



# My Brother's Keeper Task Force



*One-Year Progress Report to the President*

February 27, 2015

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Dear Mr. President,

One year ago, you launched My Brother's Keeper ("MBK") to address persistent opportunity gaps and to tear down barriers that too often prevent boys and young men of color and other young people from realizing their potential. The Presidential Memorandum you signed on February 27, 2014, established the MBK Task Force to work on these issues and directed that it submit a status report within one year. This is that report.

At the launch of MBK, you issued a powerful call to action for government, businesses, nonprofits, local education agencies, and individuals to make a difference in the lives of the young people of our nation – to help ensure they have the tools and opportunities they need to succeed, regardless of who they are, where they come from, or the circumstances into which they are born.

MBK is important because our nation will be most successful when all of its young people are successful. There is evidence indicating that, when so many of our boys and young men of color and other young people grow up in poverty, drop out of school, have trouble finding meaningful work, or get involved in the criminal justice system, we lose the contribution of their talents and abilities in our communities and in the larger economy.

Your MBK Task Force has laid out comprehensive, forward-looking recommendations to help ensure that no young person is left behind and that all have the tools to achieve. The strategies focus on addressing the barriers to the path into the middle class and to social mobility more broadly. They include an emphasis on implementing policies to address disparities, developing strong communities that commit to nurturing and mentoring our youth, and encouraging unique public-private collaborations. A wide array of businesses, foundations, and nonprofits have committed hundreds of millions of dollars and in-kind resources to advance the vision and objectives of MBK. More than 60 superintendents of the largest urban school districts have pledged to develop aligned strategies. And nearly 200 mayors, county executives, and tribal leaders have accepted your challenge to develop locally driven, comprehensive cradle-to-college-and-career strategies aimed at improving life outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

As we have traveled the country, we have heard from countless young people excited about what MBK will mean for them. They have told us that they feel hopeful, that they are enthusiastic about having forums and venues to be heard in, and that they are embracing authentic roles in helping to shape their own futures. A 16-year-old member of Boston Mayor Walsh's MBK Task Force summed it up this way:

"Ask yourselves: What will you do to keep the promise, not only to me, but to all of us? Because we matter. I ask you to join me in proving it."

Mr. President, through MBK, your call to action has catalyzed a level of commitment that is creating optimism and opportunity. We will continue to work toward building avenues for transformative impact on individual lives and entire communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arne Duncan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Arne" being more prominent than the last name "Duncan".

Arne Duncan  
United States Secretary of Education

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Broderick D. Johnson". The signature is cursive and spans across the width of the page.

Broderick Johnson  
Assistant to the President,  
Cabinet Secretary, and Chair of the  
My Brother's Keeper Task Force



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## *One-Year Progress Report to the President*

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*President Barack Obama meets with the My Brother's Keeper Task Force at the White House, May 30, 2014.*

## Executive Summary

On February 27, 2014, in the East Room of the White House, President Barack Obama launched “My Brother’s Keeper” (MBK). The President’s call to action was a reflection of his commitment to close opportunity gaps still faced by too many young people, and often faced by boys and young men of color in particular. The President’s vision found its roots in the idea that “my neighbor’s child is my child – that each of us has an obligation to give every child the same chance this country gave so many of us.”<sup>2</sup> The President’s announcement encouraged candid dialogues around the country and a greater sense of responsibility among community leaders and young people themselves to put all youth in a position to thrive, regardless of their race, gender, or socioeconomic status.

Over the course of the past year, efforts have advanced along three interdependent areas of focus based on the goals laid out in the MBK Presidential Memorandum: Place-Based State and Local Engagement (the MBK Community Challenge); Private-Sector Action (e.g. independent nonprofit, philanthropic and corporate action); and Public Policy review and reform (the work of the MBK Task Force). This report provides an update on all three approaches.

## **Place-Based State and Local Engagement: The MBK Community Challenge**

Since late September 2014, nearly 200 mayors, tribal leaders, and county executives across 43 states and the District of Columbia have accepted the MBK Community Challenge (“Challenge”) in partnership with more than 2,000 individual community-based allies – a mix of citizens and community organizations and leaders who have committed to support the MBK initiatives of their communities. These “MBK Communities” are working with leading experts in youth and community development to design and implement cradle-to-college-and-career action plans.

Within six months of accepting the Challenge, MBK Communities commit to review local public policy, host action summits, and implement their locally tailored action plans to address opportunity gaps. Dozens of MBK Community leaders have already hosted summits, and others are being planned.

MBK Communities that have held their summits are provided with technical assistance to develop, implement, and track plans of action from both federal agencies and independent organizations with related expertise. On February 12, 2015, more than 200 local and national leaders and practitioners gathered at the White House for the MBK Community Challenge National Convening to learn and share best practices.

## **Private-Sector Action: Business, Philanthropy, and Nonprofit Action**

Foundations, businesses, and social enterprises have responded to the President’s call to action by taking steps to ensure that communities have the support they need, and by providing funding and advice for aligned national initiatives. More than \$300 million in grants and in-kind resources have been independently committed already to advance the mission of MBK. These funds include investments in safe and effective schools, mentoring programs, juvenile justice reforms, school redesign, and efforts like the National Basketball Association’s (NBA’s) “Be Someone Who Matters to Someone Who Matters” mentorship public service announcement (PSA) campaign. Finally, the National Convening Council, led by retired Deloitte Consulting CEO Joe Echevarria and former NBA star and entrepreneur Earvin “Magic” Johnson, and other private and philanthropic organizations have provided technical assistance to help MBK Communities create and execute their own independent MBK action plans.

## **Policy: The Federal Response**

The MBK Task Force has encouraged and tracked implementation of the recommendations outlined in the initial 90-day report issued in May (the Task Force Report). Those efforts have led to greater focus on federal investments that support evidence-based interventions. For example, grant programs, like the Department of Labor’s American Apprenticeship Initiative, will harness federal resources to create clearer pathways to success for youth using earn-and-learn and other job-driven training models. Similarly, the departments of Education and Justice issued correctional education guidance to help to ensure that incarcerated youth have the full

protection of existing laws and benefits. The federal government has also advanced its efforts to track quality data for boys and young men of color and their peers.

This report provides a high-level review of the policy progress in each key milestone identified in the *Task Force Report* as well as descriptions of significant policy accomplishments. The milestones are based on research that has identified key points on the path to adulthood that are especially predictive of later success and where interventions can have the greatest impact.

Targeted areas include

1. **Entering school ready to learn**
2. **Reading at grade level by third grade**
3. **Graduating from high school ready for college and career**
4. **Completing postsecondary education or training**
5. **Successfully entering the workforce**
6. **Reducing violence and providing a second chance**

Among the highlights of the policy accomplishments are:

### **Cross-Cutting Recommendations**

The Administration continues to build upon public and private efforts to highlight promising strategies and practices with strong evidence, provide a comprehensive view of the outcomes for boys and young men of color and their peers, and support parents and other caring adults in engaging young people.

#### **1. Entering School Ready to Learn**

The U.S. departments of Education and Health and Human Services focused efforts on eliminating suspensions and expulsions in early learning settings, encouraging universal developmental and behavioral screening, and announcing up to \$750 million in Preschool Development Grants.

#### **2. Reading at Grade Level by Third Grade**

The U.S. Department of Education has completed a series of briefs clarifying the four essential components of effective reading instruction that schools should implement to improve kindergarten and first-grade reading skills. The Department also launched campaigns to highlight and share the most effective practices.

### 3. Graduating From High School Ready for College and Career

Federal agencies, states, and communities continue to invest in and support the development of resources and interventions that have been shown to improve the conditions for learning in our schools and substantially improve student outcomes.

### 4. Completing Postsecondary Education or Training

The Department of Education made substantial progress toward improving college advising services and expanding the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) Completion project. Additionally, in support of the President's college completion goal, in December 2014, the U.S. Department of Education helped launch the second White House College Opportunity Day of Action.

### 5. Successfully Entering the Workforce

Federal agencies announced a number of new resources to broadly help employ and train underrepresented populations, encourage innovative partnerships at the state and local levels, and expand registered apprenticeship opportunities for at-risk youth.

### 6. Reducing Violence and Providing a Second Chance

The Department of Justice and other agencies worked together to promote community-oriented policing practices, improve trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve, and improve the overall life and educational outcomes for justice-involved youth.



*President Obama talks with mayors participating in the MBK Community Challenge at the White House, January 23, 2015.*

## Place-Based State and Local Engagement: The Community Challenge Response

In launching the Challenge, President Obama called on communities and tribal nations to develop and implement locally driven cradle-to-college-and-career strategies with the strongest evidence of improving life outcomes for all young people and ensuring that they can reach their full potential, regardless of who they are, where they come from, or the circumstances into which they are born. Nearly 200 cities, counties, and tribal nations across 43 states have joined the Challenge, including the nation's five largest cities (New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, and Philadelphia); 17 tribal nations, including the Cherokee Nation, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribes, and Hoonah Indian Association; and cities with some of the highest African American populations (Detroit, Birmingham, and Washington, D.C.) and Hispanic populations (San Francisco, Dallas, and Phoenix).

The Challenge is rooted in the importance of supporting locally driven, place-based strategies, which draw on the compounding effects of cross-sector partnerships investing in evidence-based strategies to achieve shared goals. Effective place-based policies can influence how rural and metropolitan areas develop – and how well they function as places to live, work, operate a business, preserve cultural heritage, and more. Such policies can also streamline otherwise redundant and disconnected programs.<sup>3</sup>

Using place-based strategies, communities across the country have demonstrated for many years that they can dramatically raise high school graduation rates using early warning systems and intensive tutoring and mentorship. They have reduced violent crime and improved reentry outcomes through justice reinvestment. They have increased kindergarten readiness through early home visiting and dual-generation programs. And, they have connected youth to jobs and skills-based learning through apprenticeships and sectoral training.

To inform local efforts around the country and provide guidance on strategies with proven results, the [Playbook for Action](#) was released as part of the launch of the Challenge, encouraging leaders to develop local strategies with an eye toward both short-term priorities and long-term progress. Local leaders taking up the Challenge agreed to a timetable with four specific steps:

- 1) Accept and announce the President's Challenge, designating staff and having a commitment to the Challenge goals;
- 2) *Within 45 days*: host a local action summit;
- 3) *Within 120 days*: conduct a local policy review focused on existing investments and available evidence-based approaches; and
- 4) *Within 180 days*: launch a plan of action, including next steps and a timetable for reviewing progress, with data on targeted outcomes.

Of the diverse array of MBK Communities, well over 100 have hosted their local action summits and have begun developing a longer-term agenda, with capacity-building support in place.

### Technical Assistance

MBK Communities that accept the Challenge design and implement their own strategies, but can receive technical assistance to support their ongoing efforts and bring action plans to life in their communities. Learning resources and ongoing technical support have been developed through a collaboration involving subject-matter experts from relevant federal agencies and non-governmental organizations in the fields of education, health, and justice. The nonprofit National Convening Council has coordinated such work with the National League of Cities, StriveTogether, United Way, PolicyLink, Urban Institute, Deloitte Consulting, and others.

Thus far, technical assistance from federal entities and their private-sector counterparts has focused on bringing key partners to the table, incorporating data-driven discovery and impact measurement, planning, and implementing and monitoring successful outcomes-focused strategies. Depending on the local context and constraints, communities may choose to obtain assistance by accessing resources like webinars and guides, or engaging in one-on-one technical consultation and support with experts.

Commitments to the Challenge have been made by local and national leaders in municipal government. In June 2014, Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson, President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM), announced the establishment of USCM's MBK Task Force during the organization's annual meeting in Dallas, Texas. Following this meeting, the USCM's MBK Task Force's co-chairs, Birmingham Mayor William Bell and Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, initiated an assessment of efforts underway in cities across the country and the roles that the mayors of these cities are playing. The group's independent report from September 2014, *My Brother's Keeper Initiatives in Cities*, provided a baseline understanding of how various cities were already responding in concrete ways to the goals of the MBK initiative.

