

MENTORYork



A High Impact Service Plan for the City of York



Message From Mayor



Dear Neighbors:

In April of 2009, the signing of the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act by President Obama shed new light on the symbolism of service and civic engagement in our country. Since its inception, platforms for the revival of volunteerism and community engagement have sprouted rapidly across cities in the United States.

I am pleased to join President Obama and Mayors from many cities across the nation in answering this call to service by inviting all residents to become engaged, involved, and present in the well being of the City of York by presenting **MENTORYork**.

The City of York has worked to hone this pilot initiative, **MENTORYork**, by partnering with The School District of the City of York, and private professionals to mentor at-risk teenagers enrolled in 9th grade at William Penn Senior High School, with the concrete goal of helping them to graduate. The forging of a first time working agreement with the school district and the City administration provided a window of opportunity to explore this innovative initiative to impact the lives of our youth.

MENTORYork is the City of York's, high impact service plan developed with the support of Cities of Service. The plan is designed to engage volunteerism in our city by targeting service towards the enhancement of our city's most prized possessions, our youth, through this progressive and innovative initiative.

Together, through collaborative efforts and a caring community, I know we can make lasting community changes that will affect generations to come. Thank you to all of the citizens and partners that have played a role in implementing our plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Kim Bracey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

C. Kim Bracey
Mayor

Executive Summary

On February 25, 2011, the City of York officially joined the national Cities of Service coalition and made a strong commitment to engage and empower volunteers to address the urgent needs of our physical city and our people in need.

Since then, the City of York has worked to hone a pilot initiative partnering the City, The School District of the City of York, and private professionals to mentor our at-risk teenagers enrolled in William Penn Senior High School, the City's only public high school, with the concrete goal of helping them to graduate.

Founded in New York City on September 10, 2009, Cities of Service is a bipartisan coalition of mayors who have committed to work together to engage citizens to address critical city needs through impact volunteerism. By accelerating the service movement at the most local level—connecting local needs to the supply of willing volunteers in innovative and impactful new ways—Cities of Service aspires to create a new chapter in America's longstanding history of service while making local government more effective.

Creative and disciplined public-private partnerships are powerful antidotes to some of our most enduring, festering problems.

In a still challenging economy, it is important that we enlist the help of more qualified, committed private citizens of all ages and rally all private resources at hand to improve our community.

York is proud to be one of 110 cities in the nation that are Cities of Service coalition members, one of only nine Pennsylvania cities, and only one of six third class cities in Pennsylvania.

About Cities of Service

Founded in New York City on September 10, 2009 by 17 mayors from cities across the nation, Cities of Service is a bipartisan coalition of mayors who have committed to work together to engage citizens to address critical city needs through impact volunteerism.

The coalition aims to create a vibrant and growing network of municipal governments effectively leveraging citizen service as a reliable, viable tool to achieve measurable impact on pressing local challenges. By accelerating the service movement at the most local level—connecting local needs to the supply of willing volunteers in innovative and impactful new ways—Cities of Service aspires to create a new chapter in America’s longstanding history of service while making local government more effective.

Today, the Cities of Service coalition includes more than 100 mayors, representing nearly 50 million Americans. Like the founding mayors, each coalition member has made a commitment to work with other mayors around the country and advance service strategies in their own city by crafting a high-impact service plan.



About AARP

AARP was founded on the principle of service. Since its establishment in 1958, AARP has been dedicated to delivering value to its members through service. Now, with the heightened interest in civic engagement and a new vitality around service, including the passage of the Kennedy Serve America Act in 2009, AARP is well positioned to tap into the strength of its millions of members to help solve pressing problems at the community level through the Cities of Service – AARP Volunteer Chief Service Officer Initiative.



About the Cities of Service-AARP Volunteer Chief Service Officer Initiative

The City of York joined the Cities of Service – AARP Volunteer CSO Initiative in February 2011. Through this collaboration between Cities of Service and AARP, coalition members with less than 125,000 residents have been given the opportunity to appoint highly-skilled volunteers to serve as Chief Service Officers for one year, many of whom come from AARP's membership.

Chief Service Officers are senior members of the mayors' leadership team and are responsible for the development and implementation of a high-impact service plan that leverages citizen service to address the city's most pressing challenges. In addition to appointing a volunteer Chief Service Officer, participating cities receive a \$5,000 Recognition Award from AARP and technical assistance from Cities of Service to develop and implement their high-impact service plans.

Service In Our City

The act of volunteerism has been woven into the fabric of the City of York for decades, often derived from the faith community, neighborhood associations, businesses, community members, or executive boards.

Through discussion with key community partners on all service levels within the City, the focus towards addressing community challenges to promote change through service were established.

MENTORYork highlights two important points:

-Everyone can make a difference: Being an encouragement that change can occur with the actions of all community members.

-Working together builds a stronger community: Embracing collaborative efforts within the community provides a foundation of strength when addressing challenges.



Program Overview

The Superintendent of the School District of the City of York will provide a list of 25 at-risk teenagers that are enrolled in William Penn Senior High School's 9th Grade Academy. These at-risk teens, known as Grads To Be, will be paired with 25 caring, diligent Master Mentors, role models and diverse professionals who will become actively involved in the lives of their respective students.

Beginning in the late summer of 2011, we will publicly solicit applications for **MENTORYork**. A personalized call to action will be made by the Mayor and her cabinet to both public- and private-sector community entities and parties.

