

## Application Template

### Application Section I: Community Connectors Program Description

- 1. The target population is students grades 5-12. Identify the grade level or levels at each school that your program will be targeting. Programs may serve students in one or more grade levels.**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio (BBBS) proposes to serve 140 youth in 2015-16 in grades 6-12 at the six Columbus City Schools (CCS) listed in question #2; 154 youth at those schools in 2016-17; and 158 youth at those schools in 2017-18. The graduation rate in Columbus City Schools in 2012-13 was only 77%, well short of the state standard graduation rate of 90%; and at each of the high schools participating in this project, the graduation rate is below 80% (Ohio Department of Education, 2014).

Poverty is a major contributing factor to high school dropout rates (Jerald, 2006). Seventy-nine percent (79%) of the students in Columbus City Schools are considered economically disadvantaged; at the six schools we are proposing to serve through a Community Connectors grant, 85% of the students are considered economically disadvantaged (Ohio Department of Education, 2014).

Low academic achievement is another major contributing factor to dropout rates and is a serious problem in Columbus City Schools. Ohio Achievement Assessment scores at Columbus City Schools lag far behind state averages. Only 46% of CCS fifth graders passed the Ohio Reading Achievement Assessment in 2013-14, compared with a state average of 72%, and only 42% of CCS fifth graders passed the Ohio Math Achievement Assessment, compared with a state average of 68% (Ohio Department of Education, 2014).

- 2. Provide the number of youth in each grade level and at each school your program proposes to serve.**

**Tables One-Three.** Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio proposes to serve the following youth at the following schools through our Community Connectors grant in each of the next three school years. We will create 80 new mentoring relationships each year of the grant (highlighted yellow) while maintaining as many existing mentoring relationships as possible through high school graduation.

<b>Table One. 2015-16 School Year</b>									
<b>School (grades served by school in parentheses)</b>	<b>5th grade</b>	<b>6th grade</b>	<b>7th grade</b>	<b>8th grade</b>	<b>9th grade</b>	<b>10th grade</b>	<b>11th grade</b>	<b>12th grade</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Africentric Early College (6-12)	0	20	4	2	4	1	1	1	33
Champion Middle School (6-8)	0	20	7	5	0	0	0	0	32
East High School (9-12)	0	0	0	0	3	2	2	1	8
Linden-McKinley High (7-12)	0	0	20	3	4	1	2	1	31
Northland High School (9-12)	0	0	0	0	3	3	1	0	7
Woodward Park Middle (6-8)	0	20	5	4	0	0	0	0	29
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>140</b>

<b>Table Two. 2016-17 School Year</b>									
<b>School (grades served by school in parentheses)</b>	<b>5th grade</b>	<b>6th grade</b>	<b>7th grade</b>	<b>8th grade</b>	<b>9th grade</b>	<b>10th grade</b>	<b>11th grade</b>	<b>12th grade</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Africentric Early College (6-12)	0	20	10	2	1	2	1	1	37
Champion Middle School (6-8)	0	20	10	4	0	0	0	0	34
East High School (9-12)	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	1	7
Linden-McKinley High (7-12)	0	0	20	10	2	2	1	1	36
Northland High School (9-12)	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	1	7
Woodward Park Middle (6-8)	0	20	10	3	0	0	0	0	32
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>154</b>

Table Three. 2017-18 School Year									
School (grades served by school in parentheses)	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade	TOTAL
Africentric Early College (6-12)	0	20	10	5	1	1	1	1	39
Champion Middle School (6-8)	0	20	10	5	0	0	0	0	35
East High School (9-12)	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	1	6
Linden-McKinley High (7-12)	0	0	20	10	5	1	1	1	38
Northland High School (9-12)	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	5
Woodward Park Middle (6-8)	0	20	10	5	0	0	0	0	35
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>158</b>

3. Select one: Which of the following best describes the proposed project? Select one.

- A.  Totally new program developed by this organization
- B.  Replication of an existing model in use by others  
- Please provide the name of this model.
- C.  Expansion of an existing program within the applicant organization
- D.  Extension of an existing program to a new setting

Our proposed project is an expansion of an existing program within our organization. **We are proposing to use a Community Connectors grant to expand and enrich Project Mentor, our School-based Mentoring program in Columbus City Schools, at the six schools listed above.** We are proposing to serve 140 students at these schools in 2015-16, a 32% increase compared to 2014-15, with the number of students served to increase further in the following two school years. In total, we will provide mentoring relationships to 300 unduplicated students (140 in year one, with the addition of 80 new students each in years two and three). We will also enrich our existing mentoring model at those schools with more depth of intervention, including having our program coordinators meet in small groups with participating youth on a weekly basis, in addition to the weekly one-to-one mentoring sessions between mentors and youth. In this way, the program coordinators can provide more direct support to students to help them build hope and succeed at school and in life.

4. Please describe your project. How will it address each of the five Community Connectors core principles and what outcomes will you use to measure success.

