



Strategic Plan 2025-2028

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Executive Summary

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Kawartha Lakes - Haliburton (BBBSKL-H) is embarking on a new strategic direction to enhance our ability to empower children and youth through life-changing mentoring relationships. Our strategic plan centers on four key priorities. The acronym for our plan is “ENGAGE B.I.G”.

2025-2028 Strategic Priorities

1. Engage
2. Build Capacity
3. Innovate
4. Grow

Each priority is supported by specific goals and initiatives to drive meaningful outcomes for our community.

2025-2028 Strategic Priorities

1. Engage By:

- Increasing Community Awareness
- Inspiring Donors, Mentors and Partners
- Focusing on Volunteer Recruitment and Retention

2. Build Capacity By:

- Improving Governance, Structure and Stewardship
- Focusing on People and Culture
- Training Board, Leaders and Staff
- Meeting Quality Assurance Requirements
- Focusing on Staff Recruitment and Retention

3. Innovate By:

- Develop Relevant Programs
- Implement Relevant Programs
- Continuing to Implement the Theory of Change
- Investing in Tools

4. Grow By:

- Diversify Revenue Streams
- Obtain Donor Support Through Stewardship
- Improving Our Financial Stability
- Improving Our Risk Management and Crisis Response Abilities

- Increase our Presence

Through this strategic plan, BBBSKL-H is committed to creating a brighter future for the children and youth we serve, fostering meaningful relationships, and building a resilient organization that can meet the challenges of tomorrow. This vision positions us to ignite the power and potential of young people and strengthen our impact in the community.

This report provides background on the process that we followed to arrive at our strategic priorities and gives more insights into the goals and initiatives that we will undertake. The strategy is supported by an operational plan.



ENGAGE B.I.G.

Our 2025-2028 Strategic Roadmap – At A Glance

Our Vision... All young people realize their full potential

Our Mission... To enable life changing mentoring relationships and provide support to ignite the power and potential of young people

1.0 Engage	2.0 Build Capacity	3.0 Innovate	4.0 Grow
<p>Goals: In order to raise awareness of our services and to improve our visibility so that we can attract volunteer mentors and board members, we will increase community awareness, and inspire donors, mentors and partners, by focusing on volunteer recruitment and retention.</p> <p>Initiatives: 1.1 We will develop a strong communication strategy to raise awareness about our mission and impact. We will also utilize social media, events, and partnerships to connect with the community and share success stories. 1.2 We will clearly communicate the value of contributions and involvement. We will showcase the positive outcomes of our programs and create opportunities for donors, mentors, and partners to engage directly with the agency and its beneficiaries. 1.3 We will develop a targeted volunteer recruitment approach and highlight the personal and societal benefits of volunteering with youth. We will streamline the onboarding process and provide ongoing support and recognition for volunteers.</p>	<p>Goals: In order to build capacity and recruit and retain qualified and motivated staff and volunteers, we will focus on people and culture by investing in training and development. We will also improve our governance structure, and stewardship, and meet BBBS Canada's Quality Assurance Requirements.</p> <p>Initiatives: 2.1 We will ensure we have a clear and effective governance structure and policies in place. We will regularly assess and refine governance practices to enhance transparency and accountability. 2.2 We will develop organizational tools that focus on the employee life-cycle and embrace diversity, equity and inclusion. 2.3 We will invest in professional development opportunities, leadership training, and workshops that align with the agency's goals and values. 2.4 We will establish tools to achieve accreditation compliance. This may involve implementing monitoring systems, and incorporating feedback loops to continuously improve program quality and track progress. 2.5 We will focus on strategic staff recruitment and retention, valuing their contributions to the agency.</p>	<p>Goals: In order to ensure we are current and relevant, we will evaluate and develop meaningful programs, continue to implement the Theory of Change, and invest in tools.</p> <p>Initiatives: 3.1 We will regularly assess the needs of the youth we serve and adapt programs accordingly, stay informed about best practices in youth mentoring, and incorporate innovative approaches to keep our programs relevant and effective. 3.2 We will explore more group mentoring programs, match supports and solidify student placement programs. 3.3 We will regularly evaluate and adjust based on the outcomes and impacts of our programs. We will ensure that we remain adaptable and responsive to the evolving needs of the youth and the community. 3.4 We will embrace technology and tools that can enhance the efficiency of our operations.</p>	<p>Goals: In order to support the agency as it scales to meet emerging demands, services and programs, we will improve our financial stability, meet our financial goals, focus on long-term sustainability, and explore expanded community presence in Haliburton.</p> <p>Initiatives: 4.1 We will diversify our revenue streams to reduce dependence on single sources. 4.2 Through a strategic approach, we will cultivate and maintain strong relationships with donors. 4.3 We will enhance our financial security and sustainability. 4.4 We will undertake planning in crisis management, business continuity, safety, and security. 4.5 We will explore options to increase our presence in Haliburton, including a satellite office.</p>

Strategic Planning Process

To guide the development of this strategic plan, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Kawartha Lakes – Haliburton (BBBSKL – H) engaged a consultant to facilitate the process. The following steps were undertaken to ensure a thorough, inclusive, and forward-looking approach:

1. Leadership Vision and Initial Analysis:

Meetings were held with the Executive Director to discuss her vision for the organization's future, conduct a SWOT analysis, explore potential directions, and validate draft components of the plan. The Executive Director had done some pre-planning and work with the caseworker that formed the basis of the strategic priorities.

2. Environmental Scan:

An environmental scan is a process used to assess internal and external factors that impact an organization's ability to achieve its goals. It provides a comprehensive understanding of the organization's current state and operating environment, helping to inform strategic decision-making. An environmental scan was conducted in order to examine opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses to create a foundation for planning. We looked at internal and external factors and used a SWOT analysis to identify internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats. The environmental scan was shared with staff and the Board of Directors in order to provide insights to guide decision-making and strategic priorities, identify risks, recognize opportunities and align goals. A high-level summary of the environmental scan and SWOT is included in this report. Please refer to the detailed environmental scan for more information.

3. Staff Engagement:

Staff workshops were conducted to gather insights and ideas, focusing on:

- Strategic planning and environmental scanning
- Exploring new program and outreach opportunities
- Developing the key components of the strategic plan including the strategic priorities, objectives of those priorities as well as the expected activities and outputs

The draft strategic plan was then validated by the Board of Directors and some staff.

