



STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2028



**Big Brothers
Big Sisters**
OF LANARK COUNTY

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Our Vision for Big Brothers Big Sisters 2025-2028

Empowering youth to realize their potential and build brighter futures.

Big Brothers Big Sisters Lanark County is pleased to present this Strategic Plan – 2025-2028. This is an exciting time for Big Brothers Big Sisters as the organization focuses on growth and recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The agency sees the next four years as an opportunity to take a creative and strategic approach to build on existing and new partnerships, diversify risk, and streamline operations to help empower youth to realize their potential and build brighter futures.

Through the Strategic Planning process, priorities of focus were identified for over the next four years. These priorities touch on collective opportunities for growth and areas which could benefit from attention, while laying the foundation for the organizational goals and strategies included in this plan.

Strategic priorities identified are:

- Sustainability & Partnerships
- Volunteer Engagement
- Communications & Marketing
- Investment in Staffing
- Program Adaptation and Enhancement

In such a competitive and rapidly shifting economic environment, Big Brothers Big Sisters must be fast, efficient, and resourceful to increase resiliency and maximize on opportunities to increase revenue and reduce expenses.

The 2025-2028 strategic plan strives to ensure objectives establish quantitative or qualitative outcomes, identify foundational strategies to achieve targeted outcomes, while identifying a sequential path forward.

The development of this strategy and plan involved contributions from community partners and industry stakeholders, sponsors and funders, staff and volunteers, Bigs and Littles, and the board of directors.

The agency understands that contribution from these stakeholders and team members is integral to ensuring the ultimate success of this Strategic Plan. Feedback was gathered through one-on-one interviews, surveying, and through an in-depth strategic planning session. Engagement through the surveying process was high, with a close to 80 per cent response rate.



We are extremely thankful for all those who took the time to speak with us, complete our surveys, and/or contribute to the in-person strategy meeting.

Contributions were made from the following individuals and organizations:

Big Brothers Big Sisters Board of Directors

- Jordan Thompson (Board Chair)
- Brenda Gray (Past Chair)
- Carole Fuller (Secretary/Treasurer)
- Manon Vaillancourt
- Briana Krushelnicki
- Andrew Lynch
- Nancy Holman
- Big Brothers Big Sisters Staff
- Jennifer Miller (Executive Director)
- Christine Peringer (supporter)
- Randy Martin (Big Brother)
- Ruth Anne Johnson (former Board Chair)
- Shawn Pankow (Town of Smiths Falls)
- The Table Community Food Centre (Ramsey Hart, Executive Director)
- Lanark Highlands Youth Centre (Rayna Critchley, Executive Director)
- Upper Canada District School Board (various partners)

children will enhance their personal development as well as become engaged citizens in their community.





What We Do

Our Vision

All young people in Lanark County realize their full potential.

Our Mission

To enable life-changing mentoring relationships to ignite the power and potential of young people in Lanark County.

Our Values

SAFETY **QUALITY** **RESPECT**

Beliefs

That all children should be given the opportunity to reach their full potential. In providing these opportunities, the children will enhance their personal development as well as become engaged citizens in their community.

That by changing the course of young lives, we can in turn be changing the course of our community's future -that it could lead to a reduction in poverty and unemployment; to safer schools and neighborhoods; to a renewed optimism for growth. We believe that it has the potential to lead to change on a broader, more far-reaching scale.

That opening a child's eyes to "what is" opens their mind to "what could be."





SWOT Analysis

This SWOT Analysis was developed in consultation with staff and Board of Directors, as well as through feedback received from industry peers, funders, sponsors, and volunteers of the organization.

During an in-person strategic planning session, staff and Board of Directors brainstormed to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the organization over the next four years. This data was then compiled with information gleaned from surveying and one-on-one interviews and filtered for relevance. The resulting SWOT Analysis is a good indicator of the opportunities and threats that will be faced by the organization both internally and externally between 2025 and 2028.