**Project Mentor is an initiative of Columbus City Schools, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio and volunteer partners from the business community to provide thousands of at-risk CCS students with valuable mentoring relationships.** Project Mentor is one key component of Columbus City Schools' mission, which is that each student is highly educated, prepared for leadership and service, and empowered for success as a citizen in the global community. Mentors are asked to meet weekly with their child for 45 minutes to an hour during the student's lunch hour throughout the school year.

**1) Setting Goals to be Prepared for 21st Century Careers:** At the beginning of their relationship, mentors and students, with assistance from their BBBS program coordinator, complete a Youth Outcomes Development Plan to identify desired youth outcomes. Selecting individual goals at the beginning of the relationship helps mentors to encourage and coach their students toward desired outcomes. In the winter and spring youth review their goals with their mentors to discuss whether they are on track for meeting their goals, and if not, what steps the youth can take to improve their performance. This plan is also updated annually. Additionally, mentors are able to review report cards with their mentees at three mentoring sessions during the year. This helps keep mentees accountable, and helps mentors and mentees set achievable academic goals so that mentees can be successful. These activities help youth develop planning and goal-setting as life-long habits. Goal-setting leads to stronger academic performance and increased educational expectations. We will use these indicators, as measured through our Youth Outcomes Survey, to measure the success of this core principle. (The Youth Outcomes Survey is described in detail in our response to question 13).

**2) Building Character:** We collaborated with Cardinal Health to create School-based Mentoring activities teaching students the value of a strong work ethic and behaviors that are needed to be successful in school

and at work. These activities are aligned with Paul Tough's research in his 2012 book *How Children Succeed*, which demonstrates that character development is critical for all children, particularly those dealing with the consequences of living in poverty. Sixth, seventh and eighth grade students complete activities helping them define their values and develop a strong work ethic. Seventh and eighth grade students also complete activities about anger management and coping with emotions. Self-discipline and optimism are two character traits proven to have a positive impact on a young person's future (Tough, 2012). We will review three areas on our Youth Outcomes Survey - attitudes towards risky behaviors, truancy (to assess self-discipline) and educational expectations (to measure optimism) - to measure the success of this core principle.

**3) Developing Pathways to Achievement (decision making and critical thinking skills):** Project Mentor gives youth a chance to participate in meaningful, hands-on activities each week that teach them new skills and build their self-confidence. For example, Project Mentor students take part in financial literacy activities which introduce them to concepts such as budgeting, savings, household finances and the stock market. Project Mentor participants also take part in additional activities related to basic life skills; for example, sixth graders learn how to shop for groceries, seventh graders learn how to sew, and eighth graders learn how to do laundry. Youth also do activities related to building their organizational skills. Attitudes towards risky behaviors and truancy correlate strongly with positive decision making and critical thinking skills. Consequently, we will use these indicators from our Youth Outcomes Survey to measure the success of this core principle.

**4) Building a Sense of Resiliency:** Big Brothers and Big Sisters not only provide an additional positive adult relationship for youth, they also help strengthen school bonding by serving as advocates for the students among school staff; encouraging students to talk with their teachers; providing students with strategies to build relationships with teachers and staff; and encouraging students to join school clubs and school sports activities (Rhodes, 2002). These efforts pay dividends: at-risk young adults who have mentors are much more likely to participate in extracurricular activities, take leadership positions, and volunteer more regularly than their non-mentored peers (Bruce and Bridgeland, 2014). Our program coordinators also conduct home visits for youth in our program, especially for those students with attendance issues or behavioral infractions. The goal of the home visits is to provide more intervention resources and establish stronger connections with families. (For more detail on home visits, please see our response to question 11.) Youth with strong support networks are more resilient than youth who lack positive adult role models as well as supportive peers. There are three indicators on our Youth Outcomes Survey that measure three different aspects of a youth's support network: social acceptance (positive relationships with peers), parental trust, and presence of a special adult other than a parent/guardian. We will use these three indicators to measure the success of this core principle.

**5) Believing in a Positive Future:** Big Brothers and Big Sisters inspire youth to envision successful futures, and help youth understand what is needed to achieve their goals, emphasizing the power of education in determining their future. Youth in our program frequently lack an adult in their life who was successful in school and has a fulfilling career. Because most of our mentors are dedicated professionals (see question 8), our program gives them a chance to develop a friendship *and* receive ongoing support, advice and encouragement from such an individual. The remainder of our volunteers are college students, who again serve as concrete examples to the students of what they can achieve if they work hard. Seventy-six percent (76%) of at-risk young adults who have a mentor say they plan to enroll in and graduate from college, as compared to 56% of their non-mentored peers (Bruce and Bridgeland, 2014). Two areas of our Youth Outcomes Survey - educational expectations and scholastic efficacy - measure a youth's belief in a positive future. Consequently, we will use these indicators from our Youth Outcomes Survey to measure the success of this core principle.