4. Board Involvement:

Meetings with the Board were held, including:

- Presenting the approach
- Validating the draft strategic plan and directions

5. Stakeholder Engagement:

Input was sought from key stakeholders to inform the plan, including:

- Families and Mentors: match monitoring meetings to understand family and mentor needs
- Schools and School Boards: meetings with school board representatives to assess community requirements
- Other stakeholders: an info graphic was created by the agency for the Strategic plan summary and sent out to the Community Planning Table, Donors list and Mentors and Families
- Staff and Board Member: workshops and meetings

6. Surveys and Feedback:

Draft surveys were developed for donors, partners and schools to gather insights and align strategies with stakeholder expectations. A decision was made by management not to send the full surveys, rather to use the general contents when validating the draft plan with stakeholders.

Feedback from all participants was incorporated into the plan, ensuring alignment with community needs and organizational goals. Overall, stakeholders expressed strong support for the proposed directions, affirming that the organization is on the right track to achieving its mission.

The agency has an inclusivity statement which is a foundational component to the strategic framework.

Who are we?

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Kawartha Lakes – Haliburton (BBBSKL – H) is the community’s leading child and youth mentoring organization. We facilitate life-changing and meaningful relationships that inspire and empower children and youth to realize their full potential. We focus on positive outcomes for children and their families.

We connect youth who face adversity, to caring adult mentors who will support them emotionally, help advise them, challenge them, and act as their companion. Our Traditional Mentoring Programs provide youth aged 6 to 16 with a positive role model to talk to, share their experiences of growing up, and ignite their potential.

Youth in our programs often struggle with societal barriers and face adversities such as poverty, family instability, developmental challenges, isolation, behavioral barriers, identity-based discrimination, and mental health issues. The pandemic exacerbated many of these barriers and challenges and they continue to linger. Through regular connections Bigs and Littles develop a trusted relationship built on common interests. They are supported by our experienced case manager.

The In-School Mentoring Programs provide youth with a role model mentor within school grounds where they engage in activities such as board games, crafts or just hang out on school grounds. The agency also has unique programs like the Summer Group Mentoring, Big Bunch and Kids 'N Kops for children and youth.

We are a member agency of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada (BBBSC). BBBSC is a federation comprised of 86 agencies providing life changing mentoring experiences in communities across Canada. BBBS Canada released the following statistics December 31, 2024:

- ~32,000 children served in mentoring programs (51% group; 49% 1:1) (Source: BBBSC 2023 Measuring Reach Impact Report), an increase of 20% from 26,435 in 2022
- 17,547 of volunteers support mentoring programs (87% 1:1; 13% group) (Source BBBSC 2023 Measuring Reach Impact Report), an increase of 10% from 15,945 in 2022.
- Number of agencies across the BBBS Network: 86

Our Current State

We match youth to positive adult mentors. We serve vulnerable and at-risk youth in our community each year through numerous programs that include both 1:1 and group mentoring programs. We have a broad infrastructure for supporting mentoring partnerships: detailed legal screening of mentors to ensure safe participation; we have professional staff supporting mentors and volunteers; systems for selecting, approving and monitoring volunteers; referring families to agencies that provide other services if required for the mentee and their family.

We are a unique BBBS agency in that we provide wrap-around services for children.

“Littles” (our mentees) often face adversity and are usually identified through our work with the school system or their family. A number of our programs are offered in partnership with school boards and on-site at schools.

All these bonding experiences allow mentoring friendships to grow and thrive. We match Bigs and Littles with similar lived experiences.

We train the mentor to build a developmental relationship that addresses five key measurable elements: expresses care, challenges growth, provides support, shares power, and expands possibilities.

Our revenue is generated through fundraising activities, grants, special events, public donations, and some funding through the Ministry of Education for in-school programming.

All children and youth need someone to look up to. More than this, they require someone to provide guidance and advice, to give attention and praise, as well as someone to have fun with! Children and youth might get this support from parents, relatives, caregivers, siblings, teachers,

and coaches. Many of the children and youth who come to Big Brothers Big Sisters do not have this vital support and seek an adult role model to talk to, learn from, and share experiences with. We provide this support through our volunteers and programs which are designed to foster resiliency and build self-confidence.

We're a small office (3 people) with a large rural catchment area (over 7,000 km²) serving almost 200 communities. We know that the right programs, tools, leadership, and supports will help us to mitigate the following impacts that we are experiencing:

- growing waits of our Littles with increased demand for services
- youth with increasingly complex situations
- greater isolation for the youth we serve
- difficulty attracting volunteer mentors (especially males) with the needed lived experience
- challenges recruiting new governance positions with diverse backgrounds
- service gaps for children of rural/remote communities
- in-person fundraisers have shifted in recent years with our primary fundraiser losing public interest and participation by over 75%
- we are financially strapped and anticipate laying off staff once grant funding expires
- competition for scarce charitable donations in the geographic areas we serve
- some skill deficits: technology, social media, resiliency

Collaboration between staff and volunteers in service delivery is our strength. We enable quality mentoring and work towards the highest standards to ensure positive outcomes for children and their families. Our volunteer mentors lead by example and develop mutual respect with their mentees, families and the community. They build their mentoring relationship on the basis of friendship, trust and empowerment.

Our no-cost mentoring programs strive to reach young people who face adversity and need an additional supportive relationship. Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies formally match young people with an adult volunteer Mentor. Mentors are professionally trained and supported to ignite the unique power and potential of each Mentee. Big Brothers Big Sisters provides every match with access to a professional caseworker who provides support to both the Mentee, Mentor and family.

Current research suggests that young people are more likely to flourish when they are embedded in a web of relationships with supportive, caring adults. This is the essence of Big Brothers Big Sisters programs; providing the relationships that young people need to succeed.

Traditional Mentoring: [Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Big Couples](#)

Our traditional mentoring program provides children and youth aged 6 to 16 with a positive role model to talk to and share their experiences of growing up. Regular outings develop a

relationship between the Bigs and Littles, built on trust and common interests. The match is supported by our experienced case manager. The result is a positive experience for both the Bigs and Littles.

The Big and Littles mentoring program requires weekly scheduled outings each month consisting of a few hours each week, with a minimum one-year commitment.

In-School Mentoring

The In-School Mentoring Program provides children and youth with a role model and a friend to talk to and share the experiences of growing up within school grounds. For one hour a week, the mentor meets with their mentee and engages in activities such as board games, crafts or just hanging out on school grounds.

The In-School Mentoring Program requires a weekly visit of one hour for the duration of the school year, with a minimum of a one-year commitment. Matches do not meet over the summer break or during other school holidays or PA days.

We've been fortunate to receive a recent grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to help us become more resilient after the pandemic. As a result of the grant our organization continues to evolve and improve. We've done some training of staff and board members, refreshed our governance structure, hired a community engagement coordinator for a two-year contract, developed this strategic plan, purchased some technology and more.

