

## **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri, University of Missouri - St. Louis, and Missouri State University Forge Transformative Partnerships to Empower Students**

**St. Louis, MO – March 28, 2024**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri (BBBSEMO) is proud to announce two significant partnerships aimed at fostering academic success and empowerment of students through scholarship opportunities with the University of Missouri - St. Louis (UMSL) and Missouri State University (MSU).

In a landmark collaboration with the University of Missouri - St. Louis (UMSL), BBBSEMO and UMSL joined forces to provide \$5,250 Community Partnership Scholarships to BBBSEMO students enrolling at the university, effective from the 2024-25 academic year. This partnership underscored the commitment of both organizations to enhancing access to higher education and supporting the educational journeys of young adults in the St. Louis metropolitan area. The official agreement was signed on March 27th, 2024, symbolizing a shared dedication to providing inclusive educational opportunities that promoted student success and community engagement.

BBBSEMO and Missouri State University (MSU) forged a partnership that began in 2019. The new official agreement, which was signed on March 7, 2024, includes an increase to the renewable \$2,000 Community Partnership Scholarships for BBBSEMO students enrolling at MSU, commencing from the 2023-24 academic year. Pell-eligible students can apply for the Community Partnership Scholarship on top of [MoState Access](#) to assist with living expenses. Missouri State University President Cliff Smart expressed, “This partnership underscored our dedication to supporting student success and advancing educational equity in our communities.”

These collaborations reflect a shared vision of empowering students and fostering educational access. By providing scholarships and comprehensive support services, BBBSEMO aims to equip students with the resources they need to thrive academically and achieve their goals.

"We were thrilled to commemorate this significant partnership," remarked Eboni Buckels. "As we celebrated this milestone, we were enthusiastic about advancing our mission of empowering young alumni and equipping them with the necessary resources for success. Our collaborations with the University of Missouri - St. Louis (UMSL) and Missouri State University (MSU) presented exciting opportunities to make a positive impact on the lives of our future leaders."

### **Celebrating a Decade of Impact: Big Futures**

In addition to these partnerships, the year 2024 marks the 10th anniversary of BBBSEMO's Big Futures program, an initiative designed to support mentorship for young adults aged 18-25 as they navigated through their 3 E's - Enrollment, Enlistment, and/or Employment. The partnerships between the University of Missouri - St. Louis (UMSL), Missouri State University (MSU), and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri (BBBSEMO) provide equitable access to quality education for current and future full-time undergraduate students who actively participate in BBBSEMO programs.

Kristen Slaughter, CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri (BBBSEMO), emphasized the organization's dedication to the transformative power of education. "At Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri (BBBSEMO), we believe in the power of education to transform lives," she stated. "Through our partnerships with the University of Missouri - St. Louis (UMSL) and Missouri State University (MSU), we are committed to providing our young alumni with the opportunities they need to succeed in higher education and beyond."

These collaborations signify the ongoing commitment of the University of Missouri - St. Louis (UMSL), Missouri State University (MSU), and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri (BBBSEMO) to advancing educational equity and empowering students in the St. Louis metropolitan area.

**For more information about Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri (BBBSEMO) and its programs, visit <https://www.bbbsemo.org/>.**

**For media inquiries, please contact:**

**qclay@bbbsemo.org**

**About Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri (BBBSEMO):**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri (BBBSEMO), located at 501 N. Grand Blvd in St. Louis, has served youth and the community since 1914. Through BBBSEMO's 600 active matches in its one-to-one mentoring program and signature one-to-many efforts, youth outcomes are improved. BBBSEMO's initiatives encompass support for education and workforce development; these include ABCToday (in 16 schools, K-12), Big Futures (young people ages 18-25), and its newest initiatives in Group Mentoring for youth in middle school. The comprehensive work of the agency serves more than 8,000 people which includes children and families in St. Louis City and County; St. Charles and Jefferson Counties; and Cape Girardeau and Scott Counties. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri (BBBSEMO) is a proud member of the United Way.

**About University of Missouri - St. Louis (UMSL):**

The [University of Missouri–St. Louis](#) (UMSL) is the largest public research university in eastern Missouri, and the third largest in the state, priding itself on creating greater access to higher education and opportunity for its nearly 15,000 diverse students. UMSL confers nearly 3,000 degrees annually and offers a wide range of baccalaureate and master's degrees, two education specialist degrees and 17 doctoral degrees, including the only professional doctor of optometry program in Missouri. Established in 1963 as the fourth campus of the [University of Missouri System](#), UMSL boasts more than 115,000 alumni, 73 percent of whom live and work in the St. Louis region.

## **About Missouri State University (MSU):**

Missouri State University (MSU), located in Springfield, Missouri, is a public research university known for its commitment to excellence in education and community engagement. Founded in 1905, MSU offers a diverse range of academic programs and fosters a vibrant campus community dedicated to student success. With a focus on accessibility and innovation, Missouri State University (MSU) plays a vital role in shaping the future leaders of tomorrow.