



Big Brothers Big Sisters
of the Midlands

Information Booklet



Start Something.



Background of BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS

For more than 100 years, **Big Brothers Big Sisters** has operated under the belief that inherent in every child is the ability to succeed and thrive in life. As the nation's largest donor and volunteer supported mentoring network, Big Brothers Big Sisters makes meaningful, monitored matches between adult volunteers ("**Bigs**") and children ("**Littles**"), ages 7 through 18, in communities across the country. We develop positive relationships that have a direct and lasting effect on the lives of young people.

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

Vision: That all children achieve success in life.

Locally: Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands began in 1959 with a small group of men that became mentors to boys who needed a positive male figure in their lives. Today, we serve boys and girls across the 7-county Omaha metro area (Nebraska - Douglas, Sarpy, Cass, Saunders and Washington and in Iowa - Pottawattamie and Mills). Bigs, Littles and their families come from all walks of life. What our Littles have in common is the desire to have a Big, and a parent or other caring adult in their life who feels they need one. What Bigs have in common is a willingness to share in some fun with a young person.

We partner with parents/guardians, volunteers and others in the community and hold ourselves accountable for each child in our program achieving:

- Higher aspirations, greater confidence, and better relationships
- Avoidance of risky behaviors
- Education success

Programs

Community-Based Mentoring:

This program serves children ages 7-18 by matching them with a caring, positive adult role model. The child and mentor meet in the community 2-4 times a month and spend time doing different activities they both enjoy. A commitment of 12 months is required to build a positive mentoring relationship. Mentors can be a Big Brother, Big Sister or a Big Couple (a married couple).

The following programs are a part of the community based mentoring program and serve a specific population of children.

Foster Care:

Youth in foster care placements have interpersonal developmental challenges and are vulnerable as they transition into adulthood. These youth can benefit from a friend and role model who helps guide them as they work towards making healthy choices.

Juvenile Justice:

Children in this program have had some contact with the juvenile justice system (delinquency court appearance, parole intake or actual arrest) and can benefit from a friend and role model who helps guide them as they work towards making better choices.

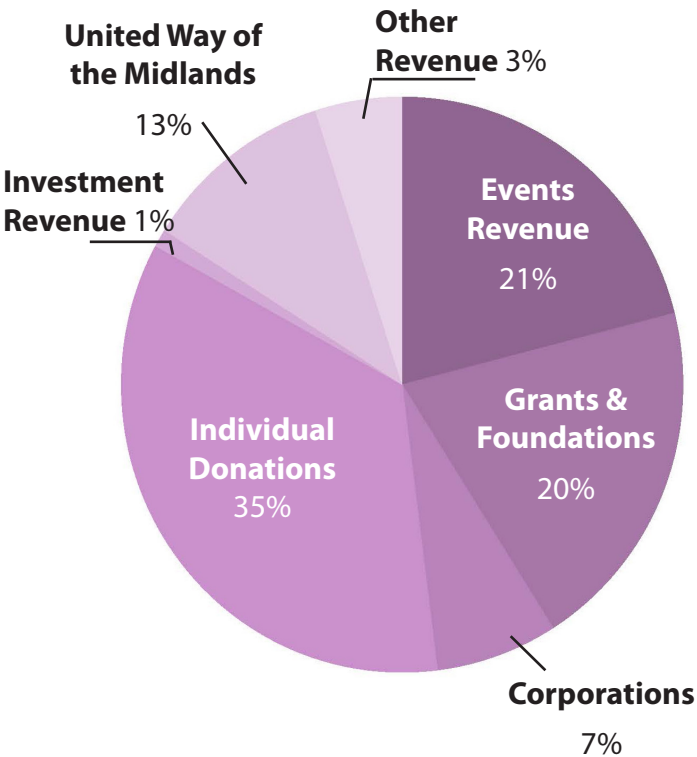
Latino Mentoring:

Children in this program have Latino heritage and may have Spanish speaking parents. These matches are supported by bilingual Big Brothers Big Sisters' staff members.

