



DEI Intentionality Statement

Big Brothers Big Sisters Independence and its affiliate, MENTOR Independence Region, believe a diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace is one where all employees and volunteers, regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, sexual orientation or identity, education or disability, feel valued and respected. We are committed to a nondiscriminatory approach and provide equal opportunity for employment and advancement in all of our departments, programs, and worksites. We respect and value diverse life experiences and heritages and maintain a work environment where all voices are valued and heard.

Our vision is that all youth achieve their full potential. To accomplish that vision, our mission is to create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth, while working collaboratively to strengthen the quality of the mentoring field and close the mentoring gap. In the fulfillment of this mission, we are committed to modeling diversity, equity and inclusion for all of our stakeholders, and to maintaining an inclusive environment with equitable treatment for all.

Our intention is to:

- Champion diversity, equity and inclusion as connected to our mission and critical to ensure the well-being of our staff and the diverse populations we serve.
- Acknowledge and dismantle any inequities within our policies, systems, programs, and services, and continually update and report organizational progress.
- Explore potential underlying, unquestioned assumptions that interfere with inclusiveness.
- Advocate for and support board-level thinking about how systemic inequities impact our organization's work, and how best to address that in a way that is consistent with our mission.
- Practice and encourage transparent communication in all interactions.
- Commit time and resources to expand more diverse leadership within our board, staff, committee, and advisory boards reflective of the communities and counties served.
- Lead with respect and tolerance. We expect all employees to embrace this notion and to express it in workplace interactions and through everyday practices.
- Make incremental, measurable progress towards the visibility of our diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.
- Develop and present sessions on diversity, equity and inclusion to provide information and resources internally, to nonprofit partners, the community, and other stakeholders.



We recognize that while all children have equal potential, they do not have equal opportunity. Too many children, and disproportionately children of color, are struggling with generational poverty, limited academic opportunities, familial incarceration, violence, and a lack of access to successful adults who can serve as role models. This confluence of risk – at home and in the community – has resulted in poor academic achievement, high drop-out rates and increased involvement in the juvenile justice system.

Our strategic and operating plans are rooted in a commitment to serving children and youth who are disadvantaged in today's society. We have an intentional focus to leverage evidence-based practices (science and data) to bring the best possible resources to children and youth most impacted by adversity.

Our **DEI Steering Committee**, comprised of staff members responsible for working with Big Brothers Big Sisters Independence (BBBSI) and MENTOR Independence Region (MENTOR IR), to strategically guide and support diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. The committee is mandated to implement industry best practices as it relates to strategic planning, education and training, hiring of diverse vendor suppliers, and recruitment of volunteer mentors, board members, and staff.

The DEI Steering Committee is accountable for ensuring that BBBSI and MENTOR IR are being intentional about their diversity, equity, and inclusion work, while implementing industry best practices. Its specific goals include the following:

- Recruit and hire staff that reflect the racial identity of populations served
- Recruit volunteers that reflect the racial identity of populations served
- Assess BBBSI policies to assure they align with DEI goals/targets
- Develop a communication strategy to pro-actively communicate policy changes related to DEI, both internally and externally
- Identify and implement ongoing DEI training and education for staff and volunteers
- Ensure that BBBSI and MENTOR IR DEI goals align with Big Brothers Big Sisters of America and MENTOR National DEI goals
- Align and deepen relationships with partners who share similar DEI strategies
- Increase diversity of vendors with which BBBSI and MENTOR IR conduct business
- Raise awareness for LGBTQ program efforts and initiatives
- Define how to incorporate youth and parent voices at BBBSI and MENTOR IR

The DEI Steering Committee drives these goals through the work and direction of three sub-committees:

1. **Community Relations:** Responsible for diversifying volunteer recruitment, building strong relationships with the communities served, advocating for other organizations and companies that align with the BBBSI mission, and supporting legislation that furthers stated DEI goals
2. **Policy & Voice:** Responsible for reviewing BBBSI and MENTOR IR policies, systems, programs and services to ensure inclusivity of the voice of all people
3. **Employee Recruitment & Retention:** Responsible for ensuring the diversification of candidates recruited and hired by BBBSI and MENTOR IR to better represent the racial identity of communities served