

CHAPTER 8
IOWA YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAM CERTIFICATION

One of the purposes of the Iowa mentoring partnership (IMP) is to certify mentoring programs that meet those certification standards for youth mentoring programs outlined in this chapter. The Iowa mentoring partnership assists with the development and support of a network of mentoring providers and provides training and support services to certified mentoring programs and programs with a conditional certification. The Iowa mentoring partnership seeks to increase the capacity of these programs, deliver resources, raise awareness, and enhance the quality of mentoring relationships in Iowa.

817—8.1(15H) Definitions.

“Certification” means the process which identifies youth mentoring programs as meeting the criteria for effective practice to be eligible for financial and technical assistance.

“Commission” means the Iowa commission on volunteer service.

“Conditional certification” means a temporary certification identifying a youth mentoring program before the program is fully operational in order for the program to apply for financial and technical assistance.

“Mentoring certification application” means the application developed by the Iowa commission on volunteer service, which can be adopted by all agencies and departments of state government. The application contains information which shall be used to determine an applicant’s designation as a certified mentoring program for participation in the Iowa mentoring partnership.

“Mentoring program” means a program that provides older mentors to youth. A mentoring program must meet all of the following requirements:

1. Be located in this state;
2. Be operated as a public or private not-for-profit entity, part of a school or area education agency, or part of a faith-based community;
3. Serve youth aged 5 to 23;
4. Appropriately screen mentors, requiring a minimum of two hours of orientation and training prior to serving in a mentoring capacity;
5. Require mentors and youth to meet for a minimum of one hour per week over the course of a school or calendar year;
6. Require mentors and youth in an E-mentoring program to communicate electronically, at least once per week, over the course of a school or calendar year.

817—8.2(15H) Certification. The commission is responsible for ascertaining that a youth mentoring program is qualified to be designated as a certified mentoring program.

8.2(1) Full certification. Before a mentoring program can participate in the Iowa mentoring partnership, it must be certified by the commission.

a. A review team shall review applications from youth mentoring programs to determine whether the mentoring programs are eligible to participate in the Iowa mentoring partnership.

b. Full certification means the commission has determined that the youth mentoring program has met the established standards.

c. Applications for mentoring program certification are available from the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service, 200 East Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50309, or the Iowa Department of Public Health, Lucas State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.

d. Applicants shall receive written notification of the commission’s decision.

8.2(2) Conditional certification. Some mentoring programs are temporarily certified before the program becomes fully operational or before the program has met the standards for full certification.

a. Conditional certification may be in effect for six months and may be used for the purpose of applying for financial and technical assistance available to certified mentoring programs. The commission may grant an extension of conditional certification if it is determined that significant progress is being made toward meeting the requirements for full certification.

b. The mentoring program name will not be included on the IMP Web site, nor will the program be referred potential mentors, until the mentoring program has been fully certified. The Web site of the Iowa mentoring partnership is www.iowamentoring.org.

c. It shall be the responsibility of the mentoring program to notify the commission when the program believes it has met the certification criteria.

d. Additional documentation may be required of new mentoring programs to verify elements of the application. Mentoring programs may be requested to provide documentation of continued eligibility at any time during and after conditional certification.

8.2(3) Recertification. Certified youth mentoring programs shall submit verification of continued eligibility to the commission at least every two years.

a. The form for recertification shall be provided by the commission.

b. Other documents and regular reporting will be requested to verify the continuing eligibility of the mentoring program.

8.2(4) Documentation. Various and specific documentation may be required by the commission during the certification process. Each program shall provide relevant information upon the commission's request in order to be considered for certification.

Applications shall be signed by an authorized representative of the organization.

8.2(5) Reapplication. A mentoring program may reapply upon proof of compliance with Iowa youth mentoring program certification standards. Any program that is denied certification or decertified for any reason bears the burden of proving that all deficiencies previously cited have been corrected. Corrections shall be in accordance with requirements of the Iowa mentoring partnership. Applications may be requested from the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service, 200 East Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50309, or the Iowa Department of Public Health, Lucas State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.

8.2(6) Notification. The commission shall be notified within 30 days following a change in staff of the mentoring program director or an authorized representative of the certified mentoring program.

817—8.3(15H) Description of application. The IMP application requires information about individuals who manage and administer the local mentoring program. Names, current addresses, federal identification number, and names of board and committee members must be included. Documents which establish nonprofit status may be required.

Specific questions are included on the application regarding mentoring program operations, training, number of mentors and mentees, structure of the program, and other information to determine whether the program meets the certification standards established in rule 817—8.4(15H).

Information contained in the application may be reviewed by the applicant upon request to the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service, 200 East Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50309. Material to be added to a file may be sent to the commission at the above address.

817—8.4(15H) Certification standards. The commission has established standards to certify youth mentoring programs. These standards are intended to indicate whether programs are operating under the quality policies and procedures established by a national panel of mentoring program experts, researchers and others.

8.4(1) The mentoring program should have a statement of purpose and long-range plan that include:

a. Who, what, where, when, why, and how activities will be performed.

b. Input from originators, staff, funders, potential volunteers, and participants.

c. Assessment of community need.

d. Realistic, attainable, and easy-to-understand operational plan.

e. Goals, objectives, and time lines for all aspects of the plan.

f. Funding and resource development plan.

8.4(2) The mentoring program shall have recruitment plans for both mentors and participants that include:

a. Strategies that portray accurate expectations and benefits.

- b.* Year-round marketing and public relations strategies.
- c.* Targeted outreach based on participants' needs.
- d.* Volunteer opportunities beyond mentoring.
- e.* A philosophy consistent with the program's statement of purpose and long-range plan.
- f.* A goal of serving at least 15 youth, computed as an average of the number of youth served over the preceding three program years.