Mentoring Children of Prisoners:

The children in this program have one or both parents currently incarcerated. Bigs in this program can help just by being their friend and giving stability to that child.

2015 Sources of Funding



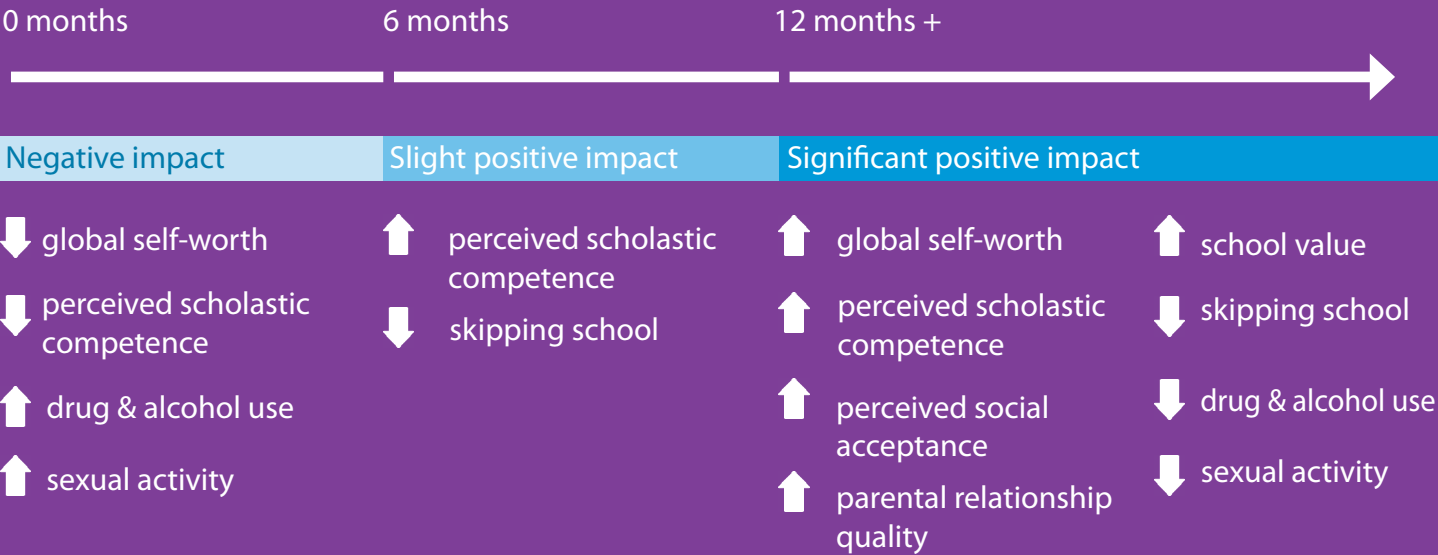
Who Are Our Littles & How do They Come to Us?

Gender		Have at least one parent who is incarcerated	
Female	53%		13%
Male	47%		
Race/Ethnicity		Live in Poverty (based on eligibility for free or reduced lunches)	
African American	49%		84%
Caucasian	35%		
Hispanic	12%	Have been referred by	
Other	2%	Family/Friend	41%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1%	School	12%
Asian	1%	Therapist/Counselor	12%
Home Structure		Self	9%
Single parent home	81%	Other	9%
Two parent home	11%	Media/Special Event	9%
Other	8%	Service Organization	6%

*All children and their parent/s choose to be involved in the program

Why focus on 12 month match retention?

In mentoring relationships, attaining a 12-month match is a key quality metric. Research tells us the best outcomes for children come from long and strong mentoring relationships. Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands has focused on increasing the percentage of Big-Little matches which last for a year or more and has increased that number to 74%, higher than the national average.





Be a part of something BIG.

The feeling of being a “Big” is universal. Think back on your own childhood. Who was that special person-other than a parent-who brought happiness into your life? Bigs are “that person” for a child, creating wonderful memories for themselves, and for their Littles.

Eligibility Requirements to be a Big

- Must be 19 years or older
- Must be a high school graduate or hold a GED
- Must have lived in the area for at least 1 year and be able to make a minimum 12 month commitment, meeting 2-4 times per month for a minimum of 4 hours per month
- Must have a valid driver’s license and current automobile insurance
- Never have been charged or convicted of a sex crime, child abuse, child neglect or molestation
- Meet specific criminal history guidelines
- No conviction of one or more of the following violations in the last 3 years: Careless and/or Reckless Driving, DUI/DWI, Driving Suspension/Revocation

What Would My Role Be When I Become a Big?

- Emphasize **friendship** over changing the behavior of the child
- Be consistent and **dependable**
- Be **patient**
- Focus on **FUN**
- Acknowledge that **positive** impact on the child comes after the relationship is built
- Have **realistic** expectations
- Put the child’s safety and **well being** first
- Set a **good example** for your Little
- Share your **strengths** and recognize your imperfections...**Bigs are not meant to be perfect**

What Am I Expected To Do?

- **Commit to a minimum of 12 months** with the availability to meet 2 – 4 times per month for a minimum of 4 hours per month
- **Take the initiative** scheduling outings and keeping contact with your Little and their parent/guardian
- **Focus on the friendship you and your Little have.** The time with your Little is one-to-one. No friends or family members (unless you are a Big Couple) are to go on outings with you and your Little
- **50/50 policy** - You and your Little are to share costs of all activities
- **Great communication** between you, the parent and your Match Support Specialist is very important to have a successful match

**Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands reserves the right to accept/deny any volunteer or to close a match at any time.*

Networking & FUN for Our Bigs!

Big Social Hours

To show our appreciation for what our mentors and Service League members do and to allow them to meet other volunteers, we host Big Social Hours at local bars/restaurants. This is also an opportunity for our current mentors/Service League members to bring someone they know who is interested in learning more about Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands.

Bowl for Kids' Sake

Signature fundraising event for the organization. Teams of five to six individuals set a fundraising goal for their team and ask friends, relatives, coworkers, etc. for donations to Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands. Those individuals raise funds online and/or bring their donations to Bowl for Kids' Sake and as a "Thank You" participants are provided with ninety minutes of FREE bowling, food, and beverages. Prizes are also given out to individuals who raise certain amounts of money.

Corporate Lunch & Learns

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands often hosts lunch and learns at local businesses to spread the word about opportunities to get involved with our agency. This is a great way to get your company involved and for them to recognize the big difference you are making in our community.

Friends of Mentoring Service League

The Friends of Mentoring Service League was formed to help raise awareness throughout the community about the mission and goals of Big Brothers Big Sisters. Along with a yearly membership drive, Service League members also help with: Big/Little match activities and assisting staff members in fundraising events and efforts that benefit Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands.

Match Makers

Match Makers is Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands monthly giving program.

Why Become a Match Maker?

Maybe you are not able or ready to become a Big, but you still want to make a difference. By becoming a Match Maker your automatic recurring monthly gift allow Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands to continue matching children in need with caring adult mentors. Our Match Maker program is an affordable and consistent way for you to make a big difference.

How do I become a Match Maker?

It's easy. You can register online at www.bbbsmidlandsmatchmakers.org or contact Sheryl Lindau at 402.905.3342. Simply find the amount that works best for you and submit your details into our secure website.

Scan for more
Match Maker info!



Mentoring Moments

A free 60 minute tour and information session at the Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands' office. Board members and staff regularly host sessions to educate the community about our organization and the wonderful work Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands does.

Monthly Agency Activities

Organized and scheduled on a monthly basis. All Bigs and Littles are invited to participate in the fun and low or no cost events that we hold. The activities range from Omaha Storm Chasers games to things like laser tag, hay rack rides, picnics, and much more.



How Will Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands Help Me After I Am Matched?

Once you are matched with your Little, a Match Support Specialist from the agency will be in regular contact with you to provide assistance and give feedback. Anytime you are unsure about what to do or how to handle a situation, your Match Support Specialist will be there to help.