Children, Youth, and Their Caregivers

Many of the children and youth served by BBBSKL-H face significant barriers that impede their emotional, social, and academic growth. Approximately 75% of BBBS mentees experience anxiety or related mental health challenges.

Most of our mentees face 13 or more adversities, such as learning disabilities, developmental challenges, isolation, and behavioral or physical health barriers. These factors profoundly affect their ability to thrive in school and society, especially when compounded by a lack of positive developmental relationships and opportunities to participate in enriching activities.

The pandemic exacerbated these challenges. Organizations like Kids Help Phone reported a 350% surge in anxiety-related calls, with 76% of callers indicating they had no one to talk to—highlighting an urgent need for mentoring and engagement to combat social isolation and its consequences.

Research underscores that children and youth facing multiple barriers are at greater risk and benefit most from targeted programs that foster healthy relationships and social-emotional skill

development. Evidence also emphasizes the importance of mentors with experience, professional skills, and a commitment to providing transformative developmental-style mentoring for high-need youth. This approach is essential to help these children and youth overcome their challenges and build resilience.

Guided by Research and Data

BBBSKL-H remains committed to using data, research findings, and stakeholder feedback to shape its programs and services. Stakeholders consistently recognize the agency's positive impact and relevance, particularly valuing the 1:1 in-school mentoring support we provide.

At the request of BBBS Canada, BBBSKL-H has adopted the Theory of Change, a proven framework for planning, implementation, and evaluation that fosters social change. This model outlines Who We Serve, How We Ignite Potential, and What the Impact Is for the youth we serve. The Theory of Change incorporates new service delivery tools, standards, and training, ensuring alignment with national standards and quality assurance protocols. It also strengthens the way agencies monitor and support matches, enhancing outcomes for mentees.

Taylor Newberry Consultants have undertaken studies in recent years to help BBBS understand the impacts of the mentor-mentee relationships. The study results relate to the Ontario Region of BBBS.

As part of the strategic planning process, we reviewed the studies that were conducted by Taylor Newberry Consultants. We drew the following conclusions and recommendations for increasing interest and expanding our programs:

1. Promote the Role of Mentorship in Mental Health Support:
 - The reports highlight that mentees benefit from emotional and mental health support even when it is not the program's primary focus. Promoting this aspect could attract both potential mentors and mentees, especially given the increasing awareness of mental health challenges among youth.
2. Focus on Relationship Building:
 - The importance of consistent, developmental relationships in helping young people overcome challenges is a clear strength of the program. Continued emphasis on this element in outreach materials could demonstrate the program's broader impact on youth development, beyond academic performance.
3. Increase Awareness of Program Impact on School Engagement:
 - Many mentees reported an improved sense of belonging at school and greater enthusiasm for learning. Highlighting these positive outcomes in communications could appeal to schools, parents, and educators, encouraging greater program participation.

4. Expand Target Populations:
 - Given the continued impact of the pandemic on vulnerable populations, the program might seek to expand its reach to more schools or communities with high rates of pandemic-related learning loss or mental health issues. Targeting these areas may increase interest in the program.
5. Leverage Success Stories:
 - Sharing stories from mentors and mentees, particularly those that emphasize the transformative impact of mentorship on personal and emotional growth, could inspire new mentors and donors to get involved in the program.
6. Consider New Program Formats:
 - As the pandemic necessitated hybrid models of virtual and in-person meetings, there may be opportunities to continue offering flexible formats for mentorship. Virtual or hybrid models could help increase program reach, particularly in rural or underserved areas.

By focusing on these strengths and promoting the program's wider impact on youth well-being, there may be greater potential for expanding participation and engaging new stakeholders in BBBS programs.

As BBBSKL-H embarks on refreshing its strategic plan, the Theory of Change will serve as a critical guiding framework. This will ensure alignment with the 2024 National Standards and allow us to continue delivering high-quality, impactful programs that reduce barriers for children and youth.

Our Volunteers

Our ability to provide impactful mentoring programs relies heavily on the strength and adaptability of our volunteers. We recognize that flexibility and agility are essential to meeting the evolving needs of the youth we serve.

Research shows that matching mentees with mentors who share similar lived experiences—such as growing up in care or facing family violence—leads to better outcomes and deeper connections. These meaningful relationships have the greatest impact between the first and second year of a match when continuity and trust are strongest. However, volunteer recruitment and retention remain significant challenges.

We recently have received some media attention that has resulted in an increase interest from prospective mentor volunteers. We are in the process of screening those mentors.

Volunteer Demographics and Trends

Many of our current volunteers are baby boomers, a generation known for being goal-driven, self-directed, and mobile, with diverse interests and a preference for short-term opportunities. As research indicates a decline in the number of baby boomers available to volunteer, it is imperative that we expand our recruitment efforts to include Millennials, Generation X, and Generation Z, particularly as volunteer mentors.

Millennials and Generation Z bring unique motivations to their volunteerism. Millennials often value structured opportunities that align with their career and personal goals, while Generation Z, sometimes called “philanthro-kids,” is cause-driven and motivated to make a tangible difference in the world. Many organizations and employers recognize this, tailoring volunteer programs to align with their philanthropic values. To attract and retain these generations, BBBSKL-H must adapt its marketing, training, and mentoring programs to reflect their interests, values, and preferred methods of engagement.

Addressing Volunteer Needs and Enhancing Support

A key goal for BBBSKL-H is to meet the current and future needs of mentors while aligning with the qualities, characteristics, and interests identified by the young people we serve. In order to do this, we must inspire mentors and clearly communicate the value of contributions and involvement by showcasing the positive outcomes of our programs. We must also develop a targeted volunteer recruitment approach and streamline our onboarding process.

Looking forward, BBBSKL-H will prioritize recruiting a diverse, engaged, and well-supported volunteer base while adapting to meet the changing needs of our mentees and the broader community. Our volunteers are at the heart of our mission, and we are dedicated to empowering them to create meaningful, life-changing relationships.

Sustainable Fund Development

Sustainable funding is vital to maintaining our existing programs and introducing new ones that address the evolving needs of our rural and vast geographic community. Unlike many organizations, we receive no consistent direct government support or core funding from Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada. Our geographic area has fewer businesses and corporations compared to larger urban centers, making fundraising particularly challenging.

Each year, we must start anew to secure funding, which creates uncertainty for budgeting and planning. To meet these challenges, we rely on the generosity of local businesses, families, organizations, and community partners for both financial and volunteer support. We must continuously diversify and refine our fund development strategies. Lack of funding

necessitated that we move to part-time hours for the casework manager and the executive director.

Our goals for the future extend beyond securing funds; we aim to diversify our revenue streams and grow donor support through stewardship, engagement, and maintaining strong relationships.

