



## News Release

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Family Service Receives Federal Grant for Mentoring**

*Lawrence, MA* – Family Service has been awarded a four-year grant from the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to match adult mentors with students in the Lawrence Public Schools who are at risk for dropping out. These funds were made available as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act signed by President Obama in February, 2009. The mentoring grant that Family Service has received is one of only ten grants awarded in the country.

The federal government has recognized that there is a significant link between school drop out and young people's involvement in criminal activity. The government also recognizes that mentoring is one of the most effective ways to help kids stay in school and on a path to personal and professional success. "I can think of few more valuable pursuits than mentoring at risk students, and playing a positive role in a young man or woman's life," said Congresswoman Niki Tsongas. "Family Service and Lawrence Public Schools should be commended for their efforts to help kids stay in school and achieve in the classroom."

Family Service will partner with the Lawrence Public Schools to recruit students who have specific risk factors for dropping out and match them in a one-on-one mentoring relationship with adult. Over the four year grant period, 150 one-on-one mentor-mentee matches will be made. Each match will meet for a minimum of eight hours every month in a community setting. Program staff will provide monthly supervision and facilitate monthly group activities that focus on vocational training and career exploration.

The long term goal is to reduce the school dropout rate and related juvenile delinquency in the City of Lawrence. Short term objectives are to improve students' attitudes and behaviors related to academic achievement. The program will officially begin on October 1, 2009. Individuals interested in becoming a mentor should contact Liz Sweeney at 978-327-6637 or [lsweeney@familyserviceinc.com](mailto:lsweeney@familyserviceinc.com).

**For more information, contact:**

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