

Vermont Mentoring Survey Toolkit 2020

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If you have any questions related to the surveys or how to access them, please contact us at info@mentorvt.org or 802-658-1888.



How to Access the Surveys

To view the updated Vermont Mentoring Surveys go to: www.mentorvt.org/resources-for-programs#5

*This is only a SAMPLE of what the real surveys will look like. Please do NOT distribute these versions of the surveys.

If you are interested in using the Vermont Mentoring Surveys for your program, please email benji@mentorvt.org to receive your unique survey links.

What if I want to add questions to the surveys?

We encourage programs to add to the base Vermont Mentoring Surveys. Review the surveys and if you want to add questions to any or all of the surveys, email benji@mentorvt.org. He will work with you to get your additional questions into your program's customized survey(s).

What if I have an existing survey that my program already uses?

We realize that programs may have their own surveys they have been using for years. We encourage you to review the Vermont Mentoring Surveys and see if there is a way to combine surveys or add some of the questions from the Vermont Mentoring Surveys to your existing surveys. *Please note that if your program received funding through the Vermont Mentoring Grants, there is a requirement to include, at a minimum, the core questions from the Vermont Mentoring Surveys in your existing surveys. **The wording of core questions and the scale may not be altered beyond changing how you refer to your mentors and mentees (i.e Bigs and Littles, young leaders, partners) unless you have received prior approval from MENTOR Vermont.** We can provide you with the corresponding image files for the scale to include in your survey system. These images are intended to make the surveys more accessible for individuals of all ages and abilities. While the images are encouraged, they are not required.

Programs Receiving Vermont Mentoring Grant Funding:

Programs receiving funding through the Vermont Mentoring Grants are required to administer either the full Vermont Mentoring Surveys for mentees and mentors or include the core questions in their existing surveys. These programs are also required to receive a minimum return rate of:

School or Site-Based Programs:

- **Mentees: 75%**
- **Mentors: 75%**

Community-Based Programs:

- **Mentees: 50%**
- **Mentors: 50%**

Other Questions?

We encourage you to reach out to benji@mentorvt.org if you have any additional questions that are not covered by this toolkit or the survey web page.



Administering Surveys

WHEN:

The vision for these surveys is that they will become a natural part of your program.

- ***During-Match Survey:*** For the “During-Match” surveys, your program will need ***to set a six-week time period between the March 15th and the June 15th*** within which the surveys will be administered and collected each year. We ask all mentoring programs in Vermont to conduct their yearly surveys during this time period to create consistency with the data that is gathered. The six-week window is important because if the surveying time is too long the results will not correctly represent a snapshot in time of your program. These surveys are ***recommended*** for all programs, and the core questions and survey period are ***required*** for all programs receiving funding through the Vermont Mentoring Grants.
- ***Optional Pre and Post-Match Surveys:*** These additional surveys can be interwoven with your match orientation and closure processes. These surveys can be a great way for all constituents to reflect on the impact of time the match spent together and can help provide a natural beginning and closure to the match. These surveys are available upon request from MENTOR Vermont. Email benji@mentorvt.org for more information.

WHO:

Ideally your program will administer surveys to the following constituents:

- Mentees*
- Mentors*
- Parents/Guardians
- Teachers/Counselors

* All programs should focus on, at the minimum, conducting during-match surveys on mentees and mentors. The more data your program can gather from more people, the better! Vermont Mentoring Grants grantees ***are required*** to survey their mentees and mentors.

Return Rate:

It would be great if all programs had a 100% return rate for all the surveys they administer, but that is not a realistic expectation. To ensure that you have enough data to evaluate your program, and that MENTOR Vermont has enough data from programs around the state, programs should strive to meet the following minimum return rates. If your program receives funding through the Vermont Mentoring Grants, meeting these baseline return rates for the mentor and mentee core survey questions is a requirement of your grant.

