

2026-2027 MENTOR SUBSTITUTE POSITION DESCRIPTION

Last Updated: September 2, 2026

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The United Way of Northeastern Minnesota's Lunch Buddies Mentoring program currently serves grade school students at several local schools who would benefit from additional support, encouragement and a positive and caring adult mentor. Youth are referred to the program by school staff and are then matched with a volunteer adult mentor. The mentors in the program commit to supporting, encouraging, and being a friend to their mentee for the school year.

Lunch Buddies mentors and mentees share one lunch break/week October-May at the following schools:

- Cherry School
- Chisholm Elementary
- Falls Elementary (International Falls)
- Floodwood School (Elementary)
- Laurentian Elementary School (Eveleth)
- Lincoln Elementary (Hibbing)
- Merritt Elementary School (Mountain Iron)
- Mesabi East School (Aurora)
- Nashwauk Keewatin Schools (Elementary)
- Northeast Range School (Babbitt)
- North Star Elementary School (Virginia)
- Parkview Elementary School (Virginia)
- Tower-Soudan School (Tower)
- Washington Elementary School (Ely)

MENTOR ROLE

- Serve as a positive role model and guide
- Focus on building a positive relationship with the young person
- Supporting the young person through an ongoing, one-to-one relationship
- Participate in school-based activities together
- Help identify and encourage mentee strengths

SUBSTITUTE TIME COMMITMENT

- Complete an online training (1.5 hour)
- Respond to UWNEMN emails re: availability when substitute needs arise
- Share lunch breaks with mentee in need when available (45 minutes – 1 hour)
 - Number of lunch breaks will vary by mentor/mentee/circumstance
 - UWNEMN will do its best to communicate number of coverage days needed when requesting substitute support
- Attend optional mentor/mentee group events and program recognition events

SUBSTITUTE REQUIREMENTS

- Be interested in working with a young person and being a positive role model
- Be at least 18 years of age
- Have transportation to the school where you will be mentoring
- Complete the screening procedure
- Agree to attend mentor trainings as required
- Pass the criminal background check
- Be willing to disclose and/or discuss any mental, chemical, or physical health conditions which may impact ability to effectively mentor
- Access to internet and an email account

DESIRABLE QUALITIES

- Willing listener
- Open to learning and growing
- Nonjudgmental
- Celebrates/embraces individual differences
- Encouraging and supportive
- Patient and flexible

BENEFITS

- Personal fulfillment through contribution to an individual child and the larger community
- Satisfaction in helping a child grow and learn
- Training sessions and group activities
- Personal ongoing support and coaching to help the match succeed
- Mentee/mentor group activities and participant recognition events

SUPERVISION

- Mentors, mentees, and substitutes will be under the supervision of the Program Specialist

APPLICATION AND SCREENING PROCESS

1. Respond with your interest
2. Submit written application and references
3. Comprehensive criminal background check
4. Complete online mentor training