



Big Brothers Big Sisters

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

F O R

One-To-One Service

FOR PROGRAMS OPERATING WITHIN
AFFILIATED *Sponsoring
Organizations*

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BBBSA STANDARDS OF PRACTICE FOR ONE-TO-ONE SERVICE

I. Preamble

Standards have been the hallmark of Big Brothers Big Sisters service in the United States since 1922, when “standards” were created and adopted by the then Big Brothers and Big Sisters federation. These early standards addressed the One-To-One® relationship as a volunteer’s individual and personal effort on behalf of children, and asserted the need for an agency to manage its affairs in a professional manner. By the early 1930s, the standards had become more stringent in setting forth minimum requirements for operation at the local level. By 1986, the national board of directors of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America was ready to adopt a set of “standards and procedures” that spelled out in detail how professional staff were to conduct their day-to-day business, and how boards of directors were to develop policies and procedures for handling the administrative matters of the agency.

This document, BBBSA Standards of Practice for One-To-One Service, replaces the 1986 document, still providing a strong foundation and a high level of quality assurance for the process of matching volunteers with children and youth. However, now it is a more comprehensive document, spelling out the values that guide the federation’s work, and provides for greater flexibility for a range of One-To-One caring relationships. For the first time, the “standards” now speak to positive outcomes for children and youth.

The document serves as an indispensable tool to...

- guide affiliates in their overall operations.
- educate and develop the affiliates’ human resources.
- serve as an internal yardstick for assessment.
- guide the national office in providing consultation, training, and supporting services.
- instill a sense of partnership in being a successful and significant service to the community’s children.
- provide consistency of language for the federation.
- serve more children.
- impact children’s lives.
- focus on the future.



II. Vision for the 21st Century

As the largest national network of mentoring organizations serving children, families and communities, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America has a vision to develop the resources, environment and mechanisms to provide caring adults in the life of every child in need.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America is the acknowledged leader in building professionally-supported, dynamic relationships which unite children with committed volunteers, primarily on a One-To-One basis, transforming their lives, and enriching families, communities, and society. Our work is as elementary as putting a friend in a child's life, and as essential as putting hope into a child's future.

To achieve our vision we will continue to build on our century-long history of commitment to excellence and of valuing all individuals, respecting their efforts, abilities and differences.

— ADOPTED BY THE NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS 10-94

III. Mission

The mission of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America is to make a positive difference in the lives of children and youth, primarily through a professionally-supported One-To-One relationship with a caring adult, and to assist them in achieving their highest potential as they grow to become confident, competent, and caring individuals, by providing committed volunteers, national leadership, and standards of excellence.

— ADOPTED BY THE NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS 10-94

“CONFIDENT, COMPETENT, AND CARING” 6-96

VALUES

The following values direct the decision-making and on-going work of the federation, at the national and local levels.

- The significance of a caring adult in the life of a child.
- Volunteers as primary service providers.
- Appropriate volunteer orientation, screening, and training.
- The professionalism of the One-To-One service.
- The provision of relevant professional training and attractive compensation for all affiliate staff.
- The power of a federation of affiliates.
- Recognition and development of assets in children and youth.



- Assets that support positive youth development throughout One-To-One relationships.
- Recognition that boys and girls each have unique needs.
- Diverse cultural ethnic participation at every level of the federation.
- Responsive customer service.
- Engaging the volunteer and child in mutually shared community service.
- The BBBSA Standards of Excellence as a basis for BBBS practice.
- The importance of the family to positive youth development.

Cultural Ethnic Diversity Policy

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America is committed to being an inclusive organization in its cultural ethnic diversity. It is the policy of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America that the National Organization and its local affiliates reflect the cultural ethnic diversity of their communities at the board, staff, volunteer, and client levels.

— ADOPTED BY THE NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS 10-97

IV. Standards of Excellence

The guiding standards for reaching and serving more children and youth with effective services committed to the value of diversity, are embraced in the BBBSA Standards of Excellence that speak to 1) quality of service; 2) commitment to growth; 3) affiliate participation in the federation; and 4) affiliate leadership at the community level; and serve as “hallmarks” of affiliates that will constitute the federation in the 21st Century.

— ADOPTED BY THE NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS 10-97

QUALITY

Our constituents expect Big Brothers Big Sisters of America and its affiliates to deliver quality mission driven services in a consistent and responsive manner. Standard outcome measurements have been identified and can be utilized by all affiliates. Adhering to the BBBSA Standards of Practice for One-To-One Service helps to assure quality and keep children safe, and helps them grow in an organization of volunteers.

GROWTH

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, as a federation, is committed to reaching and serving more children in One-To-One relationships. At the affiliate level this will require “growth plans,” developed and reviewed frequently. At the federation level this will require an on-going examination of “best practices” to not only reach and engage volun-



teers, but to sustain their involvement in Big Brothers Big Sisters service, at a variety of levels and opportunities. Growth will require diversity at all levels — board, staff, volunteers, and children.

PARTICIPATION

The use of the name “Big Brothers Big Sisters”, use of the graphic design, and mission statement builds the highly valued base of national identity for capacity building and sustainability. Active volunteer and professional staff participation at the local, state, regional, and national level develops a viable communication system. Developing and using the latest technologies maximizes resources throughout the federation. Participating in the National Professional Association, State Associations, National Conferences, Leadership Summits, and the National Forum guarantees that all voices are heard.

LEADERSHIP

Affiliates have the opportunity to be a premier youth serving organization by providing the maximum visibility and accountability in their service community area. Community leadership in collaborative efforts and partnerships identifies the affiliate as an advocate for positive youth development. The affiliates will be recognized as the experts in mentoring.

V. BBBSA Standards of Practice for One-To-One Service for BBBS Programs Operating Within an Affiliated Sponsoring Organization

1. The affiliated Sponsoring Organization operates in compliance with applicable laws.
 - a) The affiliate is incorporated within the appropriate state(s).
 - b) The affiliate has a *not for profit tax exempt* status.
2. The affiliate has a system for providing voting representation by the BBBS Program Advisory Group on the corporate board.
3. The BBBS Advisory Group has a membership recruitment and development system that focuses on providing effective and diverse representation, and provides training and leadership development to ensure that members have the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to effectively perform their responsibilities.
 - a) The Advisory Group has a membership recruitment plan that ensures that members are selected on the basis of their ability to assist in furthering the BBBS Program’s overall mission and ensures that the Advisory Group is reflective of the community.
 - b) The Advisory Group reviews, on an annual basis, members’ performance

¹Italicized words from this page on are defined in the glossary.



as related to the BBBS Program's expectations for membership or formal term limits.

4. The Advisory Group has a clearly defined and articulated vision and mission statement that drives all program decision making and provides focus for the assessment of the BBBS Program's work.
5. The Advisory Group has a comprehensive planning process, which addresses all aspects of the BBBS Program's operations including, but not limited to, growth plans for One-To-One service.
6. The affiliate has a *quality assurance system* that ensures that all aspects of the BBBS Program's operations are reviewed and assessed on an annual basis, to include a review of its policies and procedures to ensure compliance with Standards of Practice for One-To-One Service related to program management for affiliates, and ensures that the BBBS Program is in compliance with its own casework manual.
7. The affiliate has a financial management and fund development plan that ensures that fund development efforts are substantial enough to address current operation needs, contingencies, and planned growth for the BBBS Program.
8. The affiliate has established financial management practices that meet *generally accepted accounting practices* and has an oversight structure that facilitates the early identification of potential problems.
 - a) The affiliate ensures that monies raised by or allocated to the BBBS Program are used solely for BBBS expenses.
 - b) The affiliate ensures that administrative costs charged to the BBBS program are accurate and reasonable.
 - c) The affiliate makes available BBBS Program income and expense comparisons to the BBBS Advisory Group at least quarterly.
9. The affiliate has a *risk management* system that ensures that the BBBS Program operational risks are identified and appropriately managed through insurance, and policies and procedures.
10. The affiliate employs a BBBS Program Director who is responsible to the affiliate for the overall administration of BBBS Program operations.
 - a) The BBBS Program Director is supervised and evaluated in accordance with the affiliate's personnel policies and the BBBS Program Director's job description.
 - b) The BBBS Program Director has involvement in employing, supervising, evaluating, and terminating all paid and volunteer BBBS staff in accordance with the affiliate's personnel policies.
 - c) The affiliate notifies the BBBSA national office in the event that the BBBS Program Director position becomes vacant.



