

**FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY**

**Interview Guide for Semi-Structured Interviews  
with Tutoring and Mentoring Organizations Serving Washington, DC**

Organization name:

Date:

Interviewer:

Respondent name (preferably executive or director):

Length of interview: 5 minutes is sufficient but we could talk for 20-30 minutes if you have the time.

Hi, my name is \_\_\_ and I am an intern at the Urban Institute working with the DC Tutoring and Mentoring project. There are about 200 organizations like yours providing tutoring or mentoring. Research shows that about 40,000 students in DC are reading below grade level and more have other academic or non-academic needs. Our goal is to assess what would be required to help all of these students.

We are calling organizations to learn more about what they need and how we can help. Would you have time to tell me about your needs? Anything you tell us will be kept in confidence unless you give us permission to share the information.

1. **[CURRENT SCOPE – BASIC NUMBERS (required): If information is available on website:]** We see from your website that you currently have \_\_\_ [number] of volunteers serving \_\_\_ students from ages \_\_\_ to \_\_\_ in \_\_\_ neighborhood/school. Is this correct? It looks like you have \_\_\_ paid staff. Is that correct
  - **[If no information is available: ]** How many students do you currently serve? -----
  - Where? (School name if school, neighborhood, church name if church, etc.)-----
  
2. How many volunteers do you currently use? \_\_\_\_ (an estimate is fine) How many paid staff? \_\_\_\_ (estimate if needed) *(Note: we want numbers for tutoring & mentoring work, not for total organization if organization has multiple programs.)*
  - [Optional Probe:] Are all students from the same school or neighborhood?
  
3. **[CURRENT PROGRAM (required)]** Can you tell me a little bit about how your program works? [Try to confirm that contacts are 1-on-1 (or not) and how often students meet with tutor/mentors.]
  - **[Required]** Do your tutors and mentors work in schools during regular school hours?

- [Optional Probe:] From your website, it looks like you [example: pair tutors and students and they meet once a week at XYZ School?] Is that correct?
- [Optional Probe:] Do you think there's a need for more [tutoring/ mentoring services] like yours in your community? Explain?

**4. What do you see as the primary needs of the students you serve? (Preferred, if not captured in earlier discussion)**

**5. [PLANS FOR GROWTH (preferred)] Do you expect your organization to serve more students this time next year?**

[Optional Probes]

- Do you have a specific target numbers in perhaps a strategic plan? Do you plan to keep serving kids in the same area or expand geographically?
- Would you serve more kids if you could get more support?
- *If they respond that they don't expect to expand:* Would you expand if you had more resources? Funding to support staff?

**6. [BARRIERS TO EXPANSION (required)] What types of resources or support do you need? What do you see as your organization's challenges for maintaining, expanding, or improving the work you do?**

[Optional Probes]

- How do you feel about your capacity to meet the needs of your current students and tutors/mentors?
- Do you have enough volunteers?
- Do you have enough students signing up?

- Do you get the support you need from parents?
- [If meet in a specific location] Do you have adequate space that you can use for mentoring or tutoring? Is your office space adequate?

**7. Can you tell me about the orientation, training, and support you provide your tutor/mentors? (preferred)**

- [Optional probe] Do you feel that you have enough staff (or administrative volunteers or active board members if the organization is volunteer-run)?
- Do you work with staff at any schools? Do you feel you get the support you need from those schools?

**8. [How the Tutoring & Mentoring Initiative might help (preferred)]**

Our goal [repeated again] is to help organizations identify the resources they need. Besides recruiting tutors and mentors [if they say they need that], there are a number of ways that the Tutoring & Mentoring Initiative might be able to help.

- Administrative help with volunteer coordination. *Would this be of interest?*
- A discount on an online mentoring orientation program developed by the Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring. (We don't have a precise cost but it would probably be between \$10 and 20 per person, at most.) *Would this be of interest?*
- Assistance with assessing students needs and designing a tutoring plan? [If tutoring component and if answer not obvious] How do you decide what the tutor and student work on? Do you get student grades? Test scores? Do you assess students' needs when they join? (For example, one tutoring program does a reading assessment so tutors can zero in on helping kids that are behind in that area.) [If tutoring and if an indication of need or interest] Would you be interested in getting help with assessing students when they start your program?

- Assistance managing volunteers and tracking attendance? Do you currently track attendance or how often your tutor/mentors and students get together? [Especially for larger orgs that are using spreadsheets or no tracking system] Would you be interested in low-cost access to and training on an online volunteer management and tracking system? [If asked, we are talking with CiviCore, which will give a 40% discount. The price depends on the number of tutors and students but would be in the range of \$40 -100/month.]

**9. Do you try to measure what your students get out of your program? (Preferred)**

If yes, how? [Optional Probes:] Do you get grades at the end of each marking period? From students? Other ways? Do you talk to parents and teachers on a regular basis?

[If indication that might be interested in doing more] Would you be interested in getting help with tracking these or other sorts of outcomes?

**10. Are there any other types of help that would benefit your organization, for example fundraising?**

\_\_\_ [If yes] How do you currently do your fundraising? (Preferred)

[Optional Probes]

- Special events?
- Work with churches/religious congregations to get volunteers and donations?
- Solicit contributions through the mail: Send regular e-mails?
- Donations from United Ways or Combined Federal Campaigns? Obtain government grants?
- Secure Foundation grants?
- Obtain Support from businesses (if so, what does that look like? Grants? Donations of food or goods or volunteers?)
- Charge for any related services?

**11. How do you communicate with your donors, potential volunteers and the public? (Preferred)**

- [Optional probe and if no or poor website] How do you feel about your website? Would you be interested in getting help improving it?
- [Optional Probe] Have you ever had a video done on your organization? Would you be interested in getting help with that?

**12. Can you tell me more about your partnerships with other community organizations? (Preferred)**

- [Preferred probe] Do you work with other tutoring or mentoring organizations in DC? [If so] How?

**13. Are there any other types of support that your organization could use? (Preferred)**

- [Optional probe] Do you need any help with board member recruiting? Finding finance, fundraising or program experts for your board? Board training? Other board issues?
- [Optional probe] I don't know if you've had a chance to look at the project website but a possible new element might be a monthly feature that would allow an organization to tell its story and help get the word out about its programs and accomplishments. Would such an opportunity be useful? Would it be of interest to your organization?

**14. May we add you to our email list and list of organizations of organizations interested in this project? (Required)**