

Stanislaus County Employee Volunteer Mentor Program

Frequently Asked Questions

2023-2024 School Year

❖ **What is the history of the program?**

The Stanislaus County Employee Volunteer Mentor Program was developed in 1998 with input from many key departments, including the Sheriff's Department and Community Services Agency. The program paused in 2020 due to the COVID-19 emergency and was re-launched during the 2022-2023 school year.

❖ **What is NEW for Schoolyear 2023-2024?**

In the upcoming 2023-2024 school year, Stanislaus County is joining forces with Sierra Vista Child & Family Services to elevate our volunteer mentor program. Sierra Vista's specialized team will provide on-site support, guaranteeing that volunteers have the knowledge and skills needed to forge meaningful connections with their student mentees. To enhance the mentorship experience, sessions will be extended from 30 minutes to a more comprehensive one-hour format. Additionally, we're excited to announce that the volunteer mentor program is now open to retirees of Stanislaus County, inviting their wealth of experience to positively impact the development of our community's youth.

❖ **What is the time commitment?**

- Volunteer mentors are asked to commit one hour per week to mentoring, excluding travel time to and from the school site. Contingent on Supervisor approval, employees are expected to flex their hours or use authorized accrued leave time. Employee Volunteer Mentors need to obtain prior approval from their supervisor to participate in the program.
- County paid time applies to one three-hour training hosted by the County and facilitated by Sierra Vista Child & Family Services during work hours, as well as mandatory background screening/LIVESCAN and tuberculosis (TB) testing required by Modesto City Schools. Modesto City Schools (MCS) will coordinate TB screening and Live Scan for each mentor, covering the associated costs for these requirements. Additionally, County paid time includes participation in the recognition event held at a scheduled Board of Supervisors meeting. This county paid time includes travel time associated with these approved events.

❖ **Where does the mentoring take place?**

Six elementary schools within the Modesto City Schools District – Burbank, Franklin, Kirschen, Orville Wright, Shackelford, and Wilson – have been selected based on assessed needs.

❖ **What if I have a schedule conflict, sickness, or vacation on my assigned day?**

Employee Volunteers Mentors have the option to collaborate with another approved employee volunteer mentor at the same school site, ensuring that a child does not miss the mentoring visit. In cases of extenuating circumstances, the on-site coordinators can assist with coverage. Volunteers will be expected to communicate any schedule changes to the Sierra Vista on-site school staff with as much notice as possible.

❖ **Is the program structured?**

Yes! Sierra Vista incorporates the "Second Step" social and emotional programming model used by Modesto City Schools, incorporating literacy into the program with weekly journaling.

- Mentors are paired with a student for weekly one-hour sessions.
- Mentors check in at their assigned school site; identification is required to enter campus.
- A collaborative approach with Sierra Vista staff ensures support at each school site.
- Assessment tools include Pre- and Post- tests of students, ongoing training evaluations, Mentor/Mentee and Teacher surveys, aligning with the County's "Cradle to Career" Focus on Prevention initiatives.
- Continuous support for employee volunteer mentors is provided through training and resources.
- County Library staff will offer assistance in recommending age-appropriate books and materials.

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❖ **What do I need to do to become a volunteer mentor?**

- Obtain approval from your supervisors and complete and submit an online application with Sierra Vista Child & Family Services at: <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/4958415/Sierra-Vista-Child-Family-Services-Mentor-Application>
- Qualified volunteers will undergo an interview (either in person or virtually) by Sierra Vista staff and will be paired with a student mentee. The arrangement will include an agreement to mentor on a regular day and time each week.
- PLEASE NOTE - Returning volunteers must complete the Sierra Vista online application and undergo the necessary background screening and tuberculosis (TB) as required by Modesto City Schools.

❖ **Does the Board of Supervisors support this program?**

Yes! Every year, a request is made to the Board of Supervisors to officially designate January as “Mentoring Awareness Month,” accompanied by the submission of an annual progress report detailing the outcomes of mentoring efforts to the Board of Supervisors.

❖ **Is there any special recognition given for employee volunteer mentors?**

Yes! Sierra Vista Child & Family Services hosts an annual Mentor Appreciation Dinner, to be attended on an employee’s own time. The County recognizes mentors during a Board of Supervisors meeting.

For more information, please contact:

- Program Related Questions – Anne Aleson, Sierra Vista Child & Family Services AAleson@sierravistacares.org or call (209) 534-4471
- County Related Questions - Patricia Lord, Management Consultant, Chief Executive Office lordp@stancounty.com or call (209) 573-0905