11. The affiliate has a human resource development and management system that is designed to effectively manage all paid, volunteer, and intern personnel.
 - a) The affiliate has approved written personnel policies.
 - b) The affiliate has job descriptions that clearly state employee duties.
 - c) The affiliate has developed, and the board has approved, *competitive salary ranges* for all paid positions.
 - d) The BBBS Program Director and case management staff members have baccalaureate degrees as determined by the affiliate to be appropriate for positions.
 - e) The affiliate maintains confidential personnel records on each BBBS Program employee.
 - f) When volunteers function in BBBS staff positions, they are held accountable to the same qualifications and applicable policies and procedures as employed BBBS staff.
 - g) For those BBBS Programs using *non-degreed para-professionals*, the *case-work manual* contains policies and procedures which specify the process for the selection, training, and supervision of such staff assistants and specifies that all service delivery, from intake through *closure*, requires *professional staff* member decisions.
 - h) No individual is excluded on the basis of race, age, color, religion, national origin, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, veteran status, or disability.
 - i) The affiliate obtains criminal history records prior to hiring staff or assigning volunteers to staff positions.
12. The affiliate provides facilities and working conditions, which are conducive to accomplishing the operation of the affiliate including provisions to conduct private interviews, conforming to laws and regulations governing occupational health and safety.
13. The casework manual contains the policies, procedures, and forms to be used for implementing all One-To-One services.
 - a) The casework manual contains written board approved policies which address the following phases of One-To-One service delivery: written *eligibility criteria* for volunteer and youth participants, *youth outreach*, volunteer recruitment, *referrals, inquiry, intake, matching, supervision, closure*, and case record keeping.
 - b) The casework manual contains written board approved policies which address risk management issues for all One-To-One services offered by the affiliate, at a minimum: overnight visits of youth with volunteers; child sexual abuse prevention orientation, education and training; board members and/or staff members serving as Big Brothers and Big Sisters; need to interview *other persons residing with volunteer applicant*; and procedures for obtaining information about disclosed prior BBBS experience.



- 14. The children, youth, and volunteer inquiry process used by the affiliate provides the opportunity for the affiliate, parent/guardian, and volunteer to determine the appropriateness of participation and provides an *orientation* to all services provided by the affiliates.
- 15. The child intake process used by the affiliate is a consistent process to determine eligibility of children and youth for services based upon written eligibility criteria. Children and youth are not excluded on the basis of race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or marital status of parent.

Child Intake Process	Community-Based	Site-Based
Written consent from parent/guardian	<i>Required</i>	Required
In-person interview with child by BBBS staff or <i>designee</i>	Required	Required
In-person interview with parent/guardian	Required	<i>Not Required</i>
<i>Assessment of home environment</i>	Required	Not Required

- 16. The professional staff conducts an in-person interview with the volunteer. The volunteer intake process elicits necessary information enabling the professional staff to prepare recommendations based upon the volunteer’s ability to help meet the needs of the child.

Volunteer Intake Process	Community-Based	Site-Based
Application	Required	Required
Obtain references	Required (3)	Required (1)
Obtain <i>criminal history record</i>	Required	Required
<i>In-person interview</i>	Required	Required
Assessment of home environment	Required	Not Required
Written professional matching recommendations	Required	Required
Provide opportunity for <i>training</i>	Required	Required

- 17. The matching process enables the professional staff to assess and take into consideration all information gathered through applications and interviews of all parties.

Match Process	Community-Based	Site-Based
Child approves proposed match	Required	Required
Parent/guardian approves proposed volunteer	Required	Not Required
Volunteer approves proposed match	Required	Required
In-person match introduction by BBBS staff or <i>designee</i>	Required	Required



18. The professional staff develops and annually updates an *outcome-based plan* to make a positive difference for the young person based on information obtained during intake and through match supervision.
19. The professional staff oversees and ensures regular supervisory contact with volunteer, parent/guardian and child, in order to foster and maintain the growth of the relationship and meet the child's needs.

Match Supervision	Community-Based	Site-Based
Parent		
First Two Weeks <i>Contact</i>	Required	Not Required
First Year – Contact Monthly	Required (In-person contact may cover 2 months)	Not Required
Greater than one year – Quarterly Contact (every other contact)	Required	Not Required
Child		
First Two Weeks Contact	Required	Required
First Year – Contact Monthly	Required (In-person contact may cover 2 months)	Required (In-person contact may cover 2 months)
Greater than one year – Quarterly Contact	Required	—
Greater than one year – Monthly Contact	—	Required (In-person contact may cover 2 months)
Volunteer		
First Two Weeks Contact	Required	Required
First Year – Contact Monthly	Required (In-person contact may cover 2 months)	—
First Year – Bi-Monthly Contact	—	Required
Greater than one year – Quarterly Contact	Required	—
Greater than one year – Bi-Monthly Contact	—	Required

Note: Supervisory contact with child and parent/guardian should alternate as closely as possible to the schedule above, resulting in an equal number of contacts over the course of a year.