## 5. Please describe the specific activities your program will conduct.

We have developed activities for mentors and middle school students to do together at every mentoring session. There are different activities at every grade level, ensuring that the activities are age-appropriate, and the mentors and students have new activities to do each year they are in the program. With thirty activities per school year, we have developed a total of ninety activities for six, seventh and eighth grade mentors and students to do together. Most Project Mentor activities align with one or more of the Community Connectors core principles. Others focus on building specific academic skills, or enhancing the student's social-emotional development, including building a closer relationship between the student and the mentor. Our activities also align with Columbus City Schools' curriculum to ensure that our activities are advancing the district's learning

objectives. All of our activities have a long-term goal of instilling belief in a positive future. Each mentor receives a summary of each activity in advance, so that they know the key messages we want to convey to mentees. The number of activities in each core area is listed below:

- **Setting Goals (4-5 activities per school year):** For example, mentors and students create a “Bingoal” card, where the student fills in a Bingo card with several SMART goals, such as “three absences or fewer in a grading period,” and then works towards achieving those goals throughout the year.
- **Building Character (4-5 activities per school year):** For example, students discuss with their mentors who are their role models and what values they have. Mentors and students identify their five most important work ethic values. Mentors and students also undertake a service project together, such as a canned food drive, or making cards for children in the hospital.
- **Pathways to Achievement (7-8 activities per school year):** For example, mentors and students discuss creating a household budget, and the difference between needs and wants.
- **Resiliency (1-2 activities per school year):** For example, mentors and students act out a scenario where a youth has been pressured into taking drugs, and then discuss how to overcome peer pressure.
- **Positive Future (2-3 activities per school year):** For example, mentors and students create a marketing campaign for a product. Students learn how to promote themselves and their values to prospective employers and clients.
- **Academics (2 activities per school year):** For example, through a Bingo game, students learn with their mentors the relationships between fractions, decimals, and percentages.
- **Social-emotional development (8 activities per school year):** The focus of social-emotional activities is for mentors and students to get to know each other better and build their relationship. For students, these conversations help build their social-emotional skills, which are critical in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workplace.

At the high school level, where mentors and mentees have been meeting together for at least three years, we have created a Project Mentor Resource Binder with dozens of activities that mentors and mentees can choose from themselves, such as resume writing and career planning to help high school students prepare for 21<sup>st</sup> Century careers and envision successful futures. High school mentors and mentees are also able to e-mail, text and call each other outside of the mentoring sessions on a year-round basis.

Project Mentor is more than just mentoring. It is also Big Brothers Big Sisters program coordinators working directly with students on their caseloads. Our program coordinators regularly review students’ academic, attendance and disciplinary performance to identify students that are struggling. They talk frequently with the students, as well as their teachers, guidance counselors and parents/guardians, to identify barriers that are keeping the students from performing to the best of their ability. Once they have identified those barriers, they connect the students and/or their families to the additional supportive services they need to succeed.

**We are proposing to use Community Connectors funding to build on these efforts by significantly increasing the amount of time our program coordinators can spend with Project Mentor students at the targeted schools.** Each coordinator will support a smaller number of students, giving them the time to meet with the students in small groups weekly; visit the students’ families more frequently; connect with the students’ teachers and guidance counselors more often; identify problems sooner; provide interventions quicker; and help the students improve in their attendance, behavior and academic performance.

BBBS program coordinators will meet with students for at least 45 minutes per week in small group settings to help them with their school work, identify barriers to their success, connect them to additional services, and coach them to stay out of trouble and succeed in school. Program coordinators will focus on working with students to keep them on track for graduation and post-secondary career success. For high school students, this often takes the form of connecting with teachers and guidance counselors to make sure the students have all of the credits they need, and to find ways for them to make up their credit hours in areas where they are falling short. The weekly mentoring sessions with program coordinators, on top of the weekly mentoring sessions with their volunteer mentors, will provide these students with a level of support our program has not been able to provide before. We believe that providing a more intensive intervention through the program coordinators will lead to stronger outcomes for these students.

Beginning in 2015, we have access to the Learning Partner Dashboard created by Learning Circle Education

Services and Learn4Life. The Dashboard gives us a visual, comprehensive overview of the progress of Columbus City Schools students participating in Project Mentor. Using the Dashboard, we will identify those students who are most in need of help based on their attendance, behavior and course work, and then work with the youth and the youth's family to secure additional resources to assist the youth (such as tutoring to help with course work in a particular subject, or counseling to help with behavior issues).

Moreover, the Mentoring Center of Central Ohio, an independently funded division of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio, will provide support for parents of participating students by offering interactive, discussion-based workshops where they will learn how to incorporate topics such as goal-setting, resiliency, decision-making, leadership, college-preparedness, study skills, and more into their everyday activities and interactions with their children. The Mentoring Center will develop a two-hour curriculum for parents that is fun, interactive and culturally competent which allows for open discussion among participants in a safe environment for sharing. This course will seek to further a connection between parents and children by providing useful tips that parents can use in a fun and non-threatening way when interacting with their children. This format moves toward the Annie E. Casey Foundation focus on two generation development, acknowledging that parents' skills and abilities need to be developed along with those of their children if growth and life progress are to be achieved. As such, these parent workshops seek to bring parents "on board" as part of the "mentoring team." Through ongoing engagement, parents will have the tools and motivation to actively reinforce hopefulness, resiliency, developmental assets and active preparation for 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs. The Mentoring Center will also develop one-page tip sheets for parents to take home to use with their children to reinforce the skills presented in the two-hour parent workshops. These tips can be used as ice breakers between parents and children which may lead to deeper conversations in the areas of such as trust-building, goal-setting, resiliency, and anger management. Lastly, the Mentoring Center will train BBBS program staff to reinforce these skills as they interact with parents and students.

