

Frequently Asked Questions

Someone in Their Corner. A Difference That Lasts a Lifetime.

You may be wondering what it really means to become a Big, how mentoring changes a young person's life, or how your financial support makes those relationships possible.

Here are answers to some of the questions we hear most often.

- Becoming a Big
- Becoming a Donor
- About the Impact
- I'm interested. What do I do next?
- The simplest way to describe BBBS.

START HERE

What does Big Brothers Big Sisters do?

At Big Brothers Big Sisters of New Hampshire & Vermont, we create and support **strong, consistent mentoring relationships between young people (often referred to as “Littles”) and caring adult or peer volunteers (“Bigs”).**

We believe every young person deserves someone in their corner. A trusted person who listens, encourages them, helps them see what is possible, and shows up over time.

Our role doesn't end when a Big and Little are matched. We carefully assess, support, and monitor each relationship so that mentoring is safe, meaningful, and **built to last.**

Why does mentoring matter?

A consistent, caring adult can make a lasting difference in how a young person sees themselves, their future, and the possibilities in front of them.

Research has shown that young people who experience quality mentoring are more likely to stay engaged in school, pursue postsecondary education, and experience stronger economic outcomes as young adults.

But the most important part isn't statistics.

It's a relationship.

It is having someone who notices when you are having a hard day. Someone who celebrates your success. Someone who asks about your future and believes you can get there.

That's the power of mentorship.

Why now?

Young people are navigating an increasingly complicated world. They are making decisions about school, friendships, work, driving, college, careers, and their futures, often while carrying challenges adults may never see.

Did you know that parents/guardians are the biggest source of referrals? Often young people don't have a natural support network, and it is our job at BBBS to put that person in their life to create a larger, caring network!

They don't need another program telling them what to do.

They need people who will walk alongside them.

That is why we are focused on making more high-quality mentoring relationships possible while ensuring every match receives the support it needs to succeed.

BECOMING A BIG

What is a Big?

A "Big" is a caring volunteer who invests in building a meaningful relationship with a young person. Often, we refer to mentees as "Littles."

You don't have to be a teacher, counselor, coach, or expert.

You simply need to be willing to **show up, listen, have fun, and be consistent.**

It is presence over perfection!

What does a Big actually do?

There is no required list of activities or expensive outings.

The goal is to spend meaningful time together and let the relationship grow naturally.

You might:

- Go for a walk.
- Play basketball or another sport.
- Cook something together.
- Visit a library or a museum.
- Work on homework.
- Explore a hobby.
- Attend a free community event.
- Talk in the car.

- Get ice cream.

The activity is not the point. The relationship is.

Some of the most meaningful mentoring moments happen during ordinary activities.

How much time does it take?

We work with volunteers to find a mentoring opportunity that fits their availability, interests, and community.

Consistency matters more than doing something elaborate.

A Big doesn't need to create a perfect experience every time. What matters most is that a young person can count on you to show up.

It is about presence, not perfection!

Do I have to spend money on my Little?

No.

You do not need to spend money to be a good mentor.

Many of the best mentoring experiences are free: walking, talking, playing outside, visiting a library, exploring a community event, or simply spending time together.

We encourage Bigs to look for free or low-cost opportunities in their communities and to talk with their Match Advisor about ideas.

What if I don't know what to do with my Little?

That's completely normal.

You are not expected to have all the answers.

Your Match Advisor is here to help you navigate the relationship, answer questions, brainstorm activities, and provide support along the way.

You will also have access to ideas, ticket opportunities, and resources such as Match Activities (where BBBS plans and encourages all matches to attend) from BBBSNHVT and our mentor community.

What if my Little and I don't have anything in common?

You don't need to have the same interests.

In fact, discovering something new together can be one of the best parts of mentoring.

Your job isn't to be exactly like your Little. Your job is to be **curious, dependable, and present.**

What kind of support do Bigs receive?

You are never expected to figure it out alone.



BBBSNHVT provides ongoing support through our Match Advisors and program team. We help Bigs navigate questions, celebrate successes, work through challenges, and strengthen their relationships with their Littles.

We support the mentor so the mentor can support the young person.

What happens after I apply?

Once you express interest, our team will walk you through the process.

This includes learning more about you and your interests, completing required screening and safety steps, discussing the type of mentoring opportunity that fits you best, and preparing you for the relationship.

We take matching seriously because the quality of the relationship matters.

What if I cannot make a long-term commitment?

We understand that life changes.

Before becoming a Big, we will talk with you about the investment involved and help determine whether mentoring is the right fit for you right now. We have flexible options and matches get together when best for them because we know life happens and sometimes are busier than others.

If becoming a Big isn't possible at this point in your life, there are other ways to support young people and the mission.

BECOMING A DONOR

Why does BBBSNHVT need donors?

A strong mentoring relationship may look simple from the outside—two people spending time together—but there is an entire support system behind it.

Donor support helps make it possible to:

- Recruit, engage and support caring adult mentors.
- Carefully screen and match young people with volunteers.
- Provide ongoing Match Advisor support.
- Keep mentoring relationships safe and strong.
- Reach young people who are waiting for a mentor.
- Expand mentoring where communities need it most.

- Provide resources and opportunities that strengthen matches, such as Match Activities.
- Build the long-term capacity needed to serve more young people.

Your gift doesn't simply fund a program. It helps make a relationship possible.

What difference does my donation really make?

Your investment helps create the conditions for a young person and mentor to build a relationship that can influence the trajectory of that young person's life. Donations can be monthly or one-time.

It helps ensure that when a volunteer says, "I want to be a Big," we have the people, systems, training, and resources needed to support that relationship well.

And when a young person is waiting for a mentor, your support helps us work toward the day when they don't have to wait.

Does every dollar go directly to a Little?

Quality mentoring requires more than the time a Big and Little spend together.

There are trained professionals here at BBBS behind every successful match. Our team recruit/engage and screen volunteers, assess matches, provide guidance at the first introduction meeting (we call a Match Meeting when everyone meets each other for the first time), provide ongoing support, prioritize child safety, connect families with resources, and help relationships stay strong.

Investing in that infrastructure is essential to creating **safe, high-quality mentoring relationships that last.**

Can I designate my gift for a specific program?

Yes. Depending on the current opportunities, donors may be able to support areas such as:

- Community-based mentoring
- *Keys to Drive*
- *Futures Ahead*
- Mentor engagement and support
- Youth leadership
- Match support
- Technology and resources for mentoring relationships

Our team can help you identify an opportunity that aligns with your interests.

I want to make a larger gift. What opportunities are available?

We welcome donors who want to invest at a deeper level in the future of young people across New Hampshire and Vermont.

Leadership investments can support priorities that are transformative to BBBS such as expanding mentoring, strengthening the infrastructure behind matches, investing in innovation, and building long-term financial sustainability.

We would welcome a conversation about what matters most to you and where your investment can have the greatest impact. Please contact Nicole McShane, Chief Philanthropy Officer: nicole@bigsnhvt.org

Can my company support BBBSNHVT?

Yes, we need more businesses to get behind the power of mentorship.

Businesses can support mentoring in many ways, including financial sponsorship, employee volunteerism, workplace mentoring, event participation, in-kind support, and employee giving.

We can work with businesses to identify opportunities that connect their community priorities with the needs of young people.

ABOUT THE IMPACT

Does mentoring really work?

Yes. Research continues to demonstrate that quality mentoring can contribute to meaningful educational, economic, and social outcomes for young people.

Research of BBBS conducted by Harvard University and the U.S. Dept. of Treasury has found that mentored young people are **20% more likely to attend college** and that mentoring is associated with stronger economic outcomes in young adulthood, including a **15% increase in earnings**.

Research also shows improvements in school engagement, including lower absenteeism/truancy and fewer suspensions among young people who participate in mentoring.

But research tells only part of the story.

The other part is what happens when a young person has someone who consistently says:

"I see you. I believe in you. I'm here."

What makes BBBSNHVT different?

We don't simply connect a volunteer with a young person and walk away.



We focus on creating **safe, supported, and quality relationships.**

Our team carefully assesses volunteers and young people, makes thoughtful matches, and provides ongoing support throughout the relationship.

That combination of **the relationship plus the support behind it is what makes quality mentoring possible.**

How does BBBSNHVT serve both New Hampshire and Vermont?

We have 60 years of mentoring expertise. Our mission is: MENTORING.

Through our **Power of WE** strategic plan, we are building one stronger organization while remaining responsive to the needs of individual communities.

We are intentionally building service hubs and partnerships in communities where we can grow mentoring relationships sustainably and with quality.

"I'M INTERESTED. WHAT DO I DO NEXT?"

I think I want to become a Big. What is my next step?

Start with a conversation.

You don't need to know exactly what type of mentoring you want to do or whether the time is right.

Our team can help you explore the possibilities and determine whether becoming a Big is right for you.

You bring your time, your willingness to connect, and your commitment to show up. We'll handle the rest.

I want to donate. What is my next step?

Make a gift at a level that is meaningful to you.

Whether you give \$25, \$250, \$2,500, or make a transformational leadership investment, your support helps create and sustain mentoring relationships.

If you would like to discuss a larger investment, a corporate partnership, or a specific area of impact, our team would love to have a conversation with you.

I'm not ready to become a Big or make a financial gift. Can I still help?

Yes.

You can:

- Tell a friend about mentoring.



- Introduce us to a business or community leaders.
- Share a BBBSNHVT post.
- Attend an event.
- Help recruit a mentor.
- Invite someone to learn more.
- Connect us with a school, employer, community organization, or potential partner.

Sometimes the most important first step is simply opening the door.

THE SIMPLEST WAY TO EXPLAIN BBBS

If someone asks you, "What exactly does Big Brothers Big Sisters do?" you can say:

"We connect young people with caring mentors and provide support behind those relationships to help them thrive. We believe every young person deserves someone in their corner to stay on the path to graduating high school and have a mentor's impact to last a lifetime. BBBS works to make that possible for more young people across New Hampshire and Vermont."

And if they ask, "What can I do?"

"You can become that person for a young person, or you can help make that relationship possible by investing in the mission."

The Invitation

There are young people waiting for someone to show up.

There are adults who are ready to make a real IMPACT.

And there are communities that need stronger connections between the two.

That's the Power of WE.

Whether you become a Big, make a gift, introduce us to someone, or simply help spread the word, you have a role to play.

Someone in their corner can change what a young person believes is possible.



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