20. The professional staff conducts closure interviews with the parent/guardian, child and volunteer, to the extent that all parties are accessible to the professional staff, in order to assess the accomplishments of the match for meeting positive outcomes and the effect of the match closure.
21. The professional staff reassesses any program participant requesting a rematch.



22. The affiliate has developed policies and procedures regarding the management of confidential information.
23. Volunteer Big Brothers, Big Sisters, and Board Members are not excluded on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, veteran status, or disability.

VI. Amending the Standards of Practice for One-To-One Service

Any recommended *amendment* to the Standards of Practice for One-To-One Service will be discussed and considered by the National Program Committee at any of the three meetings held annually.

Federation recommendations may come from any individual and/or group and/or affiliate in the federation but must be received by the Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer no later than 60 days prior to the scheduled meeting of the Program Committee in order for it to receive due consideration.

The recommendation will be reviewed and if any action is deemed appropriate, it will be reported to, but not voted on, by the National Board of Directors at the same time. Further, all affiliated agencies will be informed of the recommendation, and any action deemed appropriate, that is being considered by the Program Committee, in the next available *Federation News* mailing following that particular Board Meeting.

Affiliated agencies may present any comments to their Regional Officer and/or National Professional Association Representative or the Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer.

The Program Committee will have the recommendation repeated on the agenda for their next meeting, take action, and recommend that action to the National Board of Directors for approval.

The action taken by the National Board of Directors will go into effect at the designated time specified in the action adopted.

VII. Alternate Standard Policy

If a Big Brothers Big Sisters affiliate has established a board approved standard of practice which is different from any Big Brothers Big Sisters of America's Standards of Practice for One-To-One Service, then that affiliate must request that their current board-approved standard of practice be accepted by Big Brothers Big Sisters of America as an alternate standard, understanding that it is the responsibility of the Big Brothers Big Sisters affiliate or program to follow BBBSA's Process for Requesting an *Alternate Standard*.



VIII. Process for Requesting an Alternate

This process outlines the steps that a Big Brothers Big Sisters affiliate or Big Brothers Big Sisters program must follow to request substitution for a standard of practice that is different from a Big Brothers Big Sisters of America's Standards of Practice for One-To-One Service.

Conditions that must exist before requesting an alternate:

- The request must be in writing and appear in a document (affiliate service manual or board minutes) that has been approved by the affiliate's board or the program's advisory board.
- The date of such board approval must be known and verifiable by board minutes.
- If the requested alternate is a service delivery standard, it must appear clearly and concisely in the affiliate's or program's casework manual that is used by case managers to provide consistent service, thus, being verifiable in writing.

Process for filing a request for an alternate:

1. The affiliate or program must file the request through the use of a form: Request for Alternate Standard Approval. This form may be secured from the national office, and must be submitted to the appropriate Field Manager for review. While the request may be submitted at any time, if the affiliate or program desires a determination prior to its regular affiliate review, the request must precede the review by three months.
2. The Field Manager will review the request, and submit the request to the Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer within twenty working days of receipt.
3. The Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer, the Director of Program Development, and the Director of Agency Development, will acknowledge receipt of the request, in writing, within ten working days of receipt; may request additional information from the affiliate or program or Field Manager; and will respond, in writing, to the request within thirty working days of receipt of request from the Field Manager. The determination on the proposed alternate standard of practice will be stated as approval, disapproval, or recommendation to modify.
4. A written appeal may be made to the National Program Committee. The committee shall recommend its decision to the National Board of Directors and will be reported to the affiliate or program in writing following its decision.



GLOSSARY

Advisory Group

Community volunteers who provide oversight and advice to BBBS Programs operating within a Sponsoring Organization

Affiliate

A not-for-profit corporation legally affiliated with BBBSA

Alternate standard

A BBBSA approved written procedure contained within an affiliate's casework manual that differs from a national Standard of Practice.

Assets

Positive features in a child's life that promote healthy development; e.g. internal asset — achievement motivation; external asset — family support.

Assessment of home environment

Documented professional evaluation of the physical surroundings (house and neighborhood) and the residents of the home and immediate neighborhood to determine:

- 1) If environment supports a healthy relationship
- 2) Safety issues
- 3) The presence or absence of family and community assets

Casework manual

Document that contains all policies, procedures, and forms for service delivery.

Closure

Cessation of the agency's development and support of the match relationship or cessation of an individual's participation in the service delivery of affiliate.

Community-based BBBS service

Adult and youth match activities that take place in the community without supervision by BBBS staff or other professional site-based personnel, not restricted to any one site.

Competitive Salary Ranges

Established minimum and maximum compensation for positions within the organization that are comparable to similar positions in other not-for-profit organizations within the local geographic area.



