

States Engaging Human Need with Community Partners: Virginia and the Mentoring Initiative

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) implements the [Virginia Mentoring Initiative](#) to establish new or expand current programs to address self-sufficiency, job readiness and preparation, out-of-wedlock births, prisoner reentry and family preservation for individuals, families or youth with limited incomes or in need of services. The Initiative assists agencies of the Virginia Social Service System and their community and faith-based partners in establishing and developing mentoring programs. Together these public and community grass roots agencies help strengthen Virginia families and support positive development of Virginia's youth. The Initiative includes mentoring programs in areas such as tutoring, job coaching, job retention, career advancement, nutrition education, money and household management, time management, fatherhood and motherhood roles, enhanced parenting, healthy relationships, and marriage.

For additional information, e-mail community.connections@dss.virginia.gov or call (800) 777-8293.

Types of Mentoring

The Virginia Mentoring Initiative includes the following types of mentoring:

Type or Approach to Mentoring	Description
Adult-to-Youth	An adult provides a teen or younger child with a supportive relationship and the benefit of their life, school, or work experience to encouraging positive youth development.
Adult-to-Adult	An adult shares their life skills and knowledge with another adult to support and assist them in reaching specific personal or job related goals. The mentor builds trust by being a positive role model. Establishing trust, setting achievable goals, and making and celebrating progress are all part of the adult-to-adult mentoring commitment to help people better their lives.
Peer-to-Peer	Adolescents and children work with each other towards reinforcement of values and goals to achieve their potential. Peer to peer mentoring is under the guidance of an adult.
Family-to-Family	Having the support of a family has a definite impact on the ability to succeed. Mentoring an entire family provides every member in the family support and encouragement in reaching his/her goals.

Mentoring Results

Mentoring has been shown to:

- Improve the attitudes of youth towards their parents, peers, and teachers

- Encourage students to succeed in school
- Help foster care youth face challenges
- Assist ex-offenders in successful reentry to their family and community
- Help individuals with limited income gain and maintain jobs

Mentoring Programs

Virginia Reentry Family-to-Family Mentoring Program

In the Virginia Reentry Family-to-Family Mentoring Program married couples or two person teams are trained to help bridge positive connections with the community and provide support to formerly incarcerated men and women and their families during the reentry process. Training on effective mentoring with ex-offenders and their families is provided.

For more information, e-mail prisoner.reentry@dss.virginia.gov or call (800) 777-8293.