2014 National Big of the Year Award Guidelines

Each year, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America honors two amazing volunteers—a National Big Brother of the Year and a National Big Sister of the Year. These mentors are nominated by their local agencies for their dedicated commitment to changing the lives of children facing adversity for the better, forever. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America is proud to bestow this award on these remarkable individuals.

Those who are chosen for this honor should understand that they effectively represent all Bigs in the Big Brothers Big Sisters network. Accordingly, the National Big of the Year must agree to the commitments and responsibilities that accompany the award. The agency, Little and the parent/guardian of the Little also must agree to and support the guidelines of being a Big of the Year. Those commitments and responsibilities are outlined in this document.
I. Selection Process

Each agency is invited to nominate one Big Brother and one Big Sister to be considered for the National Big of the Year Award. A nomination packet is to be completed and electronically submitted to your State Association Chair. A current list of State Chairs can be found on Agency Connection under Directories located on the right side navigation panel.

Judging at the State level
The State Chair will review all nominations from their state using the National Big of the Year Selection Criteria form. The State Chair will select one Big Brother and one Big Sister who has best demonstrated the characteristics outlined on the Selection Criteria form. The candidate’s nomination will then be submitted electronically to the National Office for review. Any nominations that are sent by mail will not be accepted. It is recommended that agencies use the Selection Criteria form when choosing their nominees for Bigs of the Year as the State Association Chairs and National Judges will also be using the same form.

Judging at National Level
Big Brothers Big Sisters of America will form a Big of the Year Selection Committee. The Committee will be composed of 15-20 national board and council members, funders, corporate, foundation supporters, ambassadors, and staff members. The National Big Brother and National Big Sister of the Year will be chosen from the candidates submitted by each State Chair. The 2014 National Big Brother and Big Sister of the Year will be announced to all agencies in early April 2014. The nominating agency of each winner will be notified prior to the announcement. All media relations regarding the National Bigs of the Year must be coordinated with the National Office. In order to present a unified message to the press it is necessary that we ask the winning agency to not speak publicly regarding the Big of the Year. Agencies should work with the National Office regarding all interviews, social media, press releases, and news coverage leading up to the National Conference.

II. National Big of the Year Nominee Criteria

The following are characteristics that each nominee must exemplify to be considered for National Big of the Year. State Chairs and National Judges will utilize these criteria to select their candidates for Big Brother/Big Sister of the Year.

1. The match has demonstrated significant impact for the Little.
   □ Big has helped his/her Little overcome obstacles to achieve positive outcomes. This is evidenced by the Little’s academic and/or behavioral achievements and their reaching of major milestones (i.e. improved academic performance and attendance, graduation, college attendance, avoidance of delinquency, respect of authority and peers).

2. The match has demonstrated an impact in the Little’s social/emotional improvements.
   □ The Little has shown increased confidence, improved relationships with family and peers, an interest of setting goals for his/her future and a desire of higher aspirations for his/herself.

3. Nominee has been highly engaged in Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.
   □ Recruitment of volunteers.
   □ Promoting Big Brothers Big Sisters in the community and/or workplace.
   □ Supporting and/or hosting fundraising efforts.
4. The Big has shown excellence as an advocate for Big Brothers Big Sisters. Through public appearances and/or interviews on behalf of the local agency, Big speaks persuasively about their experience and actively promotes our one-to-one mentoring model in print, TV, radio and/or social media.

III. Commitments and Responsibilities

A. National Big of the Year

By submitting a nomination packet; the Big, Little, parent/guardian of the Little, and the nominating agency agree to abide by the following:

1. Matches must be part of a single one-to-one site-based or community-based match. Big couples are not eligible for the National Big of the Year award.

2. The Big and Little have been matched for a minimum of 2 years.

3. Matches must be current, active matches and cannot be closed.

4. One Big Brother and his Little Brother and one Big Sister and her Little Sister will be chosen to represent Big Brothers Big Sisters as the National Big of the Year. If the Big has more than one Little or any previous matches, only the match that has been awarded Big of the Year will be recognized.