In addition to USCM, the National League of Cities, the National Association of County Officials, the National Association for Latino Elected Officials, the National Congress of American Indians, and the African-American Mayors have all signaled commitments to meet the challenges that are core to MBK's mission.

### Inaugural MBK Community Challenge National Convening

Over 200 representatives from cities, counties, and tribal nations, members of the MBK Task Force, private sector supporters, and nonprofits gathered on February 12, 2015 at the White House for the MBK Community Challenge National Convening. The purpose of the convening was to provide a forum for local leaders to learn and share effective strategies and foster relationships with experts and each other. The full-day event consisted of presentations and plenary panels focused on how communities can model leading practices and build solution-oriented collaborations.

## MBK in Action Spotlights

Each Challenge Community has up to 180 days after accepting the Challenge to officially unveil its comprehensive action plan. The federal government does not sponsor, supervise, or independently evaluate the efforts of these localities. But the communities themselves have reported many encouraging signs of progress and momentum. Some of those independent efforts are highlighted below, with information received from the communities themselves, to provide a sense of the broad work being performed to help ensure all youth have the opportunity to realize their full potential.



Mayor Richard Berry and local youth at a My Brother's Keeper Action Forum in Albuquerque, New Mexico, January 16, 2015.

### Albuquerque, New Mexico

*"This work is especially important in my city, as Albuquerque is home to a minority-majority population. I believe that through MBK we have a real opportunity to see some meaningful outcomes emerge, and help these young people succeed in our community."*

*– Mayor Richard J. Berry*

In Albuquerque, local leaders have been focusing on issues of college- and career-readiness and strategies to create supportive environments to improve life trajectories. The community used the Head, Heart & Hands approach in their MBK local action summit to explore the issue of racial equity, recognizing the need for a framework that could lift up the personal stories of youth to provide context around this complex issue. The Albuquerque MBK Action

Forum was a collective effort that engaged multiple stakeholders, including city government, school district leaders, teachers, community leaders, and over 200 students.

**In January 2015**, Albuquerque held its local action summit in partnership with the Albuquerque Public School (APS). The summit brought together youth, community leaders, policymakers, and community members in a community conversation aimed at improving life outcomes for all youth. The feedback, comments, and information gathered at the event are now guiding the work of the district's newly formed Office of Equity and Engagement.



U.S. Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan and members and staff from the Boston Celtics basketball team at a My Brother's Keeper town hall meeting in Boston, Massachusetts, September 18, 2014.

#### Boston, Massachusetts <sup>4</sup>

*"I'm committed to building a citywide movement to close opportunity gaps in Boston and set a new standard for inclusion and equity in America."*

*– Mayor Martin J. Walsh*

Shortly after accepting the Challenge, the city of Boston established the MBK Boston Advisory Committee in September 2014, and is actively engaging the community to promote positive outcomes for all youth. The MBK Boston Advisory Committee developed subcommittees focusing on eight key areas: Civic Engagement, Education, Business

Development, Workforce Development, Human Services, Public Health, Public Safety, and Youth Employment. The mayor has convened a task force with approximately 40 members, including police officers, educators, city youth workers, youth, and advocates. Boston plans to expand the number of year-round jobs for young people, as a way of introducing them to employment and helping them to think about future careers.

**In early December**, the city hosted its local action summit at the James P. Timilty Middle School in Roxbury. More than 500 residents and community stakeholders from government, academia, the private sector, and faith-based organizations attended. Breakout sessions were facilitated to identify recommended strategies to address opportunity gaps.

**In January**, Mayor Walsh launched the Mayor's Mentoring Movement, an initiative in collaboration with Mass Mentoring Partnership to recruit 1,000 new caring adult mentors for Boston's youth. The target timeframe to meet the recruitment target is two years. At least 10 percent of the volunteers will be city of Boston employees. The effort will offer new empowering relationships for boys and girls ages 7 through 18.



*Mayor Rahm Emanuel and members of the Urban Prep Academy Class of 2014 in Chicago, Illinois, April 8, 2014.*

## Chicago, Illinois

*"For our children to reach their full potential, we must all live up to our full responsibilities to them. The city of Chicago is proud to accept the President's My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge."*

*– Mayor Rahm Emanuel*

The city of Chicago is committed to forging partnerships and strategies specifically designed to address poverty, unemployment, and violence. The city is developing new programs that can have a transformational impact on all youth, including young men of color, by reducing violence, increasing educational attainment, and expanding pathways to meaningful careers. The city has launched additional initiatives in early childhood, grade school literacy, pathways to college and careers, mentoring, criminal justice, and opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals.

**In July**, the city of Chicago announced an investment in the Becoming A Man (BAM) program, to expand enrollment from 600 to 2,000 students. BAM is a nationally recognized, intensive group mentoring program with outstanding performance indicators. The program leverages elements of behavioral therapy to strengthen the participants' social-cognitive skills, including self-regulation and impulse control. Evaluations by University of Chicago researchers attribute significant outcomes to the program, including reduced violent arrests (by over 40 percent), reduced failing grades (by 37 percent), and increased graduation rates (by 10 percent).

**In November**, as part of the Commission for a Safer Chicago and the MBK Community Challenge, Mayor Emanuel convened over 130 community and faith leaders, practitioners, subject matter experts, city staff, and youth to create a shared strategic plan for youth violence prevention for 2015. Implementation is underway. A steering committee of the Commission meets monthly to discuss progress and challenges, and the Mayor meets quarterly with the entire Commission to share updates and continue to plan together.

## Fulton County, Georgia

*"We need to work together to make things better. We need to engage residents of all ages, especially young people, about finding ways to strengthen our connections and keep communities safe for everyone."*

*– Chairman John Eaves*

The mission of the Fulton County My Brother's Keeper Task Force is to work in collaboration with stakeholders to address opportunity gaps by utilizing best practices and strategies that strengthen communities. To date, Fulton County has hosted three MBK Community Challenge events in the Metro Atlanta area, three MBK meetings with local stakeholders, and launched the Fulton County Youth Service Directory. The task force is focusing, for example, on building more trust among communities of color and law enforcement officials.

**In October 2014**, Fulton County held a local action summit in partnership with Fulton County Superior Court and Office of Children and Youth. Since the first convening, Chairman Eaves has convened three more meetings with over 900 stakeholders in attendance. The “Our Streets, Our Sons” event was held at BEST Academy and included a panel discussion aimed at helping young people improve their interactions with police. Preventing the escalation of tense situations and helping young people learn how to respond appropriately were the ultimate goals. The discussion was moderated by a local television news anchor and panelists included a motivational speaker, a nonprofit leader, and the Fulton County Schools School Resource Officer.

**In December 2014**, the Fulton County Schools and the South Fulton County Learning Community Schools hosted an educational summit called “SOS: Saving Our Students.” The event was held at Langston Hughes High School and included a panel discussion on issues that teens face, including crime and violence. The sessions have also dealt with topics including bullying, gang activity, family dynamics, mentorship, and self-esteem.

## Lansing, Michigan

*Mayor Virgil Bernero has emphasized his “driving ambition” to “spark a new wave of engagement...investment, and success” when it comes to creating a better future for young people in the Lansing region.*

The city of Lansing accepted the My Brother’s Keeper Challenge in September 2014, as part of Mayor Bernero’s “Mayor’s Young Lansing” (MY Lansing) Commission and Partnership. In addition to the two signature events described below, the Board of Water & Light is partnering with MY Lansing MBK to replicate its apprenticeship program across industries. A series of community engagement events in November and December 2014 led to the creation of a new coalition that is working with the Lansing Police Department and regional law enforcement officials to develop strategies and solutions that will improve relationships between police and community. In January 2015, the city of Lansing selected a non-governmental organization to serve as the official organizer of its MY Lansing MBK efforts.

**In October**, Lansing held its local action summit led by MY Lansing MBK in partnership with Jackson National-Life, Board of Water & Light, Lansing Community College, and Michigan State University. Since then, the Lansing School District and the Lansing Police Department have partnered to develop a strategic plan to increase academic success of students and improve trust between the police and the community.

**In January**, as a follow-up to the local action summit, Lansing held a quarterly Partners Action Summit, in conjunction with the MLK National Day of Service, bringing together parents, youth, educators, business leaders, public officials and clergy for an orientation to the MY Lansing MBK Mentoring Network. The network is a coalition focused on preparing young people for college, careers, and civic engagement, and the members have agreed to work toward shared measurement and collective impact.



Mayor Ras Baraka and other dignitaries at a My Brother's Keeper forum in Newark, New Jersey, January 6, 2015.

## Newark, New Jersey <sup>5</sup>

*"Today when we think of thugs and gangsters, we think of young African-American and Latino men. We must change this dehumanizing image."*

*– Mayor Ras Baraka*

The city of Newark's MBK initiative has appointed a director and held multiple forums with youth, law enforcement, city officials, and community leaders from across sectors to begin raising awareness and developing a plan of action. The mayor plans to create a program focused on all six Challenge milestones that increases investment and connects disparate initiatives working to expand opportunity for all people – and to eliminate opportunity gaps too often faced by young men, including young men of color. Current programming plans include school readiness activities, leadership retreats, community garden and beautification projects, and youth summits where youth are given a meaningful role in shaping city policies. Newark youth and families can already enroll in the program on the city's website, and during a recent MBK Newark registration event, youth were given "My Brother's Keeper Newark" membership kits, which included listings of mentoring opportunities, education programs, and public and community service initiatives.

**In January**, Newark hosted a "Young Men of Color and Law Enforcement" forum, which was

designed to facilitate dialogue around issues that strain the relationship between law enforcement and African-American, Latino, and other youth. Eric Garner, Jr. was among the panelists who discussed improving education, reducing crime, and engaging youth in their own lives and in Newark's development.

**Later in January**, Mayor Baraka hosted Newark's MBK Launch Breakfast. Local business, civic, and civil rights leaders attended and called the community to action.

### Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin<sup>6</sup>

*"We can start today by looking and reaching out to our member tribes to give momentum to this initiative in Indian Country."*

*– Ernie Stevens Jr., Oneida Community Leader*

**In November 2014**, the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin hosted the first MBK Community Challenge event in Indian country. Smoke dancers kicked off the program that included local leaders, students, and community organizations. Oneida also participated in a Native American Task Force convened by the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) to advance the goals of the MBK initiative in Indian country.



*Attorney General Eric Holder meets with Indian Tribe youth in Bismarck, North Dakota, June 5, 2014.*

## Philadelphia, Pennsylvania <sup>7</sup>

*“The objective of My Brother’s Keeper is to provide all of our children with the opportunity to achieve and thrive.”*

*– Mayor Michael Nutter (Co-Chair, USCM MBK Task Force)*

The city of Philadelphia has engaged youth, including incarcerated youth, to develop the goals for their local action plan. In the same spirit, and as one part of its efforts, the city has partnered with Casey Family Programs and the Association of Black Foundation Executives to provide race equity training for key leaders in the Philadelphia local government. The goal is to train service providers, philanthropic partners, and youth leaders with the tools and vocabulary to engage boys and young men of color.

**In November**, the city held a local action summit at the West Philadelphia Community Center in Mantua, a Promise Zone designated by President Barack Obama. More than 130 citizens and representatives from the nonprofit, public, private, and philanthropic sectors attended, including U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx.

**Later in November**, the city hosted the first-ever MBK Youth Hackathon at String Theory Schools in center city, Philadelphia. The nongovernmental program, supported by Qeyno Labs and #YesWeCode, drew 95 participants (ages 13-20) to form teams and build apps focused on one of five tracks: education, health and wellness, restorative justice, food and sustainability, and masculinity. Each team spent approximately 54 hours taking their idea from concept to demo, and presented before a panel of judges and their peers.



U.S. Department of Education Secretary Duncan and Mayor Michael Nutter at a My Brother’s Keeper roundtable discussion in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, July 11, 2014.

