Big Brothers Big Sisters of America

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) is generally accepted as the oldest and largest youth mentoring organization in the United States. The organization has developed an effective approach to mentoring, with formalized standards and required procedures for affiliates, which has led to the model’s recognition as an evidence-based program. Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) has demonstrated positive outcomes for healthy youth development. It is designed to foster supportive relationships between youth ages 6 to 18 with caring adults, which have been shown to mitigate the negative effects of risks in the social or environmental contexts of the youth’s lives. Headquartered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, BBBSA has a network of over 350 affiliates across the country and serves almost a quarter of a million children annually.

BBBSA Standards of Practice

Youth are profoundly impacted by social interaction, but mentoring as a generic idea is not effective. No other mentoring program has demonstrated the strong outcomes seen in the Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) research. BBBS is effective because local affiliates adhere to well-developed standards guided by a national organization with over a century of experience, which in turn leads to mentoring relationships that are carefully supervised, intense, enduring, and thus, effective.

The BBBSA published standards and required procedures offer operational guidance and also a process for forming and supervising match relationships that includes the following:

- **Orientation** is required for all parent/guardians and volunteers to determine appropriateness for participation and provide an overview of services provided.

- **Volunteer Screening** is required of all potential adult volunteers or Bigs, which is designed to screen out those who may inflict psychological or physical harm, those who lack the capacity to form a caring bond with the child, or are those who are unlikely to honor their time commitments. The screening process includes a written application, a background check, an extensive interview, and a home assessment.

- **A Youth Assessment** is required all of youth entering the program, which is designed to help BBBS staff learn about the youth, so the best possible match is formed. It also allows staff to secure parental permission. The assessment involves a written application, interviews with the youth and the parent, and a home assessment.

- **Matches** are formed carefully and are based upon considerations such as the shared interests of the volunteer and youth, geography, the needs of the youth, the volunteer’s skills and abilities, the preferences of the parent, and the capacity of program staff.

- **Supervision** is a key element of the BBBS mentoring process and it occurs via an initial contact with the parent, youth, and volunteer within two weeks of the match; monthly contact with the volunteer, parent and/or youth during the first year; and quarterly contact with all parties during the duration of the match.

BBBSA has developed a strategy to guide them through 2015. The strategy outlines four strategic pillars: Impact at Scale; Sustainable Resources; Intentionality, Diversity & Inclusion; Leadership & Partnership. To view the BBBSA 2011-2015 Nationwide Strategic Direction click here.
**The Mentoring Relationship**
Youth and volunteer adults are recruited to form relationship matches. Initially, Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) case managers interview each youth and their guardian. Then, at the first match meeting with the volunteer Big, the case manager and the volunteer set goals aimed at ensuring a mutually satisfying relationship and promoting growth in attitudes, behaviors, and skills identified specifically for the youth, such as school attendance and performance, parent/peer/sibling relationships, skills/hobbies, hygiene, etc. The mentoring interactions are not prescribed, but are aimed at:

- decreasing or delaying antisocial activities;
- improving academic performance, attitudes and behaviors;
- improving relationships with family and friends;
- strengthening self-concept; and
- providing social and cultural enrichment.

**BBBS Affiliation**
Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) affiliates are 501c3 nonprofit organizations with their own staff, budget and board of directors. The national organization sets program standards and provides fundraising, volunteer recruitment, seed capital and supporting services to its affiliates. Each Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) affiliate identifies their geographic recruitment catchment area, target population, and criteria for youth eligibility. To maintain their affiliation, BBBS affiliates must submit a Membership Affiliation Agreement (MAA), pay agency dues, and complete an online assessment annually.

**Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) Funding**
Only programs recognized by Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) as affiliates are eligible to apply for grant funding. Although BBBS is delivered as school-based or community-based mentoring, the PCCD only funds community-based mentoring, which is the researched model recognized by the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) as an effective Blueprints Promising Program. The school-based mentoring approach is coordinated around school structures and calendars, which limits the mentors’ ability to generate close, long-term relationships and it has less evidence that it leads to high quality mentoring and enduring outcomes.

**History of BBBS**
Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) was initiated in 1904 when Ernest Coulter, a New York City court clerk, recognized that caring adults could help many of the male youth being seeing in the courtroom to avoid trouble, and he began to recruit volunteers. At around the same time, the members of a group called Ladies of Charity were befriending girls who had come through the New York Children’s Court. That group would later become Catholic Big Sisters. Both groups continued to work independently until 1977, when Big Brothers of America and Big Sisters International joined forces and became Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.

**Current BBBS Vision**
“All children achieve success in life.”
Current BBBS Mission
“To provide children facing adversity with strong and enduring, professionally supported one-to-one relationships that change their lives for the better, forever.”

