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Mentoring Inventory and Assessment

For the Rotary Club of Downtown Sioux Falls



Augustana Research Institute



This report presents the findings of an inventory and assessment of mentoring programs in Sioux Falls, South Dakota conducted in November and December of 2019.

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Executive Summary

Sioux Falls prides itself on being a community of generous people who care for one another. In Sioux Falls today, an estimated 1,855 mentors are actively engaged in mentorship relationships.

Yet the need for mentors is significant. Waiting lists persist for the community's largest youth and family mentoring programs. Students and families sometimes wait months before being matched with a mentor. Based on current program capacity and existing demand, mentoring programs estimate the number of additional mentors needed *today* is 1,088.

This report summarizes the results of 119 surveys and interviews conducted with community stakeholders, mentoring program staff, and Rotarians about strengths and opportunities when it comes to mentoring in Sioux Falls.

Additional mentors are needed to meet demand for existing mentoring programs as well as to expand opportunities for mentoring to broader swaths of the population. In particular, stakeholders and mentoring program staff described five areas of opportunity for increased mentorship: youth, families and adults, career, social services and community accessibility, and intercultural inclusion.

Based on the results of surveys and interviews and on the interests of the Rotary Club of Downtown Sioux Falls Executive Committee, this report identifies and describes three focal areas for mentoring: youth, new Americans, and families and adults.

The Sioux Falls area has a total K-12 public and private school enrollment of 45,970. Though youth-focused mentoring programs have the most participants of any area examined here, they cumulatively reach fewer than 2,000 youth. Across the board, youth-focused programs report their greatest need is additional volunteers.

Sioux Falls is home to a growing number of new Americans, immigrants and refugees who have settled here. In total, 18,708 Sioux Falls residents were born in another country, and of those people, more than half entered the United States within the past decade. New American mentoring programs match long-time residents with newcomers, benefiting both parties as they bridge cultural divides.

Sioux Falls is fortunate to enjoy a healthy economy and generous residents who can come alongside families and adults experiencing temporary crisis and instability. Mentoring programs for families and adults can help people get back on their feet by empowering them with daily living skills and parenting techniques, job skills, and confidence to advance in their careers.

Thousands of people are involved in existing mentorship programs, but across the board, programs report opportunities for growth. The greatest needs are additional volunteers and financial support. Program staff and community stakeholders agree: Priority should be given to matching potential mentors with programs and mentees they can mentor successfully *and* to empowering a broader cross-section of the population to become mentors. Advocates of mentoring can lift up the diversity in the menu of options available among local mentoring programs, work to build an inclusive pipeline for new mentors from diverse backgrounds, and collaborate across sectors to facilitate referral to mentoring.

Introduction to the Report

In October 2019, the Rotary Club of Downtown Sioux Falls commissioned the Augustana Research Institute (ARI) to conduct an inventory and assessment of mentoring programs in the Sioux Falls community. This report presents the results of that investigation.

To identify mentoring programs, ARI collected 54 surveys from Rotarians reporting mentoring programs with which they were familiar. ARI also compiled available information from existing databases, including the Helpline Center, and volunteer and employment databases. ARI used this initial data collection to inform a first wave of surveys and interviews of mentoring programs. Programs included in the first wave were asked to identify additional programs engaged in mentoring.

In total, ARI identified 112 organizations and programs that support mentoring or related activities. From that list, ARI identified 37 programs that provide 1-to-1 mentoring, including 21 programs in which volunteers from the community provide sustained, 1-to-1 mentoring. To gather information about mentoring programs, ARI conducted 45 interviews with organizational leaders about opportunities for mentoring they offer.

Additionally, ARI collected 20 surveys from community stakeholders regarding community assets and needs when it comes to mentoring. Surveys were submitted by organizations serving diverse sectors, including courts and the criminal justice system, homeless and domestic violence shelters, human service providers, addiction treatment providers, healthcare providers, and universities and education providers.

Organization of the Report

The first section of this report gives an overview of the state of mentoring in Sioux Falls. It describes community assets and needs identified by stakeholders and provides an estimate of the current mentoring gap—that is, the number of additional mentors needed today to meet current demand.

The remainder of the report describes three areas of opportunity for mentorship: youth, new Americans, and families and adults. Each population is described, followed by an overview of mentoring programs that serve that population, closely related opportunities, and types of support needed.

The State of Mentoring in Sioux Falls

Sioux Falls prides itself on being a community of generous people who care for one another. Stakeholders widely agreed that this culture of caring is the community's greatest asset. As one person put it, "We are a generous and caring community. It's in our culture and it's our biggest asset." People support the community by giving of their time, talent, and treasure. Mentors make a special commitment to invest in relationship with those they might not meet in day-to-day life. In Sioux Falls today, an estimated 1,855 mentors are actively engaged in mentorship relationships.

Yet the need for mentors is significant. Waiting lists persist for the community's largest youth and family mentoring programs. Students and families sometimes wait months before being matched with a mentor. Based on current program capacity and existing demand, mentoring programs estimate the number of additional mentors needed *today* is 1,088.



Community Assets

Asked to comment on the community's greatest strengths with regard to mentoring, stakeholders resoundingly named a spirit of generosity and caring. Beyond that, stakeholders also spoke to the depth and breadth of resources available in the community to support mentoring, particularly in the form of financial stability and professional expertise. As a community, Sioux Falls enjoys economic abundance: the city is nestled in a region with one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country¹ and is encompassed in part by Lincoln County, South Dakota, which has one of the lowest poverty rates nationally.² One stakeholder summed it up, remarking, "Sioux Falls also has a robust workforce with people in a variety of industries" who "offer their time to others" and "are willing to share their experiences."

Needs and Opportunities

While recognizing the community's generosity, stakeholders and mentoring program staff emphasized the need for more volunteer mentors across the board. Additional mentors are needed to meet demand for existing mentoring programs as well as to expand opportunities for mentoring to broader swaths of the population. In particular, stakeholders and mentoring program staff described five areas of opportunity for increased mentorship: youth, families and adults, career, social services and community accessibility, and intercultural inclusion.

¹ 2.4% in October 2019 as reported by U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics for Metropolitan Areas, not seasonally adjusted

² Lincoln County had the third-lowest poverty rate nationally by county based on 2013-17 American Community Survey.

