

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 1, 2024

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

I am requesting \$250,000 in funding for the Big Brother Big Sisters Lone Star Greater Houston Agency (BBBS) to support 1:1 mentoring for Greater Houston area at-risk youth. Each year the agency supports over 2,000 area youth, each with their own mentor. Fiscal Year 25 funding will be used to further the impact of the outcomes-achieving Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring program operations across the Greater Houston area, including Fort Bend County. BBBS' mission is to create and support 1:1 mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth.

The funds requested will allow for the BBBS to continue to provide life-changing mentoring nationally, which they have conducted for nearly 120 years and in the Houston area since 1950. BBBS seeks to improve the lives of low-income and at-risk youth by engaging families, schools and communities in mentoring activities. The program is evidence-based, with the most recent research (a random control trial study funded by Arnold Ventures in Houston) demonstrating how mentoring youth can positively impact communities. This staff-driven work includes outreach to at-risk children (ages 6-17), volunteer recruitment, community partnership development, training, mentor and mentee screening, strategic matching, match support, community and family engagement activities and program administration, such as quality assurance and outcome evaluation.

The project has a Federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by 34 USC Subtitle I, Chapter 101, Subchapter V, Part A: Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program. BBBS outcomes also illustrate how their mission works and defends the potential that exists in the youth in our community. According to federal studies, children of incarcerated parents are at escalated risk. Without effective intervention, 70% of them will end up in prison themselves. In Texas, it can cost over \$100,000 a year to imprison a child. Alternatively, it costs less than \$2,000 to provide a mentor and support a child's match for a year. Further, I also certify that I have no financial interest in this project, and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

Sincerely,



Troy E. Nehls
Member of Congress