STRENGTHS

- Engaged and dedicated staff, who are invested in the agency's goals
- Engaged and dedicated volunteer database
- High quality and well executed programming
- Established programming
- Community trust
- High quality committed leadership
- Flexible response to challenges
- Impact of program on youth in community

WEAKNESSES

- Marketing and Communications
- Branding – need to build and sustain community awareness of what we do and impact of contributions
- Stable and diverse funding sources
- Volunteer recruitment and retention
- Lack of longevity planning
ie. Succession planning



Sustainability & Partnerships

Through sustainability and partnerships, we will...

...have optimized operational expenses through partnerships and will have sourced committed funding of 60 per cent from sponsors, foundations, and municipal, provincial and federal governments, 20 per cent from fundraising events and social enterprises and the balance from donations and events.

More than 60% of our revenue streams will be long term and sustainable.

Financial sustainability is a challenge for all non-profit organizations and Big Brothers Big Sisters is no exception. Diversifying funding sources is key to spreading organizational risk across multiple buckets to lessen impacts of economic pressures.

Partnering with peers to access limited resource pools can lessen the burden on both Big Brothers Big Sisters and the partnering organization. Over the next four years, Big Brothers Big Sisters will consider formal opportunities for long term relationships.

How We Will Get There

- Quantitatively identify funding base targets to support the agency's mentoring programs and build a core understanding of programming costs and staffing requirements.
- Create master document of funding opportunities, ranked in prioritized order with a goal of increasing submitted applications by 10% between 2025-2028.
- Update all sponsorship frameworks and packages to reflect long term sponsorship opportunities and creative sponsorship concepts.
- Analyze frameworks from other Big Brothers Big Sister agencies in Canada
- Perform return on investment analysis for each of the agency's core events (including staff time and resources)
- Identify and access previously untapped markets as revenue generation resources, such as:
- Meet with prospective partners to discuss collaboration and/or merging opportunities

*by changing the course of young lives, we can in turn
be changing the course of our community's future*





Volunteer Engagement

Through Volunteer Engagement we will....

...adapt to the changing realities of volunteerism in Canada, therefore increasing retention* of agency volunteers by 25% and increasing total number of new volunteers by 10 each calendar year.

*retention rate dependent on relevant program being evaluated

Big Brothers Big Sisters is fortunate to have a thriving network of dedicated and committed members of the community who support the agency either financially or through in-kind volunteer participation as Big or in another capacity. Due to changing demographics, many dedicated volunteers are nearing retirement or approaching an age where they are no longer able to provide the integral support relied upon in the past. Without a college or university in the County, and with high school graduates being too young to mentor, sourcing recent retirees continues to be a significant source of agency volunteers on all fronts.

In consequence, the agency must be diligent in strengthening the connection with existing volunteers while creatively sourcing new volunteers to maintain an invested network.

How We Will Get There

- Develop a Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Strategy and Plan within 12 months that:
- Review and reorganize volunteer recruitment responsibilities within the organization in order to maximize impact
- Launch targeted annual recruitment campaigns through social media, community events, and partnerships to attract a diverse volunteer base, utilizing National resources where available
- Partner with schools and youth facilities to engage with youth as future volunteers and mentors
- Review current volunteer onboarding, training and development to identify areas for improvement and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity impacts
- Review volunteer recognition program and update to be more reflective of changing volunteer demographics and desires

That opening a child's eyes to "what is" opens their mind to "what could be."





Communications & Marketing

Through communications and education we will....

...be recognized for our brand and community contributions through programming, partnerships, sponsorships and social enterprises by 2028.

Effective communication is one of the most challenging tasks for non-profits like Big Brothers Big Sisters who are stretched thin with staffing and resources. While Big Brothers Big Sisters is easily recognized in the community as a valued organization with positive impacts to the community, there is a disconnect between a general sense of that value and an educated understanding of the impact of contributions to the community.

To thrive and survive, Big Brothers Big Sisters must ensure the communities on which it relies for funding, volunteer participation, and youth engagement clearly understand the intrinsic value it brings to youth and the surrounding communities and join in to help celebrate successes and weather the storms as community partners.