Youth

The need for youth mentoring is broad. Several respondents pointed out that youth “from all walks of life” benefit from having caring adult relationships. Mentors build self-worth, offer encouragement, serve as positive role models, and connect youth to the community. To that end, respondents encouraged increased mentorship for all youth, not only those considered in need or at risk. Mentoring program staff suggested that there are enough youth to grow mentoring programs much larger than they are, if programs can increase capacity and the number of available mentors.

“Every kid deserves a caring adult relationship.”

Several respondents pinpointed subpopulations of youth who might especially benefit from mentorship. Those subpopulations include students in residential settings who are more difficult to match with mentors, children with incarcerated parents, and young adults ages 14 to 22.³ Additionally, respondents suggested that changing demographics among Sioux Falls youth are increasing the need for adult mentors who share students’ diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences.

Families and Adults

A number of respondents identified a need for more mentoring to support families and adults. Among existing mentoring relationships, more than three-fourths are with youth. Existing adult mentoring opportunities are often focused on career, whereas stakeholders described a broader need for mentoring focused on life skills, parenting, and financial stability. In this vein, the following needs were identified:

- Whole family and parenting mentoring. Family mentoring can take a variety of forms. Respondents recognized a need for family mentors who could provide ongoing, in-home parenting support to families, live-in peer mentoring, or regular in-person meetings and phone calls. Mentors might support new parents, single teenage parents, or families in crisis. As compared to traditional human services or parenting classes, mentors can provide support and modeling in the context of home and daily life. Examples of programs that have previously existed in Sioux Falls or that exist in other communities include Mentor Mom (and Dad), Family Promise, and Oxford House.

“[F]amilies need help within the context of their home while real-time behaviors happen.”

- Life skills mentoring. Many existing mentoring opportunities for adults focus on specific industries or career paths. Several stakeholders identified a need for more general, life skills-focused adult mentoring that is not necessarily focused on career or parenting. This type of mentoring could

³ Formerly, the Amachi program of Big Brothers Big Sisters matched mentors with children with incarcerated parents. That program has ceased operation. Family Connection, through the Children’s Connection program, continues to run support groups in schools. Groups are led by a licensed therapist or social worker.

help adults maneuver in the community, network and make connections, access resources, and find stability and fulfillment.

- Entry-level or re-entry workforce mentoring for men. A few respondents suggested a need for a mentoring program focused on workforce entry or re-entry for single men, something similar to Dress for Success’s programs for women who are entering or re-entering the workforce.
- Mentoring for mental health and addiction recovery. Mentors can come alongside adults to promote mental health and addiction recovery. Possible models include mental health peer mentors and peer recovery for addiction, individuals who share lived experience with mental illness or addiction and who can support others through recovery. Mentors—with or without lived experience of mental illness or addiction—could also support participants in problem solving courts such as Drug Court and DUI Court.

Career

In the field of career and leadership mentoring, respondents pointed to strong, successful programs that could be expanded, replicated, or modified to serve more people. In particular, respondents identified opportunities for early career mentoring of college-age youth and broader workforce development mentoring.

- Early career mentoring. Opportunities exist for businesses to partner with high school and post-secondary education providers to build out early career mentoring opportunities. Students would benefit from job training and internship experiences that expose them to corporate cultures, provide work experiences and references, and help build resumes. For students pursuing medical or allied health careers, early mentoring relationships and shadowing experiences in hospitals could help them clarify their interests while helping hospitals meet workforce needs. In other communities, robust business–education mentoring partnerships are bridging achievement gaps.⁴

“If our students have the opportunity to work in positive work environments when they’re young, it will be familiar to them when they consider what they want to do in the future.”

- Workforce development. Respondents identified an opportunity to expand or replicate programs such as EmBe’s Dress for Success EMPOWERMentors program, which helps women develop personal networks, workplace skills, and confidence at work. The program is limited in size. Respondents suggested the need for a similar program for men and for increased capacity for such programs in general.

⁴ For partnership models, see the Cristo Rey Schools and their Corporate Work Study Program (<https://www.cristoreynetwork.org/>) and the network of Centers for Arts & Technology (<https://www.ncat-abc.org/>).

Social Services and Community Accessibility

Stakeholders identified an opportunity for mentoring to support and integrate with work done by social service agencies. In general, stakeholders from social services and related sectors urged that mentorship programs establish open communication channels with social service providers to ensure providers know about mentoring programs that may be available to their clients.

Mentors can provide support to individuals or families who need help through a temporary crisis or ongoing instability. For example, several stakeholders saw a need for a mentoring program for people experiencing homelessness to help them navigate various systems and offer support (e.g., mentors available at shelters). Others suggested mentors could support those struggling with financial instability by working with mentees on budgeting, finding affordable housing, and meeting medical needs without insurance. There may also be opportunities for mentor families to support families from rural areas who have relocated to Sioux Falls to seek services not available near their homes.

Intercultural Inclusion

Many stakeholders and program staff articulated a need for a more inclusive mentoring ecosystem. That is, the community needs mentoring programs that serve diverse groups of mentees *and* mentors who share their mentees' diverse backgrounds and experiences. According to stakeholders, the key challenge in establishing a more inclusive mentoring ecosystem is engaging mentors from diverse backgrounds, particularly people from groups who may not currently enjoy the support and flexibility needed to become a mentor. As one stakeholder explained it,

Many potential mentors within the Latino community are working long hours trying to support their families, or maybe have not received any type of training or support to help them become more of a leader or a mentor. And potential mentors outside of the Latino population (Caucasians or others) don't often have the language skills to be able to fully communicate with a person in this capacity.

A mentoring ecosystem that does not include diverse mentors is an ecosystem that misses out on their potential contributions.

“The pool of potential mentors is very limited.”

Stakeholders identified several specific groups, urging that mentors be cultivated from within these groups in order to facilitate mentorship matches grounded in shared experiences. They asked that current leaders seek out ways to create opportunities for underrepresented groups to engage more in mentoring. Identified groups include people of color, members of the Latinx community, people who speak languages in addition to English, members of the LGBTQ community, and men (particularly Native American men).

“There is a need to promote leaders at the grassroots level.”

Mentoring Opportunities

Based on the findings described above and the interests of the Rotary Club of Downtown Sioux Falls Executive Committee, ARI identified three focal areas for mentoring, which are described in depth below: youth, new Americans, and families and adults.

Youth

Among mentoring programs in Sioux Falls, youth-focused programs currently serve the most people. Lutheran Social Services (LSS) alone has a suite of school-based and school-age mentoring programs that collectively serve nearly 1,500 students, supported by about 1,400 mentors—roughly three-fourths of identified mentor matches in the community.

