

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Rochester NY - Lisa Mattoon

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Organization Profile

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Mission/Vision Founded in 1978, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Rochester (BBBS) has been providing mentoring services to children in the Greater Rochester region for over forty-three years. It is our mission to create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth. Our one-to-one mentoring programs expose hundreds of youth annually to recreational and educational activities, as well as schoolwork and career exploration so that they may achieve their full potential. Our vision is that all children achieve success in life.

We are a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization registered in the State of New York.

Receive County Funds? YES - 2021 - \$14,246 for a Beyond School Walls mentoring program. This BBBS project matches youth in its mentoring program; enrolling youth from Henry Hudson School 28 and matching them with L3Harris Corporation mentors. Matches meet bi-weekly at Harris Corp and engage in STEM activities, career exploration, and general mentoring. The 2021 contract was just executed and there has not been a 2022 contract drafted yet.

Div. of Corp. N/A? no

Proposal Information

Project Name Youth Mentoring and Family Support in Monroe County

Summary Big Brothers Big Sisters' one-to-one mentoring program and family support is transforming the lives of youth in Monroe County. Recent Rochester outcomes include:

- 95% of youth improved their grades or academic performance,
- 94% showed improved social acceptance and competence,
- 99% showed improved attitudes towards risky behaviors,
- 100% avoid the juvenile justice system,
- 100% of our youth graduated when matched during a time of being eligible to graduate.

However, community demand for our mentoring programs has increased dramatically since the pandemic began and is evidenced by our wait list of 319 youth wanting to be matched with an adult mentor or "Big." Over 200 Monroe County youth are on the waitlist.

Our goal is to meet the needs of these youth and their families and to provide a safe and accessible Mentoring Center and workspace. This 4-year proposed project would dramatically scale the program to meet the needs of Monroe County youth and their families by implementing two key components:

1. Creation of a Mentoring Center with physical space capacity to serve a greater number of children and mentors in an accessible location in downtown Rochester.
2. New Staff to meet the needs of additional youth, including wrap-around support for their families. Two full-time positions are proposed:
 - Family Support Specialist to connect participants and their families with food, housing, mental health supports and other family stabilization resources.
 - Recruitment and Community Engagement Specialist to recruit, screen, and train mentors, and continue building community partnerships.

Workforce/Economic?	Health/Safety?	Infrastructure/Sustainability?
no	yes	no

Description This mentoring program is an investment in Monroe County's youth and meets the goal of Public Health and Public Safety and several pillars including:

- Create programs and public spaces to foster safety and encourage positive change,

- Promote an equitable, connected, and accessible community, and
- Focus on the overall wellbeing of Monroe County residents.

a) Importance of ARPA Funding

Students in Monroe County have experience trauma and upheaval from Covid-19; they suffer from depression and anxiety, and they are at high risk of school drop-out. Our mentees come from vulnerable communities dealing with the unequal distribution of social, political, economic, and environmental resources. This proposed expanded youth one-to-one mentoring program encourages positive change in their young lives. The Mentoring Center will serve as a new and safe community space for out-of-school hours for students and the greater community.

In addition, BBBS staff connects youth and families with food, housing, and health services which benefits the overall wellbeing of Monroe County residents. These services and other family stabilization resources promote an equitable, connected, and accessible community.

Currently BBBS has a shortage of mentors. Only one out of every two youth who want a mentor, are matched with one. ARPA funding would allow BBBS to significantly expand the number of youth currently served by the mentoring program over a 4-year period. The proposed staff positions—to recruit and train mentors as well as to connect families with vital wrap-around services—are integral to serving more youth and their families.

Our current location lacks the capacity to accommodate in-person gatherings to meet the increased demand for mentoring. This move and creation of a Mentoring Center on 214 Alexander Park will enable us to serve and host more youth and their mentors for the long term and provide office space for staff.

During year one, the Youth Mentoring and Family Support Program will impact over 200 youth and their families, for a total of 525 Monroe County residents during year one. For all 4 years, the proposed program will benefit more than 1,000 youth and more than 2,500 Monroe County residents. This funding would allow us to more than triple our capacity within four years. BBBS will move into its new location regardless of ARPA funding, but we currently do NOT have the capacity to serve the number of youth who are on our wait list and their families without these critical funds. The program will be sustainable beyond 2026 because the Mentor Center will be complete and new staff will be supported through grants and partnerships.

b) Eliminating Barriers and Increasing Accessibility

Youth and their families do not pay any fees to participate in the mentoring program. The proposed expanded program will provide access for Monroe County youth on the waitlist (currently at 319 kids), providing mentoring for more students in a free and safe place during out-of-school hours. In addition, the family support component of the program will provide personalized attention so that each family has access to available resources such as food, clothing, housing, or mental health. The new Mentoring Center is on the public bus line, so access will be increased.

c) Transformative Outcomes and Metrics

BBBS has developed custom strategies – emphasizing attendance, staying on track for on-time graduation, and attaining post-high school job and career success – as well as referral pathing for wrap-around services to address out-of-school factors such as unstable housing, hunger, and basic needs for each child (also known as a “Little”).