Designee

Individual from collaborative partner organization trained and authorized to perform BBBS staff function, e.g. school guidance counselor.

Eligibility criteria

Definition of the characteristics of a potential client or volunteer, which would make him or her eligible or ineligible to participate in the agency programs.

Executive

Chief professional officer, e.g. CEO, president, or program director in a sponsoring organization.

Full-time Executive

An individual who is employed as the chief professional staff the number of hours deemed by the board to constitute a full-time work week, or two individuals who job-share the equivalent number of hours, and equally share responsibilities.

Generally accepted accounting practices

Professional accounting practices adequate to provide financial controls and oversight.

In-person intake process

The required practice for accepting new program participants.

In-person supervisory contact

A planned, structured face-to-face meeting for the purpose of fostering and maintaining growth in the match relationship.

Inquiry

The process by which the agency provides information regarding the opportunity to participate or become involved with the organization.

Intake

The process of collecting information to make eligibility, matching, and outcome decisions.

Interview other persons residing in home of volunteer

The interview of any persons who through their relationship with a volunteer may come into one on one contact with a client who is matched with the volunteer and shares their living quarters, e.g. spouse, fiancée, roommate.



Matching

The process of deciding upon an appropriate match, presenting the match decision to the prospective match parties for approval, and introducing the match parties at an in-person meeting.

Match Contact

Interactive phone, written or in-person dialog between agency staff and parent/guardian, child and volunteer in accordance with the Standards of Practice for One-To-One service, for the purpose of fostering and maintaining growth in the match relationship to achieve positive outcomes. While e-mail, voice mail, or written communication is permissible on occasion, it may not be the exclusive form of match contact.

Mission-driven service

Services provided by the affiliate in accordance with its stated mission.

Not-for-profit tax exempt status

Tax status conferred by Federal Government indicating that agency is nonprofit and does not qualify as a foundation.

Non-degreed para-professionals

People without a baccalaureate degree, who by virtue of their skills, experience or training serve as agency staff to gather data but are not responsible for the assessment of the gathered information or the determination of an appropriate course of action.

Not required

A practice not required subject to the decision of a specific local affiliate.

Orientation

Review of expectations, BBBS program information, and an opportunity for interested volunteer applicants and parents/guardians/youth to determine the appropriateness of applying to participate.

Outcome-based Plan

Written strategies developed by the Case Manager, to focus on assets that are to be developed during the match relationship.

Positive Youth Development

Providing youth with a sense of safety and structure, belonging and membership, self worth and an ability to contribute, independence and control over their lives, closeness and several good relationships, competence and mastery, and self-awareness.



Professional Staff

BBBS staff who have a baccalaureate degree and training appropriate for their position, or degreed staff (“designees”) of a collaborating partner performing agreed-upon service-related procedures on behalf of the BBBS affiliate.

Reassessment

A formal review of the needs and eligibility of a child, or suitability of a volunteer, who has been previously matched, to determine whether a rematch is appropriate.

Quality assurance system

A comprehensive review and assessment system that evaluates all aspects of agency operations to insure quality at all levels.

Referrals

- 1) Provision of information regarding how to access or providing direct access to meet needs of program participants through other services within the community.
- 2) Receipt of information regarding individuals from other sources such as service organizations, schools, therapists, and employers with regard to participation in a BBBS program.

Required

Mandated by BBBSA Standards of Practice for One-To-One Service.

Risk Management System

A comprehensive review and identification of risk factors effecting agency operations, and children’s safety, and implementation of appropriate measures to mitigate risk.

Site-based BBBS service

Adult and youth match activities that take place within a supervised venue such as schools, businesses, corporations, churches, Boys and Girls Clubs, or community centers.

Sponsoring Organization

Not-for-profit organization that has among its programs a BBBS program, e.g. Family Services, YWCA.

Strategic planning process

Assessment of community needs and environmental influences, evaluation of agency’s mission based on community’s need; examination of agency’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; development of goals and objectives; and the identification of



tactics that will accomplish goals and objectives as well as who should implement tactics and the timetable for implementation.

Supervision of Matches

A function in the affiliate's case management system intended to provide support, safety and successful relationships in order to maximize the intended positive outcomes in a child's life.

Supervision of Staff

Employee support and accountability system.

Training of Volunteers

The provision of information relative to the development or enhancement of the participants' skills that will provide opportunity for positive youth development.

Training of Staff

Assisting people to develop the skills needed to perform their jobs in an effective manner.

Youth outreach

System or process of attracting appropriate youth to an affiliate's program through community media and cooperative relationships with referral sources.