Youth-focused programs are also slated to expand. Beginning in January 2020, the Sioux Falls School District will launch TeamMates, a school-based mentoring program intended to expand the reach of youth mentoring by recruiting additional mentors and operating in schools where LSS programs do not have a significant presence.

Additionally, smaller, more focused mentoring programs work with certain segments of the school-age or youth population (e.g., immigrant and refugee youth, transgender youth, and runaway and homeless youth).

Finally, there are numerous opportunities for caring adults to connect with school-age youth by volunteering as mentors, tutors, coaches, or assistants in classrooms, afterschool programs, youth development programs, and summer camps.

Across the board, youth-focused programs report their greatest needs are additional volunteers.

Youth Population Description

The city of Sioux Falls is home 45,977 children under 18 and another 16,890 young adults aged 18 to 24 years. Table 1, below, shows the number of youth across selected age categories. Across the wider region, the Sioux Falls area has a total K-12 public and private school enrollment of 45,970. The largest school district, Sioux Falls, has a total enrollment of 24,237, followed by Harrisburg (5,121) and Brandon (4,386).⁵

Table 1. Youth by Age Category in Sioux Falls, 2018

Age Category	Number of Youth
Under 5	13,855
5 to 14 years	25,134
15 to 17 years	6,988
18 to 24 years	16,890

Source: 2018 ACS 1-year Table S0101

⁵ Enrollment based on 2019 Fall Census (K-12) as reported by the South Dakota Department of Education. Districts and schools included in the total are Sioux Falls Christian, Sioux Falls Lutheran, Lutheran High of Sioux Falls, Bishop O’Gorman Catholic Schools, St. Mary’s Dell Rapids, Westside Christian, McCrossan Boys Ranch, Good Shepherd Lutheran School, St. Mary’s Salem, Canton, Harrisburg, Lennox, Tea, Baltic, Brandon, Dell Rapids, Garretson, Sioux Falls, Tri-Valley, and West Central.

Mentoring program staff and stakeholders aver that all youth benefit from mentorship, not only those who are considered in need or at risk. The following information is presented in order to contextualize the number of youth who might be considered in need or at risk, not to imply they are the only youth who might be served by expanded mentoring efforts.

- In the city of Sioux Falls, 4,462 children under age 18 (including 2,448 who are age 5 to 17) live in households below the poverty level.⁶
- Among teenagers age 15 to 19 in Sioux Falls, the proportion who are neither enrolled in school nor in the labor force is 3.2 percent.⁷
- In 2018, the Sioux Falls Police Department made 1,311 juvenile arrests, of which 434 were for Group B arrests (e.g., curfew violation, disorderly conduct, liquor law violation).⁸

Youth Mentoring Opportunities

Lutheran Social Services

LSS has several youth mentoring programs: Everyday Heroes for grades PreK-12, USucceed for high school students, and Climb for youth ages 7-14. LSS mentoring programs are supported by the Sioux Empire United Way and corporate donors. Programs are described in detail below.

Current needs are additional volunteers, operational funding, and funding to maintain and expand a new mentor program, Check and Connect, at the middle school level. Beginning in Spring 2020, Check and Connect will be piloted at middle schools to pair youth with truancy problems with a volunteer mentor. Matches will meet weekly and focus on positive conversations about school completion.

⁶ 2018 ACS 1-year Table S1701

⁷ 2013-17 ACS 5-year Table S0902

⁸ South Dakota Office Attorney General, "Crime in South Dakota 2018"

Everyday Heroes. Everyday Heroes, which launched in 2001, is LSS’s largest youth mentoring program.

Participants	<p>Everyday Heroes currently has 1,150 mentors serving 1,200 mentees and capacity to increase numbers to 1,500 mentors and 1,600 mentees.</p> <p>Mentors in this program must be over 18, successfully complete background and reference screening, and attend an in-person new mentor orientation. Eligible mentees are students in grades PreK through 12 (primarily K-8) attending a public school in Lincoln or Minnehaha County or Flandreau. Mentees must be willing to engage with a mentor and have parent permission to enroll in the program. School counselors select a young person who can use extra one-to-one attention from a caring adult role model. Counselors are responsible for matching students with an Everyday Hero mentor.</p>
Goals	<p>The program's goals are to empower youth to succeed by establishing a trusting relationship with an adult volunteer mentor. Matches focus on developing a positive relationship, discovering strengths, and setting and reaching goals.</p>
Where and when	<p>Mentors spend one hour per week with an elementary, middle, or high school student at the school, typically over the lunch hour. Mentors and students spend time doing a variety of activities together, including playing board games, reading a book, playing basketball, eating lunch together, or simply sitting and talking. Most matches in this program last 1 year or longer, and some students have been in the program for as long as 13 years. The average match is 5 years. Everyday Heroes mentors volunteer in the following school districts: Sioux Falls, Baltic, Brandon Valley, Canton, Dell Rapids, Flandreau, Garretson, Harrisburg, Lennox, Tea Area, Tri-Valley, and West Central.</p>

USucceed. USucceed is LSS’s mentoring program for high school–age students.

Participants	<p>USucceed currently has 127 mentor–mentee matches with capacity for up to 150.</p> <p>Mentors in this program must be over 18, successfully complete background and reference screening, and attend an in-person new mentor orientation. Eligible mentees are high school students with a referral to the program and family permission. Students can be referred to this program by school personnel, case managers, parents/guardians, or counselors, or they can self-refer. LSS matches qualified students with volunteers based on need and student interest level.</p>
Goals	<p>Mentors assist students in setting and meeting goals in relationship development, school and work readiness, and being a good citizen.</p>
Where and when	<p>USucceed is a mentoring program for high school students. It offers support from school staff as well as support from an LSS case manager. USucceed matches can meet during the school day or during out of school hours and may meet at school or in the community. Matches commit to meeting four hours per month until the student graduates. This helps ensure a stable presence and support throughout the student’s high school career.</p>

Climb. The Climb mentoring program was previously known as Big Brothers Big Sisters, a program that had operated in Sioux Falls for 25 years. The program transitioned to LSS Climb in November 2019.

