



Volunteer Mentoring FAQs

What is your agency's mission?

Our mission is to provide children facing adversity with strong and enduring, professionally supported one-to-one relationships that change their lives for the better, forever.

Why is mentoring important?

Mentoring is the act of providing guidance and friendship to someone who could use a role model for life's choices and decisions. By mentoring, people can help others reach goals and improve self-esteem. When mentoring children, volunteers offer to help build a strong foundation for youth as they grow.

How does mentoring work?

It's simple. Someone volunteers to develop a relationship with a young person, offering support and guidance. By spending time together, learning new things and enjoying friendship, the mentor helps the young person make better life choices.

Why choose this program over others?

Big Brothers Big Sisters pioneered youth mentoring in 1904. We're the industry leader in mentoring services to children. An independent national study surveyed our programs and methods spanning a five-year period. This research company found that children involved in Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring programs were more likely to graduate and stay out of trouble when compared to their peers without mentors. They also found that children improved their school grades and relationships with others. Our program has proven results.

Additionally, our programs are characterized by three elements not featured in many mentoring programs:

Professional supervision: Intake of client and adult, screening and training of the adult, creating matches, and supervision during the relationship is conducted by professional Match Support Specialists who combine assessment, management, coaching and guidance to all parties.

Longevity: This relationship is unique and different for each match, thus it takes time to develop. Our volunteers commit to 2-4 meetings per month for a minimum of one year.

Developmental relationships: Big Brothers Big Sisters of New Hampshire creates friendships between adults and youth. These naturally developing friendships are highly valuable to the child, as the adult is willing to share their time and include the child in day-to-day activities.

Does Big Brothers Big Sisters have any results to prove success?

Big Brothers Big Sisters of New Hampshire measures the impact of services for at-risk youth by administering a nationally-accepted pre/post test known as the Youth Outcomes Survey. This survey shows us that BBBSNH's mentoring programs result in proven, positive short-term and long-term outcomes for youth in three main areas: educational success, avoidance of risky behaviors, and increased social and emotional well-being.

What is Big Brothers Big Sisters of America?

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America is the umbrella organization that supports local Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies. They are headquartered in Tampa, Florida and offer standards for agencies to provide consistent, quality services.

Where are you located in New Hampshire?

On January 1, 2015 the formerly independent Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies of Greater Seacoast, Greater Nashua & Salem, Greater Manchester and Western New Hampshire joined together under the umbrella organization Big Brothers Big Sisters of New Hampshire. We're excited to now be working together to serve children throughout the state! There are Big Brothers Big Sisters offices in Portsmouth, Nashua and Keene, as well as satellite offices in other communities throughout the state.

What is your greatest need?

We need volunteers. Particularly, male volunteers. And to keep those mentoring relationships going, we need funds to do it. The bottom line – more mentors, more dollars. With additional funds, we can offer more services to children in need.

Why do you need more Big Brothers?

Predominantly, females volunteer more often and at a greater rate than their counterparts. Most of the children waiting for a mentor are boys (about 70 percent) and they could use a positive adult male to look up to. Many of these boys are from female-headed households and have no close male role models. That's why we focus our recruitment toward males.

How many kids do you serve?

We serve 1,100 children and volunteers annually in our mentoring programs. As a full-service agency, we reach thousands of area children through our efforts annually.

How will I be matched with my Little?

The application and interview process helps us to get to know your preferences and learn about the situation best suited for you. You also get to know us and learn what to expect. In making your match, we take into account your personality, likes, dislikes, age preferences, background and location. The final decision about a match is always yours.

How do Littles come into the program?

Children and parents may hear about Big Brothers Big Sisters from a teacher, counselor, church, other community organization, friend who has a Big, commercials – anywhere.

Who are the Littles in the program?

Our Littles come from various types of home environments and family structures, different socio-economic levels, ethnic backgrounds, and neighborhoods and schools across our entire community. Their backgrounds and personalities are unique, they all have a need for friendship with a caring adult.

Do the mentoring programs cost anything?

No. You don't have to spend money. This program is about developing a relationship with a Little Brother or Little Sister. We encourage no-cost or low-cost activities to do together like going to the beach, hiking, etc. We don't have an annual membership fee and we even provide volunteers with a list of fun, free activities to do.

Can I volunteer if I travel for work?

All of our programs ask for a one-year commitment. We've found time consistency to be one of the most important elements in being an effective mentor. Many of our Big Brothers and Big Sisters fit their relationships with their flexible lifestyles. And some of our programs are perfect for that busy corporate traveler. It's making the right program choice for your lifestyle that counts.

Can I volunteer if I'm in college?

Absolutely. Being a Big Brother or Big Sister can greatly add to your collegiate experience. You have flexible time and spending that time with a Little Brother or Little Sister would work well with a class schedule. As a matter of fact, we'd love to meet some of your college friends and introduce them to the idea of mentoring. (By the way, some colleges offer credit for community service when you volunteer, so check with your campus career office or volunteer center).

When can I see my Little?

You and your Little, along with his or her parent or guardian, decide the best times for your match to meet. Keep a consistent schedule and see each other at least twice a month to establish a genuine relationship and comfort level. The length of outings will depend on the comfort levels of Big, Little, and parent/guardian.

What is the Match Support team?

The Match Support team is a group of specialists who can help you develop your friendship, address any questions, concerns, or problems, and give you guidance throughout your match. The team can help you understand what's happening in your friendship and flag problems before they start. They can also be a helpful link to resources.

How much money should I spend?

We discourage you from spending a lot of money on your outings. The goal of the relationship is friendship. You should focus your time on getting to know each other. We encourage you to seek out free or low-cost activities, especially in the beginning. Big Brothers Big Sisters often offers group activities that are a great way to meet other Bigs and Littles! You may also receive notices for opportunities for free tickets for your match to attend a variety of cultural and sporting activities.

Still have questions?

Feel free to contact us at **1-884-NH4-BIGS** or **info@bbbsnh.org** to talk to a staff member and get more information about volunteering.