## Promising Community Practices

While most MBK Communities are in the planning stages and will not begin to launch or implement plans for several more weeks, over 100 have selected milestones on which their MBK Communities will focus their efforts. The federal government does not sponsor, supervise, or independently evaluate those efforts. Several MBK Communities, however, have provided their own reports on having made significant progress in forming comprehensive strategies and beginning to implement plans of action. Here are a few examples:

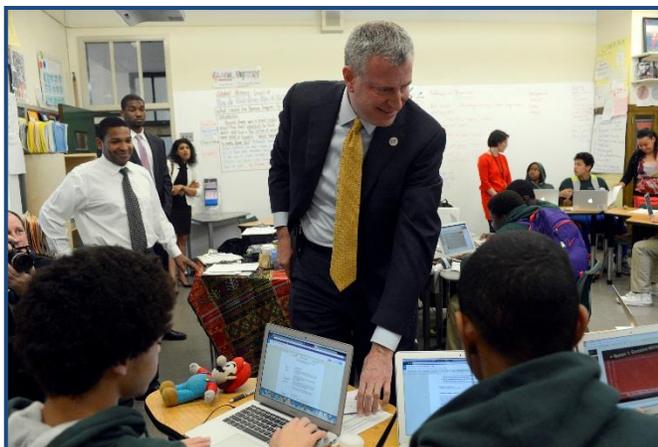
### Young Men's Initiative, New York City, New York <sup>8</sup>

Originally launched in 2011 by Mayor Michael Bloomberg, New York City's (NYC) Young Men's Initiative (YMI) was re-launched in January of 2015 by Mayor Bill de Blasio in part to be more closely aligned with the goals of the MBK initiative. The city of New York describes YMI as a "cross-agency municipal effort committed to tackling the disparities faced by young men of color and to improving outcomes related to education, employment, health and the criminal justice system for all young people."

*"My administration has programs underway that deeply share the spirit and the imperative of MBK, such as universal pre-kindergarten and the expansion of middle school after-school programs. By accepting the MBK Community Challenge, we pledge to continue our public investments and maintain our data-driven approach to tracking outcomes for young black and Latino men and provide them, and all youth, with the opportunities they deserve to be able to succeed."*

– Mayor Bill de Blasio

More than 20 New York City departments and hundreds of community-based organizations are working with New York City's Center for Economic Opportunity to implement 45 evidence-based programs and policies that link young men, and all youth, to education, employment and mentoring opportunities, improve health outcomes, and reduce criminal justice system involvement. While YMI programs are divided into these specific categories, New York City officials believe what makes their model particularly unique and effective is the concept of interrelatedness among all of these areas. For example, programs for youth involved in the criminal justice system may focus on employment, education, or health. Furthermore, New York City agencies are now working collaboratively on program design and evaluation, and report collective progress to the mayor monthly.



In the new phase of YMI, New York City will tackle five new initiatives that are connected to MBK's milestones.

1. **Education Career Recruitment:** Develop new recruitment initiatives and programs for NYC public school teachers over the next three years aiming to expand and strengthen the talent pipeline and include diverse candidates.
2. **Increase Tutoring:** Provide direct support through tutoring and reading programs for 10,000 children in grades K-3.
3. **Application Fee Waivers:** Provide application fee waivers and information about enrolling in and paying for college to every high school student with a "B" average and minimum SAT/ACT score – modeled after the College Board Expanding College Opportunities (ECO) project.
4. **High School Mentoring:** Increase mentoring opportunities across the city by engaging with existing nonprofits that provide mentorship.
5. **New York Police Department Community Relations:** Establish a central role for YMI in efforts to improve community/police relations.

### **Your Life Matters, Indianapolis, Indiana** <sup>9</sup>

In March 2014, Mayor Greg Ballard launched the Your Life Matters (YLM) initiative. Among other things, YLM called for the formation of a bipartisan task force to research effective models for reducing violence and improving life outcomes for young people in Indianapolis – and for breaking down barriers to success for disconnected youth. The resulting [report](#), which was released as part of Indianapolis' MBK local action summit on November 18, 2014, contained 48 recommendations across a broad range of categories: education, employment, mentoring, health, justice, and re-entry. The task force also called for strategic investments in best practice programs that reflect comprehensive service delivery models and urged the city to hold program operators accountable for achieving measurable impacts.



The process by which YLM developed its recommendations is instructive. The first step was data collection and review to better understand the challenges faced disproportionately by black men in the city. Armed with a clearer sense of outcomes and associated disparities, the task force then consulted with experts, including nonprofit organizations, philanthropic leaders, providers of direct services, and academics. Conducting research on evidence-based models and strategies was the next step, as well as assessing gaps in the continuum of service offerings

throughout the city.

Since releasing the report, YLM has engaged city officials, community and faith-based leaders, youth organizers, parents, and educators for input into the next stage of effort – the formulation of action plans. By the end of March 2015, YLM intends to develop its implementation strategy for selected YLM recommendations, including clear performance indicators, data tracking protocols, and a resource management blueprint. Indianapolis is executing the MBK Playbook for Action and YLM plans to identify the necessary commitments, investments, and partnerships that will improve youth outcomes against all six MBK milestones.

“The President’s leadership and focus on this issue closely matched the work we are doing in Indianapolis with the Your Life Matters initiative,” said Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard. “Our holistic effort aims to address the underlying issues that lead to crime. Participating in this Challenge will help Indy engage with more partners who specialize in solving these issues.”<sup>10</sup>

### **Modeling Past Success, Houston, Texas**<sup>11</sup>

Houston Mayor Annise Parker accepted the MBK Community Challenge in October 2014, and local efforts since then have been led by the Houston Department of Health and Human Services. With local partners across all sectors – education, business, health, law enforcement, juvenile justice, protective services, and youth services – Houston is assembling evidence on effective practices and identifying community resources that fuel opportunities for young people to be successful. Houston’s MBK



Executive Leadership Team is supported by a local action partnership steering committee (to coordinate implementation of action plans), a development team (to secure resources that will support action), and a marketing and communications team (to implement public relations and media plans). In addition, four working groups guide efforts pertaining to specific functional areas: strategy, policy, evaluation, and stakeholder engagement.

Efforts that are underway in Houston actively address multiple MBK milestones. For example, to advance progress against the milestone pertaining to “successfully entering the workforce”, a summer youth employment program employs nearly 500 youth, ages 16 to 21, in various city departments. Outreach and recruitment partners include the Houston-Galveston Area Council, Workforce Solutions, SER Jobs for Progress (SER), and the Houston Area Urban League (HAUL). Most positions available through the Summer Jobs Program are for 32 hours per week and provide youth with vital experience in a professional setting. The paid roles teach responsibility and serve as an introduction to the municipal workforce.

In support of the milestone pertaining to “reducing violence and providing a second chance”, Houston’s work in the Striving to Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere, or STRYVE, program is building a comprehensive health and violence prevention plan in one area of the city to inform efforts that improve the quality of life for young people. STRYVE is a national initiative led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and identifies evidence-based solutions to health and safety issues facing all youth, and disproportionately, young men and boys of color.

The operational approach that Houston is applying to address MBK priorities is modelled after their successful campaign to reduce, and eventually end, veteran homelessness – part of the Obama Administration’s Mayors Challenge to End Veterans’ Homelessness launched by First Lady Michelle Obama in June 2014. Houston has connected 1,402 individuals to permanent supportive housing and reduced the unsheltered homeless population by 50 percent. As with this housing program Houston intends to monitor outcomes associated with its MBK Community Challenge initiatives, in order to assure measurable results and sustainable success for all youth.



*Participants in the UBS NextGen Leaders program, June 20, 2014.*

## Private-Sector Action: Business, Philanthropy, and Nonprofit Support

An expanding list of corporations, nonprofit organizations, and charitable foundations are advancing the goals of MBK through independent commitments that align with the Task Force Report. More than \$300 million has been independently pledged by foundations and corporations. The first \$200 million of private foundation commitments was announced at the February 2014 launch of MBK by 11 of the nation's leading foundations who seek to align their investments in the next three to five years: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, The Atlantic Philanthropies, Bloomberg Philanthropies, The California Endowment, The Ford Foundation, The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, The Open Society Foundations, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The W.K. Kellogg Foundation, The Kapor Center for Social Impact, and the Nathan Cummings Foundation.

In their June 2014 report, [A Time for Action](#), this funder group outlined a specific plan for investing their funds and shared a clear aspiration aligned with the President's call to action: "We are driven by a shared vision for all people - to be healthy, well educated, economically prosperous, and happy - regardless of our race, ethnicity, or gender."

On July 21, 2014, at a youth town hall in Washington, D.C., President Obama announced additional private-sector commitments. Private sector leaders, including AT&T Chairman and CEO Randall Stephenson, NBA Commissioner, Adam Silver, and the President of the NBA Players Association, Chris Paul, announced specific commitments from their respective organizations. Alongside federal, state, and local government efforts, these independent private sector programs and platforms will further expand opportunities for learning, mentorship, volunteerism, and jobs for all youth, including boys and young men of color.



*President Obama at a My Brother's Keeper town hall meeting with youth and superintendents at the Walker Jones Education Campus in Washington, D.C., July 21, 2014.*

The examples below provide further detail on many of the announcements made in July, and are followed by highlights from other organizations about related work to further the goals of the MBK initiative. The federal government does not sponsor, supervise, or independently evaluate these private efforts.

### Academic Success



- **Emerson Collective**, along with their partners, is collaborating with districts and educators to launch a competition to find and develop the best designs for next generation high schools. Together, they will contribute \$56 million for this effort. The first Request for Proposals is scheduled to be released in September 2015.
- **Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS)** is coordinating the leaders of 63 of the largest urban school systems in the country in an unprecedented joint pledge to change life outcomes by better serving students at every stage of their education. The CGCS districts collectively educate nearly 3 million of America’s male students of color. As a result of this pledge, Superintendents and School Boards are changing policies, increasing investments, and tracking data against key performance indicators, using strategies with proven results. Driven by local context and data, Superintendents are focused on high leverage strategies such as increasing access to and quality of early childhood programs, improving literacy instruction, reducing suspensions and expulsions, and increasing attainment in advanced courses and college, to name a few.
- **College Board** is investing more than \$1.5 million for “All In,” a national College Board program to ensure that 100 percent of African American, Latino, and Native American students with strong “advanced placement (AP) potential” enroll in at least one matched AP class before graduation. The College Board and CGCS are now working with National Urban League and National Council of La Raza to improve parent engagement in these efforts.
- **Becoming A Man (BAM) and Match**, comprehensive mentoring and tutoring programs, announced \$10 million in new funding to support their expansion as well as a large-scale study on their long-term effects conducted by the University of Chicago Crime Lab and Urban Education Lab.

## Mentoring and Public Engagement



- **AT&T** announced an \$18 million commitment to support mentoring and other education programs as part of the company's Aspire initiative, which is focused on high school success and workforce readiness for students at risk of dropping out of school. Since July's announcement, AT&T has made grants to 37 organizations around the country for programs, with a mentoring component, that are delivering quantitatively proven impact. In addition, the AT&T Aspire Mentoring Corps launched as a public-private partnership among **MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership**, the AmeriCorps VISTA program, and AT&T. It is a program inspired by the MBK Task Force recommendation to more fully utilize AmeriCorps to expand mentoring programs' capacity. Five host cities were selected in January to launch the Aspire Mentoring Corps.
- **Discovery Communications** has invested more than \$1 million to create an original special programming event inspired by My Brother's Keeper. By chronicling specific youth stories and highlighting interventions that have made a positive impact in the lives of boys and men of color and the communities they live in, the special seeks to address public awareness and perception. The special will premiere on Father's Day, June 2015, on Discovery Channel, and be simulcast on the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN). Discovery en Español will also air the documentary in Spanish. In addition, to further drive discussion of this important issue on a local level, Discovery Education will host listening sessions in conjunction with the program.
- **NBA, National Basketball Players Association and National Basketball Retired Players Association** announced a five-year commitment in partnership with **MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership**, CGCS and Team Turnaround. Approximately 3,500 people have connected with a mentoring program through MENTOR since the July announcement with the NBA. On Christmas Day 2014, the NBA launched a public service announcement and campaign in partnership with MENTOR to recruit 25,000 new mentors over the next five years. The NBA and its teams are also working with Superintendents across many of their franchise cities to provide incentive programs that increase attendance and improve overall school performance. NBA executives, players, and former players have led leadership development workshops for youth in cities around the country, and will continue to host these workshops through 2019.

