

JOAQUIN CASTRO
20TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

HOUSE PERMANENT SELECT
COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
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Congress of the United States
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Washington, DC 20515-4320

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May 10, 2024

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
H-305, the Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro,

I am requesting funding for the Mentoring Programs to Reduce Recidivism Among Justice-Involved Youth in Bexar County in fiscal year 2025. The entity to receive funding for this project is Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Texas, located at 10843 Gulfdale Street San Antonio, TX 78216. The funding would be used to increase capacity to take on more mentors to match youth to reduce juvenile delinquency and reduce the risk of criminal behaviors later in life for at-risk youth. The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because the Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Texas program tackles the complex social challenges that hinder youth development and contribute to risky behaviors. These challenges include issues like teen pregnancy, academic struggles, abuse, domestic violence, high school dropout rates, juvenile delinquency, and eventual incarceration. Without positive role models and mentors, many young people struggle to break free from these destructive cycles, perpetuating these harmful behaviors. Mentors play a crucial role in disrupting these cycles by offering guidance, support, and new perspectives to youth. They help young individuals overcome obstacles, avoid re-offending, and ultimately achieve success. By providing youth with the tools to navigate their challenges, BBBSST contributes to a stronger, more resilient community. Funding for mentor recruitment is an investment in the community's future. Research has consistently shown the positive impact of supportive relationships on youth development and trauma recovery. BBBSST's mentorship program enhances social competence, teaching valuable skills like empathy, kindness, and helpfulness. These skills are essential for long-term success but can be challenging to instill without consistent reinforcement in various settings, which mentors provide. In the 20th Congressional District of Texas, BBBSST's program will specifically target youth at higher risk of delinquency and justice system involvement. By addressing these risks early, the program prevents the costly consequences associated with delinquency, such as poverty and educational disruption. BBBSST offers a cost-effective, proactive solution that benefits not only the youth and their families but also the mentors and the entire community.

The project has a Federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes described in the Byrne Justice Assistance Grants program, section 501 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C § 10152).

I certify that I have no financial interest in this project, and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JOAQUIN CASTRO". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'J'.

Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress