

Big Steps To Success Volunteer Opportunity Overview

Big Steps to Success is a **mentorship** program specifically designed for children and youth living in government care who are between the ages of 7 and 14.

Children and youth living in government care often lack unconditional love or support of a consistent positive adult role model. This significant gap can have dire consequences on their confidence, self-worth, education and ability to move forward in their lives as adults. Without a high school diploma and consistent guidance, young people involved in the child welfare system can face a lifetime of underemployment, low income and lost potential.

According to research conducted by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada in partnership with Boston Consulting Group, every dollar invested in mentorship returns \$23 to society. Other findings show that, compared to their non-mentored peers, vulnerable youth who receive mentoring are:

- **55% more likely to enroll in post-secondary education.**
- **17% more likely to be gainfully employed.**
- **78% more likely to volunteer.**
- **130% more likely to hold leadership positions.**
- **50% more likely to have a strong social network.**

The objective of this program is to help young people living in government care improve educational outcomes and benefit from a caring adult relationship.

Each mentee-mentor pair will participate in the program for a period of three to five years, with a minimum commitment of one year.

Benefits of becoming a mentor:

- Engage in a life-changing relationship built on friendship, trust and empowerment
- Help introduce your mentee to new experiences, opportunities and networks
- Have fun and share in mutual hobbies and interests!

Volunteer requirements:

- 18+ years of age (19+ in BC)
- Minimum one year commitment (2-4 hours per week)
- Provide a vulnerable sector check + character references
- Participate in mentor orientation and training

What mentoring looks like:

Once you have completed the process to become a volunteer mentor, mentors (Bigs) and mentees (Littles) will be thoughtfully matched. You will meet with your Little for a few hours every week either in the community, at their school, virtually or a combination of the three and you will get to know them through meaningful conversation, activities and shared experiences. All Big Steps to Success mentors receive specialized training and are supported by their Big Steps Coordinator throughout the match.

How to apply to become a mentor:

Big Steps to Success is currently operating in four cities across Canada.

To apply to become a mentor you will need to:

- complete a volunteer application form and
- connect with the Big Step Coordinator in your city.

Toronto, ON

- Step 1: [Click here to complete the online volunteer application form](#)
- Step 2: Reach out to Andy Ondrade to let them know you are interested in becoming a volunteer mentor for Big Steps to Success! Andy can be reached via email at andy.ondrade@bigbrothersbigsisters.ca or phone at (416) 925-8981 ext. 4152.

North Bay, ON

- Step 1: Complete the volunteer application form (PDF or Word doc.)
- Step 2: Submit your volunteer application form to Tayler Sullivan and let them know you are interested in becoming a volunteer mentor for Big Steps to Success! Tayler can be reached via email at tayler.sullivan@bigbrothersbigsisters.ca or by phone at (705) 474-3041 ext. 1

**Please note that the North Bay location is exclusively serving Indigenous children and youth through this program and is interested in recruiting volunteer mentors with an Indigenous cultural background.*

Saskatoon, SK

- Step 1: [Click here to complete the online volunteer application form](#)
- Step 2: Reach out to Jessica Kirk to let her know you are interested in becoming a volunteer mentor for Big Steps to Success! Jessica can be

reached via email at jessica.kirk@bigbrothersbigsisters.ca or by phone at (306) 244-8197 ext. 2-245

Victoria, BC

- Step 1: [Click here to complete the online volunteer application form](#)
- Step 2: Reach out to Jacqueline Sookermany to let her know you are interested in becoming a volunteer mentor for Big Steps to Success! Jacqueline can be reached via email at jacqueline.sookermany@bigbrothersbigsisters.ca or by phone at (250) 475-1117 ext. 53

Please note: Once you sign up as a mentor, it may take anywhere between 1-3 months to go through the volunteer intake process and get matched with the right mentee.

QUESTIONS?

Please note that the process and timelines to become a volunteer mentor vary slightly based on location. To learn more, connect with the Big Steps Coordinator in your city. Contact information is listed above.