

SFY 2022 Big Brothers Big Sisters Direct Appropriation

Final Report

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Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development  
Employment and Training Programs Division

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## Introduction

The Minnesota State Legislature appropriated $237,500 ($250,000 minus $12,500 for DEED administration) in [2021 Minnesota 1st Special Session Laws, Chapter 10, Senate File 9, Article 1, Section 2, Subdivision 3 (z)](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2021/1/Session+Law/Chapter/10/) for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2022 to Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities to provide work readiness, employment exploration, and skills development for youth ages 12 to 21 in the Twin Cities, central Minnesota and southern Minnesota.

## Summary of Goals and Objectives Presented in the Work Plan

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS), the nation’s largest mentoring program, matches youth facing adversity with mentors when they are between the ages of 8 and 12 and continues to support them until young adulthood. In addition to receiving tremendous benefits from forming positive relationships with their mentors, mentees are also able to participate in numerous enrichment activities hosted by BBBS to help youth (both mentees and youth mentors) plan for their education and career futures.

During SFY 2022, the BBBS agencies in the Twin Cities, Central Minnesota and Southern Minnesota had a goal to serve at least 1,125 youth through a variety of activities to prepare them for the future workforce:

* Mentoring that leverages caring adult volunteers to provide long-term, one-on-one mentoring for teens with and emphasis on high school and post-high school success;
* Career pathway exploration and readiness through one-on-one support, group activities in partnership with local businesses, and referrals;
* Post-high school college and training access and success through college/training tours, test prep, application support, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), access to scholarships, and on-going support during college and training/certificate programs; and
* Unique mentoring programs focused on future planning and career pathway success for high school students that are embedded in schools in partnership with BBBS, such as AVID in Southern Minnesota, the Graduation Coaches Program in partnership with Minneapolis High Schools, and Bigs on Campus through a partnership with St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud Community and Technical College, and the College of St. Benedict and St. John’s University.

## Program Activities

Described below are highlights of activities delivered during the period July 16, 2021 through June 30, 2022.

* **Bigs on Campus** – initiative pairing junior and senior high students with an adult mentor who is a St. Cloud State University alumnus, staff member, or community professional. Matches spend time exploring campus, touring academic departments, participating in college activities and events, and talking about future goals, career options, and college life. Most activities during the past year were moved online. (Central Minnesota)
* **Scholarship Opportunities** – Federated Challenge scholarship competition sponsored by Federated Insurance and administered by BBBS open to Littles/Alumni who have been matched for 18 months or longer and are planning to attend a two-year or less post-secondary Minnesota institution. This year 38 applicants received Federated scholarships. In addition, the Stand Tall Scholarship was available for BBBS youth and volunteers for four-year schools in or out-of-state. This was a pilot program this year made possible through the generosity of a donor.
* **Post-Secondary Success Coordinator** – meeting with BBBS alumni who are college students to assist with financial aid applications and other college-related topics. (Twin Cities)
* **AVID Virtual Academy** – virtual mentorship program pairing students in AVID college and career class with mentors to do activities focusing on topics such as relationship building, organization, time management, education and career paths, soft skills, email etiquette, growth mindset, etc. Information about the program is at: <http://www.bbbsofsouthernmn.org/virtualacademy/avid> (Southern Minnesota)
* **Junior Achievement Finance Park** – 10 matches participated in the Finance Park virtual program, where they explored careers, developed personal money management skills and prepared for financial decisions and challenges in their adult lives. (Southern Minnesota)
* **One on one match support** – BBBS staff at all three Minnesota agencies continue to connect with all the youth and volunteers on a quarterly basis to share college, career and community resources. They provide coaching and support to help matches build strong relationships that will hopefully last well beyond a youth’s high school graduation.