Monthly contacts with your Match Support Specialist via telephone include:

- Problem solving
- Brainstorming activity ideas
- Ensuring all parties are safe & happy with the match
- Providing feedback from the parent and child
- Administering surveys

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands also loves to host monthly activities that you and your Little can attend for little to no cost.

Examples: Laser tag, Storm Chasers games, putt-putt golfing, games in the park, winter carnival, hayrack ride, participating in local parades, Bounce U and many more.

FOR BIGS:

1. Attend an information session.
2. Complete application.
3. Provide names, phone numbers and email addresses of five references:
A spouse/domestic partner or close family member, a current or past employer who has known you for at least one year, a professional reference who has known you for at least one year, a co-worker or friend who has known you for at least one year, and a personal reference that has known you for at least two years.
4. Complete and sign background check forms.
5. Provide \$20 screening fee (\$30 if Big Couple).
6. Provide copy of driver's license and current car insurance.
7. Complete a two hour mandatory training session. Training sessions are available several times a month. Following your training session, schedule an in-home interview.
8. An Enrollment & Match Coordinator will come to your home and spend approximately an hour and a half with you, completing an interview and home visit to make sure your residence is a safe place for a child.
9. Once these steps are completed you will be matched with a child based on your preferences and those of the parent and child.
10. Once everyone agrees to the match, a Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands' staff member will meet you at the Little's home to go over paperwork and answer any questions you, the parent or child may have. You'll then go on your first outing, spending 30-45 minutes just hanging out and getting to know one another.
11. Within two weeks of being introduced to your Little, your Match Support Specialist will call to see how things went and to see if you have your next outing planned. After that you'll be contacted monthly but if you ever have a question/concern, please do not hesitate to give them call.

FOR LITTLES:

1. The parent/guardian calls to inquire about the program and an interview is scheduled with an Enrollment & Match Coordinator.
2. The Enrollment & Match Coordinator goes to the child's home and completes an interview with the child and parent/guardian to assess the child's personality, interests and needs.
3. Any school or counseling reports are faxed to the appropriate party so the agency gets plenty of information on the child's behaviors and needs from outside parties. This also helps determine if a child is eligible for our program.
4. Once all paperwork is completed, we match the child with the best possible volunteer, based upon parent preferences, child and volunteer interests, personalities, etc.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is my email address used for?

Email addresses are used to send out information to Bigs about monthly agency activities, upcoming community events, fundraising opportunities and events.

What is a Big?

Bigs are regular people just like you. These people just have the desire to make a positive impact in a child's life. Role models come in all shapes and sizes, and you could be the perfect fit.

What is a Little?

A Little is a child between the ages of 7-18 who is most likely from a single-parent home. Littles come from all different family, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

What is a Big Couple?

A married couple that is interested in making a positive impact on a Little Brother's life.

How will I be matched with a child?

It begins with a short orientation followed by an interview process. We need to get to know you, your likes, dislikes, personality, background, where you live and work, etc. This helps us choose a match for you that is well-suited to your interests, skills and personality.

Who does the initial interview and how long will it take?

An Enrollment & Match Coordinator will come to your home to conduct an interview, which will take approximately 60-90 minutes to complete.

How long is the waiting period?

We do not operate on a first come first served basis. The waiting period varies for Big Brothers and Big Sisters. At our agency we typically have a list of 100 Little Brothers that are waiting to be matched with a Big Brother or Big Couple at any given time.

Who is responsible for scheduling activities?

Both parties are responsible for scheduling activities. The Big and the parent should arrange all match outings.

What kind of outings/activities can I do with my Little?

In your match packet (you will receive this when you meet your Little for the first time) there will be handouts that list several suggested activities and outings. The packet also includes a list of area businesses that provide discounts for you and your Little. In addition, you can do activities that you and your Little choose together.

Can I bring my spouse/friend/family member on outings?

