

Common Questions – New iCouldBe Mentors

1. **What is iCouldBe’s Mission?** iCouldBe’s mission is to provide at-risk middle and high school students with an online community of professional mentors, empowering teens to stay in school, plan for future careers, and achieve in life.
2. **Who are the students served?** We identify partner schools where at least 50% of the student population is designated as at-risk. Criteria for “at-risk” status include: 1) having a poor attendance record, 2) being significantly behind in credits, 3) demonstrating low motivation for the regular school program, 4) being economically disadvantaged, 5) having low state test scores, or 6) having a low grade point average. We also identify schools where 70-100% of students are eligible for the Federal Free Lunch Program.
3. **How are Mentees chosen to participate?** iCouldBe engages middle and high schools which contractually agree to allow the program to be embedded into an existing class. Doing so provides Mentees with one scheduled class period per week, for the entire school year, to engage their mentors in our curriculum.
4. **Can you describe the curriculum?** The curriculum navigates mentees and mentors through a series of “Missions” which are broken into smaller manageable “Quests” made up of 80+ individual “Activities.” The three main missions help the mentee learn about themselves today (Mission One: I AM), to dream about their future (Mission Two: I COULD BE), and to learn the practical steps to get there (Mission Three: I WILL). Each Activity has a simple format to encourage meaningful mentee and mentor interaction to accomplish the program goals. Each quest ends with an activity that acknowledges and celebrates student achievement.
5. **What is an Activity?** The full year curriculum includes 80+ activities designed to encourage communication between each Mentee and Mentor pair. Each activity includes a “Check This Out” section featuring the main activity content. And each activity includes a “Start The Conversation” area with questions based on the activity content. Activities also include related quotes, vocabulary words, website links, and other helpful information.

Mentees and Mentors view identical activities. Mentors can access Activities when they receive an alert that their Mentee has posted a new Activity comment. The alert will include a link to the email message, which will link to the updated Activity.

At the end of each Activity is the section where Mentors and Mentees can enter comments.

Mentors are encouraged to reply thoroughly to their Mentee’s work, and to contribute their own experience and insight.

When a Mentor feels that the conversation has covered the Activity topic thoroughly, the Mentor should mark the Activity as ‘Complete’ at the bottom of the page. This will update the status in the Activity list viewed by the Mentor and Mentee. The Mentor should also select the rating from the drop-

down to indicate if the activity was excellent, satisfactory, or needs more work.

6. **How are Mentees and Mentors paired?** There are three ways a Mentor can be matched with a Mentee: 1) the Mentee can choose the Mentor by searching a career field and reviewing the Mentor profile, 2) the staff can make the match, or 3) a Mentee or Mentor can request a specific pairing by posting to the appropriate sections on the Forums.
7. **How long is the mentoring commitment?** To get the most out of the mentoring relationship and to effectively support your mentee, we ask that you participate for the full school year from September – June.
8. **What is the time commitment?** We ask that you spend an hour a week online responding thoughtfully to your Mentee’s Activity posts and emails. The time varies depending on the engagement level of the Mentee.
9. **This sounds great! How do I become an iCouldBe Mentor?** We’re so excited to have you join us! The process is easy and should take at most one month from start to finish. There are three simple steps to get started: 1) attend a live 30-minute webinar or access a recording to learn more about the mentoring commitment, 2) complete the online application and submit the background check, and 3) receive welcome message upon clearing background check.
10. **How do I sign up for the webinar or access the recording?** Click here to access the recording.
11. **What happens after the webinar?** This timeline outlines the next steps in the process after the live webinar. If you accessed the recorded webinar, please note that you’ll have to follow-up with iCouldBe staff (michelle@icouldbe.org) in order to get the registration link.

