



Special Instructions for Finding Your Mentor

Parents/Legal Guardians and Applicants,

Part of the application process for the Wisconsin Challenge Academy is to find an adult within your community that is willing to be a mentor for the Applicant while they are in the 17 months of the program (22 week Residential Phase and 12 Month Post-Residential Phase). A mentor is an adult who provides support, encouragement, counsel, friendship, reinforcement, and a constructive example to the youth that they are committed to working with.

Mentors must be at least 21 years of age, the same gender as the youth, and not living in the same household. Immediate family members may not be the mentor if they are living in the same household. It is not necessary for the Applicant to personally know the mentor. Mentors come from many sources within the community where the youth lives and have wide and varied backgrounds. Past Mentors have included teachers, counselors, factory workers, ministers, police officers, judges, retired men and women, social workers, little league coaches, neighbors, and the list goes on and on. The qualifications for the mentor are listed below.

Mentor Qualifications

1. Must be at least 21 years of age
2. Same sex as the youth being mentored
3. Must NOT be a member of the immediate family (The definition of immediate family or household member includes anyone who has been the Applicant's primary caregiver or is living with the Applicant. It is possible for a distant relative to be an Applicant's mentor if he or she is not the primary caregiver and is not living with the Applicant, as long as the individual meets all of the other requirements.)
4. Should live within a reasonable distance of where the youth will live during the Post-Residential Phase (Reasonable distance is defined as the distance acceptable to both the mentor and the youth)
5. Must consent to a Criminal History Background Check and Fingerprinting. (Background checks must be free of any sex offender convictions and must also be free of felonies, alcohol, or substance abuse convictions within the last 5 years.)
6. Must have a desire to volunteer some of their time for the youth and the program

When talking with potential mentors it is helpful to inform them of what they will need to do as a mentor. Mentors will visit with their Cadets (what the Applicant is called during the program) approximately two times (both are all day events with weekend availability) while the Cadet is in the 22 week Residential Phase at Fort McCoy. During the Post-Residential Phase, the mentor must have a minimum of 4 units of contact per month with his/her Cadet and is required to do one "Service to Community" project each quarter (once every 3 months). The mentor will also report monthly to the Challenge Academy, providing information on the Cadet's status/progress.

The youth does not need to know the adult, but should do the "asking" for their help. The Mentor Brainstorm Worksheet is provided on the next page for your use and has helped 9 out of 10 youth find a dependable mentor nominee. Another option is to post on the WI Challenge Academy Facebook page that you are searching for a mentor in your community. Below is a generic example that you can modify and use.

"My son/daughter is looking to attend the Challenge Academy. We are searching for a possible mentor in the city name area that would be willing to meet with us and discuss the possibility of being a mentor for the next class. Please message me if you are interested in this life changing opportunity."

Mentor applications can be submitted separate from the Cadet application. It is important to take the time to find a qualified and committed mentor. In order to be considered for Acceptance to the Challenge Academy, Applicants must have submitted all application materials, including their mentor application.



Wisconsin Challenge Academy

www.challengeacademy.org

749 East 12th Avenue
Fort McCoy, WI 54656-5248
(608) 269-4605
FAX : (608) 269-9001
challenge@wisconsin.gov

Mentor Brainstorming Worksheet

*This form is for your use only... Do not turn in

This worksheet is designed to assist in finding the right mentor. Simply fill in the blanks below with people that you are familiar with in each category. Once you have finished, discuss the answers with your parents or Challenge Academy staff. Decide your top choices and contact them.

Mentor Eligibility

- Same sex as Applicant
- 21 years of age or older
- Not living in the same household
- Not a family member
- Lives reasonably close

Dad's Friends

Mom's Friends

Brother's Friends

Sister's Friends

Friends' Parents

Former Employers

Church Members

Neighbors

Neighbors' friends and family

Social Acquaintances

Holiday Card List

Community Leaders

Fire Fighters, Police Officers, Nurses, Doctors...

Past or Current Teachers

Civic Organizations

Counselors at School

Uncle's Friends

Aunt's Friends

Cousin's Friends

Former Cadet's Parents

Post something similar to this on our WI Challenge Academy Facebook page:

"My son/daughter is/I am looking to attend the Challenge Academy. We are/I am searching for a possible mentor in the city name area that would be willing to meet with us/me and discuss the possibility of being a mentor for the next class. Please message me if you are interested in this life changing opportunity."



