

Briefing on the Impact of Mentoring: Insights from Recent Research

Harvard University and the U.S. Department of Treasury has provided compelling evidence on the transformative power of mentorship, particularly through programs like Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS). This longitudinal study, rooted in three decades of data, highlights the significant educational, economic, and social benefits for mentored youth.

Key Findings

1. **Increased Educational Attainment**
 - **Higher College Enrollment:** Mentored youth are 20% more likely to enroll in college compared to their non-mentored peers.
2. **Enhanced Economic Outcomes**
 - **Increased Earnings:** Participants experienced a 15% boost in earnings between the ages of 20 and 25, reflecting enhanced economic mobility.
 - **Economic Gap Reduction:** The income of mentored youth as adults was more closely aligned with the income of their mentor than their family, helping to reduce the socioeconomic gap by two-thirds.
3. **Improved Behavioral and Social Outcomes**
 - **Behavioral Improvements:** Within 18 months, mentored youth reported lower absenteeism and fewer school suspensions.
 - **Healthier Social Behaviors:** Mentored youth exhibit improved behaviors and stronger social bonds, leading to a reduced dependency on social services and long-term societal improvements.

Economic Efficiency of Mentorship Programs

- **Program Cost:** The average cost of the BBBS program is \$2,500 per match, with an average match length of 2.5 years.
 - Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rhode Island's average cost per match is \$3,000 and average match length is 3 years.
- **Return on Investment:** This investment is recouped within just seven years through increased tax revenues and reduced reliance on social services, making it one of the most cost-effective youth interventions.

Strategic Implications

This research positions the BBBS program as a catalyst for policy development, strategic partnerships, and public engagement. By demonstrating measurable economic benefits and contributing to closing the opportunity gap, mentorship programs like BBBS play a crucial role in creating a talent pipeline for the future.

IT TAKES LITTLE TO BE BIG