6. Discuss how the program will utilize best practices to ensure program success. Are there successful mentor programs after which you will model your program? Please name the program and describe what makes it successful.

The evidence base for Project Mentor is strong. Public/Private Ventures has conducted a large-scale, national, random assignment evaluation of Big Brothers Big Sisters School-based Mentoring. The study found that youth who participated in Big Brothers Big Sisters' School-based Mentoring program showed statistically significant improvements relative to their non-mentored peers in eight academic outcomes: 1) overall academic performance; 2) performance in science; 3) performance in written language; 4) performance in oral language; 5) quality and number of assignments turned in; 6) fewer serious school infractions; 7) scholastic efficacy; and 8) reduced skipping of school (Herrera et al., 2007).

Additionally, a meta-analysis of youth mentoring programs found that the greater the number of research-supported best practices the mentoring program employed, the greater the positive outcomes youth participants displayed (Rhodes and DuBois, 2006). The best practices cited in the study are followed by our agency (please see our responses to question 11 on how we implement these practices): **1) Monitoring of program implementation; 2) Screening of prospective mentors; 3) Mentor/youth matching; 4) Mentor pre-match training; 5) Expectations: frequency of contact:** Mentors and youth meet weekly during the school year at a consistent time and place; **6) Supervision; 7) Ongoing training; 8) Structured activities for mentors and youth:** See responses to questions 4 and 5; **9) Parent support/involvement**

The 2007 Public/Private Ventures study also found that longer and closer relationships are associated with stronger impacts. To increase the length and strength of relationships, the authors recommend:

- **Ensuring that volunteers provide at least one school year of mentoring:** The average length of our School-based Mentoring relationships in Columbus City Schools is currently 22 months, well above the one year threshold, and we expect the average match length to increase further under our new program model.
- **Building programs in feeder schools to sustain relationships through school transitions:** Through the six schools participating in our Community Connectors program, mentors and students will be able to be matched together from middle schools through the twelfth grade.

- **Selecting supportive schools for program involvement and continually fostering those partnerships:** Our agency has a strong partnership in place with Columbus City Schools (see response to question 12).
- **Providing mentors and mentees with opportunities to communicate during the summer months:** Our agency hosts an annual Big-Little Summer Festival, an event which gives mentors, mentees and their families an opportunity to spend time together and continue to build their relationships during the summer months. We will also hold 2-3 experiential learning activities for students and mentors during the summer months to help address summer learning loss. Mentors and mentees can also become pen pals over the summer by exchanging letters through our program coordinators.

Finally, a 2013 study conducted by The Boston Consulting Group compared the life outcomes of 500 former Little Brothers and Little Sisters with a control group of individuals from similar backgrounds who did not participate in a BBBS program. The study found that, over the course of their working lives, youth who were mentored through a BBBS program will earn on average \$315,000 more than those who were not mentored. The study calculated an average social return on investment of \$18 for every dollar invested. Few other interventions for children facing adversity can match the proven value of Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring.

**7. Describe your organization’s previous experience with this type of program OR a program of a similar scale, including previous evaluations, size and duration of previously implemented programs, goals, and outcomes.**

Founded in 1933, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio was one of the charter agencies that founded Big Brothers of America in 1947, and today is one of the ten largest agencies of 340 Big Brothers Big Sisters affiliates in the country. In 2014, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio provided its one-to-one youth mentoring to more than 2,600 disadvantaged children.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio began advocating a district wide mentoring plan for Columbus City Schools in 2006. At the time our agency had more than ten years of experience operating School-based Mentoring programs, including nine programs in CCS. We finalized a plan with Columbus City Schools and in July of 2007 Project Mentor was formally launched with the expansion of our School-based mentoring program to every CCS middle school. At our previous two Project Mentor Volunteer Luncheons, we honored the first two Project Mentor graduating classes of more than 300 Columbus City Schools Project Mentor Seniors.

Our Strength of Relationship survey results indicate closeness between the mentors and youth (see question 13 for more detail on the Strength of Relationship survey.) Table Four below details the Strength of Relationship survey findings for participating volunteers and youth in Project Mentor from the 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years.

**Table Four. Strength of Relationship survey results for Project Mentor, 2011-2014.**

<b>School year</b>	<b>Number of volunteer responses</b>	<b>Number of youth responses</b>	<b>Volunteer average score (out of five point scale)</b>	<b>Youth average score (out of five point scale)</b>
2011-12	1,244	1,138	3.9	4.6
2012-13	883	887	4.0	4.6
2013-14	973	928	3.9	4.6

As these results demonstrate, mentors consistently indicate that they have close relationships with their mentees. Even more striking is how strong the mentees rate their relationships with their mentors. These results are a reminder that youth in our program have few adult role models; consequently, they value greatly the friendship and guidance they receive from their Big Brothers and Big Sisters.