School or Site-Based Programs:

- **Mentees: 75%**
- **Mentors: 75%**
- Parents/Guardians: 50%
- Teachers/Counselors: 50%

Community-Based Programs:

- **Mentees: 50%**
- **Mentors: 50%**
- Parents/Guardians: 50%
- Teachers/Counselors: 50%

As mentioned above, programs should focus on gathering data from mentees and mentors, the constituents with whom you have the most contact. Parents/guardians



and teachers/counselors may be harder to get such a high return rate from, but can provide important insight into your program.

HOW:

The Vermont Mentoring Surveys are available in two formats:

- Online through SurveyMonkey (view How to Access the Survey section above)
- As a printable PDF ([files can be found here](#))

Mentee ID Number:

Surveys for all four constituent types will require the person filling out the survey to provide a “Mentee ID Number.” This is done to enable your program and MENTOR Vermont to gather higher quality data and be able to evaluate a mentee and mentor match over time while also ensuring that the mentee’s information remains anonymous. Each mentee in your program should have a unique mentee number.

- Full users of the [Vermont Mentoring Database](#):
 - You can run the “Mentee Number” report under the “Shared” reports tab to find your pre-set mentee numbers.
- Non-Vermont Mentoring Database Users:
 - Contact benji@mentorvt.org and Benji will provide you a spreadsheet template to use that will include the following columns:
 - Mentee ID Number
 - Gender
 - Current Age
 - Date mentee first joined mentoring program

You will need to submit this completed spreadsheet to MENTOR Vermont before receiving your unique program survey links.

Remember, you will need to provide the appropriate mentee number to each of the constituents you survey. A mentee’s ID number should remain consistent from year to year. If a mentee leaves your program, their mentee ID number should still not be assigned to another mentee.

Standardized Survey Administration Instructions:

1. Do not alter the wording of the questions or the scale. We can provide you with the corresponding image files for scale to include in your survey system. While use of the images is encouraged, it is not required.
2. If individuals taking the survey feel a question doesn’t apply to them, they should select the “No Answer” option.
3. If a mentee asks for clarification on a question or about what something means:
 - Don’t provide your interpretation of the question or rephrase the question.
 - Ask the mentee what they think it means. Whatever they think it means is fine.
 - If the mentee is really stuck, they can skip the question.



Overall Tips for Administering Surveys:

- Ensure you pick a six-week window in which you have the necessary staff time to dedicate to this process. To get a good return rate you will need to have time to reach out multiple times to those whom you wish to complete surveys.
- Let the person being surveyed know why their responses are important.
- Be honest and upfront with how long the survey will take.
- Provide clear, concise instructions with the survey that explain how to complete the survey and how to return it once completed (see page 10 for a sample communication template).
- Make taking and returning the survey as easy as possible. All surveys can be filled out through SurveyMonkey with a unique link for your program, or printed out.
- Some programs have found that offering a drawing for a donated gift card to people that complete the survey has led to increased participation.
- If you choose to mail blank surveys to constituents, include a self-addressed envelope to return the survey in (if you're able to, you may want to consider including postage as well).

Tips for Administering Surveys to Mentees:

All mentees should complete the survey a comfortable distance away from any person, or other youth who may distract or influence the responses.

Mentees under 10 years old:

For younger mentees, it is recommended that the survey be read aloud to the youth, and that the youth tells their answers to a program staff member who will record the answers for them. The last four questions of the full mentee survey are geared towards older youth and you should use your own judgment if you would like to ask those questions or skip them.

When the mentee you're working with is filling out the actual rating scales, you may find that you will need to read each item aloud as they read along, and then the mentee can mark whichever answer is most accurate. If you add open-ended questions to your survey where you are asking for mentees to write, it is fine if they simply wish to tell you, and have you record their response, **word for word**, on the survey sheet. It is often found that youth are happier speaking their answer to an adult rather than writing it down themselves. However, if they prefer to write it down themselves, that is fine too.