<p>Participants</p>	<p>Climb currently has 124 mentors paired with 133 mentees with capacity for up to 300 mentor–mentee matches.</p> <p>Mentors in this program must be over 18, successfully complete background, reference, and driving screening, and attend an in-person interview and new mentor orientation. Eligible mentees are youth ages 7 – 14 who live in the Sioux Falls area. A parent or guardian must enroll the child, and the mentee and family must participate in an interview and be willing to actively participate in the program.</p> <p>Matches are supported by an LSS case manager who works to ensure a successful experience for all. Parent/guardian involvement is essential in Climb and is needed to initiate enrollment in the program. Parent/guardians are also expected to work with mentors to schedule meetings and to respond to program staff.</p>
<p>Goals</p>	<p>The program's goal is to empower youth to succeed by establishing a trusting relationship with an adult volunteer. Matches in LSS Climb work towards relationship development, community engagement, and equipping the child to reach their full potential.</p>
<p>Where and when</p>	<p>Climb matches meet for four hours per month in the community. To help with this, LSS provides an activity card that offers discounts to program participants and hosts monthly events that all matches are invited to attend.</p> <p>Matches last 1 year or longer. Historically, the average match length has been about 2.5 years. Established matches can continue to meet after the child turns 14.</p>

TeamMates

TeamMates is a youth mentoring program that began in Nebraska. The program was founded in 1991 by University of Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne. TeamMates currently has chapters in Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Wyoming, and South Dakota. In Sioux Falls, the program will be supported by a coordinator on staff with the Sioux Falls School District and a local advisory board.

Participants	<p>The TeamMates program started in Nebraska and will expand to the Sioux Falls School District beginning in January 2020. In its first semester, the program hopes to recruit 25-50 mentors, then grow to 100+ or as many as possible.</p> <p>The TeamMates model was adopted for its strong brand and with the expectation it would appeal to more male mentors, specifically. Eligible mentors must complete a background check, interview, and training. Eligible mentees will be elementary students who self-refer who are referred by a teacher, counselor, or school administrator.</p>
Goals	<p>TeamMates is a strengths-based mentoring program, equipping mentors to help students discover their individual strengths and talents and identifying opportunities for them to build on the ways that they are uniquely awesome.</p>
Where and when	<p>Mentors will commit to 1 hour per week, usually during lunch, for the duration of the school year with no obligation over the summer. Ideally, mentor matches will persist through high school graduation. In Sioux Falls, TeamMates will focus on elementary schools that do not have a strong mentoring presence already. Participation will not be restricted to Title 1 buildings nor to low-income students. The program is intended to complement existing programs, not compete with them.</p>

Translators of Cultures

Translators of Cultures is nonprofit based in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Founded nearly 15 years ago, the organization incorporated as a nonprofit about one year ago. The organization's mission is to promote the education and success of immigrant and refugee youth in the Sioux Falls community. Translators of Cultures conducts community outreach to enrich the lives of youth through service projects and to educate the broader Sioux Falls community through interactions with different cultures. Activities include events, presentations, and partnerships with a local university, always with students and educators working together in leadership roles. For the past 3 years, Translators of Cultures has coordinated a school-based mentoring program based at Washington High School: Adults Mentoring Minority Youth (AMMY).

To date, the organization has relied primarily on local grants and individual contributions. Since incorporating as a nonprofit, they are working on building community support and hoping to connect with the business community and hospitals so that students can share their stories and contribute to diversity training. Needs include additional volunteers and financial support.

By the end of the year, Translators of Cultures intends to double the number of mentors and mentees in the AMMY program. Future plans include expanding the Shoes & Boots peer tutoring program, in which high school students—some American-born and some from other countries—assist students who are new

to the United States. Translators of Cultures also plans to launch a new program to pair high school student mentors with younger students at elementary schools, focusing on students who are newcomers to the United States.

Participants	<p>AMMY currently has 10 mentor–mentee matches and capacity to double that number.</p> <p>Mentors go through diversity training and are expected to meet with mentees once per week, usually for lunch. Mentors receive a small stipend. Mentees are high school students from a minority group who are referred by a counselor or teacher. Students are generally new Americans or learners of English as an additional language.</p>
Goals	<p>AMMY’s goal is to help students adjust to living in Sioux Falls, see more of the city than they might otherwise, and have a supportive adult in their lives. The program also helps longer-time Sioux Falls residents get to know newcomers and their stories and to understand diversity.</p>
Where and when	<p>Mentors and mentees are expected to meet once per week, usually during lunch. Matches are intended to last at least 1 year, ideally until high school graduation.</p>

Transformation Project

The Transformation Project is working to transform South Dakota into a place where communities embrace their transgender neighbors, where every family has a support network, and where transgender kids can live safely and authentically. The organization's mission is to support and empower transgender youth, young adults, and their families while educating communities in South Dakota and the surrounding region about gender identity and expression. The Transformation Project launched its Youth Mentors mentoring program in December 2019.

The Transformation Project is supported primarily by grants and individual contributions. Current needs include funding, public education on the topic of gender identity and transgender youth, opposing legislation that is harmful to transgender youth, and distributing the Transformation Project's publication to a wider audience.

Participants	<p>The Transformation Project expects to match approximately 40 mentors with mentees during the next year.</p> <p>Mentees are transgender and nonbinary youth up to age 18. Mentors are paired with their mentees as follows: Female mentors are assigned to a youth assigned male at birth who identifies as female. Nonbinary mentors are assigned to a youth who identifies as nonbinary. Male mentors are assigned to a youth assigned female at birth who identifies as male. This program is new, and eligibility criteria are still being defined.</p>
Goals	<p>The Youth Mentors program will pair transgender and nonbinary youth with caring adults who can support them, talk about gender and gender identity, demonstrate that they are loved and valued, and have fun.</p>
Where and when	<p>Mentors will meet with their mentee once a month for 2 to 3 hours at a time to do something fun. Mentors will be trained and given a list of suggestions of activities their mentees would enjoy.</p>

Volunteers of America, Dakotas

Volunteers of America, Dakotas has been serving those in need since the 1920s. The organization offers a range of programs that focus on bringing higher levels of care and safety through safe, nurturing environments where individuals and families become healthy and self-sufficient.

Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Services works with youth ages 10 to 21 to provide crisis intervention in preventing runaways and homelessness, mobile outreach to identify youth who are homeless or runaway to connect them to services and provide safe, affordable housing through transitional services. RHY Services launched its mentoring program two years ago, but, to date, recruitment and volunteer participation have been minimal.

RHY Services is supported by federal grant funding, the Sioux Empire United Way, and public contributions. Current needs include donations for client needs (clothing, hygiene items, and winter gear) and volunteer mentors committed to growing this program.

