J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

MENTOR GEORGIA

2025 Landscape Study

An insight into the state of Mentoring in Georgia and recommendations.

www.mentorgeorgia.org

Report Team

This report was compiled and published by MENTOR Georgia, a statewide affiliate of MENTOR, housed within the J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development at the University of Georgia. Preliminary data cleaning and analysis was conducted by Georgia State graduate students Elise Brockenberry, Emily Tan, and Emily Weiss, under the supervision of Gabe Kuperminc.

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- Members of the MENTOR Georgia Advisory Board
- Members of the MENTOR Georgia Provider Council

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Executive Summary

This report provides an in-depth analysis of the current state of mentoring programs across Georgia, highlighting key strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. The study, based on a comprehensive survey conducted among youth-serving organizations, offers valuable insights into the funding, operational structures, and outreach efforts of mentoring programs in the state.

The findings indicate that, four years after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic (with data collected in 2024), funding remains a significant challenge for most mentoring organizations, impacting their ability to sustain operations, expand services, and conduct formal evaluations. Many organizations operate with limited budgets, **restricting their capacity to hire full-time staff and invest in essential program quality enhancements** like ongoing training or retraining of returning mentors. Together, these factors undermine efforts at operating quality mentoring programs, **reducing the likelihood of positive youth outcomes** that are both possible and indicated by a deep body of mentoring research. Diversification of funding sources and capacity-building efforts in financial management are crucial to overcoming these challenges and creating environments and relationships that give youth more of the tools to thrive through positive mental health strategies, career exploration, academic support, and more.

Building the quality and quantity of mentoring relationships requires attention, with a clear need for organizations to adopt and implement standardized best practices. Expanding mentoring services beyond urban areas and ensuring access for youth in rural communities is a priority, as our findings indicate that mentoring programs are **more concentrated in Metro Atlanta** now than when we conducted a similar survey in 2016. Virtual mentoring and hybrid models present viable solutions to bridge geographic and logistical barriers.

Evaluation and impact measurement remain areas of opportunity and improvement, as our inquiries found that **only half of the organizations surveyed engage in formal evaluations**. Enhanced support in this area will enable programs to better track their outcomes, demonstrate impact, and refine their approaches. Our recommendations in this area include expanded resources and support evaluation efforts, particularly in the form of tools, training, and templates for conducting evaluations. This support would be enhanced through a peer learning network focused on program evaluation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated existing challenges, particularly in mentor recruitment and program delivery. Many organizations have adapted to new models of engagement, integrating virtual components to maintain connections with mentees. This shift underscores the need for clear guidelines and resources to support hybrid mentoring approaches. In addition to highlighting and guiding innovative approaches to volunteer engagement, robust conversation and inquiry is needed into how to incentivize volunteer participation and retention.

To address these challenges, this report recommends strategic initiatives focused on securing sustainable funding, expanding program reach and innovation, enhancing mentor training and retention efforts, and strengthening evaluation frameworks. Collaboration among stakeholders, including government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector, will be essential in driving meaningful progress and ensuring that every young person in Georgia has access to quality mentoring relationships.

Introduction

MENTOR Georgia, a statewide Affiliate of MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, is housed within the J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development at the University of Georgia. Building on a foundational 2016 landscape study completed in collaboration with the Georgia Student Finance Commission and MENTOR National, MENTOR Georgia has grown into a dynamic convener and trainer committed to expanding and enriching opportunities for Georgia's youth through meaningful connections with caring adults. Currently MENTOR Georgia is supported by Executive Director Leslie Hale to grow the MENTOR Georgia network, develop programs, oversee training, and set direction for the Affiliate. This work is supported by a governing board representing diverse sectors and a program provider council made up of mentoring and youth development programs.

Mission

Our mission is to strengthen the quality and increase the quantity of mentoring relationships for Georgia's young people and to close the mentoring gap.

Vision

Every young person in Georgia has supportive mentoring relationships they need to grow and develop into thriving, productive, and engaged adults.

Our Values

- We believe in the power of community.
- We embrace our shared humanity.
- We strive always to be better.
- We are strategic.

We believe mentoring is a commitment to equip young people with supportive relationships and growth opportunities where they live, work, and play. MENTOR Georgia conducted this study among youth-serving organizations to strategically expand opportunities for Georgia youth to connect with caring adults and peer mentors. This work is accomplished by supporting direct service organizations through training, technical assistance, and capacity-building. This study offers an updated snapshot of the state of mentoring services in Georgia, providing clarity on the strengths, challenges, and needed support for mentoring and youth service providers. The responses provided allow for MENTOR Georgia to develop more effective tools, training, and services for mentoring organizations and help us activate on our mission of strengthening the quality and increasing the quantity of mentoring relationships for Georgia's young people.

Study Methodology

The method of data collection for this study was an online survey. The survey was distributed using the Qualtrics survey platform in June 2023 and was open for submissions through January 2024. The survey formation committee (Leslie Hale, Executive Director of MENTOR Georgia; Nipuna Ambanpola, Research and Public Service Manager at the Fanning Institute; Rylee Dickinson, Graduate Assistant at MENTOR Georgia) drafted the preliminary questions of the survey and were advised by Michael Garringer, Senior Director of Research and Evaluation at MENTOR National and Gabriel Kuperminc, Georgia State University Professor of Psychology and Public Health and a member of the MENTOR Georgia Advisory Board and the National Mentoring Research Board. The survey questions were inspired by previous studies, including *Youth MENTORING in Georgia: A Landscape and Analysis,* published by the J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development, the *2016 National Mentoring Program Survey* by MENTOR National, and the *2020 Mentoring Provider Survey* by the Mentoring Partnership of Southwest Pennsylvania. After reviewing and finalizing the survey questions, MENTOR Georgia finalized the survey instrument as an online survey, designed in Qualtrics, leveraging its tools to optimize question logic and flow, ensuring a high-quality experience and encouraging robust responses.

Survey Distribution

The survey was emailed to 110 individuals who previously completed a provider inventory response on behalf of a youth mentoring organization or program. The survey link was also distributed at the statewide 2023 MENTOR Georgia Summit, where there were 108 attendees (many of whom were also on the email distribution list). The attendance list for the MENTOR Georgia Summit was used to identify additional contacts for email outreach, with the survey link distributed to them in the days following the MENTOR Georgia Summit. All stakeholders identified through this process received a minimum of two email outreach attempts with additional outreach phone calls to increase survey participation. The survey was also included in monthly and weekly newsletters sent by MENTOR Georgia on multiple occasions between June and December 2023. Direct outreach was completed by MENTOR Georgia staff to the Program Provider Council, composed of youth mentoring practitioners, to gather responses from their organizations. As an early incentive, respondents were entered into a lottery to receive two complimentary registrations to the MENTOR Georgia Summit, which was held in Athens, Georgia on August 31, 2023. Completing the survey also provided participating agencies with a priority invitation to a gathering to unveil the results of this study and the opportunity to interact with stakeholders.

Survey Composition

Please refer to the APPENDIX to review the full survey. The survey comprised of four sections:

- Section 0: Pre-Survey
- Section 1: Organization Information
- Section 2: Engagement Information
- Section 3: Comprehensive Program Information

Each survey section was designed to capture specific and unique information. The response choices in Section 1 (pre-survey) designated the respondent's flow in the survey, which prompted a category selection regarding their programming.

