:

- Must talk with the young parent every month
- Must talk with the mentor every month
- Policy must address the Attendance in Parenting Classes a youth and/or their mentor are required to attend
- Must summarize conversations and sign the Goal Objective Reporting form (GOR)
- Must complete and sign GOR form for the young parent within 45 days of being matched. The GOR must be updated and signed at a minimum of twice a year
- Must have a policy that includes individual goals for each young parent

Goals for each GOR should include but not be limited to:

- **Specific:** Well defined, clear, and unambiguous
- **Measurable:** With specific criteria that measure progress towards the accomplishment of the goal
- **Achievable:** Attainable and not impossible to achieve
- **Realistic:** Within reach, realistic, and relevant
- **Timely:** With a clearly defined timeline, including a starting date and a target date.

3.7 Match Closure Policy:

- Must attempt to have a closure conversation with each matched party. If parent/guardian is involved in young parent case, they should be included in closure conversation
- Must write up a Closure Summary on the young parent and the mentor
 - Note the date of closure
 - Reason for closure
 - Note if either party is considered eligible for re-matching

3.8 Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect Policy:

- Must train program volunteers and mentors on their responsibilities for reporting suspected Child Abuse and Neglect
- Must notify program staff of any initiated hotline calls as soon as possible
- Must create steps for making and documenting hotline calls

3.9 Maintaining Case Records Policy:

- Must maintain one file per young parent and one file per mentor
- Must restrict access to files to only assigned Case Manager, Supervisors, Other Staff / Board “as needed” and DSS or FACT

3.10 Collateral Information Policy:

- Must outline additional information that can/should be collected in order to make a determination about the eligibility of a young parent or mentor or providing ongoing services and involvement with the program

3.11 Confidentiality Policy:

- Must outline what is protected under the confidentiality policy, the limits of confidentiality, including turning information over to legal authorities and the consequences of violating confidentiality

3.12 Overnight Policy:

- Must forbid overnights or create standards in which overnights would be acceptable. If overnights are acceptable, there must be a process for monitoring the overnights in the supervision and support policies, processes and forms

3.13 Transportation Policy:

- Must forbid mentors from transporting young parents or create standards in which providing transportation would be acceptable. If providing transportation is acceptable there must be a process for monitoring the mentor's driver's license and insurance in the supervision and support policies, processes and forms
- Must also outline, consistent with current Missouri laws, the requirements for transporting the children of the young parent

3.14 Out of Town Travel Policy:

- Must forbid out of town travel of young parents and mentors or create standards in which out of town travel would be acceptable. If out of town travel is acceptable, there must be a process for monitoring the out of town travel in the supervision and support policies, processes and forms

3.15 Communicable Disease Policy:

- Must create policy, consistent with current Missouri laws, for accepting young parents and mentors who might have a communicable disease or contract one while matched. The policy must include the process for handling notification to young parents and mentors

3.16 Volunteer Update Policy:

- Must update Child Abuse and/or Neglect Checks, Family Care Safety Registry and Missouri Highway Patrol checks every two years
- Must outline method for updating driver's license and auto insurance if mentor is allowed to transport young parent

3.17 Eligibility Exception Policy:

- On very rare occasions the Young Parent Mentoring program might feel a need to make an exception to the eligibility policy for an individual
 - The "exception" must be justifiable, in writing and not create substantial risk to the youth or program
 - All "exceptions" must be approved by the sponsoring agency executive leader and the local MMP Director
 - The number of exceptions made in a given year must be reported to the liaison organization, FACT, and they reserve the right to review the associated files and documentation

3.18 Alternate Standards Policy:

- Must submit request for an alternate standard in writing to FACT after approval of the governing Board
- Must include the date of approval and must be verifiable by Board minutes
- FACT will review alternate standards request and respond in writing with a determination of approved, disapproved or recommendation to modify
- FACT may seek clarification during the review process by requesting additional information or scheduling a meeting
- If the alternate standards request is approved, it must be maintained in the Program Management Manual (PMM)