Participants	<p>RHY Services currently has 9 youth eligible for mentorship and capacity to serve up to 15 mentor–mentee matches.</p> <p>All volunteers must be 25 years old, submit an application, and pass a criminal background and child abuse and neglect screening. Positive references, a valid driving license with insurance, an interview, and training and orientation are also required. Mentors must possess an understanding and belief in the principles of youth development and involvement. Mentees must be willing to participate, commit to 2 to 4 hours a month of contact with a mentor, and adhere to program guidelines.</p>
Goals	<p>RHY Services provides youth with safe, structured transitions from homelessness to self-sufficiency to have a lasting impact on not only the youth, but the Sioux Falls community. Mentors provide connection for youth to positive permanent supportive adults who can guide them through life challenges. The connection to positive relationships, opportunities to finish high school, gain employment and maintain sobriety in a safe living environment will lead to productive, engaged adults who will contribute to the Sioux Falls community.</p>
Where and when	<p>Mentors are asked to commit to once a week contact with for a minimum of 2 to 4 hours a month for at least 1 year. Mentors and mentees meet in the community.</p>

Additional Opportunities to Connect with Youth

Even outside of long-term, 1-to-1 mentoring programs, Sioux Falls has ample opportunity for caring adults to connect with youth. A complete inventory of such opportunities is beyond the scope of this report, but a brief accounting of categories of opportunity is provided.

Afterschool programs. Afterschool programs typically serve elementary or middle school students. Many welcome volunteers who can help with homework, logistics, games and activities, and informal mentoring. Often, regular time commitments are encouraged (e.g., one afternoon per week for a semester). Typically, programs require a background check and training. Examples include the Boys & Girls

Club, YMCA, Harmony South Dakota, Washington Pavilion Action Arts and Science Program, and Multi-Cultural Center programs.

Coaching, camps, and clubs. Programs such as EmBe’s Girls on the Run, Heart & Sole, and Let Me Run rely on volunteer coaches. Although some of these programs focus on a single activity (e.g., running), their goals for participants are youth development and confidence building. Typically, the time commitment is shorter than for a mentoring program (e.g., 2 to 3 months of coaching afterschool, a 2-week camp, or a day-long event), though some may entail a long-term commitment (e.g., Girl Scouts). Additional examples include Special Olympics and the South Dakota Miss Amazing pageant, open mic and talent cultivation with Our Growth Project, summer camps and classes at the Washington Pavilion, and summer camps at the Multi-Cultural Center.

Faith-based programs. Many churches and faith communities have opportunities for mentoring younger members of the congregation or community. Additionally, some faith-based organizations mix mentorship and discipleship, bringing youth and adults together to build relationships and grow in faith. Models vary in their particulars and may include small group gatherings, camps or periodic events, and 1-to-1 mentoring toward discipleship. Examples include Sioux Falls Young Life / WyldLife and Collision of Sioux Falls.

New Americans

Sioux Falls is home to a growing number of new Americans, immigrants and refugees who have settled here. Sioux Falls also welcomes a number of international visitors, including international students, who live as part of the community for months or years before returning home.

Mentoring opportunities with new Americans may pair newcomers with American-born residents or foreign-born residents who have lived in the United States for years and share the experience of arrival and adjustment. Some programs focus on English language, citizenship, or job skills, while others work more broadly to establish relationships and connections across cultures. Mentoring opportunities with new Americans benefit newcomers and long-time Sioux Falls residents alike as they learn from one another about cultural differences and commonalities.

Opportunities exist for both youth and adult mentors and mentees, family-to-family friendship, and tutoring or classroom assistance. All told, the number of new mentors or volunteers needed by community organizations in this area is 284.

New American Population Description

The foreign-born population includes immigrants and refugees as well as secondary migrants, people who initially came to the United States and lived in a different city, then subsequently moved to Sioux Falls. Sioux Falls has a total population of 181,906, of whom 18,708 are foreign-born. About half of the foreign-born population entered the United States nearly a decade ago. The number who entered in 2010 or later is 10,257.⁹

LSS is a resettlement agency. The LSS Center for New Americans (CNA) reports that the number of individuals resettled in South Dakota (statewide) over the past 5 years is 1,589. However, the number of

⁹ 2018 ACS 1-year, Table DP02

people resettled has fallen over that time period. In federal fiscal year 2019, only 130 individuals were resettled in South Dakota.¹⁰

New Americans come from diverse backgrounds. The Sioux Falls School District reports that families in the district speak over 80 languages (including dialects).¹¹ Many families who speak a language other than English at home also speak English very well, but others are still learning English as an additional language. In Sioux Falls, 20,968 people speak a language other than English at home, and of those, the number who report that they speak English less than “very well” is 6,935.¹²

New American Mentoring Opportunities

LSS Center for New Americans Mentor

The CNA Mentor program started about 7 years ago and pairs a refugee family with families, individuals, or groups who provide social support during the family’s transition to the United States. Historically, the program has focused on serving families new to the United States during the first 6 months of transition. However, given lower rates of new arrivals, there is opportunity to enhance this program to serve families who have been here longer.

Participants	<p>The CNA Mentor program currently has 2 families matched with mentors and capacity to increase by 5 active mentors every 6 months. Expanding the program to serve families who have been here longer than 6 months would increase the need for mentors.</p> <p>Mentors must be over 18 and successfully complete background, reference, and driving screens. Mentors must attend a required orientation and interview. Mentors could be families, individuals, roommates, college groups, church or religious groups, or community groups. Mentees are refugee families or individuals who are receiving services through LSS.</p>
Goals	<p>The program’s goals are to foster friendship between refugee families new to the community and longer-time residents. Mentors provide invaluable social support for families during their transition to the United States.</p>
Where and when	<p>Mentors make a commitment to visit the family they are working with once a week for 6 months. Mentors enjoy sharing meals, teaching and learning language, playing games with kids, and learning about a new culture from their refugee friends.</p>

Translators of Cultures

As described above under Youth Mentoring Opportunities, Translators of Cultures coordinates a mentorship program that matches adults with high-school age youth who are often immigrants or refugees (AMMY) and also coordinates peer and youth-to-youth mentoring programs for immigrant and refugee youth (Shoes & Boots).

¹⁰ LSS Center for New Americans Annuals Report on Refugee Resettlement in South Dakota, FFY2019

¹¹ Sioux Falls School District “Fast Facts”

¹² 208 ACS 1-year, Table DP02

Augustana University Friendship Family Program

Augustana's Friendship Family Program, which has been in operation for around a decade, serves international students at Augustana. International students may be visiting for a semester or 4 years. Local families, with or without an Augustana affiliation, are welcome to participate. This opportunity allows families to learn about other cultures, languages and traditions as Augustana welcomes international students from around the globe.