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Mentor Information and Application

Thank you for considering being a mentor for a Wisconsin Challenge Academy Applicant. The Challenge Academy is a unique opportunity for a young person who has dropped out, is expelled, or is struggling in High School. It truly is a "second chance" to turn a life around. A very important part of this program is the involvement of mentors like you. When a candidate has a mentor who is committed to helping them succeed, he or she is much more likely to finish the program and return to his/her community as a productive citizen. We know that your time is precious, but this opportunity can be life changing for both of you. Below we have tried to cover some of the basic questions that you may have about the program and what is involved in mentoring with the Challenge Academy.

Our Mission

To offer our Cadets the opportunity to develop the strength of character and the life skills necessary to become successful, responsible citizens.

What is the Challenge Academy?

The Challenge Academy is a 17-month program for youth ages 16 - 18 years old who are at-risk of not graduating from High School. The first 22 weeks of the program (Residential Phase) is spent at Ft. McCoy in a structured, quasi-military environment. Cadets are provided the "opportunity to develop the strength of character and the life-skills necessary to become successful, responsible citizens". This is accomplished through a variety of daily activities to include classroom instruction preparing for HSED testing, character development classes, service to community, and leadership opportunities.

Following graduation, in the Post-Residential Phase, graduates of the program continue to sustain and build on the progress made during the Residential Phase with the help of their mentor. Cadets are assisted by their mentors to make the transition from the structured environment of the Challenge Academy into a self-governed environment back in their home community.

What is a Mentor?

A mentor for the Challenge Academy is an adult who, along with parents, provides support, encouragement, counsel, friendship, reinforcement, and constructive example to the youth that they are committed to see grow.

Who can be a Mentor?

Mentors must be at least 21 years of age, the same sex as the youth, and not living in the same household. Immediate family members may not be a mentor if they are living in the same household. It is not necessary for the Applicant to personally know the mentor. Mentors come from many sources within the community where the youth lives and have wide and varied backgrounds. Past Mentors have included teachers, counselors, factory workers, ministers, police officers, judges, retired men and women, social workers, little league coaches, neighbors, and the list goes on and on.

How much time is involved in being a mentor?

Mentors will visit with their Cadets approximately two times (both all day events with weekend availability) while the Cadet is in the 22 week Residential Phase at Fort McCoy. During the Post-Residential Phase, the mentor must have a minimum of 4 units of contact per month with his/her Cadet and is required to do one "Service to Community" project each quarter (once every 3 months). The mentor will also report monthly to the Challenge Academy, providing information on the Cadet's status/progress.

What would disqualify me from being a mentor?

- A conviction for a sex offense
- A felony conviction within the last 5 years
- Any alcohol, drug, or substance abuse conviction within the last 5 years
- A recent history of domestic violence (reports, charges, convictions)
- Failure to follow through on commitment on previous Challenge Academy mentorships

I'm ready to be a mentor; what do I need to do?

The decision was the hard part; now it's easy. Carefully read and fill out the attached application forms. Make a copy to keep for your records. Mail the original application with a copy of your proof of car insurance to the Challenge Academy, ATTN: Admissions; in a timely manner (part of the process for acceptance of the applicant is to have a viable mentor). A staff member will contact you to complete an interview over the telephone.



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Mentor Application

Personal Information

Name

Last First Middle Date of Birth Age
MM / DD / YYYY

Address
Number and Street

City State Zip Code County

Home Phone

Cell Phone

Active Email Address

Work Phone

Drivers License

State Number

Sex Male Female

Marital Status Single Married Divorced Widowed Separated

Ethnicity - Hispanic/Latino Yes No

Race American Indian Asian Black Native Hawaiian White

Information for Youth Being Mentored

Mentee's Name

Last First Middle

How do you know the Mentee?

Who asked you to be a Mentor?

Were you a previous Challenge Academy Mentor?
 Yes No If yes, name of Cadet Class/Year

Mentor Information

Why do you wish to become a volunteer mentor for the Challenge Academy? (be specific)

Describe your driving record, included any offenses other than speeding.

Will you have transportation to mentor activities held at Ft. McCoy? Yes No

Education

Highest Level Degree Area of Study

Employer Occupation Length of Employment

Current voluntary commitments

What type of experience do you have working with youth/children?

Current health condition Poor Fair Good Excellent

Do you have any physical limitations or special concerns?

Explain your past use of alcohol or any other drugs

Explain your present use of alcohol or any other drugs

Have you ever been involved in, investigated for, arrested, and/or convicted of a crime?

Yes No

If yes, briefly explain,
including dates

Authorization to Release Information

I hereby authorize the Challenge Academy, along with law enforcement departments, to conduct whatever background check on me that may be deemed appropriate. I understand that this information is necessary to assist in determining my qualifications and suitability for a mentor position that I am applying for.

I fully understand that the information collected may be of a sensitive, confidential, and privileged nature, and may reflect upon my suitability. I hereby release the Challenge Academy and its agents from damage that may result from the exchange of requested information between law enforcement departments and the Challenge Academy.