Fall Recruitment Season

- **Mid-July – Late August:**
 - Volunteers attend live webinar sessions
- **Mid-to-Late August:**
 - Volunteers complete registration and background check
- **Late August to mid-September:**
 - Background checks processed and sent to iCouldBe
 - Approved Mentors receive Welcome Emails from iCouldBe
 - Approved Mentors fill out profiles and complete training
- **Mid-to-Late September:**
 - Majority of students register (the rest will register by the end of October)
- **Late September – Early October:**
 - Majority of Mentees and Mentors are matched

Spring Recruitment Season

- **Early-to-Mid December:**
 - Volunteers attend live webinar sessions

- **Mid-to-Late December:**
 - Volunteers complete registration and background check
- **Late December to mid-January:**
 - Background checks processed and sent to iCouldBe
 - Approved Mentors receive Welcome Emails from iCouldBe
 - Approved Mentors fill out profiles and complete training
- **Mid-to-Late January:**
 - Majority of students return from Winter Break;
 - Any new students who will register will do so in February. We do not always have new students in the spring.
- **Late January – Early February:**
 - Majority of New Mentors and returning Mentees are matched

12. Are Mentors in the spring working mostly with students who have been in the program for months?

Yes. Most matches made in the spring are between new mentors and existing mentees. This means that your mentee had already started the program and the iCouldBe curriculum with another mentor. This mentor likely had to leave (usually it's for unforeseen circumstances) so the mentee is now in need of another caring adult to guide him/her through the latter half of the program.

- 13. Why do I need to enter my social security number for the background check?** The social security number is part of the comprehensive vetting steps we take to ensure potential volunteers are who they say they are. We take very seriously the need to protect volunteer data and that's exactly why no one at iCouldBe has access to social security numbers. Our background check provider, True Hire, are the only ones who have access to this personal information which they need to conduct the verification process on user background checks.

Our partner True Hire is a very reputable organization that has been in business for almost 20 years. They take all possible steps to ensure the protection of personal data from loss, misuse and unauthorized access, disclosure, alteration and destruction. True Hire uses encryption to protect personal information online; they also do everything in their power to safeguard the information at their facilities. All information is kept strictly confidential in their offices. Only employees who need the data to process the checks are given access to personal information. Their offices are fully secure with state of the art alarm and monitoring services.

They are also monitored by the National Association of Professional Background Screeners (NAPBS), which exists to promote ethical business practices, promote compliance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act and foster awareness of issues related to consumer protection and privacy rights within the background screening industry.

We cannot in good conscience allow volunteers who have not been fully vetted to have access to minors. The commitment we make to schools to keep students protected and safe is our number one priority. We would love to have all interested volunteers serve as mentors but need to ensure they go through all the necessary channels to be fully vetted.

Mike Barnhart (our direct contact on the True Hire team) would be more than happy to answer any additional questions about the process. His contact information is also below.



Mentoring for the Digital Age

Mike Barnhart
mbarnhart@true-hire.com
800-262-7301 extension 307

We're really looking forward to your service and hope you will move forward with participation. Our students need you.

14. **What is the status of my mentor application?** After receiving your background check results we will be in touch via email to confirm the status of your application. You may also email michelle@icouldbe.org if you've been waiting for more than two weeks.

15. **What do I do on my first day as an iCouldBe Mentor?** As an official iCouldBe mentor, there are a few steps we'd like you to take on your first day. You'll be able to access all of these sections once your application is approved.

Step 1: Read the Admin Message, if there is one up that week.

Step 2: Review the Mentor Training Webinars

Step 3: Complete your Mentor Profile

Step 4: Check the Mentee Activity section of your homepage to see if you are matched

Step 5: Click Email to read introductory emails from your Mentee's teacher. If your Mentee has not emailed yet, reach out and say hello first.

Step 6: Check the Mentee Activity section of your homepage to see if Activity comments have been added by your Mentee. The Activity box will display the most recently updated Activities at the top of the list. You can also check the Email section to see if an Activity Notice message is listed.

16. **What should I be doing on a weekly basis?** Communicate! Communicate! Communicate! The more frequent the communication, the greater the opportunity for a meaningful Mentor-Mentee relationship. To help make that happen, please ensure you are communicating with your Mentee at least once a week. That means responding thoughtfully to as many of your Mentee's Activities as soon as possible and checking in with them via iCouldBe Email. There's also the opportunity to connect with other users on the site by spending time in the Forums.