## Career Success



- **Citi Foundation** made a three-year, \$10 million commitment, to create ServiceWorks, a groundbreaking national program that uses volunteers to help 25,000 young people in ten cities across the United States develop the skills they need to prepare for college and careers. Fifty AmeriCorps members have been deployed to 10 cities as the inaugural ServiceWorks class, and an additional 175 AmeriCorps members will be deployed over the next three years. The Corps members are receiving training in leadership and workplace skills, and the opportunity to use their new skills to lead community service projects in their own communities.
- **JPMorgan Chase & Co.** committed \$10 million to expand its mentor and training program, The Fellowship Initiative, to Chicago and Los Angeles along with a new, expanded class of Fellows in New York City. The program enrolls young men of color in a comprehensive enrichment program that includes academic, social and emotional support, one-on-one mentorship with JPMorgan Chase employees, college planning support and more.
- **UBS America** announced a five-year, \$10 million commitment, to improve college success among under-resourced populations. UBS NextGen Leaders aims to empower students with the skills, knowledge, and experience needed to succeed in college and compete in the global marketplace. UBS, in partnership with Students for Educational Opportunity, is recruiting their inaugural class, hosting college application and FAFSA workshops for hundreds of students and families. Final selection of the inaugural class will take place in April 2015.

Other private and philanthropic organizations are implementing their own strategies and making their own aligned investments. Earlier this month, for example, Prudential announced a commitment of \$13 million to support technical assistance for MBK Communities as well as impact investments for innovative for-profit and nonprofit social purpose enterprises that eliminate barriers to financial and social mobility. The National Civic League announced that, among other activities, it would focus its All-America City Awards on efforts that would help vulnerable boys and young men.

## Private-Sector Action Spotlights

### NBA MENTOR Initiative and PSA <sup>12</sup>

When positive adult role models are a consistent presence in the lives of youth, youth are better prepared to overcome obstacles and accomplish their goals. However, 1 out of 3 young people in the United States will grow up without a mentor.<sup>13</sup> In conjunction with National Mentoring Month in January 2015, the NBA family of organizations (NBA Players Association, NBA, and NBA Retired Player's Association) and MENTOR launched a campaign to promote mentoring as a critical asset for young people. The core message is simple: "Be Someone Who Matters to Someone Who Matters."

Several past and current NBA stars, including Magic Johnson, filmed a [public service announcement](#) to communicate to youth that their lives are important. The ad debuted nationally during NBA games on December 25, one of the highest-viewed game days of the year.

Individual teams throughout the NBA are following suit and rolling out programs that amplify the NBA's overall commitment to action. For example, on January 11, the Memphis Grizzlies celebrated Mentor Night and premiered the "I Was That Kid" campaign, a player PSA initiative to support mentoring as a vital tool for student success. The campaign's call to action is one aspect of efforts to further mobilize mentor recruitment in Memphis, with a target of 5,000 new mentors by 2020. As part of the initiative, mentors and mentees will be given vouchers to enjoy healthy variations of traditional game day food.



*Stills from the "My Brother's Keeper: Be Someone Who Matters to Someone Who Matters" public service announcement.*

## Council of the Great City Schools <sup>14</sup>

The mission of the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) is to educate the nation's most diverse student bodies to the highest academic standards and prepare them to contribute to democracy and the global community. The urban school systems that comprise CGCS collectively educate a third or more of the nation's African American and Latino students, and nearly 40 percent of low-income boys and young men of color.<sup>15</sup> CGCS's commitment to helping all youth succeed was one of the independent private sector responses announced by the President last July.

"The Council of the Great City Schools, these are big-city school superintendents, has done an extraordinary thing, pledging, making commitments to each other, as well as to school districts and students and parents that this will be a major focus for them. And we want to thank them for the commitment they are making," said the President at the July event. Sixty three school districts (as of February 2015) represented by the Council joined in a first-ever collective pledge to improve the educational outcomes for students, including boys and young men of color, from early childhood to graduation by implementing a set of evidence-based strategies.

The pledge includes a performance dashboard to track progress with disaggregated data across relevant metrics such as absenteeism; suspension and disciplinary rates; participation in Advanced Placement, honors, and gifted classes; and overall graduation rates. CGCS and its school districts will disaggregate data by gender within race to ensure that all subgroups of students are improving across all indicators. CGCS has developed a set of statistical indicators against which it will hold itself accountable, and to drive the identification of practices that are most effective across the country.

In October 2014, CGCS held a symposium for its members that focused on the achievement gap for boys and young men of color, providing technical assistance to school districts around strategies, tactics, and best practices. A few examples of efforts that were launched by member school districts in support of the CGCS pledge include:

- *Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC*: Schools set up centers where suspended students take classes to ensure that they do not fall behind.
- *Norfolk, VA*: High schools have graduation coaches who monitor attendance and course data, enroll students in credit recovery programs, and conduct home visits to find out why students are absent.
- *San Francisco, CA*: The School District now uses a blind review process for admission to special education services that strips the applications of students' names, ethnicity, and grade level.

## MBK Data Jam and Hackathons <sup>16</sup>

President Obama's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology predict a shortage of one million technology professionals in the coming decade.<sup>17</sup> This fact was underscored by an ACT report, [The Condition of STEM 2013](#), which shows that the academic achievement gap is even more pronounced among students of color interested in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Furthermore, even if exposed to good STEM instruction, and even as they gain STEM skills and competencies, many students may not be able to see themselves as a part of the STEM community. Solving this crisis will require bold solutions that bring a disruptive mindset, innovative thinking, entrepreneurial insights and creative opportunities.

The MBK Georgetown Data Jam and MBKHACK provided a forum this year to begin tackling these issues. Georgetown University and the Beeck Center for Social Impact and Innovation, in partnership with the Department of Education, co-hosted a Data Jam that brought together developers, designers, entrepreneurs, corporate "intra"preneurs, researchers, statisticians, policy makers, educators, and students to help build new tools and applications that will create ladders of opportunity for not only boys and young men of color but for all youth. On August 2, 2014 over 150 people showed up early on a Saturday morning at Georgetown for the Data Jam. The event brought together a diverse group of high school students and teachers, data scientists, software developers and community leaders to capitalize on the range of perspectives and expertise among the participants. Nearly 20 teams spent the day crafting compelling ways to visualize data and find creative solutions to chronic challenges, directly aligned with the six MBK milestones. At the end of the day, seven teams were voted by other participants as having the most promising ideas for further exploration.

MBKHACK is an independent project run by nonprofit Qeyno Labs aimed at transforming and empowering youth through social innovation, education, technology, and proactive mentoring. Working over 3 days alongside adult professionals, students identify problems, develop design concepts, pitch solutions, compete and work in teams toward execution. The hackathons bring together community partners and national sponsors, city leaders, volunteer designers, developers, innovators, entrepreneurs, industry professionals, community organizers, concerned citizens, parents, and most importantly, youth. Participants collaborate to solve some of the most intractable problems facing their communities, including: education, restorative justice, environmental sustainability, health, food & wellness, financial inclusion & literacy.



*US Department of Education Secretary Duncan with local and private sector leaders at the White House Early Education Summit, December 10, 2014.*

## Policy: The Federal Response

As noted in the MBK Report, too many young people, and boys and young men of color in particular, never have the opportunities, support, or services that ultimately lead to academic success, good jobs, or long and healthy lives. High-impact, evidence-based interventions fundamentally shift the trajectory of at-risk youth and help reduce systematic inequality at multiple critical junctures on a child's path to adulthood. From early home visiting to college counseling, the federal government is innovating and scaling new approaches to address these critical disparities. Organizations and agencies are embracing cradle-to-college-and-career strategies that are increasing school attendance, improving academic performance, and reducing health disparities. The MBK Report served as a resource to the federal government to break down silos that were limiting the effectiveness of programs designed to help youth and to find new and better programs.

When funding, technical assistance, regulations, and government leaders are aligned in the interest of local communities, fundamental changes in education disparities, poverty, and inequality are fostered. The Task Force recognized that this kind of collaborative, system-wide approach requires long-term planning, innovative policies, and measurable goals. To effectively benchmark federal efforts, the Task Force identified six universal milestones that serve as key building blocks in the path to adulthood. Falling behind on achieving these milestones has immediate consequences and makes it more difficult for an individual to catch-up and succeed.

Over the past year, the MBK Task Force has made progress in each of the six milestones, as well as cross-cutting strategies. Research from the Social Genome Project<sup>18</sup>, The Achievement Gap Initiative at Harvard University<sup>19</sup> and other recent thought leadership demonstrates the need for this frame on key life stages and a focus on achieving excellence and equity from birth through adolescence and the transition to early adulthood.

- 1. Entering school ready to learn**
- 2. Reading at grade level by third grade**
- 3. Graduating from high school ready for college and career**
- 4. Completing postsecondary education or training**
- 5. Successfully entering the workforce**
- 6. Reducing violence and providing a second chance**

Across all milestones and recommendations in the Task Force Report, the Administration has worked to build the necessary infrastructure and community support that will sustain change. The following sections document many of the policies and programs that support the recommendations of the Task Force.

### **Cross-cutting Recommendations**

The MBK Task Force identified the following four cross-cutting areas of opportunity that span multiple developmental milestones. The recommendations offered to address these areas often require system-wide changes that seek to transform community dynamics that reinforce and perpetuate inequality across generations.

- Enabling comprehensive, cradle-to-college-and-career community solutions;
- Learning from and doing what works;
- Making data about critical life indicators more transparent; and
- Empowering parents and engaging other caring adults.

The Administration is committed to scalable evidence-based programs, but this often requires processes for data collection and cross-agency collaboration. Achieving impact requires that agencies measure what works, adjust strategies based on the outcomes, and invest in experimentation and innovation to test new approaches to program delivery. Multi-agency strategies can be used to help more youth successfully reach each milestone and help combat the causes and consequences of disparities.

Overall, federal agencies have made considerable progress in identifying, disseminating, and updating statistics on critical indicators of life outcomes and are continuing efforts to identify and plan to address gaps and limitations. The Task Force has more work to do, however, in supporting state and local agencies, innovators, social entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders in

creating new tools and resources that allow local communities to use their own data to understand and develop effective strategies.

Some highlights of the Administration cross-cutting work that helps more children reach every milestone through evidence-based programs include:

### **Enabling comprehensive, cradle-to-college-and-career community solutions**

#### ***Second Round Promise Zone Designation***

Through 2015, the President implemented and expanded the place-based Promise Zone Initiative to create a better bargain for the middle-class by partnering with local communities and businesses to deploy evidence-based strategies to foster more economic growth and opportunity. With federal support, mayors, tribal leaders, and county executives across the country have committed to taking actions that will build public and private partnerships around common goals, leverage evidence-based practices to create a “cradle-to-career” pipeline of academic and community supports, and use shared data to inform and deliver supports to students and families.

In the past year, the first five Promise Zones made strong gains toward strengthening economic security, expanding educational opportunities, increasing access to quality, affordable housing, and improving public safety. For example, 2,000 kids in Los Angeles were able to find a summer job through a youth employment initiative, 900 unemployed people in Southeastern Kentucky have been connected to a job, and over 700 households and 50 businesses in remote southeast Oklahoma will soon have access to clean, safe drinking water for the first time. Recently, the Administration opened up the second round competition to designate the next set of Promise Zones and expand this success to more communities across the country.