As measured by our Youth Outcomes Survey (see question 13) and documented in Table Five below, in each of the past three years the vast majority of Project Mentor youth participants have shown improvement in at least one of eight outcome areas, and more than 75% have shown improvement in at least two outcome areas.

**Table Five. Youth Outcomes Survey results for Project Mentor, 2011-2014.**

School year	Number of youth responses	Percentage of youth who reported improvement in at least one outcome area	Percentage of youth who reported improvement in at least two outcome areas
2011-12	503	92%	74%
2012-13	450	92%	78%
2013-14	495	93%	77%

**8. What will make this collaboration successful? What will the indicator(s) of success be for this collaboration?**

Our agency has worked very closely with Columbus City Schools to develop Project Mentor. At each individual school where the mentoring program is offered, CCS teachers, counselors and school administrators work hand-in-hand with Big Brothers Big Sisters to ensure that the program runs smoothly and successfully. Our program leadership staff also meet regularly with CCS executive directors and district liaisons to ensure that our programs and activities align with student needs.

Approximately 1,000 community members each year mentor CCS students through Project Mentor. Mentors are recruited from all areas of the community. Volunteer sources include employees from businesses, government agencies, service organizations, non-profit organizations, college students, and individuals from the community at large. To date, we have developed partnerships with 79 organizations, including 50 corporations, with employees and members at partner organizations volunteering at Project Mentor schools.

**Very few organizations can match the size and strength of collaborative partners that Big Brothers Big Sisters has cultivated through Project Mentor.** Project Mentor is serving a vital role in transforming Columbus City Schools not only through the academic achievements of program participants, but also as a catalyst for mobilizing the entire community to become personally invested in Columbus City Schools. Our recruitment efforts are enhanced by our African American Advisory Council, an advisory body comprised of 12 members representing a diverse cross-section of the African American community, including residential, business, government and nonprofit sectors.

Highlights for Children and McGraw-Hill Education are industry leaders in producing fun educational materials for children. For our Community Connectors grant, Highlights and McGraw-Hill will provide materials and intellectual support to assist Big Brothers Big Sisters in designing and implementing activities for mentors and mentees to do together that are fun and rewarding, help mentors and mentees build their relationships, assist mentees in their academic development, and align with the core principles of Community Connectors. Our faith-based partner will be The City of Zion Church, an inner-city, cross-cultural church located on the east side of Columbus, with a congregation of 400 people. City of Zion will provide intellectual support for the program, especially regarding the parent workshops, outreach to families and cultural dynamics.

This phenomenal collaboration will be successful because it builds upon a strong existing partnership between Big Brothers Big Sisters, Columbus City Schools and corporate volunteer partners, and adds in intellectual support and materials for programming topics from Highlights, McGraw-Hill and City of Zion. **The combination of a leading youth mentoring organization, a major metropolitan school district, dedicated volunteer partners from the business community, leaders in educational materials and support from the faith-based community will make this a vibrant mentoring program with strong outcomes for students.**

The projected indicator of success for this program is that at least 75% of the youth will show improvements in at least two of the eight outcome areas measured by the Youth Outcomes Survey. Additionally, we expect in each individual outcome area, at least 80% of students will improve or maintain their performance from the baseline to the follow-up survey.

**Application Section II: Program Management**

**9. Leadership Team: The leadership team should be comprised of no less than one member of each partnering organization. Please provide a brief bio of each leadership team member, including a brief description of the team member’s passion for the program and interest in working with young people. Bios should also include:**

- **Name and title**
- **Responsibilities for this grant project.**
- **Qualifications**
- **Prior relevant experience**

Edward N. Cohn, BBBS President & CEO: B.S. in Business Administration from Ohio State University; served on the Board of Directors for our agency for five years prior to becoming President & CEO; more than 25 years of experience in the banking industry, most recently as the Executive Vice President of Unizan Bank; currently a Big Brother to two youth (relationships began in 2012 and 2014), also served as a Big Brother from 2007-2012. Mr. Cohn will provide agency oversight and secure community support for Project Mentor.

Marytherese Croarkin, Editor Emerita for Zaner-Bloser (a wholly owned subsidiary of Highlights for Children): M.A. in Reading Education from Ohio State University; has developed educational products with a focus on literacy for 26 years; 30 years of experience in education, including reading teacher; currently liaison between Highlights for Children and Big Brothers Big Sisters for the Grade 1 literacy mentor-mentee project. Ms. Croarkin will continue to serve as liaison to ensure an appropriate match between literacy materials and students and advise on efficacy evaluation.

Pastor Elgin D. Orton, The City of Zion Church: degree in Arts in Religion from World Harvest Bible College; he will celebrate his tenth pastoral anniversary in August 2015. Pastor Orton will provide intellectual support for this project, particularly in regards to the parent workshops and outreach to families in the program.