Mentees 10 and older:

Mentees should receive clear directions from you on how to fill out the survey, and how and when they should return the survey to you if using the printed version. Don't forget to provide them with their "Mentee ID Number." For older mentees, it is fine to have them complete the survey on their own. Administering surveys via email or mail is also appropriate.

Tips for Administering Surveys to Mentors, Parents/Guardians, or Teachers/Counselors:

- You will need to provide each constituent the "Mentee ID Number" for the mentee they are completing the survey about.
- If you add open-ended questions to your program's surveys, please inform those taking the survey to avoid using the mentee's name in their responses to ensure survey results are anonymous to MENTOR Vermont. Using the following phrases instead of names is recommended:



- My mentee
- My child
- This student

If Using the Full Vermont Mentoring Surveys

Entering and Storing Survey Responses:

Using Online Surveys:

By having your constituents complete surveys through your program's unique SurveyMonkey surveys, all of the responses will automatically be saved in SurveyMonkey.

Using Paper Surveys:

When you receive completed paper surveys, the easiest way to enter the data will be to manually enter each survey into the corresponding SurveyMonkey survey for your program. This will result in the data from all of your survey responses, both paper and online, being stored and tabulated in one spot.

Survey Results:

All the online SurveyMonkey surveys are hosted under MENTOR Vermont's Survey Monkey account. This enables MENTOR Vermont to add your program's questions to the Vermont Mentoring Surveys and create unique survey links for your program. All of your program's survey results will be stored in SurveyMonkey. When your surveys are launched, MENTOR Vermont will provide you with a link for each survey type (mentor, mentee, etc...) that will allow you to view your results as they come in so that you can check in on who has responded at any point during your survey window without needing MENTOR Vermont's assistance.

By using "Mentee ID Number" and not using the mentee's name, the results will remain anonymous to MENTOR Vermont and only the program coordinator, if they desire, will be able to decipher who the respondent is by using the mentee ID number spreadsheet they created.

Additional Information

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Recommendations***

Page 13: Core Survey Questions

- ***Mentee Core Questions***
- ***Mentor Core Questions***



Overview of Vermont Mentoring Surveys

During the design phase of the [Vermont Mentoring Database](#), MENTOR Vermont and the Vermont Mentoring Funders Collaborative convened a committee of experienced mentoring staff from around the state to develop a common survey system for evaluating youth mentor pairs in Vermont. This group developed questions by analyzing existing evaluation resources, including the Search Institute’s “[Developmental Assets](#),” MENTOR’s “[Elements of Effective Practice](#),” and surveys from Vermont mentoring programs serving a diverse range of populations and age groups. The committee also developed four different survey types—mentee, mentor, parent/guardian, and teacher/counselor—to ensure that the information programs gather is inclusive of the perspectives of all adults connected to the youth, as well as of the mentee themselves. In order to illustrate the effects the mentoring relationship has on the youth over time, each survey type includes three versions: Pre-Match (prior to the mentoring relationship), During-Match (intended to be taken repeatedly at yearly or biannual intervals), and Post-Match (as a part of the match closure process).

MENTOR Vermont launched the [Vermont Mentoring Surveys](#), the final product of this committee’s work, in March 2014, with the hope that programs would widely use the tool to help better evaluate their own mentor pairs, and that MENTOR Vermont and our funding partners could begin gathering aggregate data around the state of mentoring in Vermont.

For a variety of reasons, the Vermont Mentoring Surveys were not widely adopted by mentoring agencies and programs in the first year of implementation. In the fall of 2014, MENTOR Vermont staff and the [Program Leadership Council](#) (an advisory group made up of experienced mentoring practitioners from around the state) met to discuss the future of the Vermont Mentoring Surveys. This meeting centered around ways to improve the surveys and increase program adoption in 2015 and beyond. MENTOR Vermont and the PLC revised the surveys, taking into consideration program feedback, and launched the updated versions in March 2015.