#### ***Generation Indigenous: An “All of Government” Approach to Addressing Native Youth Issues***

An initiative specifically focused on barriers to success for Native Youth, Generation Indigenous (Gen I), was announced by President Obama in December 2014 at the White House Tribal Nations Conference. Gen I is a comprehensive initiative involving multiple agencies - Department of Interior (DOI), Department of Education (ED), Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Labor (DOL) and Department of Justice (DOJ) - working collaboratively with Tribes to implement education reforms and focus on Native youth engagement. The 2016 Budget will support this work through new and increased investments, including: (1) \$34.2 million at DOI to extend broadband internet and computer access to all Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)-funded schools and dormitories; (2) \$10 million at HUD and \$8 million at DOI to address teacher housing needs; (3) \$50 million at HHS to provide youth-focused behavioral, mental health, and substance abuse services; and (4) \$53 million for Native Youth Community Projects at ED to support community-driven, comprehensive strategies to improve college and career-readiness of Native youth.<sup>20</sup> Two efforts specifically focused on youth engagement include:

- A new National Tribal Youth Network program in partnership with the Aspen Institute's Center for Native American Youth. The Youth Network will support leadership development and provide peer support through an interactive online portal.
- The first ever White House Tribal Youth Gathering to engage hundreds of Native youth in a day-long convening in the summer of 2015.

These new investments will build on current efforts to better coordinate and demonstrate results from across the federal government to serve Native youth and tribal communities.

## **Learning from and doing what works**

### *The Social Innovation Fund (SIF)*

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) made "Traditionally Underserved and Underrepresented Geographic Areas and Populations" and "Presidential Initiatives to Expand Access to Opportunity" priorities in their FY 2014 Social Innovation Fund grant competitions. As a result, several of the grants awarded, approximately \$18 million in total, went to organizations with programs that plan to address My Brother's Keeper milestones, including: The Boston Foundation's Coaching for Completion program focused on college attendance and completion; Jobs for the Future / Aspen Institute's Opportunity Youth Innovation Fund, which is focused on college completion and career skills; Silicon Valley Community Foundation's Big Lift Social Innovation Fund, which is focused on third grade reading; and the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, which is focused on Pay for Success solutions for positive youth development for youth involved in the juvenile justice or child welfare system in states with significant racial disparities.

### *Sharing and finding "What Works"*

MBK catalyzed greater cross-agency coordination to better enable the public to learn what the highest-quality research says about the effectiveness of programs, policies, and practices that aim to improve outcomes for children, youth, and young adults. To increase the collective impact of these efforts, several Departments and agencies agreed to use a common format that would help make research results more useful for the people who are doing the day to day work of improving schools. Teachers, principals, and parents will now have easier access to the most recent research results. This common format will enable private efforts to aggregate information about programs that work across labor, health, education, and justice.

ED's What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) has led a related effort to improve its "Find What Works" dashboard, which will allow state education officials, district superintendents, professional development providers, and the general public to search for programs that have been shown to be effective with specific populations and in particular community settings.

## **Making data about critical life indicators more transparent**

### *Critical Indicators of Life Outcomes*

Over the past year, federal agencies involved with the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (“Children’s Forum”) worked to provide indicators identified by the Task Force as important to providing a comprehensive view of the environments and outcomes for boys and young men of color and their peers. Statistics are now available for indicators related to education, employment and wages, environment and family structure, health, and criminal justice. Many of the national-level indicators included information that has been released publicly but that has not been widely disseminated, and that is critical to informing meaningful discussion about the goals of MBK.

### *Identification of Data Gaps and Limitations*

In response to the May 2014 report, federal agencies involved in the Children’s Forum have continued to evaluate data gaps and are working to develop a plan, consistent with agency missions and available resources, to continue to address these gaps and limitations in the future. As conversations within federal agencies build on the work of the My Brother’s Keeper Task Force to date, new indicators and gaps may continue to be identified that can be similarly considered for future statistical data collections.

## **Empowering parents and engaging other caring adults**

The White House MBK Task Force Report noted that no single factor is more important in the life of a child than the love and support of a caring, committed adult. In addition to parents, high-quality mentors can help youth to make good decisions and engage in positive, pro-social behavior. The Administration has demonstrated its commitment to mentoring through the development of public-private partnerships, the release of grants and other initiatives that require a mentorship component, and the personal investment of federal employees – dedicating their own time to mentor young people.

### *Programs for Children with Incarcerated Parents*

The Bureau of Prisons (BOP) has been extensively engaged in developing partnerships and programs that increase opportunities for incarcerated parents to maintain contact with their children and families and other support systems. Based on the success of BOP’s Universal Children’s Day, each BOP institution is now required to host at least one children’s day event per year. Events have included summer day camp, Daddy-Daughter Dance, and Mommy and Me Tea. A total of 185 Children’s Day events were conducted in FY14 with 5,856 inmates and 8,314 children participating.

Parenting curriculums are available in all BOP institutions, and include topics such as: Building and Continuing Family Relationships While Incarcerated; Participating in the Child's Education Process; Developing Skills to Cope with Change and Stress; and Motivating Family Interest in Literacy.

BOP has launched a pilot televisiting program at the Federal Prison Camp (FPC) in Alderson, West Virginia that allows families to “visit” with their loved-ones in federal custody from their own homes. The televisiting program is currently only available to inmates in FPC Alderson, but BOP has plans to expand the program over time. Televisiting is designed to supplement, not replace, in-person visits. Research in this area has shown that family visitation can reduce the likelihood of re-offending and re-incarceration, post-release. The BOP's televisiting program facilitates increased family engagement, particularly for those families who may not be able to regularly visit in-person due to distance or financial constraints.

### ***National and Multi-State Mentoring program***

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's National Mentoring program supports large mentoring organizations that can have the broadest reach and serve the most youth. Mentoring has been shown to improve behavioral, social, emotional, and academic outcomes for at-risk youth. In fiscal year (FY) 2014, OJJDP made grant awards to four organizations for over \$41 million through the National Mentoring program.

### ***Public and Private Campaigns for Mentor Recruitment***

President Obama's 2014 call-to-action not only inspired individuals to pledge to become mentors, but also inspired private businesses and organizations – including AT&T, MENTOR and the NBA -- to engage as well. More generally, a national conversation about the importance of mentorship is occurring. Near-peer counseling and mentoring initiatives have been launched by the First Lady and the Department of Education to encourage college and university students to mentor high school students, including underrepresented students and those who may not see themselves as attending college. These efforts reflect emerging evidence that counseling provided by college students similar in age and circumstances to the high school students they counsel is effective in raising rates of college enrollment.

DOJ launched the National Mentoring Resource Center in January 2015 at the National Mentoring Summit. The National Mentoring Resource Center (NMRC), developed in partnership with MENTOR, builds on DOJ's history, leadership, and investments in quality youth mentoring. The goal is to provide and support mentoring programs with research and practice tools, along with training and technical assistance to improve the quality and effectiveness of youth mentoring across the nation. In addition to supporting the mentoring field with training and technical assistance, DOJ will also continue to focus on strategically supporting those mentoring programs in the implementation of evidence-guided, high-quality mentoring practice through the integration of research-based mentoring practice in its large mentoring programs (e.g., national and multi-state) and supporting new mentoring research through its investigator-initiated and demonstration programs.

### ***Foster Grandparents Program Indian Tribe Competitions***

In February 2015, CNCS announced the [Foster Grandparents Program \(FGP\) Indian Tribe Competition](#), to support the recruitment and placement of new volunteers (adults age 55 and over) in the Tribal community. Established in 1965, FGP is one of the nation’s oldest intergenerational programs and engages seniors as tutors and mentors to children and youth, some of whom may have special or exceptional needs. In both early childhood and K-12 educational settings, the FGP provides person-to-person service and one-on-one attention. The weekly commitment ranges between 15 and 40 hours and volunteers serve in schools, hospitals, drug treatment centers, correctional institutions, and child care centers. Foster Grandparents develop loving bonds with their “grandchildren” and often maintain ongoing, intensive relationships for a year or longer. Among other activities, they assist with schoolwork, reinforce values, encourage positive choices, teach parenting skills to young parents, and care for premature infants and children with disabilities.

In addition, the Obama Administration has been working to lead by example when it comes to the importance of mentoring. In May, when the MBK Task Force released its 90-day report, the President also called on all Americans to pledge to mentor, directing them to a place to find opportunities through [serve.gov](#) partner [Mentor.org](#). Many accepted that call, which is now being taken to the next level by Mentor, through its independent efforts in partnership with the NBA. Additionally, the White House has renewed and expanded its own mentoring program, which has paired more youth from D.C. Public Schools with White House staff mentors. These young people and their mentors communicate on a regular basis and meet for monthly workshops and several service projects throughout the year. Some federal agencies have created their own mentoring programs. For example, the Department of Transportation (DOT) joined with an after-school tutoring program, so DOT employees can volunteer to mentor students from local schools.



*President Obama & youth from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in Cannon Ball, North Dakota, November 20, 2014.*

## Milestone-Specific Recommendations

The sections below outline the six milestone areas identified by the Task Force as the most impactful and effective intervention points of young people's lives--from their early years through young adulthood. Each section contains foundational perspectives on why each intervention point is so critical, and the types of work being done at the federal and local level to address the recommendations.



*A young attendee at a My Brother's Keeper launch event in Newark, New Jersey, January 8, 2015.*

### 1) Entering school ready to learn

The first years after a child's birth are critical for building the foundation of a healthy and successful life. During these years, children's brains are developing rapidly, influenced by the richness of their experiences. In fact, research has found that the human brain grows to about 80 percent of its adult size by three years of age and 90 percent by age five.<sup>21</sup> Disparities in cognitive, social, behavioral, and health outcomes between children from lower-income families and their more affluent peers, as well as between children of color and their white peers, are evident as early as nine months of age and grow over time. By school entry, children of color are behind their peers in numeracy and literacy skills.<sup>22 23</sup> This research indicates that

opportunity and achievement gaps start well before the first day of kindergarten, making it critical that communities come together to support parents, children and their families in their earliest years.

The quality and accessibility of child care remains a challenge for millions of families across America. The Administration has taken action to ensure that preschools, families, and communities are doing more to prepare to be ready to learn when they enter school. During the past year, HHS and ED have developed and made available a number of practical tools to help preschool teachers enhance the cognitive and socio-emotional development of children.

## **Supporting Early Childhood Education**

### ***White House Summit***

To expand access to high-quality early learning opportunities for children around the country, President Obama convened a White House Summit on Early Education where he announced a collective investment from federal and private partners of over \$1 billion in the education and development of America's youngest learners. The Department of Education awarded 18 states \$250 million to expand the reach of high-quality preschool programs to enroll over 33,000 more children. Up to \$750 million in new federal grant awards were announced to support early learning for over 63,000 additional children in high-need communities across the country through new [Preschool Development Grants](#) and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grants.

States and communities around the country are also making significant progress expanding access to high-quality early learning programs. Since 2013, 34 states have increased funding for preschool programs, amounting to over \$1 billion in new state resources dedicated to early education. In November 2014, voters approved new preschool ballot initiatives in San Francisco, Seattle and Denver.

### ***Birth to Five: Watch Me Thrive***

HHS and ED launched Birth to Five: Watch Me Thrive! to encourage universal developmental and behavioral screening for children to support families and the providers who care for them. As part of this initiative, HHS and ED released resources to help families, communities, schools, and early learning programs increase their developmental and behavioral screening efforts. By connecting providers with tools focused on developmental and behavioral screening, Birth to Five: Watch Me Thrive highlights the importance of using accurate tools and early identification to assure that young children get the services and supports they need, as early as possible.

### ***Bridging the Word Gap Research Network***

In August 2014, HHS awarded the Bridging the Word Gap Research Network cooperative agreement. This agreement supports the creation of an interdisciplinary network for scientific collaboration to research early language exposure and vocabulary acquisition for children from low income communities and effective interventions to address them the word gap.

### ***Bridging the Word Gap – Incentive Prize challenge competition***

In October 2014, HHS launched the Bridging the Word Gap – Incentive Prize challenge competition. The competition will spur innovative solutions to promote the early language environment and to address the word gap. Specifically, it will reward the development and evaluation of scalable innovations that encourage parents and caregivers to increase the quality and quantity of speech spoken at home during daily interactions.