Participants	<p>The Friendship Family Program currently has 40 family–student matches and capacity to expand to 70 matches.</p> <p>Mentors are local families interested in befriending an international student. Requirements are flexible. Families should have a genuine interest in getting to know an international student and including them in their activities when possible. The number of times they meet depends on both student and family schedules. Families do not need to have a formal connection to Augustana, but they often do. Families do not provide lodging.</p> <p>Mentees are international students at Augustana who want to get to know an American family.</p>
Goals	<p>The program’s goals are to connect students with an American family to give them further exposure and relationships with Americans and American culture beyond what they would have if they were only on campus. The Friendship Family Program is sponsored by the International Programs Office and is designed to give a new Augustana University international student a warm and welcoming family contact in Sioux Falls.</p>
Where and when	<p>The Friendship Family makes a commitment to befriend a new student, to provide opportunities to have home-cooked meals and/or to participate in various cultural or community activities. Families and students may also participate in several Friendship Family events sponsored by the university during the year. Friendship Families may be paired with a student for a semester, a year, or the student’s entire college career.</p>

Additional Opportunities to Connect with New Americans

Additional opportunities to connect with new Americans exist beyond the 1-to-1 mentoring programs described above. In particular, there are opportunities to volunteer as a classroom assistant with children and youth or with adult learners or to work with adults on employment and job skills. The faith community is also active in outreach to new Americans. A complete inventory of such opportunities is beyond the scope of this report, but a brief overview is provided.

Classroom assistant (children and youth). The Multi-Cultural Center has a slate of youth programs that build academic, interpersonal, and leadership skills. Volunteers can support these programs as classroom assistants in elementary afterschool reading and math recovery programs for English Language Learners and Native American youth and afterschool Native American and self-defense clubs for students ages 5 to 17. Opportunities also exist for volunteers at STEM-focused summer camps and an annual Ethnic Youth

Day of STEM enrichment activities. Commitments range from a single day to daily for two weeks for camp, one day per week for a month for afterschool clubs, and one or two days per week for a semester or longer for reading and math recovery. In total, the Multi-Cultural Center estimates capacity for 56 new volunteers in youth programs.

Classroom assistant (adults). LSS Center for New Americans has opportunities for volunteer classroom assistants in English language classes. Classroom assistants help students complete class assignments, quiz students using flashcards and exams, and speak with students to improve their conversational English skills. Classroom assistants can volunteer during any English class time and come as frequently as their schedules allow, whether once a day or once a month. REACH Literacy also works with adults who want to learn to read, write, and improve life skills. At this time, the majority of REACH Literacy’s learners are adults who speak another language, though the program is not restricted to new Americans. Volunteer tutors may work with learners 1-to-1 or in small groups. They commit to volunteering two hours per week during a 12-week session. Together, the Center for New Americans and REACH Literacy estimate capacity for 85 additional volunteers.

Employment and job skills. In addition to its youth programs, the Multi-Cultural Center offers adult programs, including a Job Skills Program. This program assists immigrant and refugee adults in connecting to job opportunities. Participants and volunteers meet in the morning to practice mock interviews and receive tips for job searches. Activities might also include assistance searching for jobs, learning how to complete job applications, training in basic job skills, and understanding U.S. work rules and culture. Volunteers commit one or two hours for a morning every week or two. The Job Skills Program has capacity for 20 new volunteers.

Faith-based programs. Often, newcomers to Sioux Falls find community and friendship through faith communities. Ethnic congregations and religious groups support their members. Additionally, several outreach initiatives have grown out of the faith community. For example, New Roots Ministry works with pastors and Christian church leaders to connect churches whose members are mostly immigrants and refugees with churches whose members are mostly American-born. Volunteers typically come to these ministries through their own faith groups and affiliations.

Families and Adults

Mentoring programs for families and adults run the gamut; they include programs to develop life skills or parenting techniques, facilitate entry into the workforce, recover from addiction, re-enter the community after time in prison or jail, advance in careers, launch a new business, or develop skills for leadership and public service. This report focuses on programs designed to support families with children and working-age adults as they work toward entering the workforce and establishing stability.

Families and Adults Population Description

Sioux Falls is home to a population of 114,374 working-age adults, ages 18 to 64.¹³ The city is also home to 42,630 families, of which 21,209 have children living at home.¹⁴

¹³ ACS 2018 1-year, Table S0101

¹⁴ ACS 2018 1-year, Table S1101

The city as a whole has a poverty rate of 10.4%, with an estimated 11,467 working-age adults below the poverty level.¹⁵

Families and Adults Mentoring Opportunities

Genesis Mentoring

Genesis Mentoring, a program of The Community Outreach, is for individuals and families striving to make difficult life changes to improve their financial stability and to obtain or keep safe and permanent housing. Genesis matches a qualified individual or family with a volunteer who has been trained as a mentor. Supported by a member of the professional Genesis team, the mentees and mentor work together to complete a curriculum designed to improve goal setting, budgeting, parenting, and other daily living skills identified as important. Genesis Mentoring combines sharing information and encouragement within a trust-building personal relationship to improve the mentees’ ability to remain safely housed and to better care for their basic needs.

Genesis serves families directly and also partners with other organizations, including the Problem Solving Courts and Call to Freedom (see below for more details on both). Mentors in partner organizations who work through Genesis benefit from the additional training and support that the Genesis program provides.

<p>Participants</p>	<p>In the past year, Genesis Mentoring matched 49 new mentor–mentee pairs. The program currently has a waiting list of 10 individuals or families who are seeking a mentor.</p> <p>Mentors must complete a sex offender background check and check for outstanding warrants, and they must agree to follow the Genesis curriculum, meet with the program director one-on-one, and complete training. Mentees are low-income or working poor individuals and families who are willing to follow the Genesis program. Participants often come to Genesis by referral from churches, Minnehaha County Human Services, or The Community Outreach crisis care coordinator. Genesis also works with other community organizations, including the Problem Solving Courts and Call to Freedom. To enter the Genesis program, a working poor individual or family is interviewed by a member of the Genesis team and selected to be matched with a mentor.</p>
<p>Goals</p>	<p>The program’s goals are to empower families and individuals to make difficult life changes to improve their financial and housing situation. The program aims to establish encouraging, trusting relationships between mentors and mentees as well as to equip mentees with information and daily living skills.</p>
<p>Where and when</p>	<p>With the help of a dedicated and trained mentor, mentees complete a household financial literacy curriculum (with parenting and other daily living skills assistance as needed). Mentees and mentors meet 12 times during an 18-week period, with 8 sessions focused on skill development and 4 sessions focused on relationship building and fun. Both mentors and mentees are supported throughout the process by a professional Genesis team member within The Community Outreach. Most matches choose to continue beyond the 18-week commitment.</p>

¹⁵ ACS 2018 1-year, Table S1701

Problem Solving Courts

Problem solving courts are specialty courts that couple behavior modification and intensive supervision to address the root causes of crime related to alcohol, drugs, and mental illness. In South Dakota, problem solving courts began with the drug court model.

