

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3061

To support the establishment or expansion and operation of programs using a network of public and private community entities to provide mentoring for children in foster care.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 3, 2019

Ms. BASS (for herself, Mr. BACON, Mr. LANGEVIN, and Mr. SCHWEIKERT) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

A BILL

To support the establishment or expansion and operation of programs using a network of public and private community entities to provide mentoring for children in foster care.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Foster Youth Men-
5 toring Act of 2019”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) Research shows that mentors make a dif-
2 ference in young people’s lives. At-risk youth who
3 have mentors are 55 percent more likely to enroll in
4 college. Students who meet regularly with their men-
5 tors are 52 percent less likely than their peers to
6 skip a day of school. Youth who have mentors are
7 also 130 percent more likely to hold a leadership po-
8 sition.

9 (2) Young people that have mentors have im-
10 proved relationships with adults, fewer disciplinary
11 referrals, and more confidence to achieve their goals.

12 (3) In 2017, 442,995 youth were in foster care.
13 Of those youth 70,858 were between the ages of 10
14 and 13, and 101,983 were between the ages of 14
15 and 20.

16 (4) Mentoring programs that serve foster youth
17 are unique and require additional considerations, in-
18 cluding specialized training and support necessary to
19 provide for consistent, long-term relationships for
20 children in foster care.

21 (5) Mentoring programs can be used as an ef-
22 fective preventative or intervention strategy to sup-
23 port positive outcomes for foster youth.

1 **SEC. 3. PROGRAMS FOR MENTORING CHILDREN IN FOSTER**
2 **CARE.**

3 Subpart 2 of part B of title IV of the Social Security
4 Act (42 U.S.C. 629 et seq.) is amended by adding at the
5 end the following:

6 **“SEC. 439A. PROGRAMS FOR MENTORING CHILDREN IN**
7 **FOSTER CARE.**

8 “(a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to
9 authorize the Secretary to make grants to eligible appli-
10 cants to support the establishment or expansion and oper-
11 ation of programs using a network of public and private
12 community entities to provide mentoring for children in
13 foster care.

14 “(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

15 “(1) CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE.—The term
16 ‘children in foster care’ means children who have
17 been removed from the custody of their biological or
18 adoptive parents by a State child welfare agency.

19 “(2) MENTORING.—The term ‘mentoring’
20 means a structured, managed program—

21 “(A) in which children are appropriately
22 matched with screened and trained adult volun-
23 teers for consistent relationships;

24 “(B) that can include direct one-on-one,
25 group, peer, or a combination of these types of
26 mentoring services;

1 “(C) that involves meetings and activities
2 on a regular basis; and

3 “(D) that is intended to meet, in part, the
4 child’s need for involvement with a caring and
5 supportive adult who provides a positive role
6 model.

7 “(3) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligible en-
8 tity’ means—

9 “(A) a nonprofit organization;

10 “(B) a State child welfare agency;

11 “(C) a local educational agency;

12 “(D) an Indian tribe or a tribal organiza-
13 tion; or

14 “(E) a faith-based organization.

15 “(c) GRANT PROGRAM.—

16 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry
17 out a program to award grants to eligible entities to
18 support the establishment or expansion and oper-
19 ation of programs using networks of public and pri-
20 vate community entities to provide mentoring for
21 children in foster care.

22 “(2) APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.—To be eli-
23 gible for a grant under paragraph (1), an eligible en-
24 tity shall submit to the Secretary an application con-
25 taining the following:

1 “(A) PROGRAM DESIGN.—A description of
2 the proposed program to be carried out using
3 amounts provided under this grant, including—

4 “(i) the number of mentor-child
5 matches proposed to be established and
6 maintained annually under the program;

7 “(ii) the targeted age range of youth
8 to be served by the program;

9 “(iii) such information as the Sec-
10 retary may require concerning the methods
11 to be used to recruit, screen, support, and
12 oversee individuals participating as men-
13 tors, and to evaluate outcomes for partici-
14 pating children, including information nec-
15 essary to demonstrate compliance with re-
16 quirements established by the Secretary for
17 the program; and

18 “(iv) such other information as the
19 Secretary may require.

20 “(B) RECRUITMENT.—An assurance that
21 the program will engage in recruitment strate-
22 gies for mentors that realistically portray the
23 benefits, practices, supports, and challenges of
24 participating in the program.

“(C) TRAINING.—An assurance that all mentors covered under the program will receive intensive and ongoing training in the following areas:

“(i) Child development, including the importance of bonding.

“(ii) Family dynamics, including the effects of domestic violence and trauma.

“(iii) The foster care system and foster care principles and practices.

“(iv) Cultural competence practices and relationship building strategies.

“(v) Positive youth development practices.