## Effect of COVID-19 on Big Brothers Big Sisters Activities

#### Central Minnesota

The number of participants was down as a result of schools not being open for in person meetings and activities. The Bigs on Campus program took longer than usual to get up & running, with COVID playing in role in some of the scheduling complications

#### Southern Minnesota

Obstacles with technology and internet reliability impacted some students meeting virtually at school with their mentors. When students in a class were all meeting with their mentors at the same time virtually, the internet at some schools lacked the bandwidth to support so many video calls at one time. BBBS staff came up with creative solutions such as spreading students out throughout different areas of school and working with the IT department to improve bandwidth.

Many youth struggled with technology access, housing instability, food insecurity, and transportation issues. BBBS staff provided individual support to matches to overcome these challenges and provide resources. Summer can be especially hard for food insecurity since students are not in school to receive school meals. BBBS staff provides information to matches about summer meal programs to help mitigate this difficulty for Littles.

#### Twin Cities

Programming was impacted by COVID19 in multiple ways. Matched Littles were struggling with everyday life needs such as housing, food, transportation and other essentials. These challenges made maintaining a mentoring relationship much harder. BBBSTC Coordinators work with all parties to meet them where the matches are to be supportive of struggles mentors and families are going through.

Although matches wanted in-person programming, they were also hesitant to participate due to the risks of COVID-19. One such example is the Match Celebration, normally held in early spring. A survey was administered to high school senior matches to gather input on the structure of the celebration this year. With more than half of the matches saying they would prefer an in-person gathering one was scheduled in July, however, the event had to be rescheduled for August due to low registration.

For the Graduation Coaches program, one of the school partners did not engage with BBBS this year due to challenges in the school and community during the pandemic, which made participating in the program a lower priority.

## Participant Data

The grant period for SFY 2022 funds ran from July 16, 2021 through June 30, 2022. The participant data for this period is below.

### Demographic Data

| DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC | NUMBER SERVED |
| --- | --- |
| Total Served | 1,722 |
| Male | 766 |
| Female | 931 |
| Trans/Other | 25 |
| Age 12-13 | 510 |
| Age 14-15 | 602 |
| Age 16-17 | 362 |
| Age 18-19 | 204 |
| Age 20-21 | 44 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 161 |
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 20 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 34 |
| Black/African American | 508 |
| White | 681 |
| Multi-racial | 271 |
| Other/Unreported Race | 47 |
| 8th grade student or younger | 502 |
| 9th-12th grade student | 1,000 |
| High school graduate or equivalent | 97 |
| Post-secondary education student | 123 |
| Family qualified for free or reduced-price school lunch | 1,087 |

### Program Services, Activities, and Other Related Assistance

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| SERVICE PROVIDED | NUMBER SERVED |
| Education or Job Training Activities | 592 |
| Work Experience Activities | 8 |
| Community Involvement and Leadership Development Activities | 1,722 |
| Post-Secondary Exploration, Career Guidance and Planning Activities | 1,722 |
| Mentoring Activities | 1,552 |

### Customer Satisfaction

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CUSTOMER RATING | NUMBER SERVED |
| Program Experience “Excellent” | 336 |
| Program Experience “Very Good” | 229 |
| Program Experience “Average” | 42 |
| Program Experience “Below Average” | 5 |
| Program Experience “Poor” | 1 |
| Number of Participants Completing Customer Satisfaction Survey | 613 |

## Program Outcome Measures

1. **Healthy youth development, focused on the social, emotional, and academic development of youth**

* Percentage of participants who stay on track or improve their social acceptance and social competence – goal 75%, actual 85%
* Percentage of participants who stay on track or improve grades and academic performance – goal 75%, actual 79%
* Percentage of participants who stay on track or improve their educational expectations – goal 75%, actual 96%
* Percentage of participants who report having an encouraging, caring adult in their lives – goal 75%, actual 98%
* Percentage of participants who have plans for post-secondary training or college – goal 80%, actual 70%