5. Big and Little must be willing and able to attend and speak during the annual awards gala and other media events before, during and after the 2014 National Conference in Chicago, Illinois on June 16 – 19.

6. National Big of the Year award recipients must agree to participate in national public relations campaigns.

7. Big and Little must be willing and able to go to the White House in Washington, D.C. if invited. Both the Big and his/her Little must have a valid United States Social Security number to be admitted to the White House.

8. A chaperone other than the Big must accompany the Little to all events relating to Big of the Year.

9. All media relations regarding the National Bigs of the Year must be coordinated with the National Office. In order to present a unified message to the press it is necessary that we ask the winning agency to not speak publicly regarding the Big of the Year. Agencies should work with the National Office regarding all interviews, social media, press releases, and news coverage leading up to the National Conference.

If the Big Brother, Little Brother, Big Sister, Little Sister, Parent/Guardian or Agency are unwilling or unable to comply with the above this may result in another nominee being selected as National Big of the Year.

B. Agency Commitments and Responsibilities

1. The agency must be in compliance with the Members Affiliation Agreement (“MAA”) and the Standards of Practice for One to One Service (“Standards”).

2. The agency must provide staff support to Big Brothers Big Sisters of America in facilitating the National Office’s production of a highlight video of the Big and Little to be shown at the National Conference. (Costs for the production of the highlight video will be covered by the National Office).

3. The agency will be responsible for providing a suitable chaperone for the Little if a parent/guardian is not available. This chaperone must be approved by the parent/guardian in writing. The Big may not be the chaperone for the Little.

4. All media relations regarding the National Bigs of the Year must be coordinated with the National Office. In order to present a unified message to the press it is necessary that we ask the winning agency to
not speak publicly regarding the Big of the Year. Agencies should work with the National Office regarding all interviews, social media, press releases, and news coverage leading up to the National Conference.

5. Each agency must confirm that the Big, Little, parent/guardian of the Little all are willing and able to comply with the guidelines outlined in Section III. of this document.

If the Big Brother, Little Brother, Big Sister, Little Sister, Parent/Guardian or Agency are unwilling or unable to comply with the above this may result in another nominee being selected as National Big of the Year.

C. National Office Commitments and Responsibilities

1. The National Office will cover transportation, lodging and meal expenses for the National Big of the Year, their Little, and one parent/guardian of the Little to attend the National Conference and any other media relations events. All travel arrangements will be made by the National Office. It is expected that the Little and his/her guardian will attend the event and stay together in one hotel/motel room. For the National Conference, cash stipends are given to the Big and the Little to cover out-of-pocket expenses in the amount of approximately $150 each. Other charges, such as in-room movies, gym fees, and internet fees are the individual’s responsibility.

2. Friends, family members, and agency staff are welcomed and encouraged to attend the National Conference. However, all booking and travel expenses will be the sole responsibility of the individual.

D. Publicity Campaigns, Publications and Speaking Engagements

National Big of the Year award recipients must agree to participate in national public relations campaigns. Publicly speaking about the match experience is an important responsibility of the National Big of the Year. An unwillingness or inability to publicly speak about Big Brothers Big Sisters may result in another nominee being selected as National Big of the Year. In an average year, these public relations outreach events usually do not exceed 3-5 opportunities and usually include but are not limited to the following:

1. Speaking at the 2014 National Conference awards gala in Chicago, Illinois on June 16 – 19. The Big and Little will be required to give a speech at the gala and possible interviews with the media before and during the conference.

2. Participating in a highlight video of the Big and Little that will be shown at the National Conference

3. Participation in national outreach efforts, both for fundraising and volunteer recruitment in print, TV, radio or social media

4. Participating in speaking engagements throughout the year

5. Appearance in Big Brothers Big Sisters publications

6. The Big, Little, and parent/guardian of the Little must agree to allow the Big’s and Little’s name, likeness and match story to be used in publicity campaigns, including but not limited to print media, online media, websites, social media, videos, television ads, etc.