For the 2011-2012 school year, our aim is to assemble a blue ribbon cast of diverse Master Mentors and professionals who will help leverage private resources to sustain and grow the program in subsequent years.

It's important that the Master Mentors represent professional, racial, and gender diversity and offer Grads To Be projections of hope and professional possibilities for themselves. Studies show that teenagers are more likely to trust and respond to a professional with a unique position of authority or strength.

Master Mentors will be consistent, reliable role models and informal teachers providing advice, support, friendship, homework assistance, guidance, and active conversations and listening. It is our expectation that mentors will meet with their mentees two to four times per week, each week, over four years.

National studies have shown that caring, consistent mentoring can increase competency in social development, academic achievement, and life skills, and that is what we intend to do.

MENTOR *York*

One of the challenges facing York is chronic truancy and a graduation rate that has remained stagnant for over a decade. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the 2009–10 graduation rate for William Penn Senior High School was 70.47% -- the lowest in York County. That is unacceptable – especially in today’s increasingly competitive, high-tech world.

Beginning in the 2011-2012 school year, **MENTORYork** will enlist volunteer, pre-screened Master Mentors, successful professionals in their own fields of all ages and races, who will go through training preparation before mentoring at-risk teenagers through their high school years at William Penn Senior High School.

Mentors are expected to be consistent and reliable figures in the lives of the youth, while providing the groundwork for a lasting friendship through skills such as: advice offering, support, guidance, and most importantly someone to listen. Structured and unstructured activities focusing on the social and academic aspects of the students’ life are areas in which the mentors will be urged to focus upon. Maintaining communication with parent(s), teachers, and key individuals in the life of the student are valuable components that mentors are required to engage.

Our inaugural Master Mentors will be expected to maintain contact with their mentee two-to-four times per week for an average face-to-face time commitment of at least one hour per week over four years or 208 hours.

Breakfasts, lunches, dinners, sporting and cultural events, workplace visits and internships, educational and vocational field trips, and other face-to-face activities all qualify toward the time commitment. Phone, e-mail, texting and other non face-to-face communications will supplement “face time,” which we believe is an essential component of the program.

The ultimate goal of the program is to pair 25 at risk youth with mentors within one year for the purpose of increasing the number of students with improved academics and the number of students identifying mentors as trusted individuals.



We are thankful for \$5,000 from AARP to the City of York to support the efforts of the volunteer Chief Service Officer to develop and launch the **MENTORYork** high impact plan. As part of the initiative’s steering committee, this officer will work with Edquina T. Washington, MHS, York’s Director of Community Relations, and a representative from The School District of the City of York’s Superintendent’s office to launch and ensure the success of **MENTORYork**.

We also have worked closely with Better York, Inc., York’s CEO roundtable, which recently has made a financial contribution of \$4,500 to The School District of the City of York, made at the

request of Superintendent Dr. Deborah Wortham, to improve students’ wardrobes and to contribute to a stronger culture of self-respect, respect for others, and learning.

Metrics

To gauge our progress towards the goal of attaining an 80% high school graduation rate for students participating in MENTORYork, we will track the following impact metrics:

- Number of hours mentors and mentees spend together each week
- Mentee (student) attendance rate per quarter
- Mentee participation in extracurricular activities
- Mentee grades
- Mentee graduation rate

Metrics will be obtained through mentor and student surveys, parental input, and grade and behavioral reporting from the School District of the City of York.

Highly motivated participants will be key to the program's success. Thus, we will honor our mentors in public ways and meet with them regularly to learn and share best practices to show our appreciation for their efforts. We also will seek modest private resources for use as attendance and performance incentives to participating students, and to otherwise bolster the program.

MENTORYork's initial goal is to pair 25 Grads to Be (at-risk youth) with Master Mentors within the 2011-2012 school year and to support these 25 relationships during the next four school years.

Based on a thorough program evaluation in June of 2012, we aim to add 25 Master Mentors each academic year during each of the next four years.

Participating students will be at-risk students whom we want to save from truancy and dropping out of school, not mainstream students destined for the cap and gown. In order not to belittle, stigmatize, or penalize such students as "at-risk", we will enlist them as Grads To Be and treat them as such. We will insist on success by expecting success and treating all participants as successful.

For our first four years, we aim to have **at least** 80% of participating at-risk students graduate (at least 20 out of 25 at-risk students).

Metrics

| Service Strategy | Challenge | Launch Date | Impact Metrics | Partners |
|-------------------|--|-------------|--|--|
| MENTORYork | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Decrease at - risk behaviors that lead to dropping out of high school -Increase objective performance measures (i.e., grades, attendance, proficiencies on standardized tests) -Increase qualitative positives (e.g., extra-curricular participation) -Nurture holistic relationship that empowers that teenager – Grad To Be – to graduate. | August 2011 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of at-risk 9th graders identified for program and signed up with parent/guardian written support -Number of Master Mentors recruited -Number of students with improved academics -Percentage of students in MENTORYork that graduate high school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -School District of the City of York -Public - private community agencies |

Acknowledgements

A special thank you to Dr. Deborah Wortham, Superintendent of the School District of the City of York for leadership, passion, and collaboration efforts in the launching of **MENTORYork**.

Many thanks to AARP for providing the City of York with both a \$5,000 contribution and on-going assistance to help the volunteer Chief Service Officer develop and launch the city's high-impact service plan, **MENTORYork**.

We are also thankful to Cities of Service for their support.

Lastly, thank you to our public - private community partners and citizens for their unselfish giving and support of **MENTORYork**.

References

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