Joyce L. Hackett, Supervisor of School Reform for Columbus City Schools: B.S. in Elementary Education and an M.A. in Educational Administration from the Ohio State University. Ms. Hackett has worked for Columbus City Schools as a teacher, building administrator and central office administrator for 24 years, and has been the CCS liaison to Big Brothers Big Sisters since 2007. Ms. Hackett will provide district oversight and continue to secure district support for Project Mentor.

Rick Lenkey, VP Central Region, McGraw-Hill Education: B.S. in Business Administration from California University of Pennsylvania. Mr. Lenkey has been the Vice President for the K-12 Central Region since April 2010. He has been with McGraw-Hill since 1998 with previous roles as a District Manager and Sales Representative. Mr. Lenkey’s work history includes twenty three years in leadership roles. Mr. Lenkey will serve as the McGraw-Hill Education representative on our Community Connectors leadership team.

Elizabeth Martinez, BBBS Chief Operating Officer: B.A. in Psychology from Ohio Christian University; recipient of the Latino Empowerment and Outreach Network’s Youth Award for her outstanding efforts on behalf of Hispanic children; joined BBBS in 2003, previously held positions as program coordinator, manager and assistant vice president; currently serving as a Big Sister. Ms. Martinez will provide leadership, support and motivation to School-based team members to meet program goals.

Abby Fisher, BBBS V.P. of Programs: B.A. in Communication Studies from Wittenberg University; joined BBBS in 2008, previously held positions as program coordinator and manager; has been a Big Sister to three girls over the past five years. Ms. Fisher will provide management and oversight to School-based programs.

**9. A timeline of all major activities must be provided. Assessment, planning and initial training must be completed by September 7, 2015. Services must begin by September 7, 2015.**

10.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
Cultivate new and existing partnerships with businesses, service organizations, government agencies and colleges to recruit volunteer mentors.	4/1/2015 – 8/31/2015
Conduct media campaign to recruit volunteer mentors.	4/1/2015 – 8/31/2015
Collect parental permission forms.	

Recruit, screen and train/orient new mentors.	6/1/2014 – 8/31/2015
Identify, enroll and train/orient new students.	
Match mentors and students.	9/7/2015 – 11/30/2015
Mentors and students meet weekly.	9/7/2015 – 5/31/2016
Provide on-site supervision.	
Recordkeeping for mentor, student and match.	
Provide and document ongoing match support.	
Collect and analyze Youth Outcomes Surveys.	5/1/2016 – 6/30/2016

**11. Describe the implementation process for reaching the following milestones:**

- a. **Screening, orientation, supporting, and monitoring process for mentors and other personnel working directly with youth;**
- b. **Identification and intake process for mentees;**
- c. **The means by which you will involve families of youth in your program; ongoing training of mentors throughout the life of the program, including topics/frequency;**
- d. **Assessing fiscal accountability and faithful implementation of project plans; and**
- e. **Any other critical information you want the Community Connectors team to know.**

**Screening of mentors/staff:** After potential volunteers are recruited or make an initial inquiry into Big Brothers Big Sisters, they complete an application and undergo a comprehensive screening. The purpose of the screening is to protect youth by identifying and screening out applicants who pose a safety risk, are unlikely to honor their time commitment or are unlikely to form positive relationships with youth. The screening procedures include gathering and verifying information on volunteer applications; checking references; processing criminal background checks (including the Ohio Sex Offender database) as well as child and domestic abuse record checks; and conducting in-person interviews. Every employee at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio must also undergo criminal background checks prior to beginning their employment.

**Mentor pre-match training/orientation:** Project Mentor volunteers receive training from Big Brothers Big Sisters and the Mentoring Center of Central Ohio. The training helps mentors understand: 1) the impact of poverty, including its effects on academic performance and parental involvement, and how mentoring can benefit youth in poverty; 2) the impact of trauma, including how trauma and toxic stress can have long-lasting effects, and how safe, nurturing environments can help reverse the effects of trauma; 3) the typical stages of a mentoring relationship, from honeymoon to growth to maturity; and 4) the importance of building trust and active listening to maintaining long-lasting mentoring relationships, which are proven to have the greatest impact for youth. Additionally, a BBBS program coordinator holds separate orientation sessions at the school for mentors and students at the start of each school year to introduce them to the program and answer any questions they may have.

**Identification and intake process for mentees:** Every student at each participating school is assessed prior to beginning the program to reveal which students are at-risk for dropout and delinquency and are most likely to benefit from a mentoring relationship. The assessment criterion for 2015-16 is students whose score on the 2013-14 Ohio Achievement Assessment in Math or Reading placed them at the “Basic” level (below grade-level proficiency) or at the “Proficient” level, but not more than 25 points above the “Basic” level. Some exceptions are made for students who are recommended by their teachers as demonstrating a special need for inclusion in the program. As part of the enrollment process, children and families are carefully assessed. Youth are interviewed in person about their personal history, experiences, hobbies, interests and preferences, as well as their hopes and goals for involvement in the program. Parents complete an application and sign a permission form for their child to participate.

**Mentor/youth matching:** Big Brothers Big Sisters provides a carefully structured approach to mentoring. Connecting the best volunteer with a child is a critical juncture in the mentoring process. Careful consideration is given to each mentoring relationship. The program coordinator interviews both the mentor and student before the program begins, and then identifies potential students and mentors for matches based on common interests, compatible personalities, and the needs and preferences of the mentor and student.