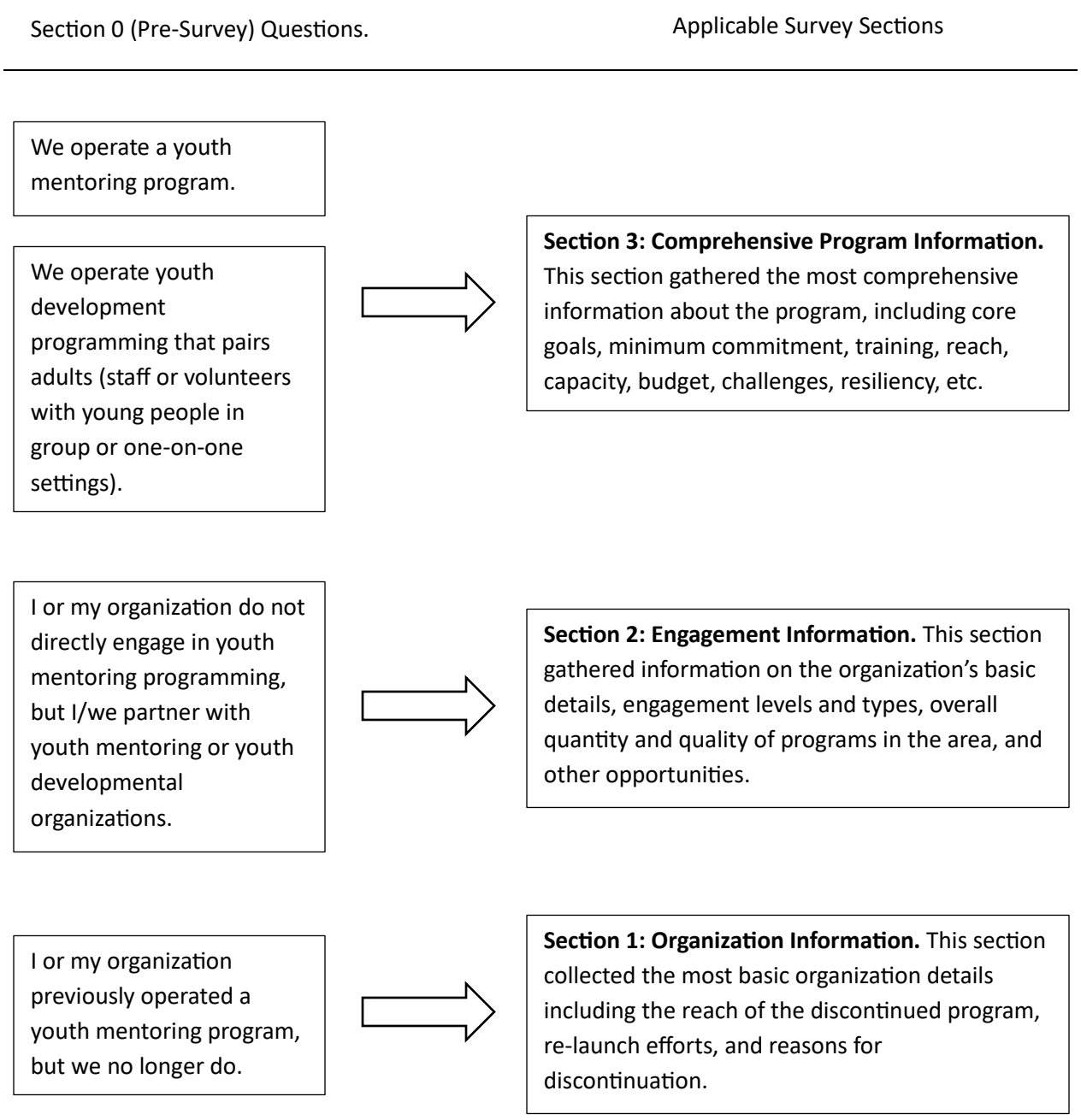


Figure 1: Survey Flow Chart

Section 0: Pre-Survey

As indicated in *Figure 1,* the Pre-Survey was crafted to decide the applicable logic hierarchy for the respondents. Pre-Survey provided four mutually exclusive choices: (1) we operate a youth mentoring program, (2) we operate youth development programming that pairs adults (staff or volunteers with young people in group or one-on-one settings), (3) I or my organization do not directly engage in youth mentoring programming, but I/we partner with youth mentoring or youth development organizations, and (4) I or my organization previously operated a youth mentoring program, but we no longer do. Depending on the respondents' selection, they were moved to the applicable section to provide pertinent information.

Section 1: Organization Information

This section gathered the most basic information such as the counties in which the program operated before dissolution, if the program was re-launched by another entity, the year in which the program was discontinued, reasons for discontinuation, the impact of COVID-19, and if the organization offers any other non-mentoring services. This allowed us to capture the status of the organization and its impact on the mentoring landscape.

Section 2: Engagement Information

In this section, the respondent was assumed to have taken the role of a partner or stakeholder. They do not directly engage in youth mentoring, but partner with youth mentoring or developmental organizations. Therefore, this section collected details about county of operation, type of organization, type of engagement and/or partnership, perception of overall quantity and quality of programs, and other comments and attitudes about youth mentoring in the operational region and/or industry.

Section 3: Comprehensive Program Information

In this section, respondents were given the opportunity to provide the most comprehensive information about their active and direct youth mentoring program. Information about the respondent, specific organizational details and structure, mentoring program history, budget, capacity, minimum commitment, goals, program types, impact, evaluation, aspirations, challenges, and levels and types of stakeholders were collected.

As a part of this section, respondents were also asked if they use or have access to resources offered by MENTOR or the National Mentoring Resource Center, if they have had training, and if they were open to discussing their responses to this form.

Results – Basic Overview

Due to the large volume of interconnected data collected through this survey, this findings section is strategically divided into categories for clarity. First, an overview of respondent data is provided, outlining various types of demographic and question-specific data. Second, overall findings are laid out in themes, with each theme including key takeaways and a descriptive summary. It is important to note that due to incomplete responses and the section-oriented style of the survey, most of the findings are elaborated using percentages to accommodate partially completed surveys.

Data Structure

The original dataset produced 112 responses. First, survey previews were removed (n = 4). Then, surveys that had no responses were removed (n = 24). Then, surveys that only provided the respondent's name, organization name, and website without responding to any other survey questions were removed from analysis (n = 15). A total of 69 responses were analyzed in this study (112 – 43) including full and partial responses.

Variations in Data

The considerable variation in the data in this study is representative of how much variation exists throughout mentoring programs across Georgia. This study represents organizations located in 21 counties across Georgia and those that operate virtually without a physical location, with the majority located in Fulton and Cobb counties. The mentoring and youth development programs participating in this survey reported practicing a range of mentoring models, including one-to-one, group, peer, and other. Some programs reported having multiple mentoring models. The data collected were used to identify correlations between program types and outcomes, strengths, and areas for growth, ultimately informing strategies to enhance the impact of mentoring and youth development efforts statewide. Descriptive statistics of key variables are included below to outline the variation of organizations and programs represented in this survey.

Variable	Sum	Min	Max	Median	Mean	Std Dev.
Budget	$13,764,512	$0	$6,000,000	$35,000	$250,263.85	$840,418.06
# Youth Served - Programs	15,706	0	2,658	35	148.17	358.43
# Youth Served - Orgs	13,857	0	2,658	86	256.94	503.80
# of FTE Paid - Orgs	214	0	84	1	4	11.42
# of Volunteers - Orgs	5,521	0	1,114	30	100.38	206.76

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

Pre-Survey Breakdown

Four questions in the pre-survey determined the path in which respondents navigated to other sections in the survey. Below is the breakdown of responses to pre-survey questions.

We operate a youth mentoring program.	Section 3	28
We operate a youth development program that pairs adults (staff or volunteers with young people in group or one-on-one settings).		33
I or my organization do not directly engage in youth mentoring programming, but I/we partner with youth mentoring or youth development organizations.	Section 2	8
I or my organization previously operated a youth mentoring program, but we no longer do.	Section 1	0

Table 2: Pre-Survey Question Responses

Since there were no responses to the fourth answer choice, as outlined in *Table 2,* "Section 1: Organization Information" was completely omitted from analysis due to no responses. Most (88.4%) of the respondents directly operated a youth mentoring program or programs that paired adults and the remaining 11.6% engaged as partners. Therefore, 100% of the responses came from respondents with direct insight and exposure to youth mentoring programs.

Mentoring Impact and Models

Organizational Impact

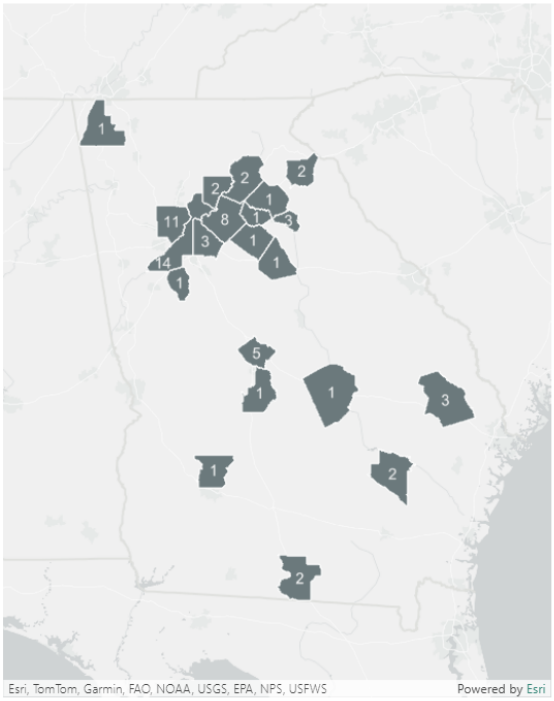
Sixty-one (61) respondents were eligible for these questions in *Section 3*, but only 59 organizational representatives provided complete responses. In reference to *Table 3* below, from an overall organizational perspective, 59 organizations serve 13,875 youth in Georgia, with 214 FTE staff, utilizing 359 volunteer staff and 5,097 volunteer mentors to support these programs. Most programs (39%) provide multiple schedules in their programming while 34% of organizations prefer to provide their programming during the school year. We coded an *unknown* category in the schedule for four organizations that provided all the other data except for their specific schedule.

Schedule	# of Orgs	Youth Served	FTE Paid Staff	Volunteer Staff	Volunteer Mentors
School year	20	5,152	27	49	2,151
Summertime Only	1	9	0	3	2
Year-round	10	1,831	34	40	713
Multiple	23	5,961	148	208	2,013
Other	1	100	1	7	10
Unknown	4	822	4	52	208
Total	**59**	**13,875**	**214**	**359**	**5,097**

Table 3: Mentor Program Schedules and Data from Organizations

Organizational Reach

The 69 organizations that provided information about the *location* (from *Section 3 and 2; refer to Table 2)* of their organization are distributed in 21 Georgia counties and virtual. Most (52%) are based in the Atlanta Metro area (Fulton, Cobb, Gwinnett, Dekalb). Fulton (20.3%) and Cobb (15.9%) have the highest individual saturation of organizations that administer mentoring programs. Three organizations identified as completely virtual with no physical location. Approximately 57% of the population in Georgia is concentrated in the Atlanta metropolitan area, with Fulton County having the largest population. Therefore, it is expected for Fulton County (and the Atlanta metropolitan area) to have such a concentration of organizations dedicated to mentoring programs. Appling, Forsyth, Franklin, Hall, and Lowndes counties each have two organizations that provide mentoring services while Barrow, Fayette, Houston, Jackson, Laurens, Lee, Morgan, Walker, and Walton counties reported one organization each.