The Vermont Mentoring Surveys now focus on during-match surveys covering the following six areas:

- 1) Mentee Resiliency
- 2) Mentee Pro-Social Skills
- 3) Mentee Future Aspirations
- 4) Mentee Connectedness to Community
- 5) Impact of Mentoring on Mentee
- 6) Match/Program Feedback
- 7) Mentor’s Involvement in Mentee’s Education

The following guide provides information on how to administer the revised Vermont Mentoring Surveys. If you have any questions related to the surveys please contact us at info@mentorvt.org or 802-658-1888.



Why Conduct Surveys

[Mentoring is a proven strategy for youth development](#) and there has been an abundance of national research conducted over the years to prove this. The research shows that youth in mentoring programs that meet best practices will receive benefits ranging from an increased likelihood to enroll in college to a decrease in likelihood of using drugs. That being said, there is still a need for program-specific data to be gathered. Conducting yearly program surveys is an integral part of running a quality youth mentoring program and will help with the following:

- **Provide Program Feedback:** Conducting yearly program surveys with your constituents can provide your program with invaluable feedback. Yearly surveys are a way for you to ensure that your program is in fact having the desired impact you intend for the youth you serve.
- **Meet Best Practices:** Program evaluation is one of the major aspects that is necessary for a program to meet nationally recognized best practices.
- **Secure Program Funding:** You will be able to use the statewide data, coupled with your individual program's data, to assist you with in securing more funding for your program from donors, businesses, and foundations.
- **Assist MENTOR Vermont:** On the statewide level, MENTOR Vermont hopes to use the survey data gathered to support our current claim to funders, that mentoring programs in Vermont are achieving the same [nationally-proven benefits of mentoring](#). The data will also enable MENTOR Vermont to see if there are common areas of need for programs across the state for which MENTOR Vermont should be focusing on providing additional support. We hope to use this data to bolster our case for receiving greater funding support for the Vermont Mentoring Grants from the State, private foundations, businesses, and individual donors.

It is our hope that the Vermont Mentoring Surveys are a tool your program will be able to easily utilize to evaluate your program and in turn provide MENTOR Vermont with statewide aggregate mentoring data to better support mentoring throughout Vermont.



How to Use Survey Data

On an individual program level, you should be able to look at the survey data that you receive to evaluate individual matches and your program as a whole. Over time, as surveys are administered year after year, you will be able to better track the progress of mentees, matches, and your program.

Individual Surveys:

Ideally, you will be able to use the information from individual surveys to determine the following (and hopefully much more).

- Does a match need more support?
- Are expectations being met?
- Does the parent need more frequent communication?
- How does the mentee feel about school?
- What general trends can you see in the match over time?

Program-Wide Survey Data:

By evaluating the data gathered from surveys program-wide, you can determine the following (and hopefully much more).

- Are your matches achieving your desired outcomes?
- If there is a specific focus of your program, are you seeing results in that area?
- Are constituent groups pleased with your program?
- Are there adjustments that need to be made to improve outcomes?
- Are there outcomes that you're achieving that you didn't expect?
- Can you see program-wide trends from one year to the next?
- Do matches see stronger results over time?

On the statewide level, MENTOR Vermont hopes to use the survey data gathered to support our current claim to funders, that mentoring programs in Vermont are achieving the same nationally-proven benefits of mentoring. The data will also enable MENTOR Vermont to see if there are common areas of need in programs across the state that MENTOR Vermont should be focusing to provide additional support in. We hope to use this data to bolster our case for receiving greater funding support for the Vermont Mentoring Grants from the State, private foundations, businesses, and individual donors. We also hope that this statewide data, coupled with your individual program data, will assist you with making program improvements and securing more funding for your program.



Sample Survey Outreach Template

Below is a communication template you can take and customize for your program to use in communicating with mentors. You can adjust the template slightly for emailing mentees, parents/guardians, and teachers/counselors.

Make sure to provide clear, concise instructions with the survey explaining how to complete the survey.