Drug courts work by recognizing that unless substance abuse ends, fines and jail time are unlikely to prevent future criminal activity. Traditional methods of dealing with addiction such as strict probation or mandatory imprisonment do not attack the fundamental problem of addiction. The drug court model is founded on the principles of judicial supervision, chemical dependency and mental health treatment, frequent and random drug testing, behavior modification, and intensive supervision, all within the community, as a means to address the needs of the offender whose problems stem from addiction. The success of the specialized drug court docket has been transferred to other specialized dockets, including DUI Courts, Veterans Treatment Courts, and Mental Health Courts.¹⁶

Sioux Falls is part of South Dakota's 2nd Circuit, which launched Drug Court in 2010, and subsequently added DUI and Veterans Court. Mental Health Court will begin in January 2020. Mentors are encouraged and needed across all problem solving courts, but especially in Drug Court. The court is seeking more mentors overall, and particularly mentors from diverse backgrounds, especially mentors who are black or Native American, both women and men. The court is also seeking volunteers to encourage and empower problem solving court alumni to organize themselves. Additionally, problem solving courts would benefit from employer partnerships to hire participants.

Mentors interested in volunteering with problem solving courts can contact the courts directly or go through the Genesis Mentoring program (described above) in order to receive additional training and support.

Participants	<p>Problem solving courts in Sioux Falls currently have about 100 participants who could be matched with volunteer mentors.</p> <p>Mentors go through an onboarding process that includes attending 2 court sessions to understand what is expected of participants. Mentors also participate in training. Drug Court graduates with at least 1 year in recovery are eligible to become mentors. Mentees are offenders who are participating in problem solving courts.</p>
Goals	<p>The program's goals are to provide problem solving court participants with additional support and guidance as they work through court requirements, seek or maintain employment, and establish stability.</p>
Where and when	<p>Mentors and mentees are expected to meet every week or 2 weeks, ideally for the duration of a participant's time in problem solving court. Most participants spend at least 18 to 24 months in the program, often closer to 2 to 3 years or longer.</p>

¹⁶ For more information on problem solving courts, visit https://uj.s.sd.gov/Circuit_Court/Problem_Solving_Courts/Default.aspx

Call to Freedom

Call to Freedom serves survivors of human trafficking. The Life Skills Mentor program supports survivors as they recover from trauma and build life skills.

The program has been in operation since June 2018. It is supported by federal and state grants, foundation grants, individual and corporate donations, and volunteers. Current needs include funding for permanent housing for sex and labor trafficking victims.

Participants	<p>The Life Skills Mentor program currently has 6 mentors and 10 mentees with capacity for an additional 5 volunteer mentors.</p> <p>Mentors must pass a criminal background check, attend trauma trainings and orientation, and complete a questionnaire about life skills, hobbies, and other interests to facilitate matching with a mentee. Mentees are survivors of human trafficking who need to be in recovery from addictions and somewhat stabilized with safe housing and a commitment to following the course of services deemed necessary by their case manager.</p>
Goals	<p>The program's goals are to help mentees navigate daily life skills as they recover from the trauma of sex trafficking and to be a kind, listening ear who can accept mentees right where they are without judgment.</p>
Where and when	<p>Mentors and mentees are expected to make a 1-year commitment to meet for an average of 2 to 4 hours per week. Clients may remain in the program with a mentor as long as needed or desired while they continue to meet eligibility requirements.</p>

Safe Families for Children

Safe Families for Children is a program of Bethany Christian Services. It is a compassion ministry that serves vulnerable children and their families by mobilizing screened and trained volunteer host families and mentoring coaches through local churches.

Safe Families for Children of Eastern South Dakota launched in January 2014.

Participants	<p>Both parents in crisis and host families receive support from volunteer mentors.</p> <p>Parents experiencing a temporary crisis can arrange for their children to stay with families of faith while they address the issues that led to their situation. Host families and Safe Families for Children volunteer family coaches maintain contact with the parents to encourage them on their path to stability.</p> <p>Host families and parents are also supported by volunteer Family Friends, Resource Friends, and Safe Families Churches.</p>
Goals	<p>Safe Families for Children provides a chance for parents to get back on their feet before abuse and neglect occur. Safe Families for Children is neither foster care nor adoption. Parents maintain full custody and remain actively involved in their children's lives during their time with a host family.</p>
Where and when	<p>Activities vary among different roles. Volunteer opportunities range from Host Family to Family Friend to Family Coach or Resource Friend. Host Families are screened and approved by Safe Families and take in children for short periods of time. Family Friends provide support to Families in Need (e.g., mentoring and transportation) and Host Families (e.g., babysitting and providing meals). Resource Friends provide various types of goods and services to Families in Need to help parents get back on their feet. Family Coaches are trained to provide resources and casework-like services to Families in Crisis. They also ensure that kids are well cared for in Host Family homes. Safe Families Churches are spiritual communities that support Safe Families as a ministry of their church.</p>

EmBe Dress for Success

Dress for Success Sioux Falls is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of women. They provide clients with professional clothing, employment retention programs, and ongoing support. Dress for Success offers a variety of programs to serve this mission, among which are two mentoring programs: Women to the Workforce (for women entering or re-entering the workforce) and EMPOWERmentors (career development for women who are employed).

Both programs serve Dress for Success clients, who must be referred. Dress for Success receives referrals from diverse sources, including churches, staffing agencies, job development programs, and attorneys. Programs have no income eligibility restrictions; participants are not necessarily low-income.

Many Dress for Success mentors choose to do double duty as all-around volunteers, assisting with additional program components beyond mentoring. Dress for Success currently has around 160 volunteers in their database.