The outcomes for our programming are that youth will: stay in school, with improved grades and a greater likelihood of graduation; avoid risky behaviors; have improved relationships with peers and adults; and, have a greater likelihood of success in the future.

Our specific measurable objectives are:

- 100% of our student participants (in any given school year) who receive mentoring will graduate high school (within their 4-year on-time graduation period);
- 100% will avoid the juvenile justice system;
- 85% of students will report higher self-esteem and/or a clearer direction for employment post- graduation;
- At least 70% of the participating students will be matched with a mentor for 12 months or longer. Often the relationships last a lifetime; and
- 100% of our student participants who receive mentoring in this program will be screened for wrap-around service needs.

The program meets the following Public Health & Public Safety Metrics:

- 100% of Monroe County youth served will be referred to the county’s Mental Health Services as needed.
- 100% of Monroe County youth served will be referred to the county’s Substance Abuse Services as needed.
- 100% of families of Monroe County youth served will be informed about the county’s Mental Health and Substance Abuse services.
- 100% of families of Monroe County youth served will be informed about food assistance programs.

The proposed Family Support Specialist will be integral to connecting Monroe County youth and their families to Monroe County health

services as well as measuring, analyzing, and reporting evaluation results.

In addition, we measure the effectiveness of the program and progress through four key data analysis tools, which include a Youth Outcome Survey; collection of student grades and attendance; Strength of Relationship tool; monthly phone calls with staff, and retention rate of youth in the program.

d) Impact Continues beyond 2026

Currently many Monroe County youth are less likely to transition successfully into adulthood due to risk factors at home (poverty, violence, abuse). Many suffer from depression and anxiety, and they are at high risk of school drop-out. With an expanded BBBS program, these young people will have a supportive adult to mentor them. Their families will be connected with wrap-around services. 100% of youth who participate are anticipated to graduate from high school and avoid the juvenile justice system. These students are the Monroe County's adults—parents, employers, employees, community members, and tax-paying citizens—of tomorrow. In addition, the Mentoring Center will be a community gathering place serving hundreds of Monroe County residents annually.

Company Strengths History & Recognitions

Following the racial riots of the 1960's, a group of African American women founded an agency, the Rochester Community Involvement, to provide male role models for their children. Concurrently, Volunteers in Partnership, began working with youth on probation. These agencies eventually merged and became known as Community Partners for Youth, Inc. In 1981, the merged organization became affiliated with the national organization of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Rochester (BBBS) has been providing mentoring services to children in the Greater Rochester region for 43+ years. Of the over 230 national BBBS affiliate programs throughout the U.S., the Greater Rochester chapter has been recognized twice as a Quality Award Winner within the last 6 years. This award recognizes agencies that have done an exemplary job in meeting program quality metrics. More recently, BBBS of Greater Rochester was awarded the Gold Standard Award, a high-level honor for exceptional agencies.

Partnerships

Our most active partners are the school districts with whom we have worked for 10 years or more. Their: 1) recruit and refer youth in target schools to become mentees; 2) provide program oversight; 3) act as liaison to BBBS; 4) provide attendance and school activities data to BBBS; and 5) support program sustainability. BBBS staff work with the Rochester City Schools and other schools County schools to collect and track data, analyze results, and continuously monitor the project to meet stated objectives.

Awareness of Services

Schools connect students in need with our mentoring services and BBBS distributes parent recruitment materials at community events and businesses. Community demand for our mentoring programs has increased since the pandemic began and is evidenced by our wait list of 319 youth wanting to be matched with an adult mentor or "Big."

Community Resources a) Proposed Partnerships

BBBS has increased outreach to professional organizations, faith-based organizations, and clubs to build our mentor pool. We have established successful relationships with Alpha Phi Alpha, Rochester Police Department, the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, Rochester Young Professionals, Aeon Missionary Baptist Church, Ministry of Christ Safehaven, and are developing new recruiting campaigns to increase the number of male and African American volunteer mentors to match our need for increasing children who identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, or People of Color) and want a mentor "who looks like them."