I further authorize the Challenge Academy to release information, as deemed necessary, for the purpose of developing longitudinal and statistical studies and reports.

The information provided in this application is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Prospective Mentor's Signature

Date

Duties and Responsibilities

- Serves as a role model, friend and advocate to the Cadet.
- Reports to the assigned Counselor and/or Mentor Coordinator.
- Returns completed screening material promptly.
- Commits to consistent contact with a Cadet while he/she is participating in the Challenge Academy.
- Observes all program policies and guidelines for mentors.
- Attends mentor training to learn how to relate effectively to Cadets.
- Participates in scheduled trainings and activities such as On/Off-site, and PRAP Review.
- Agrees to being contacted on a monthly basis by the Challenge Academy's assigned Counselor, for the purpose of discussing the Cadet's progress.
- Discusses violations of policies by the Cadet with the Counselor and/or Mentor Coordinator.
- Communicates monthly by mail, e-mail, or phone with their Cadet's assigned Counselor. Promptly informs the Counselor and/or Mentor Coordinator of problems or needs in the Cadet's life or their relationship.
- Makes consistent contact with the Cadet by phone, mail, e-mail, or in person.
- Maintains a minimum of 4 units of contact with Cadet monthly, as required.
- Submits a monthly report to the Challenge Academy when scheduled during weeks 14-22 of the Residential phase and months 1-12 of the Post-Residential Phase.
- Monitor the Cadet's Post-Residential Action Plan. Discusses with the Cadet his/her progress in executing the plan.
- Reports any changes of the Plan to the Cadet's Assigned Counselor.
- Refers the Cadet to community resources as needed and helps the Cadet obtain those resources.
- Completes a community service project in your home community with the Cadet once per quarter during the Post-Residential phase of the program.
- Shares informal activities with his/her Cadet. The mentor and Cadet will jointly select and schedule the activities.
- Completes an Exit Interview by phone, mail, or e-mail at the completion of the 17-month program.

My signature below certifies that I have read, agree to and understand the material above.

Prospective Mentor's Signature

Date



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Mentor Releases

Liability Release

I understand and agree that I will be the one actually spending time with my Cadet and that I must exercise care in supervising him/her while we are together. I also understand that I am not a Challenge Academy employee, agent, and that I am responsible for choosing and conducting all activities with my Cadet and that the Challenge Academy does not retain any power to control how these activities are conducted except to require these activities to be conducted in the State of Wisconsin.

I therefore agree that the Challenge Academy, the National Guard Bureau, the State of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin National Guard, and their respective officers, officials, agents and employees (Released Parties) will not be liable for, and I agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Released Parties from any and all liability, causes of action, and losses imposed on them in any way relating to or arising out of this mentoring agreement, including, but not limited to, liability for personal injuries, whether the liability, cause of action, or loss is caused by my action or inaction or the actions of inactions of the Release Parties.

I further release the Released Parties from any and all liability, claims, demands, or causes of action, whatsoever, arising out of any damage, loss, or injury I might sustain while participating in any activities pursuant to this mentoring agreement, whether such damage, loss, or injury is caused by the actions or inactions of the Release Parties.

My signature below certifies that I have read, agree to and understand the material above.

Prospective Mentor's Signature

Date

Release of Personal Information

I authorize the Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy (Academy) to release my name, address, and telephone numbers to an institution or individual, whether public or private, for the purpose of advocating, supporting, and furthering the mission of the Academy.

I further authorize the Academy to release said information as deemed necessary for the purpose of forming a parent support group, parent association, membership on a foundation to benefit the Academy, letter writing campaigns and class reunions. This release shall remain in effect until revoked in writing by the undersigned individual(s).

My signature below certifies that I have read, agree to and understand the material above.

Prospective Mentor's Signature

Date

Confidentiality Agreement

Confidentiality is the preservation of privileged information concerning the client, which is disclosed in a professional working relationship. Part of what you learn is necessary to provide services to the applicant or client; other information is shared within the development of a helping trusting relationship. Therefore, most information gained on an individual and family is classified as confidential.

Before you begin your assignment as a mentor you should be aware of the laws and penalties of breaching confidentiality. Giving information to unauthorized personnel could be interpreted as not within the scope of your duties. In this case Challenge Academy could refuse to support you in the event of legal action. Violation of the Wisconsin Revised Statutes regarding confidentiality of records is punishable upon conviction by imprisonment in county jail for not more than sixty (60) days, or fines of \$1000, or both. My duties as a mentor are to abide by the laws and policies regarding the preservation of confidential information.

My signature below certifies that I have read and understand the material above.

Prospective Mentor's Signature

Date