Program needs come in waves: Many volunteers are working women with limited free time who are trying to balance their own lives and careers. The number of clients also fluctuates. In general, Dress for Success has more difficulty finding mentors and keeping participants engaged with Women to the Workforce. Savvy mentors are needed for this program to walk with mentees as they navigate tricky situations.

Women to the Workforce. Women to the Workforce is a career development program designed to help prepare unemployed or underemployed women to obtain employment. The program has graduated 11 cohorts to date.

Participants	<p>Women to the Workforce forms cohorts of 12 participants twice annually.</p> <p>Mentors must complete an orientation and commit to meeting regularly during the 7-week program. Mentees are unemployed or underemployed women who have been referred to Dress for Success.</p>
Goals	<p>The program’s goal is to prepare unemployed or underemployed women to obtain employment by setting goals, obtaining skills, and building confidence.</p>
Where and when	<p>Women to the Workforce is a 7-week, 10-session program. Cohorts form twice per year, usually in September (for seasonal hires) and in the spring (in anticipation of spring career fairs). Participants are paired with a mentor for accountability. They have the option to continue the mentoring relationship beyond the 7-week program if they choose. Mentors work with mentees as they create a Personal Action Plan, gain career skills, learn how to utilize job search resources, and build confidence. Activities focus on networking, job search, preparing cover letters and resumes, job shadowing, and attending a career panel with hiring managers.</p>

EMPOWERMentors. Whereas Women to the Workforce prepares women to enter or re-enter the workforce, EMPOWERMentors focuses on career development for women who have been employed for at least 1 year.

Participants	<p>Mentors must complete an orientation and commit to regular meetings. Mentees are women who have been referred to Dress for Success, have been employed for at least 1 year, and are seeking to further their career goals.</p> <p>Numbers in this program vary.</p>
Goals	<p>The program’s goal is to help women build a network of support and to provide career development tools. It is intended to provide support in developing a strategy to advance in a career, change jobs, or develop leadership goals.</p>
Where and when	<p>Mentors and mentees commit to meeting twice a month for 6 months. Meetings are intended to benefit both mentor and mentee by fostering a safe and supportive environment where participants can question and reflect upon their professional choices as they relate to developing a career path.</p>

LSS Center for New Americans Mentor

As described above under New American Mentoring Opportunities, the LSS Center for New Americans Mentor program matches refugee families with individuals, families, or groups to support their transition as they settle in Sioux Falls.

Additional Opportunities to Connect with Families and Adults

Additional opportunities to connect with families and adults exist beyond the 1-to-1 mentoring programs described above. Numerous programs focus on career or business development, networking, and leadership. These programs adopt a variety of formats, from 1-to-1 mentoring to affinity groups or lectures and site visits. Other programs focus on adults who are reentering the community after time in prison, including in-reach programs that visit people who are in jail or prison and community coaches who work with parolees. Several peer support programs exist to support individuals with mental illness or in recovery from addiction. Finally, a few programs focus on older adults. Examples in each category are described briefly below.

Career, business, networking, and leadership. Abundant opportunities exist for individuals seeking career or business development, networking, or leadership development. Professional groups often offer mentoring opportunities for their members. For example, the South Dakota Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals has coordinated a mentorship program for members for the past 6 years. Other organizations have set up affinity groups for participants to learn from peers. Examples include Mastermind groups at Zeal and the Sioux Falls Business and Professional Women organization as well as generationally matched affinity groups with the Prairie Family Business Association. SCORE provides mentoring to people launching new businesses. Networking events such as 1 Million Cups bring entrepreneurs together. Leadership development programs such as Leadership Sioux Falls, Leadership South Dakota, and EmBe's Women's Leadership Program typically form a new cohort each year. Participants meet regularly for intensive sessions with visiting lecturers, networking, and mentorship by past participants.

Reentry from prison. Several groups focus on facilitating the transition back into the community for people who have spent time in prison or jail or on visiting people who are incarcerated. Many are faith-based. Primary, for example, has been contracted by the U.S. Probation Office to provide community coaching for people who are on parole. This particular program focuses on mentees who are considered high-risk to reoffend and recruits mentors committed to Christian discipleship. Kingdom Boundaries Prison Aftercare and Grace Team Jail Ministry both hold weekly Bible study groups in jail, halfway houses, and in their offices with people who are incarcerated or recently released. Hope Prison Ministry's P-2 and M-2 programs are visitation programs that provide 1-to-1 visitation with jail and prison inmates.

Peer support for mental health or addiction recovery. Peer support programs match people who have personal experience with mental illness or addiction—either their own or with loved ones—with individuals with mental illness or addictions. These programs are typically run through organizations that provide care, treatment, or advocacy. For example, Tallgrass Recovery & Sober Living Homes invites alumni who are sober and active in a program of 12-step recovery to return as mentors to current participants in the 30-day residential treatment program.

Older adults. Programs that serve older adults offer companionship and, sometimes, assistance with daily living or coaching in new skills. Examples include the Better Together program through LSS, which matches seniors living in their homes with volunteer visitors who provide friendship and socialization; Active Generations volunteers who engage in a variety of activities with members, from dining room host to craft instructor or fitness center mentor; and Senior Companions through the Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society, a federally funded program that supports low-income older adults with a small stipend as they make weekly visits to frail elders and adults living with disabilities.

Conclusions

Thousands of people are involved in existing mentorship programs, but across the board, programs report opportunities for growth. The greatest needs are additional volunteers and financial support. Program staff and community stakeholders agree: Priority should be given to matching potential mentors with programs and mentees they can mentor successfully *and* to empowering a broader cross-section of the population to become mentors.

Mentoring is not one-size-fits-all. The key to successful mentoring relationships is matching people to programs that work for them. Fortunately, Sioux Falls is home to a wide array of programs that serve different groups, work toward different goals, and use different formats to foster mentorship and connection. Mentoring advocates can lift up the existing diversity in mentoring programs—diversity in *who* and *how*—and help prospective mentors find the right program for them by increasing awareness of the menu of options available.

The mentoring ecosystem would benefit from a broader and more inclusive pool of mentors. Mentoring advocates can work with employers and community organizations to build pipelines for new mentors from diverse backgrounds. Groups should think creatively about how to make mentoring more inclusive and accessible for people of all backgrounds. Mentees will benefit from increased availability of mentors who share connections to their culture and community.

Finally, community organizations can support mentoring by partnering with existing mentoring programs and encouraging collaboration among mentoring programs, social service providers, the faith community, and business. Establishing awareness and connections among organizations who serve similar populations will facilitate referral, helping to ensure that prospective mentors and mentees find programs that are a good fit.