County	Count	Percent
Fulton County, GA	14	20.3%
Cobb County, GA	11	15.9%
Gwinnett County, GA	8	11.6%
Bibb County, GA	5	7.2%
Bulloch County, GA	3	4.3%
Clarke County, GA	3	4.3%
Dekalb County, GA	3	4.3%
Virtual	3	4.3%
Appling County, GA	2	2.9%
Forsyth County, GA	2	2.9%
Franklin County, GA	2	2.9%
Hall County, GA	2	2.9%
Lowndes County, GA	2	2.9%
Barrow County, GA	1	1.4%
Fayette County, GA	1	1.4%
Houston County, GA	1	1.4%
Jackson County, GA	1	1.4%
Laurens County, GA	1	1.4%
Lee County, GA	1	1.4%
Morgan County, GA	1	1.4%
Walker County, GA	1	1.4%
Walton County, GA	1	1.4%
Total	**69**	**100.0%**

Figure 2: Locations of Organizations in Georgia

Program Impact

In Section 3, organizations provided information on *up to* 5 unique programs. Respondents provided information about each program's site of operation (site-based or community-based), program service schedule, number of youth served last year, number of mentors in the last year, and service model. Sixty-one (61) organizations were eligible for this question (see *Table 2*) but only 59 respondents provided full and partial responses in this section. Information about 113 programs was captured in this section. It is interesting to observe that the total number of youth served in the past year by ***programs*** is larger than the total number of youth served in the past year by ***organizations***. The discrepancy in the total number

of mentors and FTE staff may be because mentors and staff engage in multiple programs, possibly causing some organizations to double-count participants engaged across multiple programs.

Model	# of Programs	Youth Served	Mentors Engaged	FTE Paid Staff	Site-Based	Community-Based
One to One	21	3,467	3,412	208	112	8
Group	37	5,801	1,347	115	90	372
Peer	3	79	18	3	1	3
Multiple	45	6,011	1,561	206	199	239
Other	7	348	69	13	6	5
Total	**113**	**15,706**	**6,407**	**545**	**408**	**627**

Table 4: Mentoring Model

Program Setting

Figure 3 explores the program setting in which mentoring programs are delivered. A majority (69%) of programs utilize multiple methods of program delivery settings. A distant second preference is hosting programs in schools during the day (11.5%).

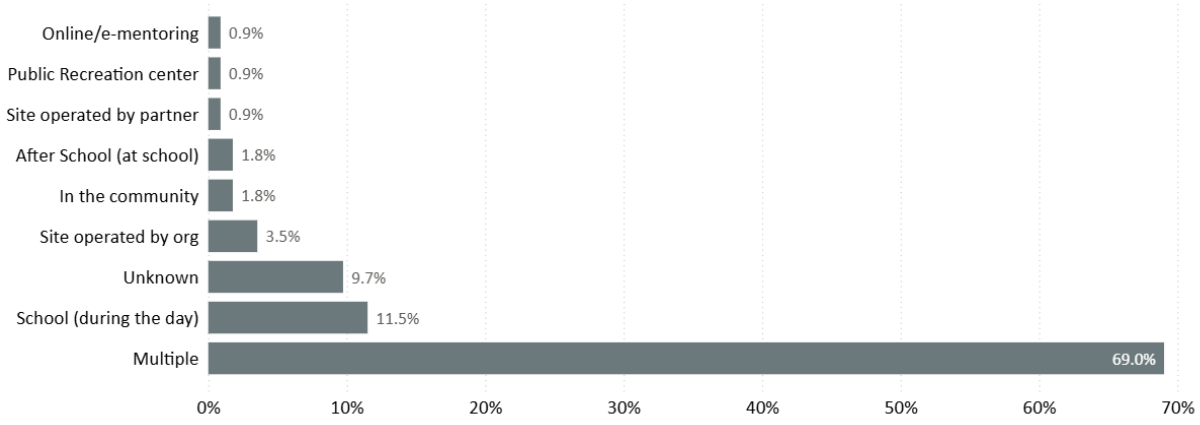
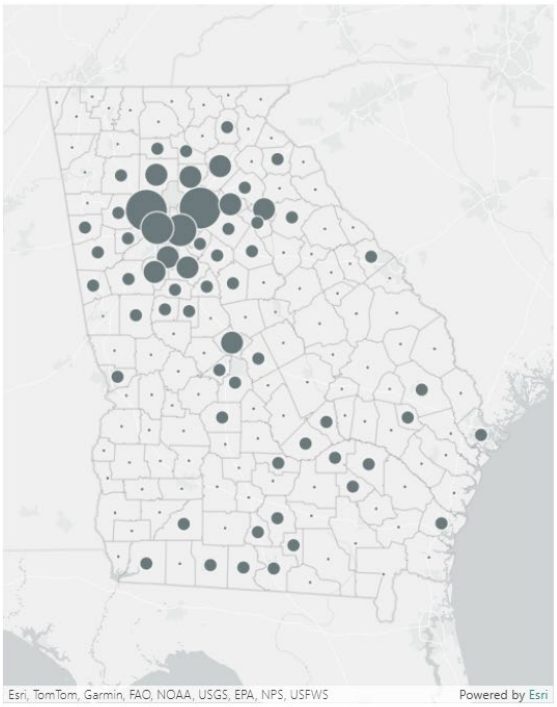


Figure 3: Program Delivery Primary Setting. N = 59

Program Reach

Mentoring organizations located in 21 counties and virtual (*Figure 2*) provide mentoring services to youth in all 159 counties in Georgia through their programs. The top 20 counties are listed in the table below, with the Georgia map capturing the programmatic reach and locations across the state. The Atlanta metro area (Cobb, Gwinnett, Dekalb, Fulton, Clayton) have the highest impact and reach with 48% of the programs. *Figure 4* outlines the counties in which mentoring programs operate and the number of programs available in each county, represented by the size of the bubble. Three (3) programs operate virtually. The counties in which most of the programs are offered relate to the counties in which mentoring organizations are located. While only 3-5 organizations operate collectively in South Georgia and Southeast Georgia, there are at least 12 programs reported in the same areas.



County	Count	Percent
Cobb County, GA	17	11.4%
Gwinnett County, GA	17	11.4%
Dekalb County, GA	15	10.1%
Fulton County, GA	13	8.7%
Clayton County, GA	8	5.4%
Bibb County, GA	7	4.7%
Cherokee County, GA	7	4.7%
Barrow County, GA	6	4.0%
Fayette County, GA	6	4.0%
Forsyth County, GA	6	4.0%
Henry County, GA	6	4.0%
Clarke County, GA	5	3.4%
Hall County, GA	5	3.4%
Bulloch County, GA	4	2.7%
Coweta County, GA	4	2.7%
Douglas County, GA	4	2.7%
Franklin County, GA	4	2.7%
Morgan County, GA	4	2.7%
Paulding County, GA	4	2.7%
Rockdale County, GA	4	2.7%
Virtual	3	2.0%

Figure 4: Locations of Programs in Georgia

Budget Compositions

Fifty-five (55) organizations (out of the 61 organizations that completed section 3 of the survey - refer to *Figure 1* and *Table 1*) provided insight into their direct financial budgets. Budgets ranged from $0 to $6 million. The majority (62%) of the programs have a budget less than $100,000.

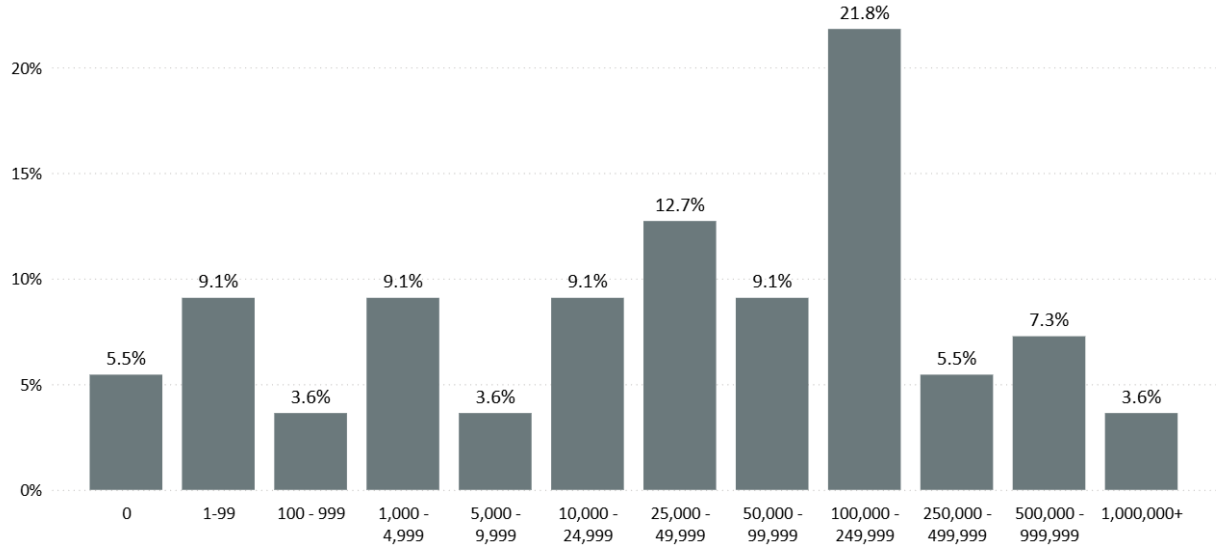


Figure 5: Budget Ranges. N = 55

Six organizations (11%) reported budgets of $500,000 or above. These data points were treated as outliers and removed in the scatterplot below for the purpose of clarity in the visualization (*Figure 4*). We observed a positive correlation between the size of the direct financial budgets and the number of youth served. This correlation holds true with the six outliers that were removed.

