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.