### ***Joint Policy Statement***

In December 2014, HHS and ED issued a joint policy statement that provides recommendations to states and early childhood programs intended to prevent, severely limit, and eventually eliminate expulsion and suspension practices in early learning settings. Recommendations included establishing fair and developmentally appropriate policies and implementing those policies without bias and investing and implementing enhanced prevention programs. To accompany the policy statement, HHS also announced a \$4.4 million investment in early childhood mental health consultation, an evidence-based practice with demonstrated effectiveness in reducing expulsion and suspension, increasing children's social skills, improving teacher-child interactions and classroom climate, and decreasing teacher stress and turnover. HHS and ED have begun wide dissemination of the policy statement through a series of targeted webinars for state and local leaders around the country.



*President Obama with students at Moravia Elementary School in Baltimore, Maryland, May 17, 2013.*

## 2) Reading at grade level by third grade

The end of third grade is the point at which children transition from learning to read to reading to learn, utilizing reading skills to understand the content of all subject areas. Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) demonstrate that far too many students in the United States are not proficient readers, and that there are wide disparities between students of color and their peers. In 2013, 83 percent of black students, 81 percent of Hispanic students and 78 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native students scored below proficiency in reading.<sup>24</sup> Students not proficient in reading by the end of third grade face a higher dropout risk and are more likely to struggle throughout their school years for as long as they persist.<sup>25</sup>

Schools can improve outcomes for students with reading difficulties if teachers have the knowledge, skills, and supports to use effective reading instruction and practices in their classrooms. During the past year, federal agencies have increased access to resources which provide teachers and other educators with information related to practices shown to support effective reading instruction. Additionally, ED requested information from the field on how best to address disparities based on race and ethnicity in the identification of students with disabilities, placement of children with disabilities, and discipline of students with disabilities.

### *New Resources*

The Department of Education has posted a series of briefs clarifying the four essential components of effective reading instruction each school should implement to improve kindergarten and first grade reading skills. Each brief provides a definition of the component, the research supporting its effectiveness, the technical assistance centers that support it or places where it has been implemented, and the federal tools and resources that can assist with its implementation.

### *School Profiles*

ED has initiated an effort to highlight and recognize schools that have successfully implemented most of the essential components, and help them to share lessons learned with others.

### *Blogs and Social Media*

In recognition of the importance of instructional leadership, ED has initiated an effort to encourage school leaders to share their perspectives about the importance of early learning and its connection to improving outcomes for all students, including boys and young men of color. Encouraging school leadership to share these stories, and to post them on the site as blogs, is the ED's first step towards building an online community among such leaders with a focus on early reading outcomes.

### ***Coordinated early intervening services***

In 2014, ED solicited public input on how to strengthen and expand the implementation of comprehensive, coordinated early intervening services (CEIS), required in districts with significant racial and ethnic disparities in the identification of students as students with disabilities, placement of children with disabilities in particular educational settings, and discipline of children with disabilities. CEIS is a key lever to help districts strengthen supports for students who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment. ED will continue to consider options that would encourage more districts to use their Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funds for CEIS for these students.

### ***ConnectED***

In June 2013, President Obama announced the ConnectED initiative, designed to enrich K-12 education for every student in America. ConnectED empowers teachers with the best technology and the training to make the most of it, and empowers students through individualized learning and rich, digital content. The ConnectED initiative will, within five years, connect 99 percent of America's students to next-generation broadband and high-speed wireless in their schools and libraries. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and companies like Apple, Microsoft, Sprint, and Verizon are already providing their support, collectively pledging to connect more than 20 million more students over the next two years. This commitment will provide unprecedented opportunities to support innovative pedagogical approaches to ensure youth are reading at grade level, and remedial approaches for those needing support.

ConnectED will also provide better broadband access for students in rural areas, by expanding successful efforts to connect parts of the country that typically have trouble attracting investment in broadband infrastructure.

In addition to these highlights, many of the Administrations events in early education provide critical foundational support that jumpstart and maintain literacy from the earliest months up to grade three.



*President Obama and U.S. Department of Education Secretary Duncan with students at the Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) in Brooklyn, New York, October 25, 2013.*

### 3) Graduating from high school ready for career and college

Students growing up in poverty and students of color are suspended and expelled from school and drop out at higher rates than others, and are less likely to have highly effective teachers and access to a strong curriculum. On almost all measures of educational achievement and opportunity, students of color are among the most at risk, particularly boys and young men. A 2012 report published by the Schott Foundation for Public Education found that in 38 of 50 states and the District of Columbia, black males have high school graduation rates lower than those of Hispanic, white, and female students, and lower than black students more generally.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the American Indian/Alaskan Native high school graduation rate is 67 percent, the lowest of any racial/ethnic demographic group across all schools.<sup>27</sup>

Over the past year, ED funded a technical assistance network to help states and districts develop and implement new State Educator Equity Plans focused on ensuring that all students have excellent teachers and leaders and equal access to a quality education. ED issued new guidance to help ensure that all students have equal access to educational resources. New grants were awarded to increase school safety, create positive school climates, prepare schools for emergencies, and help children recover from the effects of living in communities plagued by persistent violence.

## Supporting High-Quality Education

During the past year, federal agencies have increased access to resources that support effective reading instruction and improve overall educational quality significantly.

### *Excellent Educators for All Initiative*

Equal educational opportunity means ensuring that schools have the resources they need to provide meaningful opportunities for all students to succeed, regardless of family income or race. To move America toward the goal of ensuring that every student in every public school has equitable access to excellent educators, in July 2014, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced the Excellent Educators for All initiative that will establish:

- **New State Educator Equity Plans:** As of June 2015, each state educational agency (SEA) will submit to ED a new State Educator Equity Plan. In its plan, each SEA must describe the steps it will take to ensure that “poor and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers.”
- **Educator Equity Support Network:** ED funded a new technical assistance network to support SEAs and districts develop and implement their new State Educator Equity Plans.
- **Data Release and State Profiles:** To facilitate analysis, ED sent each SEA state-specific data for the analysis of existing school and neighborhood level information.

### *School Improvement Grants*

Since 2009, the School Improvements Grants (SIG) program has provided over \$5 billion to accelerate achievement in over 1,700 of the Nation’s lowest-performing schools through rigorous and robust interventions. In October 2014, ED published draft requirements to revise the SIG program in order to better support their school turnaround efforts. These new requirements included additional models focused on early learning and evidence-based strategies, and a renewed focus on family and community engagement. ED published final requirements in February 2015.

### *School Turnaround AmeriCorps*

Assisting the most disadvantaged and at-risk students often requires interventions tailored to the specific needs of those students and their community. In order to increase intensive, individualized support for students, ED and CNCS have continued support for School Turnaround AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps members serving through School Turnaround AmeriCorps help keep students in the lowest-performing schools on track to graduate by working to increase student academic achievement, attendance, and high school graduation rates; improving college and career readiness; and providing college enrollment assistance and advisement.

### ***New Guidance from the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) on Equitable Access to School Resources***

In October 2014, ED's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) issued new guidance that highlights and explains what federal law requires regarding the provision of educational resources, how OCR investigates resource disparities, and what states, districts, and schools can do to meet their obligations to all their students.

### ***New Grant Programs to Support School Climate and School Transformation***

In September 2013, ED awarded more than \$70 million to 130 grantees in 38 states across three grant programs<sup>28</sup> to help keep students safe and support healthier learning environments in schools across the country.

### ***Equal Access to High-Quality Education for English Language Learners***

In January 2015, ED and DOJ released joint guidance reminding states, school districts and all public schools of their obligations under federal law to ensure that English learner students have equal access to a high-quality education and the opportunity to achieve their full academic potential. In addition to the guidance, the Departments also released additional tools and resources to help schools in serving English learner students and parents with limited English proficiency, including two fact sheets for students and parents and an English learner tool kit, which is intended to help state and local education agencies in meeting their obligations to English Learners prepared by ED's Office of English Language Acquisition. Many of these resources are available in up to 10 languages other than English and can be accessed at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ellresources.html>. In February 2015, ED's Office for Civil Rights also released a new feature of the 2011-12 Civil Rights Data Collection allowing users to pull detailed information on English Learner students by school and district. This resource is available at [ocrdata.ed.gov](http://ocrdata.ed.gov).

## **Reforming School Discipline Policies**

### ***National Leadership Summit on School Discipline***

In October 2014, the U.S. Departments of Education (ED) and Justice (DOJ), in collaboration with philanthropies and experts from the field, hosted the National Leadership Summit on School Discipline and Climate. During this summit, over 20 state and local teams had an opportunity to deepen partnerships and develop concrete steps to further advance school discipline and juvenile justice reform in their communities.

### ***School Discipline Consensus Report***

ED and DOJ were among more than 100 groups representing policymakers, teachers, school administrators, behavioral health professionals, juvenile justice officials, parents, and youth from across the country who helped develop the *School Discipline Consensus Report* which builds on recommendations to "end discriminatory discipline policies and implement supportive school discipline models." The Report provides school leaders and state and local government officials with practical recommendations focused on improving conditions for learning for all students and staff, strengthening responses to student behavioral health needs, tailoring school-

police partnerships, and minimizing students' involvement with the juvenile justice system. Finally, as part of ED and DOJ's Supportive School Discipline Initiative, in June 2014 the School Discipline Consensus report was issued by the Council of State Governments Justice Center. It provides school leaders with recommendations for keeping students engaged in school and out of the juvenile justice system.

### ***Enforcing Federal Civil Rights Laws***

The Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is vigorously enforcing federal civil rights laws to ensure students are not inequitably disciplined based on their race, national origin, disability, or gender. OCR has recently reached robust agreements with school districts across the country to address discriminatory discipline. These agreements often include commitments to provide training for staff and administrators to recognize discriminatory discipline practices, review and revise district codes of conduct, and develop alternative discipline strategies aimed at eliminating discriminatory discipline practices and reducing the amount of instructional time missed by students.



*U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julian Castro and U.S. Department of Education Secretary Duncan meet with Mayor Bell and community members in Birmingham, Alabama, September 9, 2014.*

## 4) Completing postsecondary education or training

All Americans should receive the education and training needed for the quality jobs of today and tomorrow. In 2018, 63 percent of jobs will require postsecondary education.<sup>29</sup> Higher levels of education lead to higher wages and lower rates of unemployment which are correlated with increased civic engagement,<sup>30</sup> yet disparities still exist. For example, young men of color enroll, persist in, and complete postsecondary education at significantly lower rates than their peers.<sup>31 32</sup>

As the President said in his 2015 State of the Union Address, “We still live in a country where too many bright, striving Americans are priced out of the education they need. It’s not fair to them, and it’s sure not smart for our future.” The health of the nation depends, in part, on ensuring that all citizens, including boys and young men of color, are able to participate and successfully leverage postsecondary educational opportunities. To that end, ED continues to enhance awareness of postsecondary opportunities, increase higher education applications, improve college selection, and take steps to increase the enrollment of all students, including young men of color, in higher education and training.

During FY 2015, ED’s Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) will provide a total of \$539 million in discretionary funding through a number of new and existing grants to help expand access to higher education, improve career-focused preparation, and increase educational persistence and completion rates for underserved students.

The Administration and ED introduced several FAFSA completion efforts, counselor training, mentoring and support services, and ED issued a Dear Colleague Letter on Apprenticeships and the Federal Student Aid programs. Fostering greater access, retention, progression and completion of under-represented students is of particular importance for increasing pathways to the middle class.

### **Building Pathways to College**

#### *The College Opportunity Day of Action*

In order to align and support key strategic initiatives in higher education to achieve the President’s college completion goal, President Obama, the First Lady, Vice President Biden, Secretaries Duncan and Castro, Domestic Policy Council Director Muñoz along with ED Undersecretary Mitchell launched the second White House College Opportunity Day of Action on December 4. This summit included announcements of more than 700 commitments to expand opportunity for more students to enroll and succeed in college, especially low-income and underrepresented students.