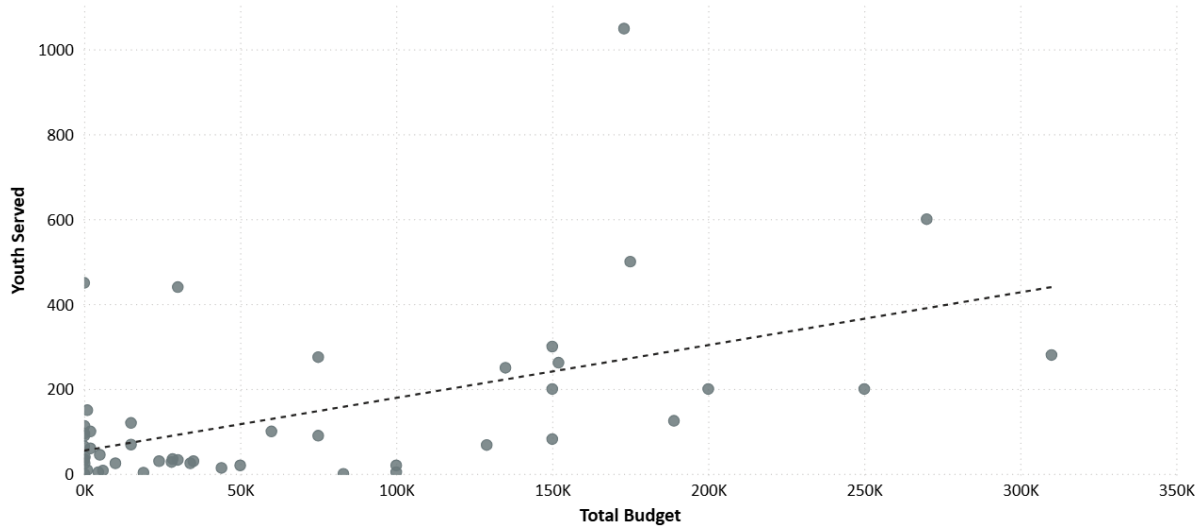


Figure 6: Budget Size and Total # of Youth Served

Organizations with large budgets serve more youth and employ more full-time staff and volunteer support. Organizations with $0 budgets still manage to serve a significant number of youth (550). Full-time equivalent staff numbers generally increase with budget size, but not proportionately. Volunteer staff and mentors play a crucial role across all budget ranges. Even in higher budget categories, volunteer numbers often exceed FTE staff numbers. The $100,000 - $249,999 budget size category shows the highest number of volunteer staff (136) and a high number of volunteer mentors (1,161), suggesting these mid-sized organizations may be particularly effective at mobilizing community support. Smaller budget organizations (< $5,000) serve a disproportionate number of youth relative to their budget. The largest organizations show the highest youth-to-FTE staff ratio, serving 3,731 youth with 90 FTE staff.

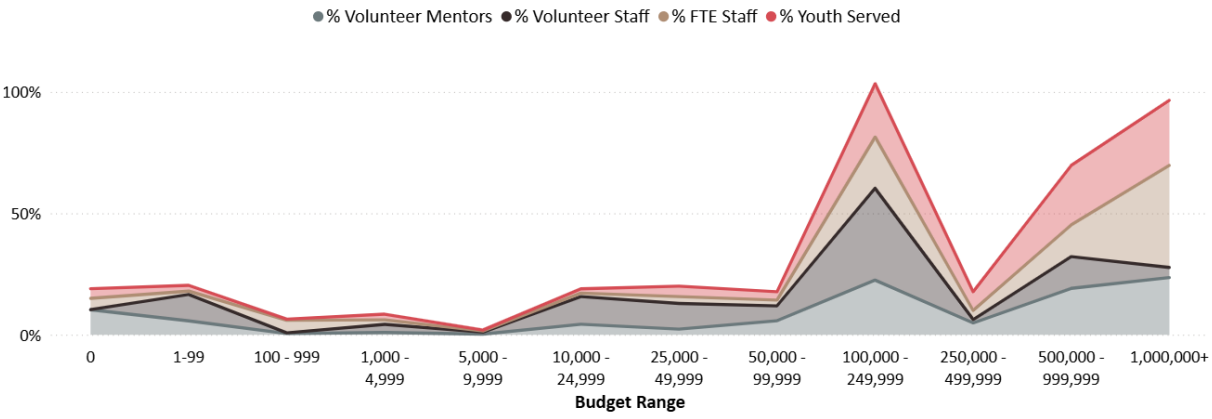


Figure 7: Budget Size and Youth Served, FTE Staff, and Volunteer Staff / Mentors

Funding Sources

Most of the organizations receive their funding from private organizations and government funding (grants, etc.). A relatively small number of organizations also receive income through fee-for-service goods or programming

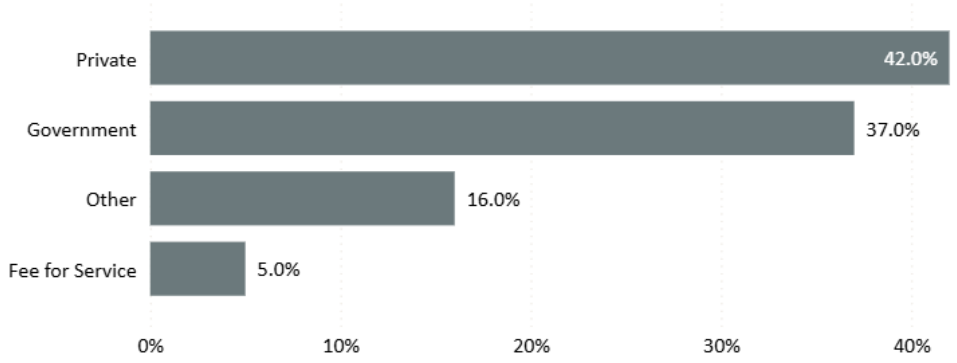


Figure 8: Funding Sources

Organization Type

Youth mentoring in Georgia is implemented across nonprofit, education, municipal, and private sectors. Nonprofits are the most common providers of mentoring and youth development programs.

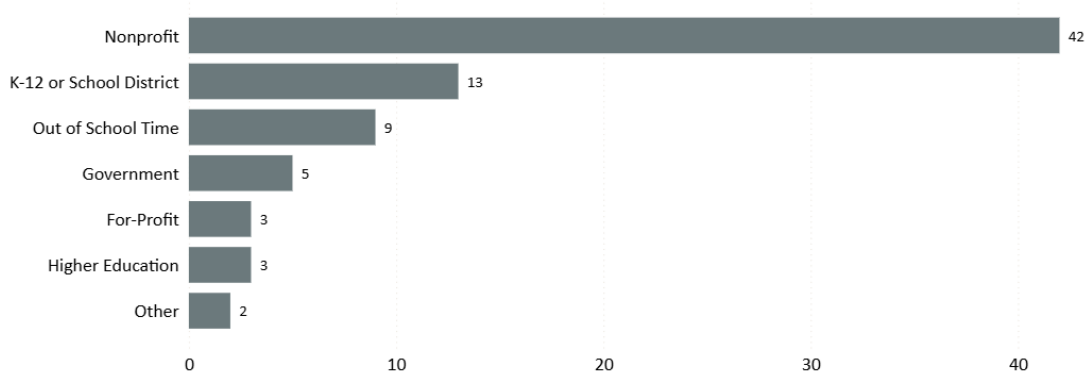


Figure 9: Organization Type

Target Audience

Many organizations (37%) indicated that they serve multiple target populations. 17.4% of organizations indicated that they do not specify their target audience in their programming while 19.6% elected to indicate that their target audiences were not listed and nuanced (Other). The multiple target audience answer choice is not mutually exclusive and may include target audiences specified in the graph.

