



## PCSAO Peer Mentoring Program Executive Summary

### A. Program mission

The goal of this program is to strengthen interpersonal relationships and increase social support networks for foster youth. Assisting foster youth to develop healthy connections with their mentor and with other youth and young adults involved in the program will help stabilize and strengthen the life of a young person in foster care, as well as develop leadership skills in the young adult mentor.

### B. Mentors and mentees

The mentors are young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 who have had personal experience in the foster care system as a child. These mentors live in Columbus, and are presently working or continuing their education after high school. Once potential mentors are identified, they are carefully screened before becoming a mentor. All mentors must submit an application and interest survey, have a BCI&I check, and be interviewed by a program staff member. Mentors must be willing to commit to the program for one year, and be highly motivated to be a positive role model for a foster youth.

The mentees are youth between the ages of 10 and 13 who are currently in the foster care system and in the custody of Franklin County Children Services. Mentees must be willing to commit to being mentored for one year, and the foster parents must be willing to support the youth in this endeavor.

### C. Service descriptions

1. **Initial training for peer mentors and mentees.** Mentors receive 5 hours of initial training to assist them in becoming a successful mentor. (Mentors are given a \$50 stipend for attending the training) Mentees also participate in a 2 hour initial training to learn about the peer mentoring program and their responsibilities in the mentoring relationship.
2. **Bi-weekly group activities.** This includes numerous fun activities and events, a group training session, and a yearly appreciation banquet. These activities allow for individual time for the mentor/mentee, as well as positive group interaction. (Mentors receive a \$25 stipend per month to assist in transportation or other costs. Caregivers are given a \$20 gift card each month to assist in transportation costs for the mentees.)

3. **Ongoing training for mentors.** The Mentoring Center of Ohio offers two additional training sessions each year for the mentors to assist them in developing their mentoring skills. These trainings are 2 hours in length. An additional training session includes both mentors and mentees to address goal setting.
4. **Ongoing support for mentors.** Program staff support the mentors by contacting each mentor on a bi-weekly basis, and offering assistance when needed.
5. **Monthly contact by staff with mentee and mentee's caregiver.** Staff contact the mentee and the caregiver once a month to deal with any concerns they may have about the mentor relationship or the program.

#### **Key Partners:**

1. **Franklin County Children Services** identify the foster youth interested in being mentored, and assist in the recruitment of young adult mentors. FCCS also run BCI &I checks for potential mentors.
2. **Foster Care Alumni of America Ohio Chapter** assists in recruiting potential young adult mentors who have previously been in foster care. **FCAA** also assists PCSAO in supporting the young adult mentors throughout the year.
3. **The Mentoring Center of Central Ohio** provides ongoing training for the mentors and mentees.

#### **PCSAO Peer Mentoring Staff**

Shari Amigo, **PCSAO Peer Mentoring Program Manager**  
Jeed Jitprasert, **PCSAO Operations Manager**  
Arlene Jones, **PCSAO Foster Youth Advisor.**  
Crystal Ward Allen, **Executive Director of PCSAO.**  
Lisa Dickson, **Foster Care Alumni of America Ohio Chapter**

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The Peer mentoring program is fully funded through a grant from CWLA for the first year. The second and third years will be funded partially through CWLA, with matching funds required. Other grant opportunities will be sought to acquire the necessary funds for the program. Donations and discounted tickets will also be sought to fund the group activities for the mentors and mentees.