



TO: Kansas Senate Committee on Ways & Means
FROM: Mary E. Shannon, President/CEO, Kansas Big Brothers Big Sisters
DATE: March 5, 2025
RE: FY 2026 Budget Request

About Kansas Big Brothers Big Sisters (KSBBBS):

Kansas Big Brothers Big Sisters is the largest one-to-one mentoring program in Kansas, with a service population of 100 counties, and the third largest among 233 Big Brothers Big Sisters affiliates in the nation. Founded as a juvenile justice prevention program, we are an evidence-based, OJJDP blueprint program, whose mission is to create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth. We accomplish this by offering two professionally case-managed programs: Community-based and School-based (both provided at no cost to families).

KSBBBS Request:

KSBBBS currently has nearly 1,000 youth on our waiting list throughout the state. We request \$300K for our greatest cost, professional case management, to (1) continue serving our current caseload of nearly 2,000 youth as we know the longer the match length, the greater the outcomes and (2) remove more youth from our waitlist to be matched with a one-to-one mentoring relationship.

Who We Serve:

In 2024, KSBBBS served nearly 2000 youth ages 6 – 25 who are facing multiple factors of adversity. In fact, KSBBBS utilizes the internationally recognized **Adverse Childhood Experience assessment (ACES)** as a part of our intake of youth, recognizing 10 levels of adversity that dramatically and traumatically impact a youth into adulthood. 12% of youth in the United States have an ACES score of 4 or greater. For youth who have an ACES score of 6+, research shows that without intervention, these youth have a biological life reduction, on average, of 20 years. KSBBBS intentionally serves only youth with significant ACES scores. In fact, the **average ACES score for KSBBBS youth is 5.** Among them:

- 80% live at or below poverty level.
- 80% live in single parent/guardian/foster parent households.
- 60% live in homes where there is or has been alcohol and/or substance abuse.
- 52% have been diagnosed with some type of mental health or emotional health condition.
- 40% have either witnessed or personally experienced domestic violence.
- Nearly half have a nuclear family member who is or has been incarcerated.

How We Serve:

Youth are typically referred to KSBBBS from parents/guardians, teachers or school administrators. Youth are enrolled and matched via our proprietary **best fit match to a one-to-one adult mentor**, couple or family who has undergone a background check, in-person interview, home assessment and key referrals. KSBBBS identifies risk and protective factors throughout the life of the match to ensure **safety, quality and positive outcomes**. This includes administration of the Risk and Protective Inventory, Child Outcomes Survey/Youth Outcomes Survey, Youth Development Outcome Plan,



and monthly case management and match support. **In the first year of the match relationship, average case management hours committed to one match is 50 hours.**

Each match utilizes the quarterly Life Skills Guide, an educational resource for Bigs (mentors) and parents/guardians to help identify and support the youth's journey to reach **our vision: that all youth we serve have a living-wage job by age 25 and become active citizens in our communities.** The guide is built around the developmental stages/milestones of our youth: self-worth, self-confidence, healthy choices, adulting 101, and career & life.

Short-term Outcomes:

- 46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs
- 52% less likely to skip school.
- 37% less likely to skip a class.
- 33% less likely to hit someone.

Long-term Outcomes:

Independent research performed by Harris Interactive (2009) indicates that the BBBS model of one-to-one mentoring has a lifelong impact on participating youth:

- 46% report a household income of over \$75,000.
- 78% vote in elections.
- 90% report that their mentor made them feel better about themselves.
- 76% learned right from wrong from their mentor.
- 52% reported that their mentor kept them from dropping out of high school.
- 65% agreed their Big helped them reach a higher level of education than they thought possible.

In the spring of 2024, Alex Bell, PhD., Harvard, released a 35-year longitudinal study that involved 5 BBBS organizations, including Kansas. He determined the following outcomes for the youth involved in the study:

- Increased lifetime earnings (+15%)
- 2/3 of youth experienced upward mobility as if born to wealthy parents
- Increase in earning living wage by 21
- Increase in healthy marriage (+16%)
- Decrease in teen births (-16%)
- Average cost of mentoring is ~\$2-3k per year. Based on tax data from income increases alone, if state/federal agencies paid for a match, it would pay for itself within seven years and create positive tax revenue thereafter.

Although Kansas ranks 37th among US states by population, we currently rank 10th overall in suicides of youth ages 15-24, with suicidal ideation for youth ages 6-12 having tripled in the last decade. This is not only a loss of human life, but of human potential for our state. Therefore, KSBBBS requests \$300K in funding to partner with us to (1) continue to provide continued stellar case management for our current youth served (as we know that the longer the match length, the better the outcome), and (2) to remove more youth from our waiting list. This funding is currently in the HB 2007 bill that was passed by the House. We request your support for this funding.