In the beginning it is important for you and your Little to get to know each other. This can happen best on a one-to-one basis. Over time it is also valuable for your Little to get to know the people who are important to you. Keep in mind that if you're spending lots of time with others your Little may begin to feel jealous or neglected. Remember that the main focus is the friendship YOU have with YOUR LITTLE.



Big Brothers Big Sisters
of the Midlands

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THE **BIG** BOOK



Big Brothers Big Sisters
of the Midlands

Start Something



INTRODUCTION

What's being a Big all about?

You are a Big because you are **thoughtful, compassionate and fun**. You have a big heart and big hopes for the world around you.

You know better than anyone that mentoring isn't rocket science (even if you are a rocket scientist); it's just about being yourself and being there for a kid. You are **first-hand proof** that real connections between a Big and a Little make a **life-changing impact**.

You have **something to give – and you're taking the time to give it**, which is the biggest piece of all. Because you do what you do with a big smile on your face, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands thinks you're a pretty big deal.

What's the big idea with "The Big Book"?

There is no such thing as "too many Bigs," and there are **no better people to talk about what it's like to be a Big than Bigs like you**.

As a Big, you are one of this organization's greatest assets. More than that, you are a **big asset to this community**. Our city is full of young people who are eager to be Little Brothers or Sisters.

Big Brothers Big Sisters wants you to be proud of that and shout it from the rooftops. Well, maybe not literally "shout"...

The Big Book isn't intended to put words in your mouth or suggest you go door-to-door forcing every person you see to sign up to be a Big. It is simply designed to **help you confidently, comfortably, realistically deliver a message about your part in the big picture** to those who might be apt to listen and also make great Bigs.

BIG VOICES CARRY



Q.1

How do you know a great potential Big when you meet one?

It might kind of feel like looking in a mirror. Think about yourself, your friends, family, colleagues, and the other Bigs you know.

There's no cookie-cutter age, ethnicity, education level, lifestyle or background for a Big; but some things are pretty consistent, across the board:

- Friendly, personable and fun-loving
- Eager to give something back
- Supportive, nurturing and positive
- Actively interested in things – whatever those things may be
- Willing to share skills, experiences and conversation
- Social and proactive when it comes to relationship-building
- Dedicated and true to one's word
- Capable of seeing things from someone else's perspective
- Responsible and adult, while still a big kid at heart

Trust your gut. When you meet someone with a clear passion to live fully, work hard, have fun and give back, and seems like he or she would make a great mentor for a young person, you'll know it.



Q.2

How do I bring being a Big up in conversation? (No soapbox required.)

Nobody wants to feel pushy or preachy. You shouldn't have to be and Big Brothers Big Sisters doesn't want you to be. Still, your experience is powerful and first impressions are important.

Think back to the time before you became a Big. Do you remember that little voice in your head telling you to do something bigger than yourself? Remember those little worries you had at the time?: *Would I make a good mentor? How much of a commitment will it be? Will I be able to think of enough stuff to do... week after week? Can I dedicate enough time to this? What if I need some support in case of roadblocks? Will I be fun enough? Will a child like me?*

Everyone has similar qualms! And what helps people understand, feel better and get excited about the process is hearing about real experiences from real people.

Mention something you recently did with your Little when you're talking with family or friends over happy hour. Talk about activities with your colleagues around the water cooler, in passing chit-chat, in one-on-one conversations and on social media. See if your peers latch on and ask more questions. If not, that's okay, because you're simply sharing a little bit about your own life and letting the conversation flow. If they do ask more, keep it going.

Confidence, self-assurance and genuine storytelling go a long way.

Q.3

What should I say about being a Big and the organization?

Be yourself. Say what feels right. Explain the program, describe the process of becoming a Big, tell your unique story and nip pesky misconceptions about mentoring in the bud.

You know what Big Brothers Big Sisters does, but here are some **basic bullet-points about the organization to keep in mind:**

- Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands is a local affiliate of a nationwide mentoring organization that has been around for more than 100 years.
- Their goal is to help develop meaningful one-on-one matches between adult “Bigs” and “Littles,” ages 7 through 18.
- Most Littles are facing adversity (living in poverty, a single-parent home or other tough circumstances) and simply need someone to count on for a positive adult relationship. That can make all the difference.
- National research shows that mentoring helps youth succeed – building confidence, avoiding risky behaviors and succeeding in school.