Fundraising

BBBSKL-H organizes a variety of fundraising events. Historically, Bingo has been a foundational event, but in recent years, there has been a waning public interest and we can no longer rely on this event as a good source of funding.

To succeed in fundraising, we must inspire donors and sponsors by demonstrating the impact of our programs and aligning with their values. We need to explore and implement a mix of fundraising methods. We are a small organization and need to balance the strain on staff time to plan fundraising events with the overall benefits to running a particular event.

While the COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges for fundraising, it also highlighted the importance of resilience and adaptability. Many charities pivoted to digital platforms for fundraising events, a trend we continue to explore. We are running online auctions as a fundraising opportunity. Leveraging technology and maintaining flexibility will be crucial as we navigate future fundraising efforts.

Governance and Stewardship

Effective governance is a foundation of our success. This includes recruiting a diverse, skilled board; fostering transparent decision-making processes; and ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations. With support from grants such as the Ontario Trillium Foundation Resiliency Grant we have invested in some board development and leadership training.

Our board is committed to enhancing diversity and supporting the agency's transition to the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA). This includes reviewing and updating articles and bylaws to ensure compliance. Additionally, planning for business continuity and managing risks remain high priorities.

The pandemic underscored the importance of cash flow management, flexible operations, and technology as tools for organizational resilience. Moving forward, we will continue to leverage technology to enhance program delivery, communications, data analysis, and fundraising.

What do the 2024 National Standard Require for Strategic Planning?

A major impetus for renewing our strategic plan at this time is the requirement of the 2024 BBBS National Standards. The standards impose several requirements on member agencies regarding strategic planning:

1. Agencies must adopt the BBBS National Theory of Change, Mission, and Vision to guide decision making.
2. The National BBBS Theory of Change, Mission and Vision must be communicated with stakeholders.
3. Staff and Board members must reference the National Theory of Change, Mission and Vision when making operational and programming decisions.
4. The agency must be guided by a multi-year strategic plan.
5. The strategic plan is created by soliciting direct input from internal and external stakeholders.
6. Strategic planning includes a comprehensive environmental scan of the needs and strengths of the community served.
7. Strategic planning includes an overview of the agency's history, current financial status, and program reach.
8. Strategic priorities are articulated, measurable and linked to the BBBS Canada's Theory of Change, mission, and vision.
9. The agency's Board of Directors approves the strategic plan.
10. The Board of Directors reviews the agencies progress in achieving strategic priorities at least annually.

Further, the agency's strategic plan and priorities are supported by operational planning.

1. The operational plan must be articulated in writing and includes measurable goals and objectives.
2. Operational planning involves agency staff and relevant stakeholders.
3. Operational planning goals and objectives must be reviewed regularly by agency leadership.
4. Results from the operational planning reviews must be shared with Board members and used to adjust the allocation of resources (e.g., staffing, funding etc.), if needed.

National Standards also require that the agency's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is captured in the agency's strategic priorities and/or policies.

Environmental Scan – A Summary

A detailed environmental scan was completed as part of this strategic planning process. It can be found in another document. BBBSKL-H has identified numerous strategic opportunities to

enhance impact and innovation in youth mentoring. The environmental scan identified external factors influencing the agency's future directions, analyzing economic, social, technological, and competitive landscapes. It aimed to provide insights for informed decision-making, serving as a foundation for effective strategies, risk management, and competitiveness in a dynamic environment.

The environmental scan identified key strategic opportunities for the agency to enhance impact and innovation in youth mentoring. This scan identifies external factors influencing BBBSKL-H's future directions, analyzing economic, social, technological, and competitive landscapes. It aims to provide insights for informed decision-making, serving as a foundation for effective strategies, risk management, and competitiveness in a dynamic environment. The report, outlines key opportunities to adapt, innovate, and provide impactful support to the agency's mentees.

The environmental scan has identified key strategic opportunities for BBBSKL-H to enhance its impact and adapt to emerging needs. These include focusing on relevant mentoring programming, improving data quality, fostering partnerships, prioritizing staff and board development, embracing diversity and inclusion, and undergoing digital transformation. Additionally, the agency is encouraged to prioritize crisis planning, policy development, volunteer and board recruitment, innovative program development, and strategic communication to reinforce the BBBS brand identity. The report did not assess feasibility nor prioritize implementation.

Overview of Opportunities Identified

The following presents a high-level overview of the opportunities identified through the environmental scan. This is not an exhaustive list, rather meant to provoke thought and promote further discussion of the opportunities and consider their relevance and feasibility to BBBSKL-H. Please refer to the detailed report. Many of the suggestions are included in the strategic directions for the agency:

- focus on relevant mentoring programming that addresses the current and emerging needs of children and youth in the community.
- focus on the intended impacts of the new service delivery model of the Theory of Change and measurable impacts of the Developmental Relationship framework.
- continue to improve the quality of agency data and provide programming that is relevant, meaningful, and impactful and aligns with the National Theory of Change - a service delivery approach that focuses on training, recruiting, retaining, matching, and supporting mentors with a developmental style of mentoring and lived experience.
- the agency would also benefit from working with other agencies on partnerships that improve its programming overall and leverage opportunities for joint grant submissions where it makes sense.

- learning from the pandemic, find more ways to identify children in need and to evaluate whether there is a continued role for virtual mentoring.
- the agency could also find tools to be more resilient to change including training and developing its staff and Board members and conducting a salary review of comparable-sized agencies with a similar geographic catchment.
- seek out board members with diverse skills and backgrounds. This would align with National's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.
- to remain in step with other similar charities, digital transformation, particularly in fundraising and outreach will be key.
- to prepare for the future, undertake more crisis planning, business continuity planning, safety and security planning, etc.
- continue to develop and explore ways to connect with children/youth and caregivers. A thoughtful outreach strategy should consider community needs, the impact and benefits of mentoring, builds trust, and balances the agency's priorities. Several ideas are identified in the report and not meant as an exhaustive list.
- develop a volunteer recruitment strategy to attract Big Brothers and Big Sisters for the current and future demographic needs, lived-experience, and skills. Numerous strategies are identified in the report. Volunteers should represent the diversity of the community the agency serves. Consider inter and multi-generational engagement. Donor and volunteer appreciation events can improve retention.
- collaborate with schools and school boards to develop group programs. Focus on healthy relationships and mental wellness, creating summer programs for youth thriving in small group dynamics, social prescribing, addressing the lack of interest in virtual mentoring by emphasizing in-person opportunities, increasing community engagement and awareness through events and testimonials, advocacy campaigns, offering flexible mentoring models and establishing partnerships with local organizations. Additionally, the agency should maintain a feedback mechanism for continuous improvement, ensuring programs remain responsive to the evolving needs of the community.
- re-invent the agency's fund development and marketing strategies: identify needs, new initiatives, tools, and major prospects, like a Legacy Giving Program and annual campaign to build a pipeline of ongoing support and partnerships; procure requirements to enable social media campaigns for marketing and fundraising. Donor engagement and recognition would recognize and appreciate donors.
- current sector trends provide insight into what's happening in the non-profit sector across Canada and can inform strategic directions for the agency, e.g. the move to online donations, looking for businesses that align with the agency's values, tailoring volunteer recruitment to specific demographics, measuring impact, focusing on DEI, exploring partnerships, etc.
- implement the new governance structure, support virtual needs, promote change and effective decision-making, update by-laws, facilitate board development, succession plan for board, develop a strategy to attract and retain board members, review policies and procedures to enable the agency to better operate in crisis (e.g. policies on working remotely, staff leaves, internal controls, social media, IT security, risk strategies).

