

Mentoring Matching Grants Line Item and the Massachusetts State Budgeting Process

Mentoring Matching Grants (7061-9634) is a line item in the Massachusetts state budget, which is particularly important to mentoring programs in Massachusetts. It represents a publicly funded, statewide, competitive grant program that supports mentoring throughout the state, with a specific focus on using the funds awarded to create new mentoring matches. The only state grant program dedicated specifically for mentoring, the line item was first included in the state budget in 1999, and has created almost 9,000 mentoring matches for youth across the state over the last 10 years. The grants are administered by the Massachusetts Service Alliance, the state commission on service and volunteerism. For more information on the Mentoring Matching Grants line item (7061-9634) please see the ***FY11 Budget Request One Pager***.

In order for programs to effectively ensure this funding exists in the future, they must have at least a basic understanding of the state budgeting process. It begins when the Governor releases his budget proposal on the 4th Wednesday in January, and continues through the end of June. The entire process actually runs year round however, as state agencies spend the fall drafting their budgets which make up the Governor's proposal. While this can be overwhelming, its length provides organizations with many opportunities to influence budget decisions.

The following is the full year budget timeline from the Official Website of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and includes a brief description of the places in which programs can actively participate in the process to advocate for the Mentoring Matching Grants line item:

September - December

- Beginning in the fall, each agency submits spending plans to its Executive Office, and then the Executive Office submits its plan to the Office of Administration and Finance. In the case of the Mentoring Matching Grants line item, the agency submitting the original plan is the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, led by Commissioner Chester.
- The Administration holds open budget hearings and takes public testimonies.
 - This is an opportunity for programs to communicate why funding for mentoring is important, and what outcomes are achieved as a result of the funding. Staff, program participants or volunteers can testify in person, or the program can submit testimony in writing.
- The Budget Bureau (part of the Executive Office for Administration and Finance) reviews budget submissions and comments; establishes governor's priorities and vision and makes recommendations.
- The Governor reviews the Budget Bureau's recommendations.

January - April

- The Governor must propose a budget by the 4th Wednesday of January. “House 1” or the Governor’s budget proposal, is the first step in the state budget process, and communicates the Governor’s priorities to the public.
- House 1 is sent to the House Committee on Ways and Means (the committee authorized to draft the House of Representatives budget proposal). The House Ways and Means Committee holds public hearings to collect input on budget priorities.
 - As is the case with the Administration’s hearings, this is another opportunity for programs to communicate why their grant programs are important. Elected officials pay particular attention to the voters in their districts, so this is a great place to strategically involve mentoring matches as well.
- The budget bill is reported out of the House Ways and Means Committee and sent to the full House chamber, where Representatives may offer amendments and debate the bill
 - Programs can contact their Representatives to ask that they support the Mentoring Matching Grants line item and other budget items that are important to them, and thank them when they advocate on their behalf. Programs should also activate their stakeholder groups (youth, mentors, families) to make similar asks of their Representatives.
- This bill is passed by the House and then sent to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means.

May - August

- The Senate Ways and Means Committee holds public hearings.
 - As is the case with the House Ways and Mean’s hearings, this is another opportunity for programs to communicate about the importance of funding for mentoring and engage matches in their advocacy efforts.
- The bill is reported out of the Senate Ways and Means Committee and is sent to the full Senate chamber; Senators may offer amendments and debate bill.
 - Programs can contact their Senators to ask that they support the Mentoring Matching Grants line item and other budget items, and thank them for advocating on their behalf. Programs should also activate their stakeholder groups (youth, mentors, families) to make similar asks of their Senators.
- The Senate bill is sent to the House Conference Committee, where they resolve differences between the House and Senate versions and create the Conference Committee Report, which cannot be amended.
 - If programs have relationships with legislators serving on the committee, this is another opportunity to write or call them and ask for their support.

- The Governor signs or vetoes parts of the budget. A 2/3 vote in each chamber can override the Governor's veto of a line item.
 - Once again, programs can call on their legislators to support budget items that are important to them, and ask that they override a veto if necessary. Programs should also activate their stakeholder groups (youth, mentors, families) to make similar asks of their legislators.