**Enroot Volunteer Mentor: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

**Empower an immigrant youth to envision their future and succeed in college, career, and life.**

#### What is a mentor?

A mentor is a role model, advisor, friend, and guide. You are a caring adult who listens to your mentee and helps him/her set goals and pursue them. Being a mentor is important: you are a supporter and guide through academic, career, and everyday challenges. Being a mentor is fun: you and your mentee learn from one another and do activities you both enjoy.

#### Who are the mentees?

Mentees in the Enroot Program are all immigrant high school students. Student s are in grades 9-12 at either Cambridge Rindge and Latin School (CRLS) in Cambridge, MA or Somerville High School (SHS) in Somerville, MA. They are English-Language-Learners (ELL) departments, sections of the high schools with teachers trained to work with students in the process of learning English.

They come from around the world, with the biggest groups typically from Haiti, Ethiopia, and Central and South America. Some have been in the US for years, others for months. Enroot does not cherry pick top students, though many have strong academic skills; we look for students who are excited to get involved and take advantage of what our program has to offer.

#### How do the mentees get into the program and what are they expecting?

We promote the Enroot program at the high schools and work with teachers and school administrators to identify students who are a good fit with the program. Interested students apply to be part of the program, including an online application, in-person interview, personal essay, and written recommendations. Once accepted, students attend a training to explore topics including: “What is a mentor,” “What can I do with my mentor,” and “What is a good mentee?” We encourage students to think of their mentors as guides and friends who want to get to know them, have fun, and help with projects like learning English, improving academic skills, working on college applications, and exploring job options.

#### How do you match your mentors and mentees?

We make matches based on interests, strengths, personality, mentors’ area of expertise (including language and cultural knowledge) and student needs. Typically, males are matched with males and females with females.

#### How will I meet my mentee?

You will meet your mentee in two structured, group mentor/mentee meetings led by Enroot staff. After these initial meetings, you and your mentee are free to decide what activities you will do.

#### When and where should I meet my mentee?

You will meet your mentee for two structured group sessions. After these group sessions, continue meeting at either Enroot, 99 Bishop Allen Drive or another community location at least for the following two meetings. Enroot staff will assign you to meet weekly from 6:00-7:30 (day of the week TBD). If your student participates in the Cambridge “Mentorship Program” of Enroot, you will continue to meet at Enroot’s offices for a weekly seminar, including at least one group activity or workshop each week. If your student is part of the Cambridge “Leadership Program” or Somerville program, and you and your mentee have met successfully several times and have good communication, you may start to meet different days, times, and locations. Please notify your Enroot contact staff member before you start to meet on a different schedule.

#### How often should I meet my mentee?

You should meet your mentee once a week. Of course, this isn’t always possible. If you miss a week, stay in touch with your mentee so they know you’re thinking about them. You should meet a minimum of twice per month.

If you haven’t been able to meet your mentee for two weeks in a row due to cancellations or disconnects, contact Enroot staff so he/she is aware and help find a scheduling solution if necessary.

#### How should I communicate with my mentee?

This is up to you and your mentee, and you should talk about it at your first meeting. Discuss the best way of keeping in touch, and try to get multiple methods of contact (phone number, email, Facebook, Snap Chat, etc. in case one approach doesn’t work). If you are having trouble communicating with your mentee, get in touch with Enroot staff and he/she will help.

#### What kind of activities should I do with my mentee?

First, talk to your mentee. What does he/she want to do? Common activities include: playing board games at Enroot’s office, playing a sport, going out for ice cream/coffee/dinner/etc., visiting museums, going to movies, visiting colleges, working on college applications, scholarships, or school work, doing informational interviews, and more. If you’re having a hard time figuring out what your mentee would like to do, try a few different activities and see how it goes. Reach out to Enroot staff to talk this over and get ideas.

#### If we go out, who pays?

There is no firm rule in this situation, but remember: a mentor is not an ATM. Your mentee shouldn’t expect you to pay for everything, or come to see your relationship as a way to get free stuff. However, keep in mind some students won’t have much (or any) pocket money. Look for free or inexpensive activities if this is an issue. Try to get a feel for how much your mentee can pay, or discuss the issue directly. Be in touch with Enroot staff for tips on how to have this conversation.

#### Is it okay to drive my mentee places?

We don’t encourage this as it can open you (and us) to liability issues, but some mentors do take their mentees places in their cars. If you plan to do this, please contact Enroot staff ahead of time to let him/her know, and check-in that your student has permission from their parent/guardian.

#### How long does this mentoring relationship last?

This relationship lasts for an academic year, from approximately October-June. Many pairs continue meeting over the summer on their own, and even continue meeting for multiple years. We hope pairs will continue as a match in the program beyond one academic year, but can’t guarantee this will happen (participants sometimes move, graduate, or decide to pursue different activities).

#### What program support/resources are available to me and my mentee?

If you have questions, a challenging situation with your student, or would just like to think through this experience with someone, call or email Enroot staff members! Also remember you have lots of fellow mentors in the Enroot program. Use each other for support. You are not alone.

Program staff will call to check in on how things are going and offer support several times per semester. However, don’t wait for us to call if there’s an issue or you just want to talk something over – we’d love to hear from you!