Website
www.bbbs.org

Developer Contact
Chief Operating Officer
Big Brothers Big Sisters National Office
230 North 13th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Telephone: (215) 567-7000

State Association
Big-Brothers-Big-Sisters-State-Association-of-Pennsylvania, Facebook Page

BBBSA Contacts
A list of the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) leadership team members can be accessed on the BBBSA website at:
http://www.bbbs.org/site/c.9iILI3NGKhK6F/b.5960969/k.29EE/Leading_us_in_the_right_direction.htm

National and Global Recognitions
Recognition for Evidence of Effectiveness
The research demonstrating Big Brothers Big Sisters’ impact on positive youth development has led to the mentoring program’s recognition and listing as an evidence-based program on the following prevention program lists:

• Promising Program – Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development (20013), Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado (www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints)
• Effective Program - Coalition for Evidence-based Policy, Social Programs That Work (www.evidencebasedprograms.org)
• Effective Program – Center for Mental Health Services (2007), US Department of Health and Human Services, Prevention Research Center for the Promotion of Human Development
• Effective Program – Communities That Care Prevention Strategies Guide (2004)
• Effective Program – Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn’t, What’s Promising, Sherman et al. (1997), University Of Maryland Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice (NCJ165366) (www.ncjrs.gov/works/index.htm)
• Exemplary Program – OJJDP Model Programs Guide (Title V), Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice (www.ojjdp.gov/mpg)
Logic model

A logic model is a way to visually represent the underlying rationale for the proven behavioral changes of an evidence-based program. A logic model explains how and why a proven prevention program will work by showing how specific program components or activities influence risk and protective factors and the skills, knowledge, attitudes, intentions, and behaviors of the program participants, both immediately following the program (short-term or proximal outcomes) and in later years (long-term or distal outcomes).

The EPISCenter has created a logic model outlining the program modalities, and the risk and protective factors and proximal and distal outcomes that BBBS has been proven to impact.

![Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) Community-based Mentoring](image)

This logic model was created by the Evidence-based Prevention and Intervention Support Center (EPISCenter) at Penn State University. It is based on a research study conducted by Public/Private Ventures, Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters. The study was released in 1995 and most recently in September of 2000.

Research has demonstrated that youth participating in Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) show increases in certain life-skills, academic skills, and relationship skills, which protect the youth from becoming involved in substance abuse and other problem behaviors. The research demonstrating positive outcomes was conducted on matched youth that met with their Big Brothers or Big Sisters an average of 3 times a month for 3 to 4 hours each time for an average of one year, which totaled approximately 144 hours of direct contact annually. Positive outcomes are more likely if mentoring relationships are of high quality and interaction is frequent. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) is now promoting a focus by affiliates on retention rates and the strength of relationships.

Theoretical Rationale of BBBS

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) was initiated through the good intentions and compassion of individuals that believed mentoring could have an impact on high-risk youth. BBBSA has built upon this concern and positive regard for youth by nurturing mentoring relationships with-in a non-profit,
business model that focuses on aspects such as financial stability, governance, child safety, and risk management.

The current national practices and affiliate network was not developed with academic theories of delinquency as the basis. However, the project’s rationale most closely resembles the social control theory. According to this theory, attachments to prosocial others, commitment to socially acceptable goals, and involvement in conventional activities prevent youth from engaging in delinquent activities or other problem behaviors. The more bonded a youth is to a caring adult, the less they desire to threaten the loss of the relationship by misbehaving.

BBBSA strongly believes that the consistent involvement of a caring adult can make a difference in the social and emotional development of a youth, particularly for those youth residing in a single-parent family, an adverse situation, or a deprived environment. The theory that consistent and frequent interaction with a caring adult can be protective is related to the resiliency studies carried out by researchers such as child psychologist, Emmy Werner, and others. Werner, in a 30 year longitudinal study assessed high risk boys and girls who had made a successful transition into adulthood on the island of Kauai, Hawaii and found that the number of caring adults outside the family unit with whom a child enjoyed associating with was a significant protective factor.

A brief summary of Werner’s research can be accessed here:
http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/resiliency/resiliency.chap1.pdf

**Targeted Risk and Protective Factors**

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) strives to promote positive changes in scholastic confidence and competence, social acceptance and peer relations, educational expectations, the avoidance of delinquency, and improved parental relationships. By strengthening skills related to these outcomes, the following community-level risk and protective factors, as assessed through the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS), are targeted:

**PAYS Protective Factors Targeted for an Increase**

- Community Opportunities for Prosocial Opportunities
- Community Rewards for Prosocial Opportunities
- Belief in the Moral Order

**Additional Protective Factors Targeted for an Increase**

- Exposure to community/cultural norms that are not favorable to antisocial behaviors and substance use
- Promotion of healthy beliefs and clear standards
- Goal setting and positive future orientation
- Positive orientation to school and increased scholastic confidence and competency
- Positive parent-child affect and parental trust
- Improved relations with pro-social peers
- Communication and interpersonal skills
• Decision-making and critical thinking skills
• Coping and self-management skills

**PAYS Risk Factors Targeted for a Decrease**

- Academic failure beginning in late elementary school/poor academic performance
- Lack of commitment to school
- Early initiation of drug use
- Early initiation of problem behavior/early and persistent anti-social behavior
- Rebelliousness
- Friends who engage in problem behaviors/friends’ delinquent behavior & friends’ use of drugs - negative peer influences
- Favorable attitudes towards antisocial behavior - problem behaviors and substance use
- Favorable attitudes towards Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug (ATOD) use
- Low perceived risks of drug use
- Family conflict

Involvement in BBBS is also believed to buffer the negative effects of the single-parent home. Children from single-parent homes often live in poverty, enjoy less parental time and supervision, and have fewer opportunities for positive youth development. They are twice as likely to drop out of high school and more likely to be placed in foster care or juvenile justice facilities. Females from single-parent homes have 3x the risk of bearing children as unwed teenagers. Males whose fathers are absent face a much higher probability of growing up unemployed, incarcerated, and uninvolved with their own children.