**Support and monitoring:** Our program coordinators are on-site for every mentoring session at the middle school level, and will also meet weekly with participating middle school and high school students. Program coordinators will likewise maintain weekly contact with mentors.

**Ongoing mentor training:** Our agency provides numerous opportunities for ongoing training for mentors, including a mid-year training session, two to three summer training sessions, and ongoing coaching and training through regular contact with their program coordinator. The Mentoring Center also offers frequent in-person training sessions, as well as on-demand online trainings, that are available for all of our mentors.

**Parental support/involvement:** Our program coordinators are making home visits to every family with a student in Project Mentor. The home visits help us build rapport with families, especially those who are newly enrolling in our program, and give our coordinators a better understanding of the challenges the students are facing, which helps us coach our mentors on the youth's needs as part of a comprehensive plan of support. Through the home visits we can connect our families to needed supportive services to increase family stability, and ultimately enhance the outcomes of our youth participants. We utilize a supportive services database, which includes eighteen categories of assistance (such as food, utilities, healthcare, clothing, tutoring, etc.). The families also come to visualize us as a resource and ally; often initial visits lead to subsequent visits/phone calls with requests for assistance. We also mail information about the program to parents prior to making the mentoring relationship, and contact parents of mentees periodically throughout the school year to update them on day-to-day issues and successes of their children. We also contact parents over the summer months with a greater focus on summer learning loss.

**Fiscal accountability:** Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio follows the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles on a fiscal year budget that runs July to June. The agency budget is approved by the Board of Trustees with an annual audit of financial activity conducted by an outside CPA. The budget is arranged on a month-to-month, accrual accounting basis with each program director responsible for building and adhering to their own budget and is reviewed monthly by the president & CEO, VP of finance and board treasurer. Monthly reports are approved by the Board of Directors. All cash and checks received are verified by both the BBBS database information coordinator and the VP of finance. All income, including in-kind support, is then recorded to its designated fund. As expenses are incurred, they are coded with the appropriate cost centers to ensure that the funds received are used for a specific program if donor-designated.

**Monitoring of program implementation:** A BBBS program manager does an on-site visit at every School-based Mentoring program two times per year to ensure that the program coordinators are maintaining program standards. Our AVP of evaluation and data and AVP of child safety and quality assurance also provide ongoing monitoring of program implementation to ensure that we are maintaining program standards.

**12. Describe how each applicant partner plans to contribute to the overall program plan including, but not limited to, time contribution, personnel contribution, monetary contribution, shared responsibilities, use of facilities, etc. Complete the Roles and Responsibilities worksheet attachment.**

Each **Columbus City school** participating in this program is responsible for helping to identify and recruit children for the program; distribute and collect referral forms, applications and permission slips for student participation; provide space for mentoring activities; provide assistance in obtaining information to evaluate the program; serve as a liaison between students, program coordinators and mentors; help match the students to mentors; and participate in program orientation. **Highlights for Children** will contribute approximately 208 staff hours per year to this project. **McGraw-Hill Education** will contribute approximately 48 staff hours and 225 volunteer hours per year to this project. Highlights for Children, Inc. and McGraw-Hill Education will provide materials and intellectual support to assist Big Brothers Big Sisters in designing and implementing activities for mentors and mentees to do together that are fun and rewarding, help mentors and mentees build their relationships, assist mentees in their academic development, and align with the core principles of Community Connectors. The **City of Zion Church** will approximately 40 staff hours to provide intellectual support for the program, especially regarding the parent workshops, outreach to families and cultural dynamics.

### Application Section III: Evaluation Plan

13. The evaluation plan is intended to provide lead organizations with a framework that will ensure the program is on track to positively impact the lives of students and identify needs for additional support when challenges arise. Each evaluation plan must list the scope of work and describe the following:
- Plans for keeping records of mentor contact hours, unduplicated count of students served each month, mentor training hours, etc. for ongoing reporting;
  - Gathering of data to measure progress towards meeting the selected goals;
  - Projected indicators of success; and
  - Anticipated barriers to successful evaluation including data collection and measurement of progress toward outcomes.

Program information such as number of active mentoring relationships and unduplicated students served is recorded and tracked using AIM (Agency Information Management), an online database created by Big Brothers Big Sisters of America for use by its affiliates to track key indicators and demographics pertaining to mentoring relationships. Our program coordinators will enter information into AIM about mentoring relationships they support. Reports from AIM will be run and analyzed by our AVP of evaluation and data. Mentors and mentees each sign-in at the start of each mentoring session, enabling us to track mentor contact hours. Mentor training hours are tracked by The Mentoring Center of Central Ohio.