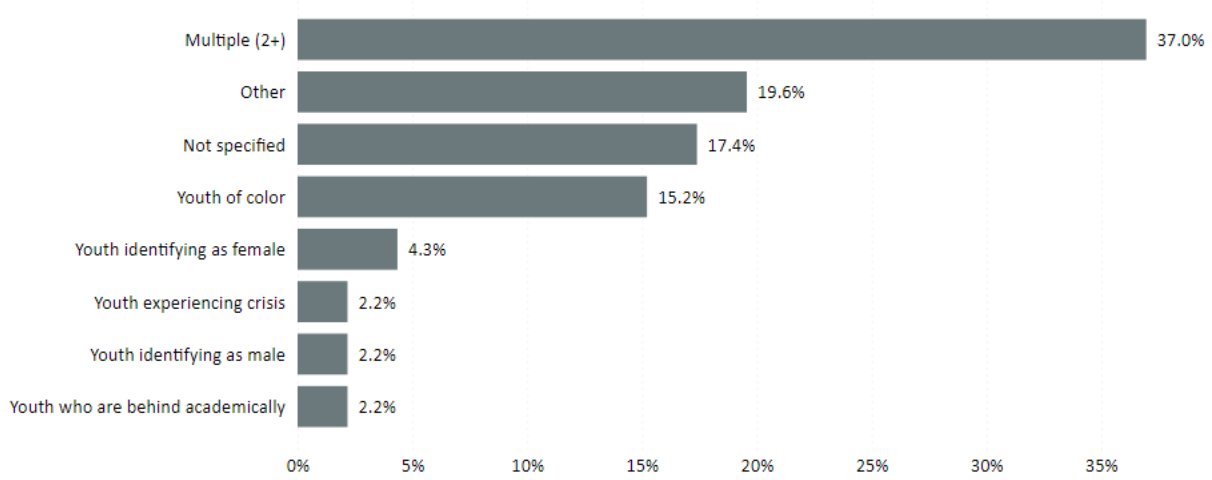


Figure 10: Target Audience

Program Evaluation

Only half of the programs (45%) report participating in formal evaluations. Of the 24 programs that have undergone evaluation, most (62%) have utilized multiple evaluations, either internally, externally, or through a combination of support and instruments.

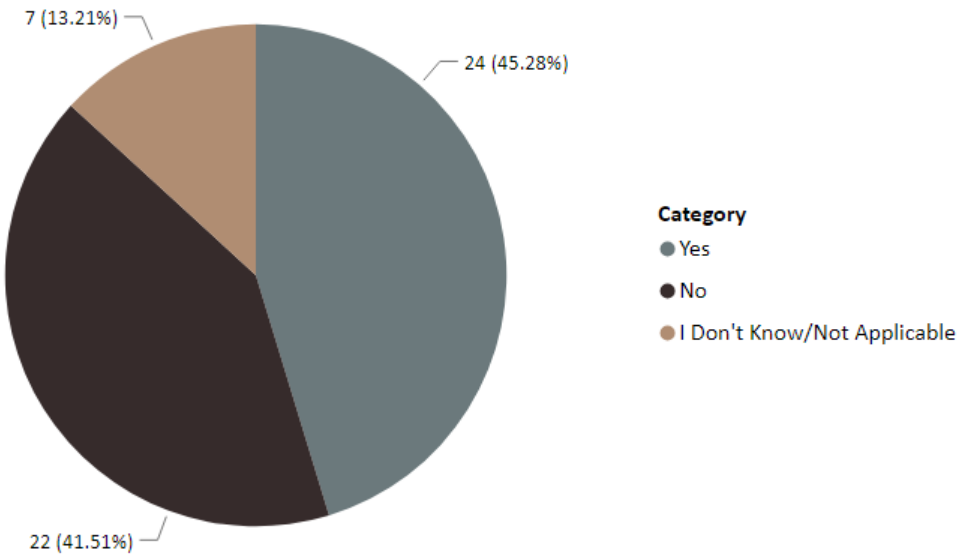


Figure 11: Program Evaluation

Mentoring Attributes

Minimum Match: More than two-thirds of programs reported that mentors met their minimum match commitments[1] at least 90% of the time.

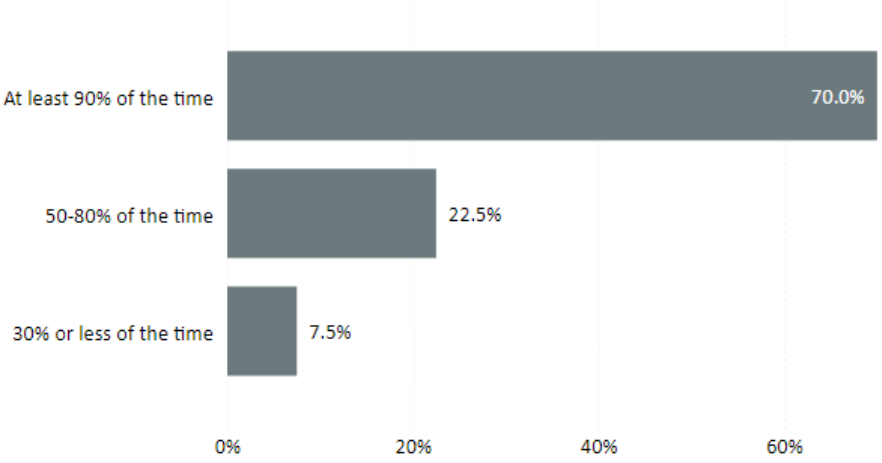


Figure 12: Minimum Match

Mentors of Color: Mentors of color are better represented in mentoring programs in Georgia, especially compared to the 2017 Landscape Study. Over half of the responding organizations stated that most of their mentors are people of color.

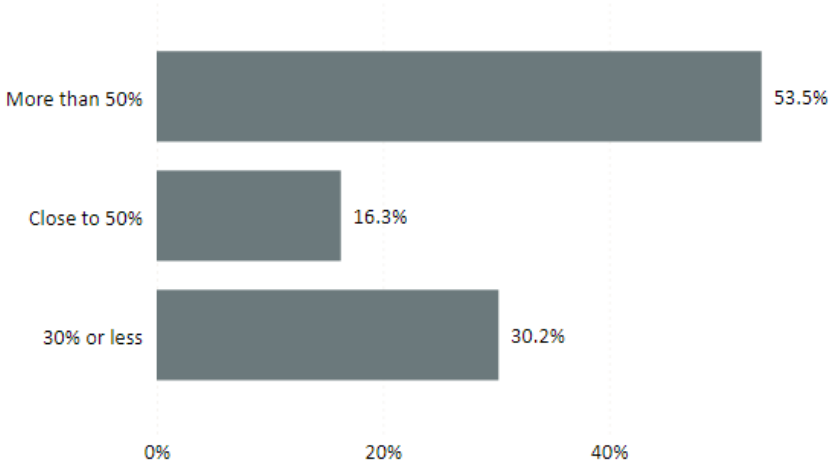


Figure 13: Mentors of Color

[1] Minimum match commitment is defined as the minimum amount of time that a mentor commits to meet with a mentee throughout the duration of the program. This amount of time is defined by the program and can vary based on differences in program goals.

Mentoring Standards: Most respondents reported that they use the standards recommended in the *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*™ in their work. 42% reported using it regularly in their work and 23% reported using it a bit. There is a clear room for more outreach and education to socialize these standards to mentoring and youth development organizations. Thirty-four percent of respondents said they do not use it, with ~15% of respondents unaware of the resource.

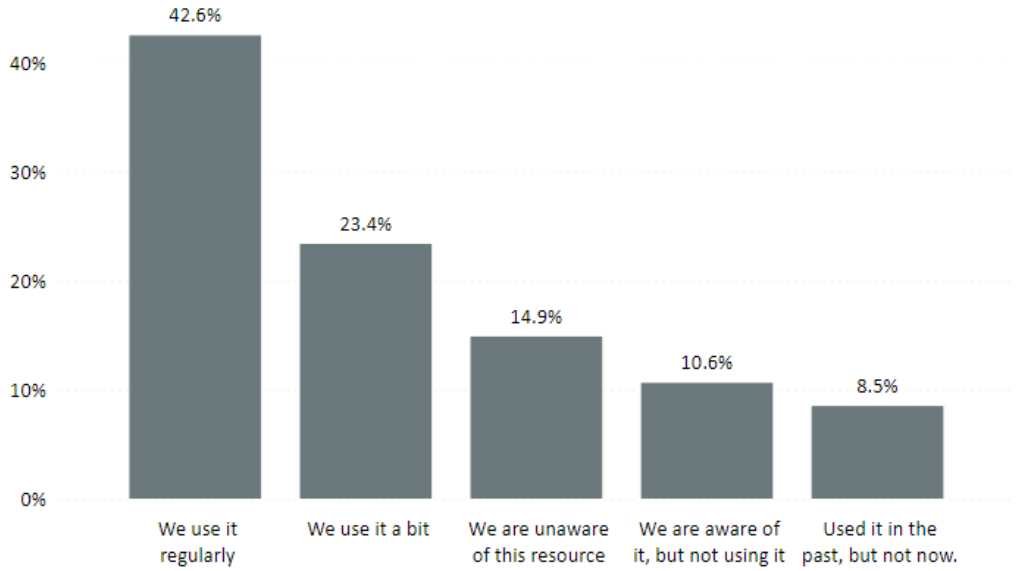


Figure 14: Mentoring Standards

Overall Challenges

In an open-ended question, respondents identified various challenges and areas where they reported they would benefit from additional support. These qualitative responses were coded and themed. The most frequent challenges include funding and recruitment. Additional challenges reported across multiple programs were establishing partnerships, managing program growth, and receiving a mentoring curriculum.

Figure 15: Overall Challenges

Key Findings

Underfunding is affecting key drivers of program quality.