See the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s KIDS COUNT for more information related to the risks associated with single-parent homes: [http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/KIDSCOUNT.aspx](http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/KIDSCOUNT.aspx)

**Demonstrated Outcomes**

**BBBS Research**

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) has been recognized as a Blueprint Model Program based on a culmination of a four-part research series conducted by Public/Private Ventures, a Philadelphia-based national research organization. The most recent of those studies, *Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters*, was released in 1995 and reissued in September of 2000. The first three reports were: *A Study of Program Practices* (1993); *A Study of Volunteer Recruitment and Screening* (1994); and *Building Relationships with Youth in Program Settings* (1995).

The highlights of the research study, which was conducted during 1992 and 1993 are below:

- The study involved 1,138 youth.
- Approximately 50 percent of the children were matched with a Big Brother or Big Sister. The others were assigned to a control group and remained on a waitlist for 18 months. The children were randomly assigned to one group or the other. There were 487 youth in the treatment group, with 378 matched.
Of the participants, 959 completed baseline and follow-up interviews.
Youth were selected from eight BBBS affiliates. The participating agencies were in Phoenix, Arizona; Wichita, Kansas; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Rochester, New York; Columbus, Ohio; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Houston and San Antonio, Texas. The agencies were selected based on their large size and geographic diversity.
Sample youth were between the ages of 10 and 16 years of age.
Of the total sample, 60 percent were boys.
More than 50 percent of the sample was minorities.
Many of the youth were low-income and had a family history of violence or substance use.
Controlled for preexisting differences in baseline characteristics (e.g., age, gender, race/ethnicity, repeated grades, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, agency variables, and factors of the youth’s home environment), which allowed for the impact of BBBS to be more precisely assessed and also increases confidence that the positive impacts seen were attributable to the BBBS model and mentoring relationships and not external factors.
The matched children met with their Big Brothers or Big Sisters an average of three times a month for three to four hours each time for an average of one year.
Researchers interviewed the Littles, the children who were not matched, and their parents on two occasions: when they first applied for a Big Brother or Big Sister, and again 18 months later.
The 18-month randomized control research trial found that Little Brothers and Little Sisters:
- Were at least 46 percent less likely than controls to initiate drug use (stronger effect for minority males and females)
- Were 27 percent less likely to initiate alcohol use (stronger effect for females)
- Were one third less likely to hit someone
- Were 52 percent less likely to skip school
- Were 37 percent less likely to skip a class
- Showed small gains in grade point averages and were more confident of their performance in schoolwork
- Had improved relations and levels of trust with their parents and their families
- Had improved peer relationships
Big Brothers Big Sisters volunteers had the greatest impact on alcohol and substance abuse prevention. The study found, that for every 100 youth between the ages of 10 and 16 who start using drugs, only 54 similar youth who are matched with a Big would start using drugs. Minority boys and girls were the most strongly influenced; they were 70 percent less likely than similar minority youth to initiate drug use.
Information and research articles demonstrating the impact of BBBS can be accessed at:
- Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence - http://www.blueprintsprograms.com/evaluationAbstracts.php?id=fe5dbbcea5ce7e2988b8c69bcfdde8904aabc1f
Return on Investment/Cost-benefit Information

An Explanation of Return on Investment Calculations:
A cost-effective prevention program is doubly appealing from a societal standpoint, as such a program can successfully prevent or reduce delinquency and problem behaviors in youth and it results in a future reduction in the financial burden of interventions to taxpayers. For example, a program that diverts a youth from a criminal path will spare society the justice system expenses associated with processing offenses, such as police, court, and prison costs. In such a case, the necessary resources for the prevention program are worth the investment as they prevent other future expenses. In addition, cost-effective prevention programs have now been shown to also provide a return-on-investment or fiscal benefits above and beyond the program costs for taxpayers.

In 2004, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy conducted cost-benefit analyses for a variety of prevention programs by calculating the economic benefits derived from specific prevention programs and subtracting the costs incurred to implement the programs. The scientifically rigorous review and analysis provided credible evidence that well implemented prevention efforts can result in a significant return on investment.

To conduct cost-benefit analyses, monetary values are assigned to observed changes that are attributed to prevention programs in the following key outcomes:

- **Crime** (such as costs to process an arrest, prosecutor costs, victim costs, detention and supervision costs, prison operation expenses)
- **Education** (graduation rates, test scores, post-high school education, special education rates, grade repetition)
- **Employment rates and earning potential**
- **Substance use** (abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs)
- **Public assistance** (including welfare receipt or social services such as foster care)
- **Teen birth rates**
- **Child abuse and neglect**
- **Health and mental health service needs**

To view a chart of the economic benefits of prevention programs and for more information on return on investment research, please see the Return on Investment section of the general section of the implementation manual.


The potential economic benefits of a successful prevention or intervention program can be readily demonstrated to policymakers and the public in general. Programs that both reduce problems identified by local communities while also reducing costs to society are especially important as state and local
governments become more accountable for both costs and outcomes. Given typical budget constraints, policymakers seek to fund crime prevention programs that will at least “pay for themselves” while delivering necessary services to their community. It is important for prevention programs to communicate the return-on-investment figures derived by economic experts and their locally assessed impacts.

