

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Intentionality Statement

We believe a diverse, equitable and inclusive organization is one where all employees, volunteers, youth, and families whatever their race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity & expression, education, income, or health condition feels 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 ensure that all voices are valued and heard.

Our vision at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Kentuckiana is that all youth achieve their full potential. To accomplish that vision, our mission is to build and support one-to-one relationships and mentoring support services to ensure that all children and youth are given equal opportunity and access to achieve their full potential.

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:

- See 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 or bias that interfere with inclusiveness.
- Advocate for and support broad-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 cultural humility, and be an engaged continuous learner and listener. 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.
- Engage in, create, and lead ongoing training and conversations on diversity, equity and inclusion, to provide information and resources internally, to nonprofit partners, the community, and other stakeholders.
- Increase youth and parent voice at all levels of our organization to help lead and inform our work.

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. Inequities that impact our youth often result from systemic biases that "sort" people into resource-rich or resource-poor neighborhoods and school systems--largely on the basis of race and income. We know that LGBTQ youth can experience heightened risk due to bias and discrimination from their own families and the community at large.

With this as context, our strategic and operating plans are rooted in a commitment to serving children and youth who are the most impacted by adversity. We must also address our country's systemic inequities in order to accomplish our vision that all youth achieve their full potential. Our program helps build up youths' resilience and enhance their employability, self-esteem, and opportunities to reduce the frighteningly high economic and health imbalances, in a boomeranging cycle that damages educational opportunities, health care, and wealth accumulation.