- understand recent legislative compliance matters particularly ONCA and keep abreast of the matters of the National insurance policy and lawsuits facing other agencies.
- by focusing on strategic communications and branding, BBBSKL-H could clarify misconceptions and establish a distinct identity from the Boys and Girls Club. This would involve clearly articulating the unique mission, values, and programs, emphasizing the one-on-one mentoring relationships that distinguish it. Educational campaigns, collaboration with The Boys and Girls Club, community presentations, a strong online presence, media partnerships, staff and volunteer training, consistent visual branding and community engagements will collectively contribute to clarifying misconceptions.

SWOT Analysis

As part of the strategic planning process we completed an analysis of our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT). This SWOT provides a foundation to identify strategic priorities and focus resources on opportunities while addressing weaknesses and leveraging strengths.

While the organization faces notable challenges, it is well-positioned to capitalize on its strengths and opportunities. Strategic investments in governance, staff support, volunteer engagement, and innovative funding strategies will be essential for ensuring long-term impact and sustainability.

Strengths:

The organization's core strengths lie in its ability to build meaningful relationships with clients and support families effectively. Over the past four years, significant strides have been made in match support, allowing the organization to meet the evolving needs of mentors and mentees. Community presence is a major asset, with strong connections to local schools, businesses, and civic organizations like the City of Kawartha Lakes, Masons, and third-party fundraisers. Initiatives like free summer programs for families living below the poverty line in Lindsay showcase the organization's commitment to addressing community needs, while diverse matches foster inclusivity and enrichment. Effective communication and event planning also contribute to the organization's visibility and success.

Weaknesses:

Challenges include maintaining programs during the school year and updating policies to meet the new 2024 National Standards. Staff training, onboarding, and retention require attention, as over-commitment to programs and events risks staff burnout. A lack of consistent funding and an underdeveloped fund development plan further exacerbates these issues. Additional gaps include vague eligibility criteria for mentees and a limited number of board volunteers, which impacts governance and strategic capacity.

Opportunities:

There is significant potential to address these challenges and grow the organization. Developing programs tailored to community needs, improving data and analytics, and strengthening partnerships can enhance the organization's impact. Strategic investments in staff and board training, competitive salaries, and digital transformation—especially in fundraising and outreach—can drive innovation and sustainability. Implementing a volunteer recruitment and retention strategy, reinventing marketing and fundraising approaches, and embracing sector trends will also position the organization to meet emerging challenges. Lastly, responding proactively to new BBBS standards and governance requirements will ensure compliance and organizational resilience.

Threats:

External pressures, such as competition for limited funding and volunteers, pose ongoing risks. Increasing youth needs, coupled with long waitlists, strain the organization's ability to deliver services, potentially impacting public perception. Financial challenges and the risk of brand confusion with other organizations, like Boys and Girls Club, highlight the need for clear differentiation and robust donor engagement. Adapting to new standards and maintaining office reputation amidst these challenges remains critical.

The following page provides a visual depiction of the SWOT.

The SWOT At a Glance

Strengths

- Build client relationships
- Support families
- Help with service navigation
- Improved match support particularly over the last 4 years
- Supporting matches in their changing needs
- Responding to community needs
- Free summer programs for families living below poverty line in Lindsay
- Diverse matches and interactions with kids with different backgrounds
- Effective Communications
- Good Community Connections including presence planning tables, local schools, podcasts (on-line, radio), local cable stations, City Of KL, Masons, Flato, College/University, 3rd party fundraisers (e.g. fashion show), BIA 100 Women, MP, MPPs, etc.
- Event Planning

Weaknesses

- Building and maintaining programs during the school year
- Updating policies to make them relevant to service delivery (e.g. eligibility criteria) and comply with new 2024 National Standards
- Staff training
- Staff on-boarding
- Over-committing to programs and event planning without resources and to avoid staff burn-out
- Vague eligibility requirements for mentees
- Lack of funding
- Lack of fund development plan
- Board volunteers

Opportunities

- Programs that address community needs
- Measuring our impact
- Improve data and analytics
- Strengthen partnerships
- Training and development for staff and board
- Staff retention strategy with competitive salaries
- Board diversity
- Digital transformation particularly in fund-raising and outreach to make connections
- Volunteer recruitment strategy to attract and retain, with data and conversion statistics
- Reinvent fund raising, fund development and marketing strategies
- Respond to current sector trends
- Implement the new governance structure
- Respond to new BBBS standards, legal and compliance issues
- Better crisis responsiveness and management
- Community engagement & connections
- Stronger donor recognition, etc.

Threats

- Competition for scarce donation and funding (grants, businesses, major donors, and events) dollars
- Stagnant number of Big volunteers, competition for volunteers
- Increased needs of youth referrals that we can't meet, e.g. higher needs in youth and children on our waitlists
- Public opinion decreased with increasing wait lists
- Brand and office reputation if we can't meet service needs
- Adapting and incorporating new standards and Developmental Relationships into daily programs and operations
- Governance structure and using best practices
- Finances
- Confusion with the Boys and Girls Club

Vision

Several years ago, BBBS Canada asked agencies to adopt its vision. BBBSKL-H agreed to adopt this vision and reaffirmed its commitment during this current review of its strategic plan.

All young people realize their full potential

Mission

Similar to the Vision statement, BBBSKL-H had previously agreed to adopt BBBS National's mission statement. However, recent service delivery changes to provide wrap around services warrant a minor change to the agency's mission. The former mission was "to enable life changing mentoring relationships to ignite the power and potential of young people".

To enable life changing mentoring relationships and provide support to ignite the power and potential of young people

Diversity Vision

At BBBSKLH, our commitment to diversity is our promise to each other and the communities we serve. We strive to reach out to and welcome every child, every mentor, every staff person and every volunteer so that we may support, strengthen, benefit from and contribute to the richness and complexity that is Canada. BBBSKLH is committed to being an inclusive movement in which differences are valued and respected in all aspects of service delivery and organizational practices. By continually demonstrating our commitment to these principles, we enrich ourselves and the lives of those we are dedicated to serving.