**BBBS Return on Investment Calculations:**

In the Washington State Institute for Public Policy report, *Benefits and Costs of Prevention and Early Intervention Programs for Youth*, it was determined that for every dollar spent on BBBS there was a return of at least $1.01 and a cost benefit of at least $48 for each participating youth. The table below summarizes the cost benefit derived for Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy:

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<th>COSTS</th>
<th>BENEFITS PER DOLLAR OF COST</th>
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In Pennsylvania, the Penn State Prevention Research Center released a 2008 report demonstrating a statewide return on investment for 28 sites implementing BBBS in Pennsylvania of over $378,000, which reflected a savings in future crime and substance use costs and an estimated average economic benefit of $13,500 per community. For every dollar invested, there is a return on investment of $1.01.


**Delivery, Administrator, and Support Staff**

**Staffing**

Staffing of affiliates depends on the size and structure of each organization. In addition, the titles of staff vary by affiliate. At a minimum, each affiliate must have:

- A diverse agency board of directors
- A full-time executive who has overall responsibilities for employing, supervising, evaluating, and terminating all paid and volunteer and managing the budget or operations of the affiliate.
- Staff responsible for the human resource development and management system.
- Case management staff that is responsible for oversight and support of the match relationships.

Affiliates may also employ staff that assumes other responsibilities such as recruitment, match enrollment, governmental relations, marketing, training, fundraising, grant-writing, and evaluation. Executive and case management staff must have at minimum baccalaureate degrees. Each affiliate’s required *Casework Manual* contains policies and procedures that define the process for the selection, training and supervision of non-degreed paraprofessionals and volunteers.
 Volunteers/Bigs

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) seeks to establish matches between youth (Littles) and volunteer adults (Bigs) that result in consistent interaction and a high level of relationship quality, marked by friendship, bonding and trust. Risks are diminished for participating youth through the supportive adult involvement of their Big; the caring adult volunteer focuses on the youth’s interests, strengths, and resources rather than the youth’s deficits or the deficits in their environment.

Adults wishing to become a volunteer mentor are carefully screened and must fulfill the following requirements before matching occurs:

- Complete an application
- Provide references
- Submit to a criminal history and child abuse record check
- Participate in an in-person interview
- Undergo an assessment of their home environment

Training

What training is required for BBBS staff?

- Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) offers a national leadership summit in June for management and a regional conference in the fall for direct service staff.

- Program management are expected to seek certification, including Chief Executive Officers, Executive Directors, Chief Directors of Operations, Human Resource Directors, and other lead agency staff members as identified by individual affiliates. BBBSA offers 2-Day sessions at locations across the country that explore topics such as Interviewing and Selection, Performance Management, Establishing a System of Youth Protection, On-boarding, and Foundations of Cultural Competency.

- General staff orientation and training is provided on-site by each individual affiliate. Training varies by affiliate, but it is guided by the standards and required procedures of BBBSA and it generally consists of job shadowing and on-line modules available through BBBSA’s online affiliate resource center, Agency Connection.

- The Big Brothers Big Sisters Learning Center (LC) is a web-based application accessed via Agency Connection that allows affiliates to browse, register for training, manage the education and training of staff, and track professional growth. Continued guidance and education is available online through Agency Connection with materials available on topics such as financial resources, strategic leadership, evaluation of board performance, etc...

- A weekly electronic newsletter, The Latest On, is also a learning tool for BBBS administrators and staff.

What training is required for BBBS volunteers (Bigs)?

Orientation and training is provided on-site by each individual affiliate. Training varies by affiliate, but it is guided by the standards and required procedures of BBBSA. Training generally addresses topics such as child safety, recognizing child abuse, youth developmental stages, communication, limit setting, and
relationship building skills. In addition, affiliates provide an orientation packet to mentors and continued training and guidance through case manager contacts.

The EPICenter recommends that formal group trainings be held to initially educate volunteers, not only of the affiliate’s program requirements, rules, and expectations, but to also share the demonstrated research outcomes that garnered BBBS recognition as a Blueprint program. It is important to aid volunteers in understanding that they are a part of a highly effective program that fosters positive youth development. If they understand their role in producing the long-term outcomes demonstrated in the research, they may be more likely to interact frequently with their youth and to select activities carefully so that they can maximize the impact of their relationship.

**Supplies**

Supplies are needed for aspects such as volunteer orientation, training, staffing, program marketing and recruitment, child abuse clearances, fundraising, and hosting social events and promoting activities for the matches.

Equipment needs include computer and Internet access for Agency Connection.

A data analysis system will need to be established or utilized. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) hosts the Agency Information Management (AIM) system. It is a centrally hosted data management system that provides information and reports needed to implement the BBBSA Service Delivery Model and to monitor and improve performance. BBBSA offers media and promotional materials under the Tools and Materials tab on Agency Connection.

**Implementation Supports**

**Agency Connection**

Through continual online access, Agency Connection and the Learning Community offers access to information about learning events, performance support, and knowledge and resource documents. Agency Connect also offers a variety of toolkits on topics such as marketing, human resources, administration and finance, government relations, information technology, community partnerships, workforce resources, fund development, and risk management.