#### *FAFSA Completion Project Expansion*

In March 2014, ED’s office for Federal Student Aid (FSA) notified state grant agencies that they will be able to receive completion data in order to guide their FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) completion efforts. Additionally, since the 2010-11 FAFSA application

cycle, there have been approximately 30.4 million FAFSA applications where a parent or student has used the FAFSA-IRS Data Retrieval Tool which allows applicants who have already filed their federal income tax returns to prefill the answers to some FAFSA questions.

### ***TRIO Training Program***

ED's Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) provides tools to train TRIO staff across the country on how to assist students in the financial aid process. In addition to direct financial aid training, TRIO staff learns how to advise students on many decisions that contribute to post-secondary success. Staff training includes: proven retention and graduation strategies; college and university admissions policies; and proven strategies to improve the financial and economic literacy of students, including basic personal income, household money management, financial planning skills, and basic economic decision-making skills.

### ***Near Peer Mentoring***

ED established a pilot to provide incentives for Title IV eligible institutions to use federal work-study dollars for near-peer mentoring. These programs have shown success across the country at increasing FAFSA completion, college enrollment, and graduation. In addition to this pilot, the First Lady is challenging every college community to take new steps to open up their campuses to students who do not always see themselves attending college.

### ***Federal Financial Aid - Ability to Benefit Provision***

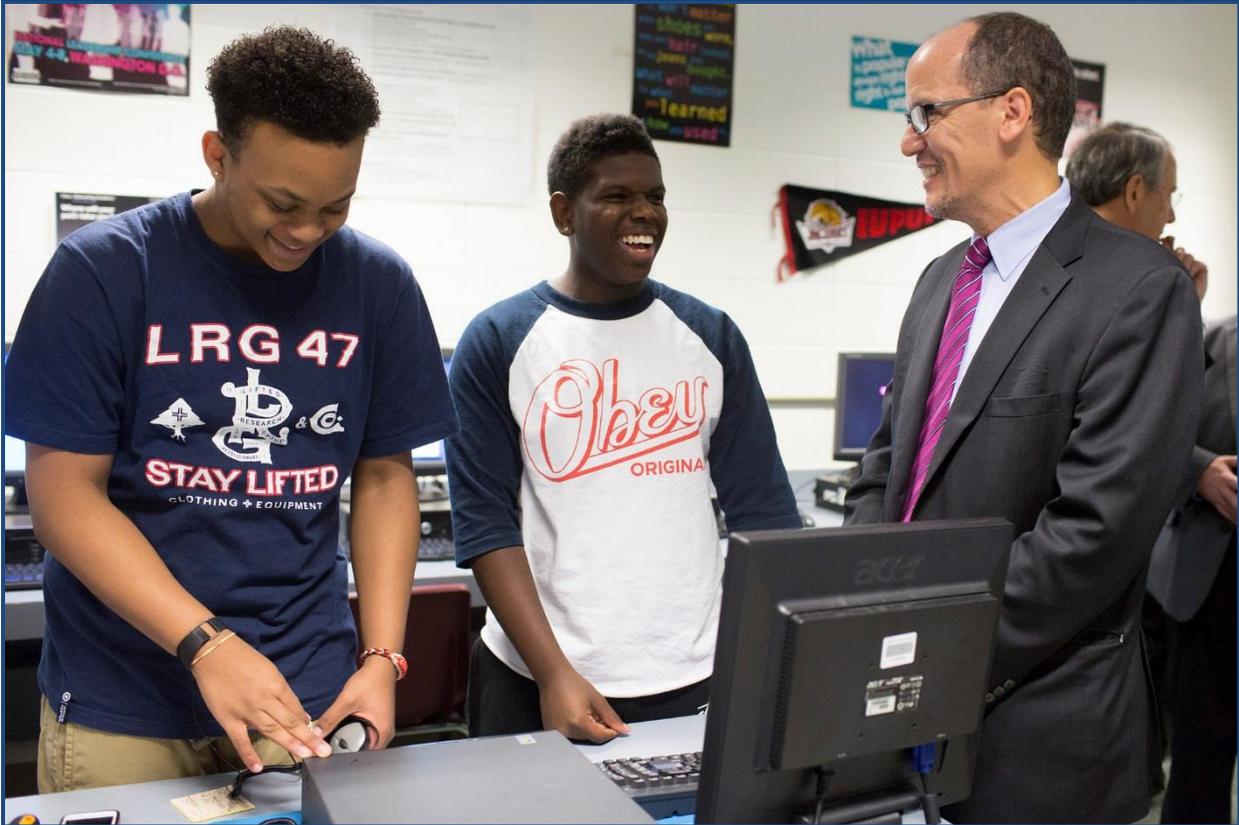
A key change in the FY 2015 Omnibus is that the budget will increase college access for low-income and low-skilled adults by partially restoring the [Ability to Benefit Provision](#) for Federal Financial Aid. This provision will increase access to Title IV financial aid funds for individuals without high school credentials if they are concurrently enrolled in adult education/basic skills and an approved career pathway training program.

### ***Student Support Services and GEAR UP***

By summer 2015, the ED's OPE will have allocated approximately \$356M in grants through its FY 2015 [Student Support Services \(SSS\) grant](#) competition and its FY 2014 [GEAR UP State and Partnership \(GU\) grant competitions](#), which provide academic and support services to hundreds of thousands of low-income, first-generation students and individuals as they prepare to access and complete their postsecondary education and move on to graduate school. Services include providing financial aid information (including FAFSA) and encouraging enrollment in challenging coursework to reduce the need for remediation. The 2015 SSS Application for New Awards also includes competitive preference priorities for "Influencing the Development of Non-Cognitive Factors" and "Providing Individualized Counseling for Personal, Career, and Academic Matters."

### ***ED's Office of Postsecondary Education Grants***

During FY 2015, OPE will have allocated approximately \$539M in both new and existing grants to help strengthen higher education and career-focused training and improve educational persistence and completion rates for students.



*U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Thomas Perez meets with Youth at a TAACCCT amplification event at Montgomery College in Rockville, Maryland, December 10, 2014.*

## 5) Successfully entering the workforce

Any young person entering the workforce should be able to get a job that allows them to support themselves, and where necessary, their families. Unfortunately, the current rate of unemployed youth ages 16 to 24 remains at 14.3 percent, more than double the national figure.<sup>33</sup> Black youths are also roughly twice as likely to be unemployed than white youth within the same age range.<sup>34</sup> A positive introduction to the labor force can increase the chances for youth to break out of a cycle of poverty, unemployment, crime and incarceration. Jobs that are combined with education and skills training can also improve a young person's future career and earnings potential.

Pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs can provide solid career pathways for youth. The earn-while-you-learn training model offers hands-on training and classroom education, all without imposing any student loan debt. Research shows that the average apprenticeship graduate earns a starting salary of \$50,000<sup>35</sup> and will earn \$300,000 more over the course of his or her career than peers who do not complete an apprenticeship.<sup>36</sup> Based on this and other research, the Administration has committed to double and diversify the number of apprenticeships in the United States within the next five years.

Significant strides have been made to strengthen pathways and address barriers to youth employment. Over the past year, the federal government awarded millions in grants that provide supports for vulnerable youth. Additional technical assistance helps lay the foundation for strong community engagement and support. In February 2015, the White House released an employer resource guide, "[Pathways for Youth Employment: Federal Resources for Employers](#)," to make it easier for both public and private sector organizations to provide entry-level opportunities for youth. The Small Business Administration is encouraging small business owners to offer jobs and internships to all youth. The Departments of Labor and Agriculture are also working with the U.S. Conference of Mayors and other organizations to expand the number of summer youth employment opportunities available to students across the country.

Agencies continue to work independently and collaboratively to build evidence-based strategies to promote and improve summer youth employment programs. A recently published DOL- DOJ funded study finds that summer jobs reduce violent crime.<sup>37</sup> This research and other studies, such as DOL's Study of New York City's Summer Youth Employment Program, are improving summer jobs programs. New guidance has also been issued to clarify rules and remove unintended obstacles, including a [joint letter from HHS, DOL, and HUD](#) providing an overview of various public and private strategies and services available to support summer youth jobs.

### **Improving Access to Jobs**

The Administration has pursued a number of major youth employment and training initiatives to help more young people successfully enter the workforce:

#### ***American Apprenticeship Initiative***

In December 2014, DOL announced the \$100 million [American Apprenticeship grant solicitation](#), which encourages applicants to demonstrate strategies to employ and train underrepresented populations in apprenticeship, including young men and women of color, people with disabilities, low-skilled populations and veterans. [HUD and DOL have engaged in a partnership](#) to promote Registered Apprenticeship opportunities for participants in HUD's Section 3 Program and DOL's YouthBuild Program.

In January 2015, DOL released a [Federal Resources Playbook for Registered Apprenticeship](#). This Playbook provides information for companies, employers, labor, apprenticeship sponsors, educators, workforce professionals, intermediaries and community-based organizations on ways to use federal funds and resources to support Registered Apprenticeship. Additionally, ED released a [Dear Colleague](#) letter that describes how federal work-study funds can be used to pay for a portion of the training wages associated with work based learning and for a Job Location and Development program.

#### ***National Guard Youth ChalleNGe and Job ChalleNGe Program***

The National Guard Youth ChalleNGe program seeks to improve the life and employment

prospects of young people, aged 16 to 18, who have dropped out of high school and are disconnected from the labor market. The program instills military-based training combined with educational instruction, experiential learning and mentoring. The program now operates in 27 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, and has served more than 120,000 young people since it began. Building upon the success of this program, [DOL announced the availability of \\$12 million in National Guard Job ChalleNge grants](#), which will expand existing Youth ChalleNge programs to provide vocational education and career development support.

### ***Performance Partnership Pilot***

In November 2014, ED announced the Performance Partnership Pilot (P3) initiative. This collaboration between ED, DOL, HHS, CNCS, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services pooled \$7 million to improve outcomes for disconnected youth. In FY 2015, Congress authorized up to 10 additional Performance Partnership Pilots allowing communities to blend together competitive and formula grant funding to build innovative solutions to drive youth employment.

### ***21st Century Conservation Service Corps***

The Department of the Interior's (DOI) nationwide youth initiative supports quality jobs, career pathways and service opportunities for youth and veterans. Through this initiative, DOI aims to provide work training opportunities to 100,000 young adults by 2017 and raise \$20 million from the private sector to support the work of youth and veteran corps. In the last year alone, DOI has forged new public-private partnerships with American Eagle Outfitters, Coca-Cola, CamelBak and The North Face, bringing new investments, heightened visibility and over 16,000 work opportunities for youth and veterans.

### ***Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)***

On July 22, 2014, the President signed the WIOA into law. Designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services, WIOA programs help millions of job-seekers connect to opportunities. Specifically, the legislation prioritizes services to out-of-school youth by requiring that at least 75 percent of available state-wide and local area funds be spent on workforce investment services for out-of-school youth. WIOA will help build new infrastructure and investments while targeting those resources to high risk youth populations.

### ***Trade Adjustment Assistance for Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grants***

In September 2014, DOL, working in collaboration with ED, released \$450 million in TAACCCT grants to nearly 270 community colleges across the country to partner with local employers to develop new courses that meet specific industry needs. The award of these funds represented the final round of an unprecedented investment of more than \$2 billion by this Administration in our country's community college system.

### ***Linking to Employment Activities Pre-release (LEAP) Specialized American Job Centers***

In February 2015, DOL announced the LEAP pilot program, a \$5 million pilot program that places One Stop Career Center/American Job Centers services directly in local jails. These

specialized services will prepare individuals for employment while they are incarcerated to increase their opportunities for successful reentry into their communities upon release. LEAP builds on promising strategies being implemented in a number of correctional facilities across the country, including the MontgomeryWorks Satellite One-Stop Career Center/American Job Center within the Montgomery County, Maryland county jail system.



*Students at the My Brother's Keeper Hackathon in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 2014.*

## **6) Reducing violence and providing a second chance**

Early exposure to violence and the criminal justice system often permanently alters the lives of boys and young men of color. For young people who are incarcerated access to a high-quality education during their confinement is a vitally important and cost-effective strategy for ensuring they become productive members of their communities. Recent research shows that about 55 percent of youth were rearrested within 12 months of release<sup>3839</sup>. Inmates of all ages are half as likely to go back to jail if they participate in higher education, even compared to inmates with similar histories.