E. The White House

In previous years, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America has been honored with an invitation to the White House to meet and be recognized by the President of the United States. Invitations to the White House are not guaranteed from year to year. National Bigs of the Year, their Littles, the parent/guardian of the Littles, and the agency must abide by the following regarding visits to the White House:

1. The National Big of the Year and his/her Little must be willing and able to attend a visit to the White House if an invitation is extended.
2. Both the Big and his/her Little must have a valid United States Social Security number to be admitted to the White House. Recognition of the National Big of the Year by the President of the United States has been historically significant and important to the continued public outreach of the network. Accordingly, if either the Big or the Little cannot visit the White House for any reason, including lack of a Social Security number, another nominee may be selected as National Big of the Year.

3. Invitations to the White House have been restricted to the National Bigs of the Year, their Littles, and a representative from the National Office. Family members, friends, or representatives of the agency will not be admitted to the White House. If the family members of the Big or Little or the agency are unwilling to abide by this rule, another nominee may be selected as National Big of the Year.

4. The national office will cover transportation, lodging and meal expenses for the National Big of the Year, their Little, and one parent/guardian of the Little. All travel arrangements will be made by the National Office. It is expected that the Little and his/her guardian will attend the event and stay together in one hotel/motel room. Other charges, such as in-room movies, gym fees and internet fees the individual’s responsibility.

5. The agency will be responsible for providing a suitable chaperone for the Little if a parent/guardian is not available. This chaperone must be approved by the parent/guardian in writing. The Big may not be the chaperone for the Little.

IV. NOMINATION PACKET AND DEADLINES

Each agency is invited to nominate one Big Brother and one Big Sister to be considered for the National Big of the Year Award. A nomination packet must be completed and electronically submitted to your State Association Chair no later than January 27, 2014. A current list of State Chairs can be found on Agency Connection under Directories located on the right side navigation panel. Agencies must send their nominations packets electronically to their State Chair and not the National Office. Nominations packets sent to the National Office by the agency will NOT be accepted. Nominations received after January 27, 2014 will NOT be accepted.

It is recommended that agencies use the Selection Criteria form when choosing their nominee for Big of the Year as the State Chair and National Judges will also be using the same form.

The Nomination Packet must include the following:
1. A completed National Bigs of the Year Nomination Form

2. A signed Consent and Release Form from the Big

3. A signed Consent and Release Form from the parent/guardian of the Little

4. A compelling essay from the match support staff of how the nominee exemplifies the impact the Big has had in the life of the Little
   ☐ 1000 words or less - 1 page only; must be typed

5. A compelling essay from the nominee that discusses the background of the relationship and what impact the experience has had on them and their Little
   ☐ 1000 words or less - 1 page only; must be typed

6. A brief essay from the Little about the impact their Big has had on their life.
   ☐ 500 words or less - 1/2 page only, must be typed
7. A brief statement from the Little’s parent or caretaker about the impact the Big has had on the child’s life.
   □ 500 words or less 1/2 page only, must be typed

8. Recent photos of the Big and Little. We also encourage agencies to submit photos from early in the match if possible. (Please note: these will not be returned.)

9. In addition, any video footage and/or articles that demonstrates the impact of the relationship and the ability of the Big to articulate Big Brothers Big Sisters mission. This is optional. (Please note: these will not be returned.)

***Nominations will not be considered if items 1-8 are not fully completed and submitted by the appropriate deadlines***

**National Big of the Year Deadlines:**
- January 27, 2014 – Nomination packets are due to State Association Chairs from agencies
- February 24, 2014 – Nominations are due to the National Office from the State Association Chairs
- March 25, 2014 – National Big of the Year Selection Committee begins review of nominees
- April 2014 – National Big of the Year award winners announced

For questions or additional information, please contact Jonathan Resendez at Jonathan.Resendez@bbbs.org.