Readiness Tool: Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS)
Community-Based Mentoring (CBM)

Planning for and implementing an evidence-based program involves many processes. This tool is designed to walk you through the processes for implementing BBBS and help you prepare for a strong quality evidence-based program implementation and sustainability.

Program Selection

Is BBBS a good fit for your community? While researching and comparing possible programs, consider the following information to determine if BBBS is the best fit for the community.

1. Are these the risk and protective factors identified and/or prioritized by your community?

BBBS Targeted Risk Factors	BBBS Targeted Protective Factors
- Academic failure or poor school performance - Lack of commitment to school - Early/persistent anti-social behavior - Rebelliousness - Friends who engage in problem behaviors/negative peer influences - Favorable attitudes towards problem behaviors/substance use - Early initiation of problem behaviors - Family conflict	- Exposure to community/cultural norms that do not favor antisocial behaviors and substance use - Involvement in and recognition for pro-social activities - Promotion of healthy beliefs and clear standards - Goal setting/Positive future orientation - Positive parent-child affect and parental trust - Improved relations with pro-social peers - Positive orientation to school and increased scholastic confidence and competency - Communication/interpersonal skills - Decision-making and critical thinking skills - Coping/self-management skills

2. Is BBBS CBM appropriate for the population you plan to target?

- Big Brothers Big Sisters makes meaningful, one-to-one, monitored mentoring matches between adult volunteers, "Bigs" and children, "Littles", ages 6 through 17, in the community. The youth often come from single-parent households and low-income neighborhoods. Youth targeted for this program are at high risk of exposure to substance use, violence and/or trauma at home and/or in the community.

3. What are the outcomes you intend to change in your targeted population?

BBBS Short-term (Proximal) Outcomes	BBBS Long-term (Distal) Outcomes
- Less favorable attitudes towards anti-social behavior/substance use - Increased healthy coping & stress/self-management skills - Increased decision making/critical thinking skills - Increased communication/interpersonal skills - Increased peer pressure resistance skills - Increased goal setting - Increased optimism in academic competency - Increased educational expectations - Increased positive orientation to school - Increased levels of trust in parent(s)/guardian(s) - Increased emotional support from peers - Increased trust in the mentor - Increased involvement with pro-social peers and in pro-social activities	46% less likely than the controls to initiate drug use. BBBS minorities were up to 73% less likely than similar minorities to initiate drug use. 27% less likely to initiate alcohol use (with a stronger effect for minority females – 54%) 32% less likely to hit someone 52% fewer days of school skipped (with higher effects for females – 84%) 37% fewer classes skipped - Gains in grade point averages - Increased confidence in academic efficacy - Improved Relationships: - Improved relations with parent(s)/guardian(s) - Improved peer relationships

4. Is it feasible for you to invest in the following key elements **BEFORE** BBBS is

Implementation Planning Steps

implemented or expanded?

- **Program Buy In:** Is their support for the implementation or expansion of BBBS in the targeted community? Have potential referral sources been engaged and ready to refer.
- **Program Coordination:** BBBS National office encourages communities and organizations seeking to start a BBBS program in their community to partner with the nearest BBBS affiliate and become a branch office.
- **Budget:** Is there a clear sustainability plan in place to address ongoing cost of the program once initial start–up or expansion funds are exhausted? Have specific commitments been made by sustainability funders?
- **Data collection and analysis plan:** PCCD grantees are required to submit quarterly reports via Egrants. Much of this data is exported from the existing BBBS AIM system but there are additional requirements of tracking length and frequency of match contacts which must be collected by the grantee.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON EPIS WEBSITE TO HELP PLAN FOR BBBS:

- BBBS Logic Model
- BBBS Implementation Manual
- Data collection for PCCD grantees

Implementation Steps

5. Can these expectations for quality and dosage be met within the existing structure and with the existing resources?
   - PCCD funded BBBS programs are expected to promote match contact length and strength to coincide with the national BBBS research. The research demonstrating positive outcomes was conducted on matched youth that met with their Big Brothers or Big Sisters an average of 3 times a month for 3 to 4 hours each time for an average of one year.
   - Orientation is required for all parent/guardians and volunteers to determine appropriateness for participation and provide an overview of services provided.
   - Volunteer Screening is required of all potential adult volunteers or Bigs. The screening process includes a written application, a background check, an extensive interview, and a home assessment.
   - A Youth Assessment is required all of youth entering the program. The assessment involves a written application, interviews with the youth and the parent, and a home assessment.
   - Supervision is a key element of the BBBS mentoring process and it occurs via an initial contact with the parent, youth, and volunteer within two weeks of the match; monthly contact with the volunteer, parent and/or youth during the first year; and quarterly contact with all parties during the duration of the match.

Steps for Assessing Program Impact

6. Does the Organization have the capacity to collect outcomes data and to monitor program fidelity?

Data collection:
   - Strength of Relationship (SoR), a youth-reported survey designed to assess the strength and success of the relationship between the mentor and mentee
   - Youth Outcomes Survey (YOS) a youth-reported baseline and post survey designed to examine changes in youth outcomes during their BBBS participation. AND/OR Program Outcome Evaluation (POE), a retrospective survey administered to mentors, youth and/or parents to track youth outcomes.

Data entry/analysis and PCCD reporting:
   - Designee to enter data into the BBBS Spreadsheet for Outcomes Analysis and PCCD Quarterly Reporting Tool
   - Designee to complete quarterly reporting requirements in Egrants for PCCD.

Fidelity monitoring:

- PCCD funded affiliates are required to participate in an implementation quality assurance review in the first quarter of the second year of funding. The review focuses on the following areas: frequency and duration of match contacts, length of relationships, outcome measurement completion rates, number of matches, frequency of match contact with case manager, and involvement of a collaborative board and community partners (to assess community reporting and sustainability efforts).

Steps for Sustainability

7. Can funds/resources be identified to sustain key implementation elements of the program beyond the initial seed funding? Make sure to carefully consider and designate those responsible for sustainability planning and securing funds/resources.
    - The majority of BBBS grants awarded by PCCD are for expansion of existing programs to target additional geographic areas or specific populations of youth at risk (i.e. children of incarcerated parents, adjudicated youth, or youth with disabilities). These expansions often include adding additional staff paid for by grant funds or special training needed not included in typical volunteer training. Special focus should be made during the grant cycle to assure the agency garners the resources necessary to support the expansion.

Addressing Challenges during Implementation

8. By carefully pre-planning BBBS implementation you will be addressing most of the common barriers encountered, however, it is still important to develop a plan for addressing day to day challenges before starting BBBS.
    - For most sites, one of the greatest challenges is recruiting volunteers. It can be especially difficult to attract male volunteers, volunteers who are interested in mentoring older youth, ages 13 and above, and volunteers whose diversity matches the youth population being served.
    - Conducting background checks of volunteers and securing child abuse clearances can be a lengthy process.
    - Sites have reported that, for home visitations, staff members need to possess skills that have been gained from and experience and backgrounds in human service, counseling, and education fields.
    - Data collection and survey administration can pose challenges due to low literacy populations, the age of participants, and variations in available data analysis systems.

For More Information go to www.EPISCenter.psu.edu