Sample email to a mentor

Hello _____,

Thank you for being a mentor in **(Name of Program)**. We are currently conducting our yearly evaluations and would appreciate if you could help us by completing a short survey by **(enter date)**. Completing this survey will help us evaluate our program to ensure we're running the best program possible for your mentee and all the youth we serve!

You can access the survey here: (your program's unique survey link). You will be asked to enter a "Mentee ID Number" at the top of the survey. This will help us gather data that we can track over time. Your mentee's ID number is: (provide unique mentee ID number from spreadsheet).

The survey should only take (depends on if you add program specific questions) minutes to complete, but should be done in one sitting. The survey data that we collect will help us determine how to improve our program and will assist us in proving data to our funders.

Thank you in advance for completing the survey and for all you do to make a lasting positive impact in the life of **(Name of Mentee)**. If you have any questions please be in touch.

If you've added open-ended questions to your survey, please be sure to remind those taking the survey to not use the mentee's name in their response.



More Detailed Survey Administration Recommendations

Responsibilities of interviewer

1. Set the tone
 - Be friendly and warm (but not overly sweet or intrusive).
 - Be confident in what you are doing (know your interview, know your role) so you can pay attention to how the conversation is going. It's fine to be nervous, but watch out for body language or nonverbal cues that give the impression you are uncomfortable, uninterested, or disapproving.
2. Be transparent
 - Always start by explaining who you are, why you are here, and what is going to happen.
 - Don't skip details or speed through the introductory comments - each mentee is hearing what you have to say for the *first* time (even if you feel like it's the 100th time you've said it).
3. Be clear
 - Avoid too much detail - don't "over-talk" (easy mistake when nervous or uncomfortable).
 - GO SLOW - read questions slowly, move on to next question slowly.
4. Be competent
 - Know the interview inside and out. Mistakes are fine - "woops, I missed something," or "sorry, let me read that again" - but sloppy interviewing is ineffective.
 - When filling out your actual ratings, make sure that you are filling out the right row for each sentence, and **not** marking an answer in the row above or below by mistake. You may want to run your finger along each row to make sure that everything lines up.
5. Affirm without leading
 - Encourage *talking* without encouraging *specific sorts* of responses. You may like or dislike certain things you hear, but you should not give positive feedback (nodding, smiling, laughing) for only those answers you like or agree with.
 - Repeat/Echo. If a mentee says, "I feel scared when the big kids yell at each other on the playground," you can say (as you write down what the mentee said), "It's scary when the big kids yell on the playground."
 - Acknowledge. React, but don't overreact.
6. Wrap up the interview
 - Offer genuine thanks - say it and show it.
 - Repeat why this interview is important, repeat other relevant details.
 - Ask "Is there anything else?" One great way to end an interview is to say: "I've asked you a lot of questions, but I know everyone is different and maybe I didn't ask about something that is important to you. Is there anything else you want to tell me about what it's like for you in (Name of Program)?" (This can be shortened for younger mentees.)
7. Finish the job



- Once the interviewee leaves, you still have important things to do: add notes, fix hard to read sections, double check names/codes, etc...

Helpful phrases

- *"Hold on - It takes me a minute to write this down."*
- *"Let me check to see if I missed anything."*
- *"You said _____ [repeat/read your notes]. Did I get that right?"*
- *"Can you tell me more about that?"*
- *"What is it about that...?"* (rather than "Why?")
- *"Let's finish up these questions and then we can talk more about [side track topic] if you want.."*
- *"I can understand that.."* (use carefully - not just for "socially acceptable" responses)

Challenges you may face

- Mentees not wanting to participate and/or not wanting to answer honestly
- Distractions - noise, friends, activity nearby
- Mentees trying to please you (guessing at "right" answers)
- Mentees trying to impress you
- Mentees being afraid of getting in trouble for certain answers, or giving a "wrong answer"
- Interviewer feeling defensive, frustrated, annoyed
- Getting off topic

Before you start to interview

Know your interview backwards and forwards.

- Know the purpose of each question.
- Be able to do the interview without your eyes glued to the page.

