

Finding a Mentor Worksheet

Use this worksheet to help you network. Don't concentrate on what a mentor is or needs to do. Just fill in as many names of people that you or someone else may know. These do not need to be people that anyone knows well. Use the back if necessary. Get as many people as you can to help you fill in more names. The object is to come up with as many names as you can. Once finished, use the list to contact people and ask for help either to find an adult interested in mentoring, or to consider it themselves. Discuss the names with your family and pick your top three to five choices for a mentor. Contact them or ask someone that knows them better to introduce you. Explain that you are applying for a military-style academy to further your education and you need an adult teammate to mentor you. If they have questions that you are not sure about, be sure to give them the application anyway, and point out the toll-free number they can call to find out more before deciding. Follow up with them in a few days. If they agree to sign up, be sure and thank them. If they decline, be sure and thank them for thinking about it, and politely ask if they may know someone else who might be interested.

Dad's Friends	Mom's Friends	Brother's Friends	Sister's Friends	Parents of Friends
Uncle's Friends	Aunt's Friends	Cousin's Friends	Past/Present Work Associates	Work Associates of Parents
Work Associates of other Family	Neighbors	Neighbors' friends and family	Family/Friends that attend a church	Church friends of those members
Pastors	Retired People anyone knows	Teachers or people they know	Local Business Owners/Workers	Cell Phone Directories
Holiday Card Lists	Email Addresses	Community Leaders	Others	

EXPLANATION TO POTENTIAL MENTOR VOLUNTEER

PURPOSE: Each student attending the TCA is paired with an adult mentor—chosen by the student—to help advise, guide and assist them throughout the goal process and following graduation. You may also submit an application to be considered as a mentor for a student who, because of their individual circumstances, is unable to find a mentor.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Texas ChalleNGe Academy is to provide a highly disciplined, safe, and professional learning environment that empowers at-risk youth to improve their educational level and employment potential and become responsible and productive citizens of the State of Texas.

BACKGROUND:

The Texas ChalleNGe Academy (TCA) is part of the national Youth Challenge Program, authorized and funded by the Department of Defense and conducted by the National Guard. The Youth Challenge Program was established in 1993 and there are currently 33 programs in 27 states and Puerto Rico (some states have more than one program). The goal of the program is to give dropouts a second chance to complete their high school education. One of the most important things you need to know is that the program is **voluntary** and a student/dropout has to apply and compete for admission. The TCA is not like a regular high school and it is not easy. It is a 22-week residential program conducted in a quasi-military format that provides our principles, structure, and emphasis on discipline and personal responsibility. The student is a member of a 50 person training platoon, lives in a dormitory, wears a uniform, meets military grooming standards, observes military customs and courtesies, does lots of marching, and perhaps most importantly he/she is held accountable for their words and actions. The staff is caring, dedicated, trained, and committed to helping the student; they understand and appreciate the courage and commitment it took to make the decision to attend the TCA.

They will do everything they can to help the student succeed; however, they will not cut the student any slack or go easy on them in terms of meeting our high standards. The staff uses a “**hands off**” approach that is tough and disciplined, yet caring and respectful, to instruct, train, and motivate the student. After graduating from the TCA, the student continues to work with an adult mentor in a positive relationship that supports the student in applying the positive values and new skills acquired during the 22-week residential phase. This post-graduation mentoring phase is a major factor in the overall success of the Youth Challenge Program and we devote a significant amount of staff time and attention to supporting the mentoring program. **NOTE: Each student is required to have a mentor to attend the TCA and we cannot complete processing their application without having an approved mentor. Mentors must complete their training on or before the first class day.**

WHAT IS MENTORING?

Mentoring is a positive one-on-one relationship between a youth and an adult that provides emotional support, advice, and guidance to help the younger person deal with the challenges of life. The goal is to help the young person gain the skills and confidence to deal with those situations and be able and responsible to make good choices in the future. Examples of challenges and situations where a mentor’s advice and guidance could be important, if not critical, include: making education and career choices; seeking, performing, and holding a job; managing personal finances; owning a home or renting an apartment; teen pregnancy and parenting skills; substance abuse; etc. Your role is not to replace a parent or guardian, but to provide additional information and perspectives that might not be available to the child.

WHAT’S EXPECTED OF YOU AS A MENTOR FOR A TCA STUDENT?

If you agree to be a mentor for a specific student, or want to be considered for a mentor position with a student/applicant, you’re making a commitment of time, attention, and some expense. We can’t quantify any of these, however, in terms of the potential impact you could have on a young person’s life the cost is

negligible and the rewards are immense. This is not a token or nominal position and you can plan on the following:

- Submit an application providing all requested information.
- The TCA staff will review the application and references and coordinate the required background check.
- Complete a convenient ONLINE training course (10 – 15 minute blocks of instruction) and notify TCA staff.
- Attend one mandatory half-day training session (three hours) at location to be announced. You'll be trained on the TCA specific requirements of the mentoring program. This training will be offered on scheduled dates posted on our website, usually from 8:30am to 12:30pm on a weekday and 9am to 1pm on a weekend in December/ January and June/July.
- Maintain weekly contact with the student/mentee during the residential phase primarily via letter.
- Maintain an average 2 hours a month of personal contact with your student/mentee during scheduled home passes, mentor-specific visitations, and/or through attendance at graduation. (Certain exceptions may apply.)
- After graduation, maintain weekly contact with the student/mentee for the next 12 months, with a minimum of four (4) hours of face-to face contact each month. Once a month you'll submit a brief online report of the student/mentee's progress. **This is when the student/mentee needs you the most and your time investment is most critical to their continuing development and future success.**
- **IF YOU CANNOT MEET THESE EXPECTATIONS - PLEASE DO NOT APPLY.**

GOALS OF MENTORING A STUDENT/GRADUATE OF THE TCA:

- 1) Create a positive one-on-one relationship built on trust, honesty, and open communication.
- 2) Maintain regular/on-going contact with the student throughout the program to help them keep their focus and effort in building, implementing, and attaining the goals they set for themselves while attending the Academy.
- 3) Help the student understand and embrace the positive qualities and traits of a responsible citizen and a successful student, employee, parent, etc.
- 4) Be a listener; earn the Cadet's trust; provide advice and guidance as the student makes decisions and deals with the inevitable issues and challenges of life.

MANDATORY ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS TO BE A MENTOR:

- Should be a resident of Texas
- Should be at least 25 years old (some exceptions apply; former graduates must be at least 21 years old)
- Must be of the same gender/sex as the student/applicant
- Mentor cannot be an immediate relative, either by marriage or bloodline, or someone living in the same household
- Mentor must live within a reasonable distance to where the student/applicant will live during the post-residential phase (usually their hometown). This is to minimize travel.
- Willing to MEET EXPECTATIONS OUTLINED ABOVE for up to 17½ months with four contacts per month, 4-hours personal contact each month during post-residential phase.

DISQUALIFYING FACTORS:

- A history of arrest or conviction for a sex offense
- A felony conviction within the last seven years (case by case consideration beyond that)
- Any alcohol, drug, or substance abuse with the last five years
- A history of domestic violence (reports, charges, convictions)
- Failure to follow through on commitment on previous TCA or ChalleNGe mentorships.

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION:

If you are interested in becoming a mentor and are able to commit to the youth AND to the program, please complete the attached application forms. **Please note and understand that we must ask for personal and sensitive information in the application process.** This information will be used to conduct a criminal background check and a sexual offender registry check by law enforcement agencies. The application forms and the information therein will be kept confidential and will only be disclosed to law enforcement agency personnel.