Among black males ages 10 to 24, homicide continues to be the leading cause of death. It is also among the leading causes of death for Hispanic, American Indian and Alaska Native males in that age range.<sup>40</sup>

Efforts to act in this area have included a wide array of policy guidance, grant programs, and national forums and task forces to raise awareness and seek solutions to violence and incarceration. In December 2014, the President released the conclusions from a four-month review of federal funding and programs that provide equipment to state and local law enforcement agencies (LEAs). In addition to the review, the President announced the Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing and proposed a three-year \$263 million investment package to increase the use of body cameras, expand training for law enforcement agencies, add more resources for police department reform, and multiply the number of cities where DOJ facilitates community and local LEA engagement.

### **Addressing Violence and Building Community-based Law Enforcement Strategies**

#### ***Minority Youth Violence Prevention and the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention***

In September 2014, HHS and DOJ announced a new grant award of approximately \$3 million to help curb youth violence and improve the health and well-being of underserved and distressed communities. Grantees must demonstrate improvements in coordination and collaboration among law enforcement agencies, public health and community entities. Nine demonstration sites were awarded the grants through the Minority Youth Violence Prevention: Integrating Public Health and Community Policing Approaches program.

On October 1, 2014, Attorney General Holder announced the expansion of the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention (Forum) to five additional cities for a total of fifteen cities. The Forum is a network of communities and federal agencies that work together, share information, and build local capacity to prevent and reduce youth violence. Each participating city has developed or enhanced comprehensive plans to prevent youth and gang violence in their city by using multi-disciplinary partnerships, balanced approaches and data-driven strategies.

#### ***The National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice and the Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing***

The events last year in Ferguson, Missouri; New York City, New York; Cleveland, Ohio; and across the country have highlighted the importance of strong, collaborative relationships between local police and the communities they protect. As the nation has observed, trust between law enforcement agencies and the people they protect and serve is essential to the stability of our communities, the integrity of our criminal justice system, and the safe and effective delivery of policing services.

In September 2014, DOJ announced the launch of the National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice (National Initiative) a multi-faceted effort that combines research, technical assistance, and innovative strategies to help repair and strengthen the relationship between law enforcement and the communities they serve. The National Initiative will explore strategies in pilot sites, launch an online clearinghouse, and conduct seminal research to enhance procedural justice, reduce implicit bias, and support racial reconciliation. These efforts

respect and honor the critical work that law enforcement officers do every day to keep us safe, and reaffirm their integral part as members of the communities they serve.

Other Administration efforts in this area include the creation of the Task Force on 21st Century Policing to examine, among other issues, how to strengthen public trust and foster strong relationships between local law enforcement and the communities that they protect, while also promoting effective crime reduction. The Task Force, which includes law enforcement representatives, community leaders, academics, and youth leaders, will make recommendations to the President on issues such as building trust and legitimacy, community policing, and police training an education. The Task Force's report will be delivered to the President in early March.

### ***Correctional Education Guidance Package***

In December 2014, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder announced a Correctional Education Guidance Package aimed at helping states and local agencies strengthen the quality of education services provided to America's estimated 57,000 young people in confinement every day.<sup>41</sup> This guidance package builds on recommendations in the MBK Task Force report to reform the juvenile and criminal justice systems to reduce unnecessary interactions for youth and to enforce the rights of incarcerated youth to a quality education. The guidance package is a roadmap that states and local agencies can use to improve the quality of educational services for confined youth.



*U.S. Department of Education Secretary Duncan and Attorney General Holder meet with youth and staff at the Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center School in Alexandria, Virginia, December 8, 2014.*

## Future Efforts to Support MBK Goals in the FY 2016 Budget

In 2014, the Administration made significant advances in policies and programs that will help all young people – including more boys and young men of color – lead healthy and successful lives. The President recognizes that this work will continue. That is why his 2016 budget proposals make significant investments in evidence-based programs, build infrastructure to ensure that we are innovating and acting on what works, and lay out a bold vision for how the federal government can work with states and local communities to promote equality and opportunity for everyone.

The President's FY16 Budget proposes new investments to ensure that millions more children arrive at school ready to learn. It includes initiatives to expand high-quality child care to every eligible low and moderate income family with a child under four in the next ten years; expand access to high-quality preschool to all four-year-olds from low and middle income families; expand the voluntary home visiting program; improve the quality of Head Start programs by increasing the length of day and year so that children receive more intensive early learning experiences; and increase funding for the Preschool Development Grants and the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships program. The critical role of early education for children and the high priority placed on it by the Administration are strongly reflected in our budget and policy accomplishments to date.

The President has laid out a vision to help our youth enter the workforce and continue along career pathways to the middle class. This includes proposals in his 2016 Budget that would increase investments to address the challenges facing disconnected youth. The "Connecting for Opportunity" \$3 billion budget proposal would expand summer and year-round job opportunities, and create educational and workforce pathways through a competitive grant program. The American Technical Training Fund is a \$200 million joint DOL-ED proposal to support evidence-based job training programs and the \$2 billion Apprenticeship Training Fund proposal would provide flexible grants to expand Registered Apprenticeships across the country over the next five years.

Additionally, The President's 2016 budget would make community college free for responsible students, enabling them to earn a certificate, an associate's degree or up to two years' worth of credits toward a bachelor's degree without paying any tuition or fees. The Budget advances the President's \$200 million "First in the World" grants and provides a 30 percent set-aside for Minority-Serving Institutions to drive innovations that increase completion, value, and affordability. Finally, over the next year the Department of Education will finalize new regulations that expand the federal government's most generous income-driven repayment program to millions more borrowers.

## Conclusion

The President closed his remarks at the MBK launch on February 27, 2014, with these words: **“None of this is going to be easy. This is not a one-year proposition. It’s not a two-year proposition. It’s going to take time. We’re dealing with complicated issues that run deep in our history, run deep in our society, and are entrenched in our minds.”**

This report shows the progress we have made since the launch of MBK. But to make a lasting difference, successful interventions must be taken to scale – that is, replicated and expanded successfully across more places and settings. That process will be marked by a combination of a set of common goals, local choice, and control, the opportunity to belong to a national network with a shared framework for action, and the requisite technical assistance to bring the vision to fruition.

The convergence of local place-based actions, federal policy-focused work, and independent private sector efforts all respond to the President’s MBK call to action. As civic and city leaders try to meet the challenges of addressing the needs of at-risk populations at a local level, policy makers, the private sector and philanthropy are providing structural and financial assistance needed to stand up what works. Through MBK, this Administration will continue to improve transparency and accountability to address persistent opportunity gaps at every level. We will continue to identify new strategies and practices being put in place to address gaps in academic performance and solidify pathways to the middle class and beyond. We will continue to study how disciplinary actions disproportionately derail boys and young men of color and other students, and may place them on the so-called school-to-prison pipeline. Overall, we will continue our work across America to improve life outcomes for all young people in their communities and ensure all children have opportunities to succeed.



*President Obama with youth from the White House Mentee program at the White House, October 2014.*

## My Brother's Keeper Communities

City	State
Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians (Tribal)	CA
Akron	OH
Albany	NY
Albuquerque	NM
Allegheny County	PA
Allentown	PA
Anniston	AL
Atlanta	GA
Atlantic City	NJ
Augusta	GA
Aurora	IL
Baltimore	MD
Baton Rouge	LA
Beaverton	OR
Benton Harbor	MI
Berea	OH
Birmingham	AL
Boston	MA
Bridgeport	CT
Brooklyn Park	MN
Brownsville	TX
Buena Vista	MI
Buffalo	NY
Caddo Parish	LA
Carlisle	PA
Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes (Tribal)	AK
Charles Town	WV
Charleston	SC
Charlotte	NC
Charlottesville	VA
Chattanooga	TN
Cherokee Nation (Tribal)	OK
Chesapeake	VA
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribes (Tribal)	SD
Chicago	IL
Claremont	CA
Cleveland	OH
Columbia	SC
Columbus	OH

City	State
Compton	CA
Cook County	IL
Culver City	CA
Dallas	TX
Dallas County	TX
Davenport	IA
Dayton	OH
DeKalb County	GA
Denver	CO
Des Moines	IA
Detroit	MI
Dubuque	IA
DuPage County	IL
Durham	NC
East Cleveland	OH
Edinburg	TX
Elkhart	IN
Fairmount Heights	MD
Ferguson	MO
Flint	MI
Fond du Lac Band of Lake (Tribal)	MN
Forest Heights	MD
Fort Wayne	IN
Fort Worth	TX
Fresno	CA
Fulton County	GA
Gary	IN
Glendora	MS
Johnston	SC
Grand Blanc Township	MI
Harrisburg	PA
Hartford	CT
Hawthorne	CA
Hempstead	NY
Highland Park	MI
Hobson	AL
Holly Hill	SC
Holyoke	MA
Hoonah Indian Association (Tribal)	AK
Houston	TX

City	State
Huntington	WV
Indianapolis	IN
Ithaca	NY
Jackson	MS
Jacksonville	FL
Jersey City	NJ
Johnstown	PA
Jonesville	LA
Kansas City	KS
Kansas City	MO
Knoxville	TN
Lansing	MI
Laredo	TX
Las Vegas	NV
Little Rock	AR
Long Beach	CA
Los Angeles	CA
Louisville	KY
Macon	GA
Madison	WI
Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation (Tribal)	CT
Massillon	OH
Memphis	TN
Miami	FL
Milwaukee	WI
Milwaukee County	WI
Minneapolis	MN
Montgomery County	MD
Mount Rainier	MD
Multnomah County	OR
Nashville	TN
Navajo Nation (Tribal)	AZ, NM, UT
New Haven	CT
New Orleans	LA
New York	NY
Newark	NJ
Newton	MA
Niagara Falls	NY
Normandy	MO
North Chicago	IL

City	State
North Hempstead	NY
Oak Creek	WI
Oakland	CA
Okolona	MS
Oktibeha County	MS
Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin	WI
Orange County	NC
Orlando	FL
Oxnard	CA
Pawnee Nation	OK
Philadelphia	PA
Phoenix	AZ
Pittsburgh	PA
Portland	ME
Portland	OR
Portsmouth	VA
Prairie View	TX
Prichard	AL
Prince George's County	MD
Princeton	NJ
Providence	RI
Ramsey County	MN
Ranson	WV
Redford Township	MI
Rialto	CA
Richmond	CA
Riviera Beach	FL
Rochester	NY
Rockford	IL
Round Valley Indian Tribes (Tribal)	CA
Sacramento	CA
Saint Joseph	LA
Salisbury	NC
Salisbury	MD
Salt Lake City	UT
San Antonio	TX
San Francisco	CA
San Jose	CA
Santa Fe	NM
Santa Ana	CA

City	State
Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians	MI
Savannah	GA
Seattle	WA
Shreveport	LA
Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate (Tribal)	SD
Southfield	MI
Spring Lake	NC
Springfield	MA
St Louis	MO
St Paul	MN
St. Croix Chippewas of Wisconsin	WI
Standing Rock Sioux (Tribal)	ND, SD
Starkville	MS
Stockton	CA
Suquamish Tribe	
Swinomish Tribe (Tribal)	WA
Syracuse	NY
Tacoma	WA
Tallahassee	FL
Tampa	FL
Tempe	AZ
Tucson	AZ
Vallejo	CA
Village of Phoenix	IL
Washington	DC
West Palm Beach County	FL
West Sacramento	CA



Mayor Steve Benjamin with youth in Columbia, South Carolina.



Youth at a My Brother's Keeper forum in Gary, Indiana.



Mayor Muriel Bowser with students at a viewing of the film "Selma" in Washington, D.C.

## Endnotes

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[http://www.phillytrib.com/news/article\\_8ad236b2-1861-5b13-b53b-4999c4076bd5.html](http://www.phillytrib.com/news/article_8ad236b2-1861-5b13-b53b-4999c4076bd5.html);  
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