**Collaborative Board Involvement**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) affiliates are required to have a governing board. The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) requires funded sites to report outcomes on a quarterly basis to a collaborative board. They define a collaborative board as a board of diverse community partners who work together to organize, plan, and implement prevention strategies. Examples of collaborative boards include but are not limited to: Integrated Children’s Service Plans (ICSP); Communities That Care (CTC) Delinquency Prevention Policy Boards; Balanced and Restorative Justice Teams; State Health Improvement Coalitions; State Incentive Grant Planning Boards; Criminal Justice Advisory Boards; and Weed and Seed Assistance for Impact Delegation (AID) Teams or other collaborative boards, including those established to focus on implementing healthy community objectives. It has been demonstrated that those prevention programs implemented through a collaborative board structure are more likely to be implemented with fidelity and more likely to be
sustained after funding. Below are ways that collaborative boards operating with the community or county of a BBBSA affiliate can support implementation:

- Local collaborative boards can play an important role in program development and sustainability. At start-up, present the research behind BBBS and share your local goals for the program.
- Provide board members with a fact sheet and the program’s logic model.
- Help them to understand ways in which they can contribute to the program’s local success, such as by referring youth, recruiting volunteers, contributing to marketing or fundraising activities, or donating incentives or tickets to activities that the matches can participate in.
- Identify potential program champions or community gatekeepers that can help to build relationships that may lead to program support or increased recruitment or referrals.
- Provide frequent verbal reports on the program’s impact and at least annually provide a written summary of program outcomes.
- Identify board members to become engaged in generating outcome reports and securing sustainability funds.

**Costs**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) National estimates that it costs an average of $1,000 per year to support a mentoring a match.

Estimated costs for program implementation should be inclusive of equipment, training, staffing, supplies, program marketing and recruitment, child abuse clearances, evaluation, and costs associated with hosting social events and promoting activities for the matches.

Sites funded by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) should plan in advance to fulfill the fidelity and reporting requirements of their grant and to budget for the following expenses accordingly:

- Pennsylvania funded sites are expected to host the developer for a quality assurance or fidelity certification review in the first quarter of the second year of funding. Grantees are required to secure a letter of commitment from BBBSA for this review prior to grant submission. Costs are estimated at $300, To confirm current costs, contact Liz Chipman at (603) 753-2498

- Pennsylvania funded sites are also expected to produce an outcomes report. The template for the required outcomes report can be accessed [here](#).

**Timeline for Implementation**

Organizations are encouraged to seek guidance from Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) as they pursue affiliation and plan for services. Review documents and resources on Agency Connection related the Community-based Service Delivery Model.

The BBBSA Agency Planning Guide can be obtained by contacting Big Brother Big Sisters National [office](#).
Benchmarks for Start-up and Implementation

Below are general steps when starting implementation. Please see section two of the EPISCenter’s Evidence-Based Prevention Program Implementation Manual.

1. Contact Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) for affiliation compliance guidance.
2. Form an agency board.
3. Hire staff.
4. Train staff.
5. Establish operating policies and procedures in compliance with national’s standards of practice.
6. Determine the procurement and management of a funding base.
7. Purchase and organize the program supplies.
8. Develop an evaluation and fidelity assessment plan. Establish AIM or a data collection system.
9. Plan a volunteer and youth recruitment strategy and begin creating and disseminating marketing materials.
10. Establish screening, matching, training, and monitoring systems.
11. Once the program participants begin to be served, administer survey tools and conduct fidelity assessments.
12. Analyze data and report outcomes to local stakeholders and funders.

Recruitment/Referrals

Recruiting youth and volunteers can be time intensive and ample staff time should be allotted to developing and enacting an effective referral and recruitment strategy. Also, sites should consider dedicating sufficient funding for program marketing.

Appeals within each community are unique, but some examples of recruitment strategies include presentations to community agencies, radio announcements, participation in school or sporting events, banners, tent cards for restaurants, door knob hangers distributed in targeted neighborhoods, fliers, newspaper ads or articles, TV announcements, online announcements, Facebook postings, email announcements, school newsletter articles, or resources that existing volunteers and board members can use to encourage their contacts to become volunteers, such as a speaking points card or a business card that reads “You Would Make A Great Mentor!.”

A variety of recruitment resources are available through Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA). Media and marketing materials can be accessed under the Operations tab on Agency Connection.

Description of Outcome Assessment Process

Information and Outcome Assessment Tools

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) offers the following information and outcome assessment tools. More information on each can be accessed on Agency Connection.

• Annual Self-Assessment
• Monthly Performance Data Entry
Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) programs funded by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) are expected, at a minimum, to:

- Administer either the Program Outcome Evaluation (POE) or the Youth Outcome Survey (YOS) to all funded participants annually;
- Administer the Strength of Relationship (SoR) to all matched youth and volunteers annually;
- Track survey completion rates; and
- Track monthly match time and number meetings; and
- Analyze and report data quarterly; and
- Produce a summary outcome report.

To adequately assess program impact, it is important to attempt to code and administer the survey tools to each program participant. Track survey completion so that follow-up efforts can be conducted as needed and to determine the sample size. The more surveys completed or the larger the sample, the more reflective of the participant group as a whole the outcomes will be. Coding or matching pre and post surveys will also allow for changes to be assessed per youth.

**Youth Outcome Survey (YOS)**

In August of 2009, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) introduced the Youth Outcome Survey (YOS), a 33 question survey to be administered to youth ages 9 and up as a pre test and as a post test at each annual match anniversary. The survey assesses academics, relationships, and attitudes towards risky behaviors. Sites trained in the YOS should administer the survey as directed by BBBSA. The YOS is only administered to the youth, which is a change from POE administration to the guardian and volunteer. The YOS also reflects a shift from assessing changes in behaviors to assessment of attitudes and perceptions of peers. Attitudes have been linked to outcomes. For example, attitude toward school has been linked to academic performance and dropping out of school. As a youth’s attitude toward school improves, their chance of dropping out of school decreases.

