



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**BBBS Contact:** Kayla Herring, Marketing and Communications Coordinator  
Phone: (850) 433-5437  
E-mail: kherring@bbbsnwfl.org

### Attorney General Moody Encourages an Increase in Law Enforcement Mentorships

**PENSACOLA, Fla.** - Attorney General Ashley Moody announced on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019 a joint partnership with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (FLHSMV), and Big Brothers Big Sisters to encourage law enforcement to join the Bigs in Blue mentorship program.

Attorney General Moody, FDLE Commissioner Rick Swearingen, and FLHSMV Executive Director Terry Rhodes each sent a memo to their respective agencies encouraging staff to participate in the Bigs in Blue program by spending an hour a week mentoring at-risk kids and teens using an existing state administrative leave policy.

"The Bigs in Blue program is doing an incredible job building bonds between law enforcement and youth by showing children that an officer's job is to protect them and their families. I saw firsthand the impact that this program has on the communities it serves when I presented a Back the Blue award to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay" says Attorney General Ashley Moody "Since then, I've been inspired to find a way to encourage more participation in this great program. I can't wait to see the impact this program will have once we have even more law enforcement officers across the state participating. It is vital to our state that we do everything in our power to build trust and respect between law enforcement and the communities they serve."

"Here, in Northwest Florida, the program is called Bigs with Badges and includes fire, EMS, corrections, state and federal departments along with police departments. This program is meant to aid positive relations between law enforcement, first responders and our community. In 2017 we formed a partnership with the Pensacola Police Department, City of Pensacola, Escambia County Sheriff's Office and Pensacola Fire Department and the recruitment of Bigs in those agencies. We hope that Attorney General Moody's initiative will only further excel our existing program." Says Paula Shell, President and CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida. "We hope this statewide initiative will help encourage members of the community that wear a badge to mentor young people."

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida currently has 14 matches enrolled in the Bigs with Badges program. That means each county has a minimum of one match in our service area from Pensacola to Panama City.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida has been the area's leader in one-to-one mentoring for 30 years by serving children ages 6 to 18. Our mission is to create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth. Last year, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida served 662 children in Northwest Florida.

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[Photo Attached](#)

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1320 Creighton Road  
Pensacola, Fl. 32504  
850-433-5437  
bbbs@bbbsnwfl.org

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