Funding is a concern that transcends location, service-delivery types, mentoring models, and target audiences. When respondents were asked where they experience additional challenges, 30% said funding. In budget compositions, 29 respondents (53% of the organizations) had a budget of less than $50,000. Roughly one-third of those small-budget organizations reported a budget of less than $10,000 or 18%. Drilling down further, 18% of programs report working with a budget of less than $1,000.

The spread of budgets in the survey were vast, with two distinct outliers – at $1.8M and $6M. As outlined in *Figure 6*, we observe a positive correlation between the size of the direct financial budgets and the number of youth served. Organizations do have diverse funding sources, with 42% of funding coming from private sector contributions and 37% from government and public sector.

Organizations with large budgets serve more youth and employ more full-time staff and volunteer support. Organizations with $0 budgets still manage to serve a significant number of youth (550) but there are limitations in being able to conduct evaluations and abide by specific standards as explained further in this report. Full-time equivalent staff numbers generally increase with budget size. The largest organizations show the highest youth-to-FTE staff ratio, serving 3,731 youth with 90 FTE staff.

In addition to staffing challenges, lack of funding impacts the ability to conduct robust program evaluations. Engaging in formal evaluations is more common for respondents with budgets above $50,000. Of the 24 (45.28%; see *Figure 11)* respondents that reported engaging in some type of formal evaluation, 62.5% had budgets of at least $50,000.

Only 45% of the programs that reported serving multiple target populations (see *Figure 10*) also reported participating in formal evaluation regularly, 70% of which operate above the threshold of $50,000 annual operating budget. This suggests that while 37% of programs are aiming to serve multiple target populations, a lack of regular evaluation for most programs does not allow them to fully understand if they are appropriately meeting the needs of the young people they serve. There is a correlation between a strong funding position and the ability to regularly participate in program evaluation.

Human capital is an important resource with regards to mentoring and youth development programming. Volunteer staff and mentors play a crucial role across all budget ranges. The $100,000 - $249,999 budget size category shows the highest number of volunteer staff (136) and a high number of volunteer mentors (1,161) suggesting these mid-sized organizations may be particularly effective at mobilizing community support.

There is a need to increase the quality and quantity of mentoring.

As portrayed in *Figure 2*, a total of 21 counties in Georgia and 3 virtually operating organizations were represented in the survey. However, the distribution of mentoring is heavily concentrated in Metro Atlanta. It is intuitive, as roughly half of Georgia's population resides in Metro Atlanta. However, this poses a viable opportunity to expand mentoring and youth development programming to other parts of Georgia. When respondents were asked about the availability of mentoring services in their area, 100% responded "not enough programs provide youth mentoring services in my area." While respondents were concentrated to Metro Atlanta, this suggests that there is a need to expand access to mentoring and youth development programming statewide.

The lack of mentoring and youth development programming in rural areas is concerning but not surprising, as previous studies have shown that programmatic mentoring is less common in rural communities, with only 11% of youth reporting growing up with a mentor from a formal program (MENTOR, 2023). Such findings reveal an increased need to expand the reach of mentoring in Georgia to ensure equitable mentoring and youth development opportunities.

Apart from the expansion of programming, there is a need to increase training and the quality of mentoring programs. *Figure 14* outlines that 34% of programs do not use the standards recommended in *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*™ in their work. An additional 23% of respondents say they "use it a bit." In total, 57% of respondents do not adequately (or regularly) use these standards in their mentoring programs.

There are also gaps around pre-match and post-match training. In the pre-match phase, 24% of organizations provide no training sessions while 52% of organizations provide only 1 training session across the life of the mentoring relationship. In organizations that provide at least one training session (76%), 32% provide less than 2 hours of cumulative training. *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*™, utilized by MENTOR National as a cornerstone training and technical assistance guidance outlines benchmark expectations for mentor training to include providing "…a minimum of two hours of pre-match, in-person, mentor training." Delivery of training, including quality and timely ongoing training, depends upon having adequate funding and staffing, pointing to a possible adverse interaction between low funding, inadequate staffing, and poor preparation of mentors.

Since volunteer staff and mentors also play a crucial role across all organizations, even irrespective of budget size, adequate training is paramount, especially as organizations strive to serve multiple target populations.

COVID-19 exacerbated challenges and shifted priorities.

There were several questions included to assess the impact of COVID-19 on mentoring and youth development programs. Overall, only 5 (9%) respondents said COVID-19 had no impact on their programs, out of which 2 said their programs were established (or resurrected) post COVID-19. 36% of organizations indicated that COVID-19 had a very high impact on their program and organization while 5% alluded to any changes to be entirely due to the pandemic. Programs that served relatively fewer youth reported more significant impact from the COVID-19 pandemic. Out of the 31 programs that reported a significant impact from COVID-19, 26 (84%) of them served less than 500 students. COVID-19 also impacted programs irrespective of budget size. 54.8% of organizations with an annual operating budget of less than $50,000 said COVID-19 significantly impacted their operations, compared to only 45% of organizations above the $50,000 operating budget threshold that indicated the same impact.

Out of the 91% of organizations that said COVID-19 had at least some impact on their mentoring and youth development programming, exactly 55% said recruiting mentors now is harder than it was before March of 2020. In qualitative input, respondents shared that their programs incorporate some level of virtual engagement. Some organizations pivoted to deliver their programs completely virtually while others only incorporated a specific element, such as a one-on-one check-in, online.

> *"Although our mentoring is in person, occasionally a 1:1 mentor will have a virtual meeting with a mentee if they are traveling for work. Also, some of our training can be done virtually."*

Other qualitative responses indicated that due to COVID-19, priorities of communities and partner organizations (such as schools and funding organizations) also changed, contributing to a steady decline of volunteers and funding that shifted their support to other causes.

> *"We rely heavily on teachers as mentors in our program. Teachers are overburdened and underpaid. They have less capacity for mentorship/doing something extra beyond their typical responsibilities. We have had to build back relationships with our school partners who have had a lot of staff turnover."*

A respondent with an annual operating budget of $750,000 said,

> *"We had to move to using paid mentors. We could no longer recruit sufficient numbers of committed volunteers."*

More inquiry is needed into the emerging and innovative models being used by mentoring programs to address volunteer recruitment and retention challenges, with forums and vehicles for disseminating and sharing this information. Likewise, continued visioning and development of new models is needed, alongside robust conversations about how to incentivize volunteerism in the mentoring field – whether through tangible or intangible benefits. Addressing the perennial – and growing – shortage of volunteers in the sector is central to the delivery of mentoring services as we seek to close the mentoring gap.

Recommendations

Conducting focus groups as a complement to this landscape survey will help to better uncover how programs are addressing the nuanced needs of the various demographics being served. Eleven organizations have been identified that completed the survey to be the preliminary respondents, specifically of those that (1) reported serving two or more target populations, and (2) expressed interest in receiving follow-up contact.

Funding – and its impacts – must be the key focus. Funding is connected to every element of programming. To address the significant funding challenges identified across mentoring programs, organizations, and stakeholders should focus on facilitating targeted fundraising initiatives and advocacy efforts to secure sustainable financial resources. Encouraging mentoring programs to diversify funding sources through strategic partnerships with corporate sponsors, philanthropic organizations, and government grants can provide greater financial stability. Capacity-building workshops on grant writing and financial management can equip organizations with the skills needed to enhance their funding strategies.

To improve program quality and effectiveness, mentoring organizations should prioritize adopting and consistently applying evidence-based mentoring standards, such as the *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*™. Survey results point to a need for customized training and technical assistance to organizations that have not yet fully integrated these standards. Investing in comprehensive pre-match and ongoing mentor training programs will ensure that mentors are well-prepared to support and engage youth effectively.

Given the identified need to expand mentoring services beyond the Metro Atlanta area, targeted outreach and expansion strategies should be developed to reach underrepresented counties. Leveraging technology to offer virtual mentoring options can help bridge geographic gaps and provide equitable access to mentoring services statewide. Developing scalable models and best practices for rural and underserved communities will ensure more widespread and effective mentoring coverage.

To strengthen program evaluation and demonstrate impact, mentoring organizations should be encouraged to implement regular, structured evaluation processes. Providing access to evaluation tools, templates, and training on data collection methods will help programs track progress and make data-driven improvements. Additionally, deepening MENTOR Georgia's a peer learning network, creating opportunities for organizations to share evaluation insights and best practices, can foster a culture of continuous improvement.

In response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations should be supported in adapting their service delivery models to incorporate hybrid approaches that combine in-person and virtual mentoring. This will provide flexibility and resilience in the face of future disruptions. Developing clear guidelines and best practices for virtual mentoring will ensure consistency and effectiveness in program delivery. Finally, addressing mentor recruitment and retention challenges should be a key focus. Statewide recruitment campaigns that highlight the benefits of mentoring and engage diverse communities can attract mentors of various backgrounds. Providing resources and support for mentor appreciation and recognition programs can further enhance retention and commitment.

Appendix

Glossary of Terms

Crisis - For the sake of this study we identify crises as organizations with a focus on homelessness, mental health, abuse, substance misuse, incarceration – self or family member, grief or death of a family member, etc.