**Strength of Relationship (SoR)**

Sites are expected to administer the Strength of Relationship (SoR) survey. The SoR process is based on two surveys, the Child SoR and the Volunteer SoR. Combined, the surveys provide indicators of the quality of the relationship between a youth and volunteer and are intended to be used as a tool to promote longer, stronger matches. The SoR captures data on nine relationship qualities. On the youth SoR, coping, disappointment, safety, importance, and closeness is assessed. On the volunteer survey, connectedness, frustration, confidence, and closeness are assessed. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America
BBBSA recommends administering the SoR 3 months from the match date and annually on the match’s anniversary date.

**PCCD Reporting**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) affiliates funded by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) are required to report on process and outcome measures quarterly and should work with the EPISCenter to ensure that the appropriate data collection systems are in place. Sites will report on required performance measures online by submitting a quarterly performance measure tracking tool via PCCD’s Egrants system. However, if more extensive analysis is desired locally, sites may wish to consider identifying an evaluator.

**BBBSA Goals**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) has set specific goals as part of their strategic direction and those goals are driving changes in survey and analysis tools. Some of their recent network goals for 2015 include:

- We continue to be a culture of learning and continuous improvement. With our robust, collaborative process for enhancing our model, systems and practices we are driven by evaluation studies, outcomes data and data analysis.
- Increase the number of children served to 262,000 with 71 percent, 12 month retention rate for community-based matches and 50 percent, 12 month retention rate for school-based matches network wide by 2015.
- Increase our alignment with current demographic trends and adequately respond to the critical needs of the children we serve by having agency and national office governing boards and staff that reflect the communities we serve.
- Increase our network’s community engagement capacity allowing us to effectively align community partnerships and increase the number of volunteers and donors in communities of color.
- Cultural competency awareness and training will be a standard part of our staff (national and agency) and volunteer orientation that allows us to better serve children and families of color.
- Relevancy, innovation, flexibility, and resiliency become organizational values and characteristics that drive our business so that we are more attuned to our diverse external environments.
- Participants—including parents, children, volunteers and supporters—are valued as potential lifelong partners that are connected to our cause. This pipeline of qualified prospective donors creates a base of two million+ supporters, with more than 50 percent contributing annually to the enterprise.
- Achieve individual and corporate funding levels representing 40 percent of national revenue.
- Our brand tracking reflects major increases in the perception of Big Brothers Big Sisters as a place to donate and as an effective, trusted youth development program.
- Achieve $300 million revenue network wide by 2015.
- Big Brothers Big Sisters is recognized as an integral part of the community solution for educational success and juvenile justice prevention.
• Develop and establish the right mechanisms for continuous feedback and information channels to react faster with better data.

• Hire and retain top-notch, focused staff in the area of education, juvenile justice and government relations.

• Connect with partners with common goals and shared accountability for outcomes.

**Communicating Outcomes**

To foster sustainability, outcomes data should be shared not only with the board and staff, but also with the volunteers and program participants and a variety of community partners, such as government officials, foundations, school partners, business and corporate leaders, faith-based organizations, potential recruitment and referral sources, civic organizations, etc... Below are a few tips for preparing community reports:

• Be concise and keep the report to one page front and back.

• Include information about Blueprints recognition and the evidence of effectiveness. It lends credibility to your initiative.

• Highlight your YOS outcomes that show the greatest positive change or the largest impact.

• Highlight length of relationship and retention data. With the data, briefly explain the theory of change and that longer and stronger relationships lead to more positive outcomes for youth.

• Communicate areas in which your affiliate exceeds national averages.

• Highlight recognitions and awards.

• Include quotes or testimonials from program participants.

• Highlight BBBS impacts in areas of particular community need. Relate your outcomes to prioritized risk and protective factors and data from the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS).

• Make your report appealing. Use color, varied fonts, pictures, graphs, and tables.

• Explain the data you present. Label graphs or table. Include percentages.

• Highlight community impacts or benefits, such as trainings provided, grant monies secured, and new relationships forged.

• List program needs, such as needed supplies and fundraising activities.

• Include an appeal to potential referral sources and volunteers.

• Provide contact information

**Fidelity Recommendations**

**Operational Standards**

Sites funded by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) are expected to be Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) affiliates in good standing and to follow national’s standards of practice for one-to one service and operational policies. Each year, affiliates must submit and have approved the online Affiliate Self-Assessment Indicators of Compliance. All standards for program
management - service delivery, inquiry, intake, matching, match supervision, match closure, case records, and confidentiality must be adhered to.

**Match Supervision**

Case managers are expected to select, match, monitor, and close match relationships. Case managers should frequently communicate with each youth, volunteer, and guardian as instructed by Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA):

- Applications and interviews must be conducted all of parties and an appropriate orientation to services must be provided.
- Contact must be made within the first two weeks of making the match. The case manager calls the volunteer and the parent after the first and second week of the relationship to determine how the relationship is developing, and may continue on a weekly basis through the first six weeks, depending on the situation. However, it eventually develops into a monthly contact with the volunteer and the parent.
- Monthly contact is expected throughout the first year of the match.
- Quarterly contact should continue for the match duration after the first annual match anniversary.
- To the extent possible, closure interviews should be conducted of all parties.

Supervisory contacts inform the case manager how the relationship is developing. They also allow the case manager to give advice and guidance to the volunteer. For most affiliates, the ongoing case manager supervision with the volunteer, youth, and guardian takes place over the phone. Interaction is also had at social activities coordinated by the affiliate.