Be ready for common misconceptions:

There are some things that **frequently trip people up** when they’re thinking about mentorship, but you can see them coming a mile away and know how you’ll respond:

- **Time:** Some people think they just “don’t have time” to be mentors. Two to four outings a month aren’t all that time consuming, and (as you know) most Bigs actually wind up doing more with their Littles because they get along so well. You can do things you do on a daily basis, like grocery shopping or walking the dog, that don’t take much out of your day. It really comes down to making time.
- **Parenthood:** As a Big, you aren’t a surrogate parent or a babysitter; you’re a friend that happens to be an adult role model and the organization works really hard to help you develop a relationship that’s completely comfortable.

- **Money:** Bigs aren’t asked to spend money on their Littles. There are lots of things you can do that don’t cost a dime, like homework, taking a walk or taking advantage of the freebies Big Brothers Big Sisters coordinates with other community organizations.

- **The “coolness” factor:** There isn’t a magic potion for being a fun mentor, and it’s not about being a source of crazy entertainment. Just be yourself! Big Brothers Big Sisters has a careful, thoughtful process of matching Bigs and Littles that share similar interests and have fitting personalities. What a Little needs is stability from someone he/she can trust. It’s pretty easy to be that kind of “cool.”

Remember to focus on your individual experience:

- I knew I wanted to become a Big when...
- My Little and I really “clicked” when...
- I remember meeting my Little for the first time; now...
- I was kind of anxious about a few things before I started, but...
- It’s not always BIG stuff that we do. The last time we got together, we...
- I didn’t expect it, but I feel like I have grown a lot because of this relationship. For example...
- There’s always somebody to support you if you need it. My Match Support Specialist helps...
- I can tell that Big Brothers Big Sisters is making a difference in the community from...
- I have a great time with the other Bigs, too, at events like...
- I really feel appreciated and valued as a Big because...
- I get the impression that you would make a great Big because...

Don’t think too hard; just be real and honest. Speak like you would to a spouse or a close friend when you’re talking about your day and, as long as you’re confident, your authentic passion for Big Brothers Big Sisters will radiate.

As a Big, you are the best possible ambassador for Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands because you make such a big difference in your Little's life and in our community. Thanks for everything you do and for being a big ambassador for the organization.

**Have just the span of an elevator ride to talk about being a Big?
Try something like this:**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands connects youth facing adversity with adult mentors who, through meaningful, positive relationships, change their lives for the better and truly help them succeed. Becoming a "Big" has helped me do my part for the community and given me an opportunity to share things I love doing with an awesome Little who enjoys them too. I can't think of a better way to "give back" than with this fun, supportive community of people. I think you would be a great fit.

And, if you have a captive audience, say more. You'll know what to do.

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Learn More About Us:



Start Something BIG.

Direct people with Big-potential to bbbsomaha.org, invite them to join you at an upcoming event or offer to introduce them to your contact at Big Brothers Big Sisters.

If you have any questions, never hesitate to reach out to your Match Support Specialist or anyone at Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands.

bbbsomaha.org | 402.504.4719

Notes

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Why focus on 12 month match retention?

In mentoring relationships, attaining a 12-month match is a key quality metric. Research tells us the best outcomes for children come from long and strong mentoring relationships. Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands has focused on increasing the percentage of Big-Little matches which last for a year or more and has increased that number to 74%, higher than the national average.

0 months

6 months

12 months +

Negative impact

Slight positive impact

Significant positive impact

↓ global self-worth

↓ perceived scholastic competence

↑ drug & alcohol use

↑ sexual activity

↑ perceived scholastic competence

↓ skipping school

↑ global self-worth

↑ perceived scholastic competence

↑ perceived social acceptance

↑ parental relationship quality

↑ school value

↓ skipping school

↓ drug & alcohol use

↓ sexual activity