Strategic Priorities

In workshops and brainstorming sessions with staff and the board, the following priorities emerged under the theme “Engage B.I.G.”

Let’s look at each of the four Strategic Priorities and the Objectives and Activities that will get the agency there.

1. Engage

Goals: In order to raise awareness of our services and to improve our visibility so that we can attract volunteer mentors and board members, we will increase community awareness, and inspire donors, mentors and partners, by focusing on volunteer recruitment and retention.

Objectives	Activities & Outputs
<p>1.1 Increase Community Awareness: We will develop a strong communication strategy to raise awareness about our mission and impact. We will also utilize social media, events, and partnerships to connect with the community and share success stories.</p> <p>Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amplify our Voice: To raise awareness of our services and to improve our visibility so that we can attract volunteer mentors and board members•need to look at competitors differently and more specifically	<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Develop plans (e.g. communications, social media, and/or marketing) that outline goals, target audience, messaging, and varied channels and that include strong social media components and utilize including email newsletters, social media, and personalized outreachb. Craft key messages that highlight the impact of programs and the positive change we aim to achieve in the communityc. Identify and collaborate with local influencers or community leaders who can amplify our message and voiced. Establish partnerships with other organizations, businesses, or community groups to cross-promote each other's initiatives.

Objectives

Activities & Outputs

1.2 Inspire Donors, Mentors, and Partners:

We will clearly communicate the value of contributions and involvement. We will showcase the positive outcomes of our programs and create opportunities for donors, mentors, and partners to engage directly with the agency and its beneficiaries.

Why?

- Community Connectedness

- a. Develop donor recognition plan and long-term engagement plans for donors, mentors, and partners to foster sustained involvement and commitment
- b. Gather metrics so that we can clearly communicate the financial impact of contributions, illustrating how each donation translates into specific program outcomes
- c. Share specific examples of how contributions are making a difference in the lives of beneficiaries
- d. We will explore an Ambassador program and an Alumni program to amplify the value of our services through authentic storytelling, increasing community engagement and recruitment
- e. Offer customized recognition opportunities based on the preferences of donors, mentors, and partners
- f. Consider naming opportunities, sponsorships, or tailored acknowledgment that aligns with the level and type of support provided

1.3 Focussing on Volunteer Recruitment and Retention:

We will develop a targeted volunteer recruitment approach and highlight the personal and societal benefits of volunteering with youth. We will streamline the onboarding process and provide ongoing support and recognition for volunteers.

Why?

- Program sustainability
- COVID response saw the need to shift programs but the current level of support is not sustainable with staffing levels and volunteer recruitment outcomes

- a. Develop a Mentor Recruitment/Retention plan with targeted recruitment campaigns that highlight the impact volunteers can make and the unique contributions they can bring
- b. Develop clear and compelling volunteer job descriptions that outline roles, responsibilities, and expectation, highlighting the impact of each volunteer role and how it contributes to the overall success of the agency
- c. Implement a volunteer recognition program that acknowledges the time and effort volunteers contribute including celebrating milestones, anniversaries, and achievements through personalized thank-you notes, certificates, or awards
- d. Foster a sense of community among volunteers by organizing social events, networking opportunities, or volunteer appreciation gatherings.

2. Build Capacity

Goals: In order to build capacity and recruit and retain qualified and motivated staff and volunteers, we will focus on people and culture by investing in training and development. We will also improve our governance structure, and stewardship, and meet BBBS Canada's Quality Assurance Requirements.

Objectives

2.1 Improve Governance, Structure, and Stewardship:

We will ensure we have a clear and effective governance structure and policies in place. We will regularly assess and refine governance practices to enhance transparency and accountability.

Why?

- Appropriate/compliant policies and defined roles and responsibilities, lead to strong oversight and improve program understanding
- Governance practices and by-laws improve effectiveness, reduce risk and attract committed leadership so that we can better mobilize resources, and better serve Littles

Activities & Outputs

- a. Revisit the governance structure
- b. Update By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation (Letters patent) for compliance with ONCA
- c. Update all policies to ensure compliance with National Standards, laws, best practices, etc. including:
- d. development and review of policies and procedures to support and strengthen program services
- e. development and review of Human Resources policies to clarify roles and responsibility of staff
- f. Update of governance policies
- g. Update/develop board evaluation, self-assessment tools and skills analysis

Objectives

Activities & Outputs

2.2. Focus on People and Culture:

We will develop organizational tools that focus on the employee life-cycle and embrace diversity, equity and inclusion.

Why?

- To keep current and meaningful

- a. Update position descriptions
- b. Review performance evaluations and goal setting tools (e.g. forms, timing, tracking etc.)
- c. Identify individual and collective training and development needs
- d. Identify Board development needs
- e. Develop a DEI statement

2.3 Train Board, Leaders, and Staff:

We will invest in professional development opportunities, leadership training, and workshops that align with the agency's goals and values.

Why?

- Continuous training is essential for keeping team informed and motivated

- a. Provide training to staff, mentors and board members to continue to develop needed skills
- b. Provide training for the fundraising team to enhance their skills in relationship-building, communication, and strategic thinking

Objectives

Activities & Outputs

2.4 Meet BBBS Canada's Quality Assurance Requirements:

We will establish tools to achieve accreditation compliance. This may involve implementing monitoring systems, and incorporating feedback loops to continuously improve program quality and track progress.

Why?

- To achieve compliance with National Standards and accreditation

- a. Update policies for 2024 National Standards
- b. Implement schedule for regular review of policies and reporting to the board
- c. Meet quality assurance requirements

2.5 Focus on Staff recruitment and retention:

We will focus on strategic staff recruitment and retention, valuing their contributions to the agency.

Why?

- To recruit and retain inspired, motivated, qualified staff committed to the agency's mission

- a. Develop effective staff recruitment and retention strategies
- b. Review and update compensation packages to align with sector standards, employee expectations etc., together with a strategy on financial viability
- c. Actively promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace and develop a DEI operational plan
- d. Organize team-building activities, social events, and employee engagement initiatives

3. Innovate

Goals: In order to ensure we are current and relevant, we will evaluate and develop meaningful programs, continue to implement the Theory of Change, and invest in tools.

Objectives

Activities & Outputs

3.1 Develop Relevant Programs:

We will regularly assess the needs of the youth we serve and adapt programs accordingly, stay informed about best practices in youth mentoring, and incorporate innovative approaches to keep our programs relevant and effective.

Why?