**Match Goals**

Match goals should be assessed at match initiation and an outcome-based plan should be created. The plan should be adjusted at least annually.

As part of developing match goals, case managers are encouraged to identify with the volunteer any areas of concern or skill building needs of the Little and then to brainstorm fun activities that can contribute to improvement. For example, activity ideas for a youth that is struggling with reading might include trips to the library or going to story hour at a local bookstore. Volunteers should be encouraged to think creatively about engaging ways that they can help their Little to grow. However, identified needs or hoped for outcomes should not dictate activities or force changes in the youth. It is very important that volunteers understand that their first and foremost role is to develop a good, trusting, and caring relationship with the youth. Ultimately, the relationship will allow the youth to seek acceptance and be open to advice and guidance from their mentor.

There is a balance between creating a genuine relationship and striving for targeted outcomes. BBBS research conducted in 2001 of 400 matches indicates that mentoring relationships usually fall into two general categories, termed prescriptive and developmental and that developmental matches are more enduring and effective than prescriptive matches.
In the research, mentors engaged in developmental relationships prioritized making the relationships enjoyable and fun for both parties. They developed reliable and supportive friendships with their matched youth by establishing and maintaining trust, listening sympathetically, avoiding judgment, and negotiating mutually satisfying activities. Mentors engaged in the prescriptive relationships believed their purpose was to “fix” deficiencies or guide their matched youth towards values, attitudes and behaviors they deemed positive. Adults in these relationships set the goals, the pace and the rules of the relationship.

The research outcomes favored the developmental relationships. Adults and youth in the prescriptive mentoring relationships found them frustrating and non-supportive. The matches met less frequently with 29 percent meeting only occasionally and only 32 percent of these relationships still existed at 18-months. In comparison, 91 percent of the developmental relationships were still meeting regularly and showing positive outcomes in the youth, such as reduced substance use, improved academic performance and confidence, and improved relationships with family and peers.

This research is indicative of the potential that a caring, bonded relationship can have upon a youth and the Social Development Strategy, developed in 1979 by David Hawkins and Richard Catalano of the Social Development Research Group in Washington, also highlights the importance of bonding in promoting positive youth development. The Social Development Strategy explains that for youth to develop healthy, positive behaviors they must be immersed in environments that nurture their individual characteristics (strengths and skills) and consistently communicate healthy beliefs and clear standards for behavior. The Social Development Strategy emphasizes two key protective factors:

- Bonding to pro-social families, schools, communities, and peers; and
- Adoption of clear standards or norms for behavior.

Research indicates that young people who have strong bonds to their families, schools, and communities are more invested in following the beliefs and standards held by these groups. These bonds are created by:

- Providing opportunities for young people to be involved in productive, meaningful, and prosocial roles;
- Providing skills for successful involvement; and
- Offering consistent recognition for and reinforcement of young people’s prosocial involvement.

These factors protect against problem behaviors and lead to healthy behaviors. The Social Development Research Group has shown that they reduce the development of conduct problems, school misbehavior, truancy and drug abuse.

So, while mentors should be aware of the needs and risks their youth faces and they should hope that their matched youth will show positive changes, such as improved school commitment or increased responsibility, as a result of their interaction, their primary focus should be on developing a caring and nurturing relationship and they should avoid imposing transformative goals on their mentored youth. By focusing on bonding, modeling healthy beliefs and standards, and providing opportunities for meaningful involvement, the basic human needs for love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization are realized and lead to long-term, positive behavioral outcomes.
Characteristics of Prescriptive Mentoring Relationships to Be Avoided:

- Mentors believe their primary purpose is to guide their mentees toward the values, attitudes, and behaviors they believe to be positive.
- Mentors set the goals, the pace, and the rules of the relationship.
- Mentors are problem-oriented and they focus on trying to “fix” deficiencies in the youth’s attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.

Characteristics of Developmental Mentoring Relationships to be Practiced:

- Mentors see themselves primarily as a friend, not as a teacher or preacher. They strive to make their relationships fun and enjoyable.
- Mentors believe they are there to help meet the developmental needs of the mentored youth by providing supports and opportunities the youth lacks.
- Mentors focus their involvement and expectations on developing a reliable, trusting relationship marked by listening and empathy. They avoid judgment and offer advice and guidance only as the relationship grows stronger and it is sought out by the mentored youth.
- Mentors involve the mentees in selecting mutually satisfying activities, empowering them with a voice and choice in the decision-making.

For more information, see the following research:

More information on the Social Development Strategy can be read in section five of the EPISCenter Implementation Manual.

**Frequency of Match Interaction**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) recommends a minimum of 4 hours of match interaction monthly. The frequency and duration that resulted in the research outcomes averaged 3 to 4 hours per week at least 3 times a month for over 1 year or 144 direct contact hours annually. The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) expects funded sites to strive towards encouraging a minimum of 9 to 12 hours of interaction per month. It is imperative that affiliates encourage matches to interact frequently, so as to increase the likelihood of the positive outcomes seen in the research. Agencies must be prepared to educate volunteers of the importance of consistent contact, and to invest in providing matches with frequent interaction opportunities and suggestions for independent activities. They also should establish a system for tracking match interaction, so that additional case manager support and guidance can be provided when low levels of volunteer interaction are identified.

