



Blueprints Model Programs FACT SHEET

FS-BPM02

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Big Brothers Big Sisters of America

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) has been providing adult support and friendship to youth for nearly a century. A report in 1991 demonstrates that through BBBSA's network of nearly 500 agencies across the country, more than 70,000 youth and adults were supervised in one-to-one relationships.

Program Targets:

BBBSA typically targets youth (aged 6 to 18) from single parent homes.

Program Content:

Service delivery is by volunteers who interact regularly with a youth in a one-to-one relationship. Agencies use a case management approach, following through on each case from initial inquiry through closure. The case manager screens applicants, makes and supervises the matches, and closes the matches when eligibility requirements are no longer met or either party decides they can no longer participate fully in the relationship.

BBBSA distinguishes itself from other mentoring programs via rigorous published standards and required procedures:

- *Orientation* is required for all volunteers.
- *Volunteer Screening* includes a written application, a background check, an extensive interview, and a home assessment; it is designed to screen out those who may inflict psychological or physical harm, lack the capacity to form a caring bond with the child, or are unlikely to honor their time commitments.
- *Youth Assessment* involves a written application, interviews with the child and the parent, and a home assessment; it is designed to help the caseworker learn about the child in order to make the best possible match, and also to secure parental permission.
- *Matches* are carefully considered and based upon the needs of the youth, abilities of volunteers, preferences of the parent, and the capacity of program staff.
- *Supervision* is accomplished via an initial contact with the parent, youth, and volunteer within two weeks of the match; monthly telephone contact with the volunteer, parent and/or youth during the first year; and quarterly contact with all parties during the duration of the match.

Program Outcomes:

An evaluation of the BBBSA program has been conducted to assess children who participated in BBBSA compared to their non-participating peers. After an eighteen month period, BBBSA youth:

- were 46% less likely than control youth to initiate drug use during the study period.
- were 27% less likely to initiate alcohol use than control youth.
- were almost one-third less likely than control youth to hit someone.
- were better than control youth in academic behavior, attitudes, and performance.
- were more likely to have higher quality relationships with their parents or guardians than control youth.
- were more likely to have higher quality relationships with their peers at the end of the study period than did control youth.

Program Costs:

The national average cost of making and supporting a match relationship is \$1,000 per year.

The information for this fact sheet was excerpted from:

McGill, D.E., Mihalic, S.F., & Grotpeter, J.K. (1998). *Big Brothers Big Sisters of America: Blueprints for Violence Prevention, Book Two*. Blueprints for Violence Prevention Series (D.S. Elliott, Series Editor). Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, Institute of Behavioral Science, University of Colorado.

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