- To understand emerging community needs and be relevant
- To align with education system goals
- Better data collection

- a. Explore relevance of social prescribing to our programs
- b. Review Taylor Newberry survey reports to determine if programs need changing and whether additional surveys required
- c. Conduct school, school board survey
- d. Conduct any needed supplemental mentor and family surveys

3.2 Implement Relevant Programs:

We will explore more group mentoring programs, match supports and solidify student placement programs.

Why?

- To respond to emerging community needs and be relevant
- To implement Theory of Change into new programming
- To align with education system goals

- a. Pilot new program initiatives and approaches, incorporating feedback from participants and mentors
- b. Develop and launch group mentoring programs that allow for more youth to be served simultaneously and tailor group programs to address specific needs, such as academic support, life skills, or career exploration
- c. Develop a plan to strengthen partnerships with schools, colleges, and community organizations to streamline the student placement process
- d. Expand match supports and wrap around supports
- e. Develop clear guidelines and procedures for student placement programs
- f. Engage with teachers, counselors, and administrators to align mentoring efforts with educational goals

Objectives

3.3 Continue to Implement the Theory of Change:

We will regularly evaluate and adjust based on the outcomes and impacts of our programs. We will ensure that we remain adaptable and responsive to the evolving needs of the youth and the community.

Why?

- To ensure meaningful and relevant programs and respond to changing needs

Activities & Outputs

- a. Implement evaluation tools to measure the impact of programs on specified criteria e.g. the academic, social, and emotional development of youth or other relevant measurements
- b. Use data and feedback to refine and improve programs continually
- c. Share success stories and program outcomes to demonstrate the effectiveness of initiatives

3.4 Invest in Tools:

We will embrace technology and tools that can enhance the efficiency of our operations.

Why?

- To keep current and meaningful

- a. Implement a donor relationship management (CRM) system to streamline communication and track donor interactions
- b. Leverage technology for online giving, mobile fundraising, and other digital channels
- c. Analyze donor data to identify trends, preferences, and opportunities for targeted engagement

4. Grow

Goals: In order to support the agency as it scales to meet emerging demands, services and programs, we will improve our financial stability, meet our financial goals, focus on long-term sustainability, and explore expanded community presence in Haliburton.

Objectives

Activities & Outputs

4.1 Diversify Revenue Streams:

We will diversify our revenue streams to reduce dependence on single sources.

Why?

- Meet financial commitments
- Long term sustainability

- Formulate comprehensive financial sustainability plan that outlines short-term and long-term goals and includes an exit strategy if it becomes necessary
- Explore and implement mix of fundraising methods, including individual giving, corporate partnerships, grants, events, agency partnerships & online fundraising
- Research innovative approaches, such as crowdfunding, peer-to-peer fundraising, and social media campaigns
- Research opportunities to diversify our grant portfolio by targeting foundations, government grants, & other sources
- Develop compelling grant proposals that clearly articulate our impact and alignment with funders' objectives

4.2 Obtain Donor Support through Stewardship:

Through a strategic approach, we will cultivate and maintain strong relationships with donors.

Why?

- To strengthen relationships and show gratitude and understand donor needs and preferences

- a. Develop a donor engagement plan that outlines communication strategies, frequency, and channels
- b. Develop and implement a donor stewardship program to acknowledge contributions and demonstrate the impact of their support
- c. Share compelling stories and updates about our impact to keep supporters engaged

Objectives

Activities & Outputs

4.3 Improve our Financial Stability:

We will enhance our financial security and sustainability.

Why?

- To ensure that there are adequate financial resources to balance and support the services, programs and activities of the agency as we scale.

- a. Review our office expenses (this was completed in 2020 and expenses were streamlined. It's time to do review again.)
- b. Establish budgeting practices that prioritize long-term financial health over short-term objectives
- c. Develop stronger financial policies and procedures that utilize best practices and are consistent with 2024 National Standards

4.4 Improve our Risk Management and Crisis Response Abilities:

We will undertake planning in crisis management, business continuity, safety, and security.

Why?

- To ensure continued operating during and after disruptive events or disasters, minimizing downtime and ensuring the continuity of critical business functions.

- a. Develop Business continuity plan (e.g. alternative work locations, system back-ups, etc.)
- b. Develop an emergency response plan (e.g. evacuation procedures, contact lists, etc.)
- c. Undertake a risk review to understand vulnerabilities
- d. Develop succession plans for key agency and board positions

Objectives

4.5 Improve our Risk Management and Crisis Response Abilities:

We will explore options to increase our presence in Haliburton, including a satellite office.

Why?

- To evaluate the feasibility and potential impact of establishing a satellite office in Haliburton to expand services and meet community needs

Activities & Outputs

- a. Develop a feasibility report with options
- b. Engage stakeholders including community members and potential funders to assess needs and opportunities
- c. Submit the feasibility report and stakeholder feedback to the Board

Summary

Our strategic plan is designed to be a dynamic and responsive roadmap, guiding our organization toward greater impact and sustainability. Rooted in our mission and informed by the evolving needs of our community, the plan outlines clear priorities and actionable goals. It reflects our commitment to adaptability, innovation, and accountability, ensuring we remain a trusted and effective partner in creating brighter futures for children and families. Through this plan, we aim to strengthen our programs, deepen community connections, and build a resilient foundation for long-term success.

Appendix A: Theory of Change



Big Brothers
Big Sisters



THEORY OF CHANGE

OUR MISSION

To enable life-changing mentoring relationships to **ignite** the power and potential of young people

WHO DO WE SERVE?



Young people who face adversity AND are in need of an additional consistent and supportive **Developmental Relationship**¹

HOW DO WE IGNITE POTENTIAL?



- » By intentionally **recruiting** based on the needs of a community's young people
- » By **matching** young people with a **professionally screened** volunteer mentor
- » By **monitoring and supporting** that match with a professional caseworker
- » By **training and supporting** the mentor, the mentee and the family
- » By **building a Developmental Relationship** between the mentor and the mentee that: Expresses Care; Challenges Growth; Provides Support; Shares Power; and Expands Possibilities
- » By **graduating** the match relationship towards natural support

WHAT IS THE IMPACT?



