

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
311 WEST SARATOGA STREET
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21201

DATE: December 30, 2010

POLICY #: SSA # 11-17

TO: Directors, Local Departments of Social Services
Assistant Directors, Local Departments of Social Services

FROM: Carnitra D. White, Executive Director *C.D. White*
Social Services Administration

RE: Big Brother Big Sister of Central Maryland Guidelines

PROGRAMS AFFECTED: Out-of-Home Placement Services (Foster Care Services)
and Transitioning Youth Services

ORIGINATING OFFICE: Out-of-Home Placement

ACTION REQUIRED OF: All Local Departments

REQUIRED ACTION: Implement policy and procedure for referring youth to Big
Brother Big Sister of Central Maryland

ACTION DUE DATE: Immediately

CONTACT PERSON: Deborah Ramelmeier
Deputy Executive Director of Programs
(410) 767-7506

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy directive is to establish a protocol and provide direction to the Local Departments of Social Services on referring youth in Out-of-Home Services to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Maryland (BBBSCM).

Background:

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Maryland, Inc. (BBBSCM) has been serving at-risk youth since 1952. As a full affiliate of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, BBBSCM uses a proven model to provide one-to-one mentoring services. It is their mission to help youth become confident, competent, and caring young adults by providing the influence of a positive adult role model and the friendship of a caring adult to a child in need. BBBSCM offers two mentoring programs:

Community Based - Children are paired with caring adults according to common interests, compatible personalities and convenient distance from each other. The volunteers are recruited; go through an extensive interview and complete background and reference checks. Volunteers mentor children to enhance and further develop the child's primary strengths. The model allows the child to develop other assets at his/her pace as their confidence grows. Monthly supervision, trainings, and activities are provided by a BBBSCM match support specialist.

School Based - One-to-One mentoring, based on the developmental asset model, is applied in a school setting where volunteers meet their mentees for one hour every week during the school year. Teachers and support staff identify the "at-risk" children that they feel would benefit from a mentor. Weekly on site supervision is provided by a BBBSCM case manager.

Eligibility:

Youth in Out-of -Home Services (foster care, kinship care, and independent living) are eligible for referral to Big Brother Big Sisters of Central Maryland. The population to be referred should focus on youth that do not have a regular visiting resource and placed outside of family foster care (congregate care). An emphasis should be placed on older youth that require a permanent connection with an adult or family that will continue after the youth ages out of the foster care system.

Referral Process:

The Local Department of Social Services shall assess all Out Of Home Service cases for appropriateness of a referral to BBBSCM. After the case worker and supervisor have established that a youth would benefit from this service, the local Department shall complete the BBBSCM application form. This form should be filled out with all the necessary information required. The application should then be forwarded to the local BBBSCM office for consideration. The local department case worker shall also inform the legal guardian of the youth that a referral has been made. Once BBBSCM has contacted the local department concerning the youth, the local department shall immediately work with the staff of BBBSCM to connect the youth and the mentor. The caseworker shall assist in the initial establishment of the relationship between the

mentor and youth. This includes coordinating and participating in the first meeting and setting up a visitation plan. Prior to the first visit, BBBSCM requires Consent to Release Information to be signed by the legal guardian of the youth. If the youth is **not** under the legal guardianship of the Local Department of Social Services, the caseworker shall attempt to have the biological parent or legal guardian of the youth sign the Consent to Release Information. If the youth is under the guardianship of the local department the Director or Director Designee may sign the consent.

Monitoring:

Once a mentor has been assigned to the youth the local department case workers shall notify the appropriate parties of the mentoring service. This includes notifying the legal guardian, foster family, group home staff, or any other party that is involved in the relationship. The case worker shall establish a rapport with the mentor and supply the mentor with the necessary phone number for him/herself and the supervisor. Local department staff shall maintain confidentiality and only release information regarding the youth that pertains specifically to the mentoring. BBBSCM staff and volunteers do not have access to the case record or other confidential information. The case worker will be responsible for notifying the mentor and BBBSCM local office of any change in placement of the youth. Notification of a change in placement shall occur within 5 business days, in writing and shall include an updated address and contact number for where the youth is now residing. If the case is transferred to a different caseworker it is both the former and new case workers responsibility to send written communication to the BBBSCM office of the change in staff and the new contact information. Correspondence with the local department and BBBSCM shall be completed within 5 business days of the change.

CHESSIE:

Youth receiving mentoring services through Big Brother Big Sister of Central Maryland shall be documented through MD Chessie. Mentoring Services are documented in MD Chessie through contacts and service logs. The name and necessary contact information for the mentor are added under collateral contact. This allows the worker to drop down the name of the mentor when documenting contact with the mentor. It also allows the worker to document the necessary contact information for the mentor. The service should be documented under the service log. This is a referred service entered as Big Brother Big Sister under category Mentoring /Non paid.