Practice

- Practice reading the questions aloud. Highlight certain sections, add notes to yourself.
- Ask a friend to role play - practice asking questions and writing down answers (and get feedback).
- Interview someone who is similar to your target audience (e.g., similar age) - young family member/relative, friend, neighborhood kid (get permission from parents).

Extreme importance of confidentiality

- Don't talk about mentees/survey responses in front of other mentees.
- Your program should decide how you will handle confidentiality specifically around the surveys.

Know what to do when something comes up.

If a mentee tells you about an event or circumstance that is a danger to themselves or others, you should follow your program's youth safety reporting procedure.

Mentee During-Match Survey

If I have a problem, I know how to get help.

Strongly Agree



Agree



Neither Agree Nor Disagree



Disagree



Strongly Disagree



No Answer



If I get into a disagreement with friends, we are able to work it out.

Strongly Agree



Agree



Neither Agree Nor Disagree



Disagree



Strongly Disagree



No Answer



I think I'm going to have a good life when I grow up.

Strongly Agree



Agree



Neither Agree Nor Disagree



Disagree



Strongly Disagree



No Answer



Having a mentor has made a difference in my life.

Strongly Agree



Agree



Neither Agree Nor Disagree



Disagree



Strongly Disagree



No Answer



I would recommend having a mentor to my friends.

Strongly Agree



Agree



Neither Agree Nor Disagree



Disagree



Strongly Disagree



No Answer



(The last two questions are optional for elementary school-aged mentees)

I feel like I matter to people in my community.

Strongly Agree



Agree



Neither Agree Nor Disagree



Disagree



Strongly Disagree



No Answer



Which best describes your mentor's role in your education? (check all that apply)

- No direct role
- They talk with me about the importance of school
- They help me with my homework
- They talk to my teachers or guidance counselor
- They talk with me about my options after high school

Mentor During-Match Survey

If something is bothering my mentee, they talk to me about it.

Strongly Agree



Agree



Neither Agree Nor Disagree



Disagree



Strongly Disagree



No Answer



If my mentee gets into a disagreement with their friends, they are able to work it out.

Strongly Agree



Agree



Neither Agree Nor Disagree



Disagree



Strongly Disagree



No Answer



My mentee is hopeful about their future.

Strongly Agree



Agree



Neither Agree Nor Disagree



Disagree



Strongly Disagree



No Answer



I have noticed positive changes in my mentee since we started meeting.

Strongly Agree



Agree



Neither Agree Nor Disagree



Disagree



Strongly Disagree



No Answer



I would recommend mentoring to a friend, family member, or colleague.

Strongly Agree



Agree



Neither Agree Nor Disagree



Disagree



Strongly Disagree



No Answer



My mentee feels like they matter to people in their community.

Strongly Agree



Agree



Neither Agree Nor Disagree



Disagree



Strongly Disagree



No Answer



Which best describes your role in your mentee's education? (check all that apply)

- No direct role
- I talk with them about the importance of school
- I help them with their homework
- I'm in communication with their teachers or guidance counselor
- I talk with them about their options after high school
- The structure of my mentoring program has an educational component



Suggested Additional Questions

Whether you are utilizing the core survey questions or the full Vermont Mentoring Surveys, MENTOR Vermont recommends adding at least one additional question that allows the respondent to provide open-ended feedback. This is to ensure that everyone connected to the mentee has the opportunity to share detailed information that goes beyond the scaled questions that are standardized. Because programs are looking to gather this type of feedback in multiple ways, MENTOR Vermont does not want to limit those efforts by requiring a specific question or questions. Some examples programs have used in years past include:

- Is there anything you would like to share about your experience with the program?
- What are some of the things you like best about mentoring with [Program X]?
- What are some things that would make your experience with [Program X] better?
- Share a short story about your mentoring experience.
- What types of activities would you like [Program X] to organize next year?
- Have you and your mentee set and achieved goals together this year? Please describe.