The Big Brothers Big Sisters Outcomes System tracks the length of the mentoring relationship, the strength of the mentoring relationship and the outcomes that resulted from the mentoring relationship. The measures we use to gather outcomes data are:

- Length:** Average Match Length and Retention Rate. Numerous studies have shown that the longer the mentoring relationship lasts, the stronger the benefits for the mentored youth (see question six).
- Strength:** A Strength of Relationship Survey is administered to mentors and youth three months after the mentoring relationship begins, and again at the end of the school year. This data helps inform how we can improve the quality of our services to mentors and mentees with the goal of achieving longer, stronger mentoring relationships.
- Outcomes:** The Youth Outcome Survey. Our Youth Outcomes Survey was developed by three of the top mentoring researchers in the country – Jean Rhodes (University of Massachusetts at Boston), Jean Grossman (Princeton University), and Carla Herrera (Public/Private Ventures) – for use by Big Brothers Big Sisters affiliates. The Youth Outcomes Survey is administered to youth within a month before the youth is matched and then at the end of the school year. It is then administered on a yearly basis for the length of the mentoring relationship.

The Youth Outcomes Survey has 33 questions that examine eight dimensions of the mentoring relationship: **1) Social Acceptance** (e.g., “I find it hard to make friends”); **2) Scholastic Efficacy** (e.g. "I feel that I am just as smart as other kids my age"); **3) Educational Expectations** (how sure the child is that he/she will reach different levels of schooling); **4) Academic Performance**; **5) Attitudes towards Risky Behaviors** (such as drug and alcohol use, cheating and skipping school); **6) Parental Trust** (e.g., “My parents/guardians respect my feelings”); **7) Truancy**; and **8) Presence of a Special Adult in the Child’s Life (other than a parent/guardian)**. These measures have been found to be reliable and valid, and have been used in previous youth development research. For example:

- Increases in scholastic efficacy are associated with improved mental health and higher grades in both children and adolescents (Hagborg, 1998).
- Increases in social acceptance predict improvements in peer relations and school conduct, increase school achievement, and decrease the chances of dropping out (Asher & Paquette, 2003).
- Educational expectations have been linked to increases in school performance and increased standardized test scores (Khatab, 2005).
- Parental trust has been linked with improved grades and attendance, as well as reduced substance use (Rhodes, Reddy, & Grossman, 2005).

Youth respond to the questions on a four-point scale, except for the questions about academic performance, for which a five-point scale is used.

**The projected indicator of success for this program is that at least 75% of the youth will show improvements in at least two of the eight outcome areas measured by the Youth Outcomes Survey. Additionally, we expect in each individual outcome area, at least 80% of students will improve or maintain their performance from the baseline to the follow-up survey.**

#### **14. Applicants are to complete the program model.**

Please see the attached program model for Project Mentor.

#### **Application Section IV: Sustainability**

**15. Describe how you plan to maintain the program after the grant funding period. Include a discussion about financial sustainability and sustainability of the partnership commitment. Applicants are not required to include cash as part of their local contributions; however, funding sustainability is critical to the Community Connectors program. Applicants that show the potential for funding sustainability will be given preference in application scoring.**

Our agency has a history of receiving significant financial support from the central Ohio community. While we require Community Connectors funding to expand and enrich our mentoring program at the six schools listed in question two, we are confident that we can raise from private sources both the matching funds needed for the three years of the Community Connectors grant, as well as the funds needed to sustain the program beyond the three year grant period. Our major private funding sources are listed below:

- **Donations from individuals**, including direct mail donations and major gifts: Not including special events, we raised approximately \$430,000 in donations from individuals in our fiscal year 2014.
- **Special events: Bowl for Kids' Sake**, which has raised an average of \$450,000 each of the past three years; *A Taste of Class for Kids*, which has raised an average of \$257,000 each of the past three years; various third-party fundraising events raised approximately \$146,000 in FY2014.
- **Grants** from corporate, community and family foundations: Our largest private grants to support our School-based Mentoring programs in the past twelve months have been from Nationwide Foundation (\$150,000), American Electric Power Foundation (\$60,000), an anonymous family foundation (\$35,000), L Brands Foundation (\$35,000), Harry C. Moores Foundation (\$20,000), Huntington Foundation (\$15,000), and the Siemer Family Foundation (\$15,000).
- **United Way**: Our agency is a member of multiple United Way agencies in our service area. We received approximately \$455,000 in funding from United Way agencies in FY2014.
- **Other revenue**: Earned income in the form of cabin rentals at Camp Oty'Okwa generates approximately \$225,000 in revenue each year.

We are also confident that our project partners (Columbus City Schools, Highlights for Children, McGraw-Hill and City of Zion Church) will continue to participate in the program beyond the three-year grant period.

#### **Application Section V: Program Budget**

**16. Complete the budget form attachment and justify each of the budget items by creating a budget justification.**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio respectfully requests a Community Connectors grant of \$492,761.86. Our total project budget for the three-year grant period is \$772,018.46. We will raise \$279,256.60 in private matching funds to support the state of Ohio's contributions. Our project partners will provide in-kind staff support for this project, as detailed in the Roles and Responsibilities worksheet. Please see the attached budget form for more detail.

*By clicking this box,  I (Insert Name) Edward N. Cohn agree, on behalf of this applicant, and any or all identified partners, that this application and all supporting documents contain information approved by a relevant executive board or its equivalent.*