Distinct mentoring program- By "distinct" we mean programs that have separate names, models, groups of youth served, goals, etc. If you operate one program in multiple locations, we would still consider that a single program. Some organizations only operate one type of program, but others may offer several programs they consider distinct

Full-Time Equivalent Staff (FTE) - Staff who work full-time (35-40 hours per week). For the survey, please include values less than full-time if needed; a 10-hour-per-week position would be ".25" FTE, for example.

Memorandum of Understanding - A mutual agreement between two parties or more that demonstrates the organizations have consulted and coordinated the responsibilities of their activities.

Mentoring - A supportive, committed relationship between a caring adult (or near-peer) and a mentee that promotes positive youth development over a sustained, prolonged period.

Minimum match commitment - The minimum amount of time that a Mentor commits to meet with a mentee throughout the duration of the program. This amount of time is defined by the program and can vary based on differences in program goals.

Organization - The entity that runs or houses mentoring programs.

Past Program Year - The duration of time that a program is conducted. This can vary from program to program and organization to organization, sometimes following the school year or calendar year.

Pre-match training - Training that is required for Mentors prior to being paired with a mentee.

Primary program - The most prominent program operated. While an organization may have many programs, for the sake of the survey please report on the most prominent program. For example, it could be the program that serves the most young people, your longest-operating program, or the flagship program of your agency.

Primary setting - The main location or structure of a program and its operations.

Program- "Program" is defined here as a distinct mentoring model that operates at one or more locations in a limited geographic area. Programs can stand alone and may house all the activities of the organization, or an organization may house multiple programs.

Programming- The program's services that are administered through activities, curriculum, etc.

Providers - Individuals or groups that administer mentoring programs, typically within or as part of an organization. Providers can be nonprofit, for-profit, schools, employers, churches, and other types of agencies in between.

Sites - Locations at which programs are physically operated.

Young People - Persons ranging from children in K-12 to youth aged 15-24 years old.

Youth experiencing crisis - Youth experiencing or affected by homelessness, mental health crisis, abuse, substance misuse, incarceration, grief or death of a family member, etc. They may be currently or recently experiencing these concerns; they may be experiencing them indirectly through a family member, e.g.: drug abuse by a parent or caregiver.

Landscape Survey

Please refer to Figure 1 to understand the flow of this survey.

J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

MENTOR GEORGIA

Participation in this study (completion of all sections) will enter your organization into a drawing for up to two free registrations per agency to attend the MENTOR Georgia Summit, in Athens on August 31st. Further, your participation will give your agency a priority invitation to a gathering unveiling the results of this study and interacting with stakeholders in early 2024.

This study is being conducted by MENTOR Georgia, which works to expand opportunities for Georgia youth to connect with caring adult mentors by supporting direct-service organizations like yours through training, technical assistance, and advocacy. **Mentoring*** is a commitment to equip **young people** with supportive relationships and growth opportunities where they live, work, and play. If your organization pairs young people with adults or older students in group or one-on-one settings for the purpose of relational support, skills building, character development, recreation, after-school, or other activities, we invite you to participate.

For complete definitions of bolded terms please click this link to review our glossary.

You can stop at any time and come back to this survey. However, to pick up where you left off, it is important to use the same device and browser. Using a different device or browser may cause your progress to be lost. If you have any problems or questions about the survey, please reach out to lhale@uga.edu.

This study will help MENTOR Georgia best understand the strengths, challenges, and needed support of mentoring and youth service **providers** in the state of Georgia.

With this information, MENTOR Georgia will create a dashboard that will allow easy access to information about your program, which allows us to connect you with needed resources and partners.

Your responses will also allow us to develop more effective tools, training, and services for **organizations** just like yours, and ultimately bring more and higher quality mentoring relationships to young people. We appreciate you taking 15 to 30 minutes to participate in this study.

PRE-SURVEY:

1. Please select the option that best describes your **programming**: *
    a. We operate a youth mentoring **program**
    b. We operate youth development programming that pairs adults (staff or volunteers) with young people in group or one-on-one settings
    c. I or my organization do not directly engage in youth mentoring programming, but I/we partner with youth mentoring or youth development organizations.
    d. I or my organization previously operated a youth mentoring program, but we no longer do.

SECTION 1

1. Name of the person filling out this questionnaire *
    a. Response Box:
2. What is your email address? *
    a. Response Box:
3. What is the name of your organization? *
    a. Response Box:
4. In which county is your organization based? *
    a. Dropdown of counties in GA with a virtual only option
5. Please select all of the counties in which you previously operated a **mentoring program *
    a. Dropdown of counties in GA with a virtual only option
6. Did your program transfer to or get re-launched by another entity? *
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Unsure
7. If you answered "Yes" to the question above, please provide the name of the organization and a contact email we can use to reach out to the organization.
    a. Name of Organization:
    b. Contact Email:
8. Please indicate the month and year your organization stopped offering mentoring services. *
    a. Response Box:
9. Please indicate why your program stopped offering mentoring services. (Select all that apply) *
    a. Loss of revenue
    b. Increased expenses
    c. Lack of available volunteers
    d. Inability to meet in person
    e. Loss of supporting or key partners
    f. Health and Safety concerns
    g. Staff Development/Retention
    h. Lack of Parent/Family Engagement

i. Lack of mentee engagement
j. Other – Please specify

10. One a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate how much the above factors were due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 1 being not at all related and 5 being almost entirely caused by the pandemic. *
    a. LIKERT SCALE 1-5
11. Does your organization still offer other non-mentoring services? *
    a. Yes
    b. No
12. If you answered yes above, please describe the other services offered below. *
    a. Response Box:
13. We would like to learn more about why your mentoring program is no longer operating. May we reach out to you to discuss your answers to this survey? *
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Phone Number:

SECTION 2

1. Name of the person filling out this questionnaire*
    a. Response Box:
2. What is your email address? *
    a. Response Box:
3. What is the name of your organization? *
    a. Response Box:
4. In which county in Georgia is your organization based? *
    a. Dropdown of counties in GA with a virtual only option
5. Please select all of the counties in Georgia in which you operate or do business. *
    a. Dropdown of counties in GA with a virtual only option
6. What kind of organization do you represent? *
    a. K-12 School or school district
    b. Out-of-school time organization (after-school or summer programming)
    c. Government or municipal organization
    d. For-profit entity/employer
    e. Nonprofit/Not for profit
    f. Religious Institution
    g. Health Care Agency
    h. Higher Education Institution
    i. Other – Please specify
7. How does your organization engage with youth **mentoring** or **youth development** programs? (Select all that apply) *
    a. We **provide** services to a program/programs

b. We **receive** services from a program/programs
c. We **contract formally** with a program/programs
d. We have informal partnership relationships with a program/programs
e. We **send** referrals to a program/programs
f. We **get** referrals for services from a program/programs
g. We sponsor or financially support a program/programs
h. Other – Please specify

8. Please indicate your perception of the *overall quantity* of programs providing youth mentoring in the geographic area(s) you represent (you'll have a chance next to share your perceptions about the quality of programs) *
    a. Not enough programs provide youth mentoring services in my area
    b. Just the right number of programs provide youth mentoring in my area
    c. Too many programs provide youth mentoring services in my area
    d. Unsure
9. Please rate the *overall quality* of programs providing youth mentoring services in the geographic area(s) you represent, with 1 being exceptionally poor and 5 being exceptionally good *
    a. LIKERT SCALE 1-5, with an UNSURE option
10. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your relationships with or the opportunities to partner with youth mentoring programs in your geographic area?
    a. Response Box (optional):
11. May we contact you to learn more about your responses to this survey? *
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Phone Number:

SECTION 3

<u>Part 1: General Information</u>

1. Name of the person filling out this questionnaire *
    a. Response Box:
2. What is your email address? *
    a. Response Box:
3. What is the name of your organization? *
    a. Response Box:
4. Please provide your organization's website URL, if you have one.
    a. Response Box:
5. What is your position in the mentoring organization? *
    a. Executive Director/President/CEO
    b. Program Coordinator
    c. Case Manager/Match Support
    d. Administrative staff

e. Volunteer
f. Intern/student worker
g. Board member
h. Other – please specify

6. What type of organization is this? (select all that apply) *
    a. K-12 school or school district
    b. Out-of-school time organization (after school or summer programming)
    c. Government or municipal organization
    d. For-profit entity/employer
    e. Nonprofit/Not for profit
    f. Religious Institution
    g. Health care agency
    h. Government or municipal organization
    i. Higher education Institution
    j. Other – please specify

7. Please tell us about the **distinct mentoring programs** you operate. * *By "distinct" we mean programs that have separate names, models, groups of youth served, goals, etc. If you operate one program in multiple locations, we would still consider that a single program. Most organizations usually only operate one type of program, but some may offer several they consider distinct.* GRID with a row for:
    a. Program name
        i. Response Box:
    b. Number of **sites** where each program operates, with an option to indicate “site-based” vs. “community-based”
        i. Response Box:
    c. Program service schedule
        i. Year-round
        ii. School year
        iii. Summertime only
        iv. Other-please specify
    d. Number of youth served by program in the past year
        i. Response Box:
    e. Number of mentors through this program in the past year
        i. Response Box:
    f. Service model – dropdown
        i. One-to-one mentoring
        ii. Group mentoring
        iii. Peer mentoring
        iv. Other-please specify

Great! That was easy, right? In the next section, you'll get a chance to tell us where you're based and about the scale of your program(s) – here's where you get to put your organization on the map!