How We Will Get There

- Create and execute a living Communications & Education Plan that identifies Big Brothers Big Sisters' unique audiences (ie. Donors, stakeholders, Bigs, families, volunteers, partners, youth centre affiliates, Jewel's customers etc.) focusing on how to improve communications and education with each demographic
- Conduct annual surveying to create baseline and use to assess the shift in brand recognition and understanding of Big Brothers Big Sisters' contributions and impact
- Share success stories, impact reports and testimonials from youth, families, staff, volunteers, on a quarterly basis (monthly if possible) highlighting the difference Big Brothers Big Sisters is making in the community
- Share impact stories with sponsors, donors, and grantors on a quarterly basis to demonstrate the effectiveness of their investment
- Review current sponsorship recognition and communications protocol/procedures and identify areas of improvement
- Actively direct recruitment communication messaging to 2SLGBTQI+ community to seek out mentors and mentees and engage with that community
- Position the organization as a leader in youth mentorship by committing to participating on the Ontario Mentoring Coalition and engaging with Big Brothers Big Sisters Canada
- Utilize Jewel's customer base as a fresh market for communication, recruiting, and donations



Investment in Staffing

Through investment in agency staffing we will...

...offer a rewarding and fulfilling work environment, and have an engaged, committed, and valued team who have the resources they need to fulfill their roles and a compensation package that is in line with similar agencies in Lanark County and surrounding area.

One of the agency's greatest strengths lies in the dedication and commitment of staffing resources. Due to rising costs of living, societal pressures and diminished organizational resources, the agency's ability to recruit, retain, and manage these dedicated staff has been impacted. Succession planning in particular is of vital importance to diversify risk of staff turn over and attrition.

Investment in staff training, mental health supports, and competitive wages and benefits is critical to ensuring staff are supported and compensated for their work with the agency.

How We Will Get There

- Conduct human resource and staffing asset assessment to:
 - track data on staff retention rates
 - annually update and adhere to clear compensation structures
 - evaluate Big Brothers Big Sisters as a rewarding and fulfilling work environment
 - identify resources needed for staff to thrive
- Anonymously survey staff and/or conduct exit interviews to garner input on improving and supporting staff retention
- Using data from assessment and surveying, develop staff retention and succession plan to address staff and volunteer attrition impacts and recruiting/retention challenges
- Establish professional development training targets and mental health supports for 2025-2028
- Host mandatory Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity training workshops for Board, staff, and volunteers to ensure Big Brothers Big Sisters reflects an inclusive environment for Bigs, Littles, volunteers, and staff
- Maintain current National Standards and internal policies on child and youth safety protocols, including regular training for staff, clear reporting mechanisms for concerns and adherence to local and national child protection standards

All children should be given the opportunity to reach their full potential.





Program Adaptation

Through program adaptation we will...

...offer modern, rewarding and effective programming that reflects the evolving needs of the community while maintaining quality, accessibility and child/youth safety. Staff and volunteer assets will be maximized to reach between 300 and 400 children and youth annually throughout all regions of Lanark County.

Big Brothers Big Sisters employs programming that's responsive to the needs of at-risk youth and the needs of the community at large. Offering quality programming with which the community sees a tangible benefit, corresponding need, and which is highly relevant to vulnerable children and youth not only provides direct benefits to at-risk populations, but also increases interest from funders who are more likely to donate to programming that resonates with them.

Achieving this delicate balance without creating unsupportable strain on staff and volunteers, and while remaining true to Big Brothers Big Sisters' core principles is one of the challenges that must be navigated through this strategic plan.

How We Will Get There

- Identify performance indicators of success for each agency program
- Conduct annual review for each program to quantitatively evaluate success, while identifying:
 - Resources needed to deliver programming (cost/benefit analysis)
 - How well it reflects the needs of communities
 - Areas for improvement
- Access industry trends, research, and surveying to identify current and future programming needs of the communities served by the agency to develop a multi-year program development and implementation wish list
- Implement mentorship program to serve 2SLGBTQIA+ community
- Build the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity committee to:
 - Conduct accessibility and inclusivity assessment of the agency's programming, policies, and procedures
 - Develop and implement Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity policies and National Standards to ensure full accessibility
- Conduct annual staff training to maintain program quality and maximizing accessibility
- Create opportunities for parents and caregivers to provide regular and valuable feedback.