1. **High school graduation**
   * Percentage of high school seniors in a mentoring relationship at the beginning of senior year who will graduate – goal 80%, actual 94% (Southern Minnesota), 94% (Twin Cities), 100% (Central Minnesota)
2. **Youth skills and knowledge related to career, training and college readiness**
   * Percentage of youth who report having an increased understanding of the careers presented at events – goal 75%, actual 76%
   * Percentage of participants who report having a better understanding of the workshop event/topic – goal 80%, actual 78%
3. **Post-secondary education (Twin Cities participants)**
   * Percentage of high school seniors who have post-secondary plans in place by graduation – goal 65%, actual 62%
   * Percentage of youth graduating from high school who enter into and engage in post-secondary training and programs – goal 60%, actual data available early 2023
   * Percentage of youth who persist in post-secondary training and programs each year – goal 60%, actual 88% of those able to be contacted

## Expenditure Data

Expenditures from July 16, 2021 through June 30, 2022 were as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Budget Category | Expenditures |
| Administration (up to 10% allowed) | $15,729.78 |
| Participant Wages and Fringe Benefits | $0.00 |
| Direct Staff Services | $218,220.22 |
| Support Services | $3,550.00 |
| Total | $237,500.00 |

## Program Success Stories

#### Southern Minnesota Story

Big Sister and Little Sister were matched in 2011. Little Sister was six years old at the time and had been recently adopted after her biological parents abandoned her at a shopping mall. Big Sister has been there for Little Sister through so much, and now she recently brought Little Sister to get job applications and helped her complete them. They also went on a college visit to Winona State University. Little Sister’s mom said that the match is great because it has gotten Little Sister out of the house and has also taught her many new skills. Little Sister is excited to work toward her future and feels very supported by her Big in choosing a career and college.

#### Southern Minnesota Story 2

Little Sister is fifteen and she and her Big Sister place a large focus on the future and take part in many college & career readiness activities. Big Sister does an awesome job planning activities that line up with Little Sister’s interests such as a vet activity and also a flying activity where Little Sister developed an interest in auto body work on planes. The match also takes part in BBBS events focused on college and career and continue to reach out for resources to help Little Sister choose her goals and build a path to success in life.

#### Twin Cities Story 1

BBBS staff member Eric introduced a Little (14 years old) and Big to each other and welcomed them to the BBBS program. Information from the Enrollment and Matching Team noted that the Little expressed an interest in being a firefighter and Eric brought this up during the introduction. Having a professional connection to a firefighter, Eric asked the Big if he could immediately help with connecting his new Little to this firefighter for an informational interview. Over the next couple of weeks, Big and Little worked together to schedule and execute the informational interview and, based on the new information they received from the firefighter, started the application process for a firefighter explorer program at a local fire department. Regardless of whether the Little is accepted into the program, Eric can confirm that the Little has made a lasting impression on the firefighter he interviewed with and the representative from the department that hosts the explorer program. The Little’s network is growing and his local fire department can now provide him with additional mentoring as he pursues his dream.

#### Twin Cities Story 2

The BBBS College and Career Readiness Coordinator was able to help Little Sister (LS) complete the FAFSA and also a couple of scholarships. The coordinator also helped connect her with a University of St. Thomas – Dougherty Family College employee where they set up a virtual meeting with LS and asked questions. Through all of this, LS has decided and has committed to attending St. Thomas (four year program) in the fall of 2022. LS has been taking pictures with everyone in her life that has helped her finish out high school and move onto college, and took one with our coordinator at the Match Celebration in March 2022.

#### Central Minnesota Story 1

The Bigs on Campus matches had an entertaining and enriching time visiting the Nursing Lab on the St. Cloud State University (SCSU) Campus. They were able to get a tour, ask questions, and learn about nursing degrees & careers. The Human Patient Simulation lab helps undergraduate students at SCSU to develop a comfort level with and knowledge of equipment and procedures they will need in professional settings. It includes five simulated hospital rooms (3 with audiovisual controls), a home care simulation room and 22 hospital bed spaces. A great opportunity for BBBS youth to learn about the career of nursing in a hands-on environment!