

# Potential Mentor Orientation



Welcome to the orientation for potential Big Brothers Big Sisters of Utah mentors! And THANK YOU for your interest in becoming a "Big." Kids of all kinds are looking for a friend and positive role model- and you could be a perfect fit for one of them. Before you fill out your application, there are a few things we want you to know.

## Who We Are

**Big Brothers Big Sisters of Utah exists to** create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth. All of our programs are built around one-to-one mentoring and include these key elements:

- Careful screening and training of potential mentors
- Thoughtful matching
- Thorough support of the mentoring match
- Focused on youth protection and youth development

Our priority is finding mentors who are ready and willing to commit to a child for at least a year. You and/or we may determine this is not a good fit or not a good time for you to volunteer as a mentor.

## Who We Serve

Of the 1,572 kids we have served in the last 30 months...

- 78% of youth are living in poverty
- 48% are living with a single parent and 9% are living with neither parent
- 68% are members of a racial or ethnic minority group
- 13% have an incarcerated parent

## Why We Need Bigs

A volunteer mentor is called a Big (a Big Sister or a Big Brother). Our Bigs play an important role in the lives of the kids we serve, our Littles. We serve kids who have more than one risk factor in their lives. A great mentoring relationship can be a positive (protective) factor that helps balance those challenges. Most often, the kids we serve are dealing with:

- The challenges of living in a low-income household
- Family stability issues – like living without one or two biological parent(s) in the household
- Their lives have been impacted by the substance use/abuse of family members
- Problems in school like learning disabilities or bullying

## What Makes A Great Big

Because of these challenges, our kids are less likely to thrive as they grow up. Having a mentor who is **caring** and **consistently involved** while **holding clear boundaries**, lets them know they are important. Being willing to **share your time**, to **share new experiences**, and to **listen** will help them imagine a bigger future.

Embracing differences throughout the time your mentoring match stays together (**at a minimum, 12 months**), and working towards goals with your Little will ensure they are able to set and achieve goals later in life too.

## A Big Commitment Can Make A Big Difference

We ask all "Bigs" to make a minimum 12-month commitment because having a strong mentoring relationship for at least a year can have deep and long-lasting positive outcomes for kids, including Educational Achievement, Emotional Well-Being, Life Skills, and Avoiding Risky Behaviors. BBBSU operates 3 different one-to-one mentoring programs that help improve these key outcome areas:

### Community-Based

- Mentor a Little (aged 6 to 18), meeting with them 2-4 times per month (about 7 hours per month) for whatever activities you choose together and are parent/guardian approved. Volunteer requirement: must be at least 18 years of age and have reliable transportation. Set the meeting schedule and activities with your Little and their parent/ guardian- may vary based on what works for you and the family.

### Site-Based

- Mentoring students aged 6-11 weekly for about 90 minutes at a site supervised by BBBSU staff– most are at elementary schools in the late afternoon. Volunteer requirement: Adults and High School students (Freshmen to Juniors) may be site-based mentors. Be able to mentor at the site on the specified day of the week, during the academic year.

### mentor2.0

- A technology-enhanced mentoring program for high-school students, in mentor2.0 you communicate electronically weekly and meet in-person monthly in the evening during the academic year. Focused on college access & success. Volunteer requirement: must have a college degree, or equivalent professional or military experience. (Opportunities for mentor2.0 are currently located in Salt Lake County and Weber County).

# Thorough Support For Mentors

After you are matched with your “Little” a Mentoring Support Coordinator on the BBBSU staff be there to support you, your Little, and their parent/guardian. Your match support will call you regularly (13 times in the first year, less frequently after that) to talk with you about the match. We are there to help with things like:

- Problem-solving
- Setting and achieving goals set by your Little
- Ideas for building a relationship
- Information about resources
- Support and feedback

## Next Steps

If this seems like something you might want to do, then these are the next steps:

- To finalize the orientation process, spend about 7 minutes completing the questionnaire- we will ask you about what you just read- and submit. Then, click on the link you receive to complete our online application (also about 7 minutes) and submit.
- We will then send you links to schedule your fingerprinting appointment and (generally virtual) interview.
- After that, please give us some time to complete background and reference checks and review the whole of your application. Then we will contact you to let you know if you are accepted.
- If you are accepted, over the next few weeks we will be reviewing “Little” applications and comparing it to your strengths and interests. We will then propose a Little who we think could benefit most from your mentorship.

## Thank You

Thank You for considering this commitment of your time and talents. If you feel like becoming a “Big” isn’t a good fit for you at this time, please check out other ways to get involved here!