Young people graduate our programs with **measurable outcomes**:

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

- » Relationship skills
- » Social awareness
- » Responsible decision-making
- » Self-management
- » Self-awareness

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

- » Positive identity
- » Mental wellness
- » Social inclusion & empowerment

EDUCATIONAL ENGAGEMENT & EMPLOYMENT READINESS

- » School connectedness
- » Commitment to learning
- » Enhanced constructive use of time

1 "Developmental Relationships Framework" © 2018 Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN. www.search-institute.org

OUR VISION

All young people realize their **full potential**

Appendix B: History of the Big Brother Movement: Canada

The first Big Sisters program was offered in Canada in 1912, followed by the first Big Brothers agency in 1913. In 1913, Toronto businesses sent a representative to New York to investigate the Big Brother Movement. Impressed with what he saw, the representative convinces his fellow businessmen to begin a similar service in Toronto. Originally Big Brothers of Metropolitan Toronto worked with both boys and girls who came to their attention through the courts. Encouraged by the growth of the movement, a Board of Directors was formed and professionals hired as permanent staff. A similar organization was formed in Hamilton in 1921, and eventually in several other cities across Canada. In the early 1960s, Big Brothers Association reorganized their services to assist boys between 6 and 16 years of age from father-absent homes.

By 1964, ten Big Brothers Associations including Toronto, Hamilton, Vancouver, St. Catharines, Peterborough, Owen Sound, Niagara Falls, Kitchener-Waterloo, Welland, and Oakville, provided service to a total of 300 unmatched boys. These agencies, which were affiliated with Big Brothers of America, decided to form a Canadian organization with a view to promoting the Big Brother concept throughout Canada. Big Brothers of Canada was federally chartered on December 15, 1964. By 1972, 60 Big Brother agencies in Canada were providing service to 3,000 boys, a ten-fold increase in eight years! In that year, Big Brothers of Canada signed a separation agreement with Big Brothers of America to become a completely autonomous national body. Growth was rapid in the ensuing years. By 1975, there were almost 100 agencies with 5,200 matched, and by 1980, 150 agencies were serving 7,200 children.

In the mid-1970s, requests were received from several communities to establish joint Big Brothers/Big Sisters agencies in Canada. The first joint agency in Canada was Halifax, N.S., followed shortly by Victoria, B.C. The majority of new agencies being formed offered services to both boys and girls.

Over the last twenty years we have seen significant growth in the number of children and youth mentored through a range of programs. Much of this growth has been fuelled by new ways of delivering programs including In-School Mentoring and Group Mentoring. Today the movement delivers a variety of mentoring programs including: Big Brothers Mentoring, Big Sisters

Key milestones in the BBBS history include:

- The first agency, Big Brothers of Toronto, was founded in 1913. Big Sisters began as a program of another organization in 1912.
- 1975 first joint Big Brother Big Sister agency in Halifax
- 2001 Big Brothers of Canada, Big Sisters of Canada, and Big Sisters of Ontario unify to create Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada
- In 2012 our 118 agencies served approximately 36,000 children and youth with the support of over 24,000 mentors.
- 2013 Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada celebrates 100 years of mentoring children and youth

Mentoring, In-School Mentoring, Go Girls! Group Mentoring, Game On! Group Mentoring, Couples for Kids, and Teen Mentoring.

As of early 2014, 118 Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies or affiliates operate in Canada, with programs in every province and territory. Agencies range in size from those serving fewer than 100 children to those serving over 1,000 children and youth.

The past 10 years have witnessed a great deal of consolidation and partnering— not long ago over 180 agencies served fewer than 20,000 young people. Looking across the country, you'll see satellite offices, partnerships with other youth serving organizations, and licensing agreements (managed from national office).¹

2021 saw the completion of BBBS Canada's Strategic Framework aimed at transforming the operations of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada with the goal of fully living into our Mission, Vision & Theory of Change. This framework will modernize the work of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada and allow us to more efficiently meet the needs of our mentees.

In 2022, BBBS comprised of 95+ member agencies serving more than 1,100 communities across Canada, each year we help over 41,000 young people access the transformative benefits of mentoring relationships with caring, trained volunteers. Our national organization provides services and programs to our membership agencies to assist them in their work with parents, caregivers, school communities, mentees and volunteers. The National Office is a registered Canadian charity and is accredited through the Imagine Canada Strong Charities Standards Program.

BBBS Canada released the following statistics December 31, 2024:

- ~32,000 children served in mentoring programs (51% group; 49% 1:1) (Source: BBBS 2023 Measuring Reach Impact Report), an increase of 20% from 26,435 in 2022
- 17,547 of volunteers support mentoring programs (87% 1:1; 13% group) (Source BBBS 2023 Measuring Reach Impact Report), an increase of 10% from 15,945 in 2022.
- Number of agencies across the BBBS Network: 86

The Big Brother/Big Sister program is no longer limited to Canada and the USA; Big Brother/Big Sister mentoring organizations now exist in many countries worldwide, including Japan, Korea, the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Jamaica and Israel.

¹ Some of the content of this appendix was obtained from the "Essential Leadership Guide A Resource for Executive Directors, Agency Board Members, and Agency Staff Members in Leadership Roles", from Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada (revised 2018)

Appendix C: History of the Big Brother Movement: USA

On July 4th, 1903, a young Cincinnati businessman name Irwin F. Westheimer observed a young boy sorting through a garbage can for food. Mr. Westheimer befriended the child and discovered that the boy lived in a home where his father had died. Mr. Westheimer took the boy under his guidance, saw him regularly and helped him as a 'big brother'. Recognizing the value of his involvement with the boy, Mr. Westheimer then asked a number of friends to act in a similar capacity to other boys and young men from father-absent homes. He approached the Men's club of the Central Presbyterian Church to assist these children by becoming 'big brothers'; that's how Big Brothers was born.

In 1908, Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, learning the work of Big Brothers of New York City, organized the first Big Sister program there to provide similar service to girls and young women. Big Brothers of New York incorporated in 1909. The movement spread from city to city across the USA as individuals and groups recognized the need for this service in their own communities. The first Big Brother Big Sister National Conference was held in October, 1917, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Although there was not a central organization providing assistance to new agencies, an attempt was made during the late 1930s to organize a national Big Brothers and Big Sisters organization, but this effort seems to have floundered at the outbreak of World War II. In 1946, representatives of 13 Big Brother agencies met to form Big Brothers of America (BBA). From 1947, BBA grew slowly and by 1963, affiliated numbered 35. National staff provided consultation, evaluation, standards of service, public relations and research.

In 1972 the National Board, following a complete review, decided to re-organize BBA. This resulted in a new constitution and by-laws, program priorities, staff, and a plan for the future.

In 1973, BBA and Big Sisters International (BSI, which had formed two years before), recognized a commonality of interest and the growing number of joint Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies, and embarked upon a program of mutual co-operation by forming a Merger Committee from both Boards of Directors. An agreement of Merger was adopted by the corporations on June 17, 1977 and Honorary Chairman, Gerald R. Ford, presided over the affair. Today in the United States, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America provide service to approximately 480-member agencies and more than 100,000 children.

Current Mission

Create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth.

Current Vision

All youth achieve their full potential.