Part 2: Program Information

Now we want to gather more information about your organization's overall program offerings and the context in which they operate. Here, we are still asking about all programs operated, if you offer more than one. Unless another time period is specified, please answer the questions for the **past program year.**

8. In which county is your organization based? *
    a. Dropdown of counties in GA with a virtual only option
9. Please select all of the counties in which you operate mentoring services. *
    a. Dropdown of counties in GA with a virtual only option
10. In total, how many **young people** were served by your mentoring program(s) in the past year? *
    a. Response Box:
11. How many paid program staff supported your mentoring programs in the past year (Please list as **Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Positions**)? *
12. How many volunteer staff supported your mentoring programs in the last program year? *
    Please do not count volunteer mentors as "volunteer" staff unless they performed other functions to help implement the program. As with paid staff, please list as FTE equivalent positions.
    a. Response Box:
13. How many **volunteer mentors** supported your mentoring program (s) in the last year? *
    a. Response Box:
14. Thinking about all of the various programs you operate, please tell us the **primary settings** where those programs are delivered. Select all that apply. *
    a. School (during the school day)
    b. Site operated by my organization
    c. Site operated by a partner
    d. In the community
    e. In the workplace
    f. Online/e-mentoring
    g. After School (at school site)
    h. Faith-Based Institution/Spiritual Organization
    i. Juvenile correctional facility
    j. Mental health/treatment facility
    k. Higher Education Institution
    l. Residential Facility
    m. Public Recreation center
    n. Other – Please specify

15. Please estimate the percentage of current funding toward all your mentoring programs that has come from the following sources. *Total should equal 100 percent.*

    Grid for funding sources - Row for the following categories with corresponding "fill in boxes" for the number with percentage sign included.

    a) Government / public
    b) Private, including individual and corporate gifts
    c) Fee-for-service or earned income
    d) Other

16. What is the combined budget (rounded to the nearest thousand) of all of your mentoring programs for the past program year? * Please only count direct financial costs, not the value of in-kind donations of goods, services, or physical space.
    a. Response Box:
17. Over the past three years, this budget has…
    a. Increased
    b. Stayed roughly the same
    c. Fluctuated up and down quite a bit
    d. Decreased.
18. Please estimate the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on funding for your organization's mentoring program(s) on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "no impact at all" and 5 being "we attribute any changes entirely to the effects of the pandemic" (N/A or UNSURE being options here)
19. We'd also like to understand the impact of the pandemic on your recruitment of mentors. Please select the answer that most accurately describes your organization's ability to recruit volunteers since early March of 2020.
    a. It's easier now to recruit mentors than it was before March of 2020
    b. The effort required to recruit mentors is about the same
    c. Recruiting mentors now is harder than it was before March of 2020
    d. N/A – Our program started sometime after March 2020
    e. Other-specify
20. How, if at all, has the pandemic affected your program, either positively or negatively (aside from the responses you may have already shared)?
    a. Response Box:
21. Please indicate the primary individuals who serve as mentors in your various mentoring programs. Select all that apply: *
    a. Volunteers above the age of 18
    b. College students and college-age volunteers
    c. Volunteer peer mentors (including those under age 18)
    d. Youth who are older than our mentees (near peers)
    e. Youth who are the same age as our mentees (same age as peers)
    f. Program staff/paid positions
    g. Other – please specify

22. We would also like to learn about who your organization partners with. Please select all that apply, whether it's formalized through a **Memorandum of Understanding,** or the partnership is informal:
    a. Fellow mentoring organization
    b. Fellow (non-mentoring) youth development organization
    c. Nonprofits
    d. School, school district, or other K-12 educational entity
    e. Higher education institution
    f. Religious institution (churches, mosques, synagogues, or other faith-based programs)
    g. Law enforcement
    h. Mental health organization
    i. Other healthcare entity
    j. Direct service organizations providing non-healthcare goods or services such as food, clothing, housing, or other supports
    k. Businesses or other for-profit entities
    l. Chamber of commerce
    m. Other – Please Specify
23. Have any of your mentoring programs undergone formal evaluation?
    a. Yes – multiple times, through an external evaluator
    b. Yes – one time, through an external evaluator
    c. Yes – multiple times using internal staff or tools
    d. Yes – one time using internal staff or tools
    e. No – we have not undergone a formal evaluation
    f. Don't know/Not applicable
24. Please share the main challenges or areas of need for which you think your agency's mentoring programs might benefit from additional support.

a. Response Box:

Thanks for sharing information about your organization as a whole! In the next section, we'll invite you to zero in on a primary program. If you've made it this far, you're well over halfway through. Stick it out to ensure your program is represented!

Part 3: Primary Program Details

Now we'd like to ask you to share some information about your primary program(s). If you have multiple programs with different models or outcomes, please select one program to report on – whether it's the program you operate that serves the most young people or it is a flagship program.

25. Name of program *
    a. Response Box:

26. Please choose the core goals or youth outcome areas for this mentoring program. (Please select all that apply)
    - Academic enrichment
    - Career exploration/job readiness/employment
    - College access or persistence/completion
    - K-12 Educational attainment/academic support
    - Family support
    - General youth development (whole child)
    - Fine Arts Exposure/Exploration
    - Identity development (strengthening connections to racial/ethnic/religious/cultural/or other social groups)
    - Juvenile justice/reentry
    - Leadership development
    - Life skills/independent living
    - Literacy
    - Mental health and well-being
    - Positive health behaviors
    - Pregnancy prevention
    - Recreational activities/hobbies/arts
    - Resiliency factors
    - Simply providing a caring adult relationship
    - Social-emotional skills
    - STEM education
    - Substance misuse prevention or treatment
    - Violence prevention/reductions in aggressive behavior
    - Other – Please Specify (Required)
27. What percentage of matches in this program meet the **minimum match commitment** for length of match?
    a. Response Box:
28. How many years has this program been offering mentoring? (If this program was paused during the pandemic, you may include those years. So, a program that started in August 2018 and had to pause in 2020 and 2021 would be in operation for five years.)
    a. Response Box:
29. Please estimate the percentage of mentors in this program that are people of color.
    a. Response Box:
30. Please select all of the following that describe any mandatory **pre-match training** that mentors are expected to receive.
    a. Row-Total Length
        i. < 1 hours
        ii. 1-1.5 hours
        iii. 2-3.5 hours
        iv. 4-6 hours

v. >6 hours

b. Row- Number of Sessions
   i. 1
   ii. 2
   iii. 3
   iv. 4+

c. Row-Type
   i. In-person
   ii. Virtual-live
   iii. Recorded Training Videos
   iv. Online Interactive Content
   v. Hybrid
   vi. Other-Please Specify

31. On average, how frequently do mentors have training and/or support contact with program coordinators or staff (e.g. supervision, check-ins, supplemental training, etc.) after **pre-match training**?
    a. No training/support contact occurs
    b. Less than 1 training/support contact per month
    c. 1 training/support contact per month
    d. 2-4 trainings/support contacts per month
    e. More than 4 post match trainings/support contacts per month
    f. Don't know
32. Which of the following age ranges are served by this program? (Select all that apply.) *
    a. Pre-K
    b. K-5
    c. Middle School Ages
    d. High School Ages
    e. College age/young adults
33. Does this program have a target population described by any of the following? (select one)
    a. Youth of color
    b. Youth living in households below the poverty line
    c. Youth identifying as male
    d. Youth identifying as female
    e. Youth in the LGBTQ+ community
    f. Youth who are behind (or at risk of falling behind) academically
    g. Youth experiencing crisis
       i. If you selected the above, can you tell us more about the population you serve?
    h. Other (please list)
    i. None of the above; we don't have a specific target population
34. How many youth are currently on a waitlist to be matched with a mentor in this program?
    a. Response Box:

35. Please estimate the average length of time youth spend on this program's waitlist to be matched.
    a. Response Box:

Thanks! Your answers to this section are helping us paint a more accurate picture of the state of mentoring in Georgia. In the next and final section, there are only four more questions that will tell us how MENTOR Georgia can best support you!

Part 4: MENTOR Georgia Affiliation Questions

1. How familiar are you with the standards recommended in the Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring published by the MENTOR: the National Mentoring Partnership?
    a. We use it regularly in our work
    b. We use it a bit in our work
    c. We are not using this resource, but have used it in the past
    d. We are aware of it, but are not using it
    e. We are unaware of this resource
    f. Other-Please explain
2. Do you use or access other resources offered by MENTOR or the National Mentoring Resource Center?
    a. We use them regularly in our work
    b. We use them a bit in our work
    c. We are not using these resources, but have used them in the past
    d. We are aware of them, but are not using them
    e. We are unaware of these resources
    f. Other-Please explain
3. If you have received training, coaching, or other help from MENTOR Georgia in the past year, please rate the quality and usefulness of the help you received. 1 being it wasn't helpful at all and 5 that the help was invaluable.
    a. LIKERT
4. Is there anything else you would like to share about your program or the work of MENTOR Georgia?
    a. Response Box:
5. Can we contact you further to discuss your responses to this form?

All Done! Thank you for taking time to complete this study. We appreciate your commitment to positive youth mentoring in the state of Georgia!