Additional collaboration occurs through the referral and volunteer recruitment processes. For example, local service organizations such as the University of Rochester/Strong Hospital and mentoring programs (Compeer) refer youth and families. Some of the businesses with whom we collaborate in our Beyond School Walls program (youth go to a mentor's place of work) are MWBE's.

b) Long-term partnerships

Since 2013, BBBS has had an active partnership with the Rochester City School District (RCSD), the City mayor, chief of police, United Way, and Rochester Area Community Foundation. The partnership identified eight school buildings that have the highest number of youth who are chronically truant, including two schools in the Greece Central School District. BBBS has worked with RCSD and Monroe County schools for the past 6 years. Since 2016, BBBS has partnered with School #28 with L3Harris for a workplace mentoring program. School #8, #28 and #35 all participate in Bigs in Blue/Bigs in Badges launched in 2018.

c) Leveraging Resources

BBBS has funding pending to support the cost of the move to 214 Alexander Park in downtown Rochester (owned by Buckingham Properties) and for the build-out of the Mentoring. Pending grant applications include: Wolk Foundation (\$150,000), August Foundation (\$15,000), Florence Muller Foundation (\$50,000) and many others. Grants received for the mentoring program include \$50,000 from Wegmans and others. We continue to leverage community resources including grants and individual donations for the move and creation of the Mentoring Center.

In-kind Resources

During the 4-year grant period, mentors will have provided 600 hours of volunteer mentoring. This work equates to approximately \$18,000 of in-kind support over 4 years (600 x \$29.95/hr. according to Independentsector.org).

Youth Mentoring and Family Support is the core program at BBBS. The long-term sustainability of this program is of highest priority, and we will continue to build a culture of philanthropy with our staff, board, and community partners. BBBS is in the midst of a comprehensive Strategic Business Plan to return to pre-pandemic levels, support mentoring programs, and determine a financial plan with multiple streams of funding to increase the number of unrestricted funds from individual donors. BBBS anticipates continued funding from the United Way of Rochester and the Finger Lakes, and United Ways from surrounding counties, and other private foundations. In addition, BBBS will continue to seek funding from local foundations, state, and federal grant programs, and host a minimum of three fundraising events each year.

Audience a) Historically Under-Resourced and Vulnerable Population

The youth/Littles who come into the program are moderate- to high-need for mentoring and wrap-around services. Most mentees (81%) served are between the ages of 10 and 17. Over half are raised in single-family homes, with 40% earning less than \$20,000 per year. They often have an incarcerated parent (35%), have experienced, or witnessed abuse, neglect, and/or violence, and/or experience environmental trauma (parental separation, divorce, parental substance use disorder, and mental illness). Almost three-quarters (74%) of the youth served by our organization in Monroe County are African American, Hispanic, or multi-racial.

The Covid-19 crisis has accentuated the challenges for youth in our communities. Throughout the pandemic, our Littles have faced tremendous setbacks – food insecurity, lack of clothing and basic hygiene items, and family hardships such as sickness, job-loss, or even death.

In addition, rising inflation is particularly burdensome to lower-income households with already tight budgets. As grocery and gas prices spike, the poorest Monroe County residents are hit the hardest, putting additional stress on youth and their families. The support of a trusted confidant, a person who wants to see them succeed, to thrive and be healthy in times of true stress is needed now more than ever.

b) No associated fees or costs are required of participants and their families in the program. The new Mentor Center will be on 214 Alexander Park in downtown Rochester on the bus line. BBBS will seek funding to purchase bus vouchers for families that need the assistance.

<i>Cost 1st Year</i>	<i>Cost All Years</i>	<i>Residents 1st Year</i>	<i>Residents All Years</i>	<i>FT Employees</i>	<i>PT Employees</i>
\$156,762.00	\$655,688.00	525	2,500	8	2

Volunteers

150

Staffing BBBS is led by Chief Executive Officer Lisa Mattoon with the support of 8 full-time and 2-part-time paid staff, 19 governing board members, and over 300 volunteers in four counties, including 150 volunteers in Monroe County.

Monroe County funding would be used to hire two new full-time staff (see attached Organization Chart):

- 1) Recruitment and Community Engagement Specialist - Provide targeted recruitment of mentors and continue our work building community partnerships.
- 2) Family Support Specialist - Connect participants and their families with food, housing, mental health supports and other family stabilization resources.

Both positions will require at minimum, an Associate's degree in social services, human services or a related field. Assessments and relationship development experience with adult populations AND understanding of child development and family dynamics is required.