**Implementation Quality Assurance Reviews**

Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) funded affiliates are required to participate in an implementation quality assurance review in the first quarter of the second year of funding. The purpose of this assessment is to ensure that implementation is adhering to the program model and that there is a commitment to high quality. PCCD is seeking assurance that sites are working towards the outcomes proposed in their grant application. The review verifies that programs are adhering to national practice standard and making progress towards outlined grant objectives. The following are a
focus of the review process as they are indicators of a program’s commitment to producing the outcomes reflected in the research that has made BBBS a Blueprints program:

- Frequency and duration of match contacts
- Length of relationships
- Outcome measurement
- Number of matches (PCCD is investing in evidence-based programs as they expect to influence community level changes in youth delinquency and problem behaviors. They are investing in BBBS affiliates through grants with the expectation that affiliates will identify and reach targeted service goals that can contribute to a population-based impact on social norms, community level reductions in the prevalence of youth problem behaviors, decreased community risk factors, and enhanced community protective factors.)
- Frequency of match contact with case manager
- Involvement of a collaborative board and community partners (to assess community reporting and sustainability efforts)

The PCCD quality assurance review process is an integral part of promoting model adherence, implementation quality, and demonstrating program outcomes and impact. The purpose of the review process is to fully assess a site’s functioning, their data collection process, and their ability to demonstrate and communicate impact.

PCCD’s review requirement should not be confused with national’s new review process. BBBS, in partnership with the Nationwide Leadership Council and the Child Safety Task Force, announced in June 2009, a process to bolster monitoring of individual agency quality systems. This Quality Assurance System Assessment (QASA) includes annual off-site and on-site reviews by national staff at randomly selected affiliates. Three core elements of Big Brothers Big Sisters quality assurance systems are assessed: program policies and procedures, program operations, and staff development.

**Additional Implementation Recommendations**

- Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) reports that more than 20 percent of matches close by the six-month point and they are striving to increase the strength and length of match relationships. Research indicates that youth need to be engaged with their mentors for a minimum of 6 months before the relationship begins to become viable, that early termination can cause possible harm, and that the benefits of mentoring emerge over a relative long period of time. Influences leading to match termination include, but are not limited to the following:
  - Youth eligibility or ability to participate in the program may be impacted by factors such as changes in family structure, illness, and residence.
  - Volunteers can become discouraged by a perceived lack of appreciation.
  - Volunteers may feel that the personal investment involved in dealing with a troubled youth is too demanding and detracts from social or family obligations.
  - Youth may perceive their mentor or relationship as unsupportive, disappointing, or overly demanding.
  - If not appropriately matched, the relationship may weaken due to a lack of chemistry or shared interests.
• Social distance can exist between middle-class volunteers and lower income youth and racial and cultural differences may also strain relationships.

• Annually, BBBS affiliates must submit the Annual Agency Self-Assessment online to verify that policies and procedures for both operations and programs have been reviewed, the program manual is in compliance with national’s standards, and a program file review process is occurring. In addition, an audit must be completed annually within nine months of the fiscal year end. All agencies must also carry the following insurance: general liability, sexual molestation liability insurance (professional liability insurance), Directors’ & Officers’, and non-owned auto insurance coverage.

• BBBSA requires that affiliates notify their Agency Development representative within 10 days of a vacancy in the Chief Executive Officer, Executive Director, or Program Director position. An approved plan must be developed to fill the position within three months of a vacancy.

**Addressing Common Barriers to Implementation**

• For most sites, one of the greatest challenges is recruiting youth and volunteers to participate. It can be especially difficult to attract male and African American volunteers. It can also be challenging to attract volunteers who are interested in mentoring older youth, ages 13 and above. Careful consideration should be given to planning for recruitment and a site’s budget should reflect ample funding for staff time and marketing expenses. Key relationships with potential referral sources should be forged, such as with school district administrators and human service organizations. Creative marketing approaches need to be developed specific to each community and it is advantageous to engage staff or community members with marketing and public relations expertise.

• Conducting background checks of volunteers and securing child abuse clearances can be a lengthy process. The Department of Public Welfare now allows BBBS affiliates to request that clearances be sent directly to them. However, this is a new process and it has posed challenges for previous grantees. It is important to understand the process and establish internal systems for requesting clearances. The ChildLine Verification Unit can be contacted by phone at: (717) 783-6211.

• Sites have reported that, for home visitations, staff members need to possess skills that have been gained from and experience and backgrounds in human service, counseling, and education fields.

• Female caregivers often see themselves as the dominant influence on their daughters and their relationships tend to be protective and intimate. It can be challenging assisting a mother to recognize that signing her daughter up for a mentor is not a negative reflection on her parenting. Sensitivity must be used in helping mothers to see that they will not be replaced and that their emotional relationship with their daughter will not be jeopardized. The enrollment decision should be positioned as a sign of strength for female caregivers and an expression of the caregiver’s vested interest in the benefits for their child.

• Data collection and survey administration can pose challenges due to low literacy populations, the age of participants, and variations in available data analysis systems. It is important to understand Big Brothers Big Sisters of America’s (BBBSA) recommendations for survey administration. It is also necessary to develop systems to track survey completion and analyze survey outcomes as required by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) requires grantees to report on performance measures that are
related to the outcomes demonstrated through research and to track contributing factors, such as
the hours of interaction and number of activities that matches engage in per month. Grantees are
encouraged to review the performance measures at grant initiation and to ensure that systems are
in place to collect the required data. The EPISCENTER has developed tools to summarize survey data,
but identifying an evaluator to aid in reporting and communicating outcomes may prove helpful.

Citations
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