“(vi) Recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect.

“(vii) Confidentiality requirements for working with children in foster care.

“(viii) Working in coordination with the child welfare system.

“(ix) Other matters related to working with children in foster care.

“(D) SCREENING.—An assurance that all mentors covered under the program are appropriately screened and have demonstrated a will-

ingness to comply with all aspects of the mentor program, including—

“(i) a description of the methods to be used to conduct criminal background checks on all prospective mentors; and

“(ii) a description of the methods to be used to ensure that the mentors are willing and able to serve as a mentor on a long-term, consistent basis.

“(E) COMMUNITY CONSULTATION; COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS.—A demonstration that, in developing and implementing the program, the eligible entity will, to the extent feasible and appropriate—

“(i) consult with—

“(I) public and private community entities, including religious organizations and Indian tribal organizations and urban Indian organizations; and

“(II) family members of children who may be potential clients of the program;

“(ii) coordinate the mentoring program and the eligible entity’s activities

1 with other Federal, State, and local pro-
2 grams serving children and youth; and

3 “(iii) consult and coordinate with ap-
4 propriate Federal, State, and local correc-
5 tions, workforce development, and sub-
6 stance abuse and mental health agencies.

7 “(F) EQUAL ACCESS FOR LOCAL SERVICE
8 PROVIDERS.—An assurance that public and pri-
9 vate entities and nonprofit community organiza-
10 tions, including religious organizations and In-
11 dian organizations, will be eligible to participate
12 on an equal basis.

13 “(G) RECORDS, REPORTS, AND AUDITS.—
14 An agreement that the eligible entity will main-
15 tain such records, make such reports, and co-
16 operate with such reviews or audits as the Sec-
17 retary may find necessary for purposes of over-
18 sight of project activities and expenditures.

19 “(H) EVALUATION.—An agreement that
20 the eligible entity will cooperate fully with the
21 Secretary’s ongoing and final evaluation of the
22 program under the plan, by means including
23 providing the Secretary access to the program,
24 the program’s staff, program-related records

1 and documents, and each public or private com-
2 munity entity receiving funding under the plan.

3 “(3) CONSIDERATIONS IN AWARDING
4 GRANTS.—In awarding grants under this subsection,
5 the Secretary shall take into consideration—

6 “(A) the feasibility and strength of a plan
7 to recruit and support transition-aged foster
8 youth;

9 “(B) the overall qualifications and capacity
10 of the eligible entity and its partners to effec-
11 tively carry out a mentoring program under this
12 subsection;

13 “(C) the level and quality of training pro-
14 vided to mentors under the program;

15 “(D) evidence of coordination of the pro-
16 gram with the social services and education pro-
17 grams of the State or political subdivision;

18 “(E) the ability of the eligible entity to
19 provide supervision and support for mentors
20 under the program and the youth served by
21 such mentors;

22 “(F) the number of children in foster care
23 served by the State or political subdivision; and

24 “(G) any other factors that the Secretary
25 determines to be significant with respect to the

1 need for, or the potential success of, carrying
2 out a mentoring program under this section.

3 “(4) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity that
4 receives a grant under this subsection may use such
5 funds to—

6 “(A) develop and carry out a training pro-
7 gram and ongoing support for mentors;

8 “(B) recruit mentors for children in foster
9 care; and

10 “(C) provide activities that will help the
11 development of a child in foster care who is
12 participating in the program.

13 “(5) GRANT AMOUNT.—In awarding grants
14 under this subsection, the Secretary shall scale
15 grants to account for the eligible entity’s annual
16 budget and capacity.

17 “(6) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than 1 year
18 after the date of enactment of this section, and an-
19 nually thereafter, the Secretary shall prepare and
20 submit to Congress a report that includes the fol-
21 lowing with respect to the year involved:

22 “(A) A description of the number of pro-
23 grams receiving grant awards under this sub-
24 section.

1 “(B) A description of the number of men-
2 tors who serve in the programs described in
3 subparagraph (A).

4 “(C) A description of—

5 “(i) the number of children in foster
6 care who participated in mentoring pro-
7 grams funded by the grant funds under
8 this subsection;

9 “(ii) data on the academic achieve-
10 ment of the children in mentoring pro-
11 grams funded by the grant funds under
12 this subsection; and

13 “(iii) the number of children in foster
14 care on waiting lists for such mentoring
15 programs.

16 “(D) Any other information that the Sec-
17 retary determines to be relevant to the evalua-
18 tion of the program under this section.

19 “(7) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—
20 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
21 this section—

22 “(A) \$15,000,000 for each of fiscal years
23 2019 and 2020; and

- 1 “(B) such sums as may be necessary for
- 2 each succeeding fiscal year.”.

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