8.4(3) The mentoring program shall have an orientation for mentors and mentees that includes:

- a.* Program overview.
- b.* Description of eligibility, screening process, and suitability requirements.
- c.* Level of commitment expected (time, energy, flexibility).
- d.* Expectations and restrictions (accountability).
- e.* Expected benefits and rewards of the program.
- f.* A separate focus for potential mentors and participants.
- g.* A summary of program policies, including but not limited to policies on written reports, interviews, evaluations, and reimbursement.

8.4(4) The mentoring program shall have eligibility screening for mentors and participants that includes:

- a.* An application process and review.
- b.* A face-to-face interview.
- c.* Reference checks for mentors, which may include character references, a child abuse registry check, a driving record check, and a criminal record check where legally permissible.
- d.* Suitability criteria that relate to the program's statement of purpose and needs of the target population. Criteria may include some or all of the following: personality profile, skills identification, gender, age, language, racial requirements, level of education, career interests, motivation for volunteering, and academic standing.
- e.* Successful completion of prematch training and orientation.

8.4(5) The mentoring program shall have a readiness and training curriculum for all mentors and participants that includes:

- a.* Knowledgeable trainers.
- b.* Orientation to the program and resource network, including information and referral, other support services, and schools.
- c.* Skills development as appropriate.
- d.* Cultural sensitivity and appreciation training.
- e.* Guidelines for participants on how to get the most out of the mentoring relationship.
- f.* Dos and don'ts of relationship management.
- g.* Job and role descriptions.
- h.* Confidentiality and liability information.
- i.* Crisis management/problem-solving resources.
- j.* Communications skills development.
- k.* Ongoing sessions as necessary.

8.4(6) The mentoring program should have a matching strategy that includes:

- a.* A link with the program's statement of purpose.
- b.* A commitment to consistency.
- c.* A grounding in the program's eligibility criteria.
- d.* A rationale for the selection of a particular matching strategy from the wide range of available models.
- e.* Appropriate criteria for matches, including some or all of the following: gender, age, language requirements, availability, needs, interests, preferences of volunteer and participant, life experience, and temperament.
- f.* A signed statement of understanding that both parties agree to the conditions of the match and the mentoring relationship.
- g.* Prematch social activities between mentor and participant pools.

h. Team-building activities to reduce the anxiety of the first meeting.

8.4(7) The mentoring program should have a monitoring process that includes:

a. Consistent, scheduled meetings with staff, mentors, and participants.

b. A tracking system for ongoing assessment.

c. Written records.

d. Input from community partners, family, and significant others.

e. A process for managing grievances, praise, rematching, interpersonal problem solving, and premature relationship closure.

8.4(8) The mentoring program should have a support, recognition, and retention component that includes:

a. A formal kick-off event.

b. Ongoing peer support groups for volunteers, participants, and others.

c. Ongoing training and development.

d. Relevant discussion of issues and dissemination of information.

e. Networking with appropriate organizations.

f. Social gatherings of different groups as needed.

g. Annual recognition and appreciation event.

h. Newsletters or other mailings to participants, mentors, supporters, and funders.

8.4(9) The mentoring program should have closure steps that include:

a. Private and confidential exit interviews regarding the mentoring relationship between:

(1) Participant and staff;

(2) Mentor and staff; and

(3) Mentor and participant without staff.

b. Clearly stated policy for future contacts.

c. Assistance to participants in defining future steps for achieving personal goals.

8.4(10) The mentoring program should have an evaluation process based on:

a. Outcome analysis of the program and mentoring relationships.

b. Program criteria and statement of purpose.

c. Informational needs of board, funders, community partners, and other supporters of the program.

817—8.5(15H) Special consideration. In addition to the standards listed above, the commission may give consideration to other factors to determine certification status in order to ensure that only high-quality youth mentoring programs are certified.

At the discretion of the commission, on-site audits may be conducted to determine certification.

817—8.6(15H) Decertification. A youth mentoring program shall be decertified by the commission if it is determined that the program no longer meets the certification standards identified herein for a high-quality mentoring program or if program personnel cannot be contacted by the commission.

8.6(1) Written notice of the intent to revoke certification shall be provided to a youth mentoring program when the commission determines that there is reasonable cause to believe the program does not comply with the rules contained herein. Notice shall be sent by United States mail at least 20 days before decertification becomes effective.

8.6(2) If the commission sends a letter by first-class mail to the last-known address provided to the commission by the youth mentoring program and the letter is returned as undeliverable, this may be considered grounds for decertification.

8.6(3) Decertification procedures may be initiated by the commission or following investigation of a complaint filed by the general public. A request for an investigation from the public must be in written form and shall specify the reason(s) why the certified youth mentoring program no longer meets the certification standards. Supporting documentation may be attached to the request. The identity of the complainant is confidential pursuant to Iowa Code section 22.7(18).

8.6(4) Benefits and designation as a certified mentoring program will continue until the final decision is issued by the commission.

817—8.7(15H) Fraudulent practices in connection with certified mentoring programs. A person is considered to be guilty of a fraudulent practice if the person knowingly falsifies information on an application for the purpose of obtaining certification and any other potential benefits, including those offered through the Iowa mentoring partnership or other state contracts and grants available only to certified mentoring programs.

The commission may investigate allegations or complaints of fraudulent practices and will take action to decertify a youth mentoring program upon concluding that a violation has occurred.

A violation under this rule is grounds for decertification of the youth mentoring program responsible for the violation. Decertification shall be in addition to any penalty otherwise authorized.

817—8.8(15H) Appeal procedure. Commission decisions regarding certified mentoring programs may be contested by an adversely affected party as detailed in 817—Chapter 5.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 15H.

[Filed 9/7/07, Notice 5/9/07—published 9/26/07, effective 10/31/07]