

WE DREAM A WORLD:

THE 2025 VISION FOR BLACK MEN AND BOYS

CAMPAIGN FOR BLACK MEN AND BOYS

2025
BMBB

BE THE CHANGE - CHANGE THE GAME



DECEMBER 2010

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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All 2025 Campaign materials are guided by input from the National Steering Committee. However, the views expressed in this report represent those of the author and not necessarily of any affiliated individuals or institutions.

ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

The 2025 Campaign for Black Men and Boys is a national collaborative effort of several organizations and individuals. The mission of the 2025 Campaign is to collaboratively develop and implement an initiative for the educational, social, emotional, physical, spiritual, political and economic development and empowerment of Black men and boys in the United States. The Campaign is currently housed at the Twenty-First Century Foundation (21CF), a national public foundation with a mission to advance strategic Black philanthropy aimed at having a positive impact on social and economic issues in the Black community. The Campaign's work is guided by the National Steering Committee that represents organizations and individuals working in areas of both policy and practice. As individuals, each member may or may not agree with potential policy solutions and prescriptions for action, but all believe that greater attention must be paid to understanding issues plaguing Black males in the United States.

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I DREAM A WORLD

I dream a world where man*
No other man will scorn,
Where love will bless the earth
And peace its paths adorn
I dream a world where all
Will know sweet freedom's way,
Where greed no longer saps the soul
Nor avarice blights our day.
A world I dream where black or White,
Whatever race you be,
Will share the bounties of the earth
And every man is free,
Where wretchedness will hang its head
And joy, like a pearl,
Attends the needs of all mankind-
Of such I dream, my world!

- Langston Hughes

Defining the Movement

The 2025 Campaign for Black Men and Boys: Finding and Embracing Our Unity of Purpose

In 2006, a group of Black thought leaders assembled in a room to consider the current condition of Black males in the United States. It was clear that something significant, sustained and effective needed to happen to change things, but exactly what was yet unclear. After a year of wrestling with myriad issues and defining the struggles imbedded in life circumstance for Black men and boys in America, the 2025 Campaign for Black Men & Boys was born. A key fact undergirding our work is in the year 2025, Black boys born in 2007 will be 18 years old. We envision for them an America that is much different than what Black men currently see and experience. We envision a nation that is whole and strong because the structural racism that impedes Black male progress would have been eliminated, where Black males can rightly take their place as a productive and thriving part of American citizenry and leaders of their communities and families.

The 2025 Campaign exists to advance a vision that extends the historic pursuit of social justice for our community. Standing on the shoulders of our ancestors' legacy of struggle as well as our contemporary need for self-determination and community responsibility, we are determined to improve quality of life for Black men and boys.

Our vision is comprehensive. Our window of opportunity is rapidly closing. The needs of our young people are painfully urgent. This work requires an unprecedented level of collaboration, alignment of resources and clarity of message.

Achieving the policy and advocacy goals in this document by the year 2025 will only be accomplished through engaging a broad base of African Americans, working with allies and partners, and using well-targeted and sufficient resources – human, financial and spiritual. As a campaign, we intend to engage organizations and individuals, working in their own communities and political arenas, to “own” the campaign’s work. This means that our partners and affiliate local coalitions must advance the 2025 policy agenda in ways suited to local and regional contexts. That is, they must customize the policy agenda to respond to circumstances unique to the political, cultural, economic and social conditions in communities around the country. We believe that only through a thoughtful, yet urgent response in local communities can we build the momentum and unified voice capable of eradicating the root causes of economic, social and political inequities.

- Greg Hodge, Community Development Associates

Introduction

Black men are vital and important members of American society, especially in their communities. Black families suffer a great loss when Black men are unable to thrive. Throughout modern American history, Black men have struggled to gain their footing and fulfill their destinies as strong, caring and productive members of our society and their families. The 2025 Campaign for Black Men and Boys seeks to shape a new future for Black men and boys in which the social and economic realities of this country accommodate the pursuit of their dreams. The campaign strives to create conditions to enable Black boys, youth and men to realize their goals and contribute greatly to their families, communities and our nation. By 2025, we dream of a world where Black boys are highly educated, Black men are anchored in the economic mainstream, Black boys see in their fathers promising futures, and entire communities of Black families are physically and emotionally healthy.

The precarious situation of our nation's Black men and boys is due to a complex intersection of race, class, structural/institutional racism, personal responsibility, and lack of equal access to opportunity. Their failure to thrive ignites fiery debate and inevitably raises questions about the historical and present-day role this nation played and continues to play in perpetuating social and economic circumstances that produce undesirable life outcomes for Black people, particularly Black males. Meanwhile, Black men and boys don't have the proper tools or resources to pursue their right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The time has come to get beyond debate and to implement bold solutions that focus on Black men and boys.

There is huge disparity in outcomes for Black people, particularly men and youth, in all major areas of American life – education, employment, justice, health, hous-

ing and family well-being. As a community and as a nation, we can no longer afford to ignore Black men's plight. The United States Census projects that by the year 2042, the population will be majority of people of color with Blacks being the second largest minority population group.¹ Half of America's children will be minority by the year 2023.² The security and social and economic well-being of our nation now and in the future depends on the collective ability of all people to thrive. We are in an age where 75 percent of U.S. jobs created between now and 2014 will require some type of postsecondary credential,³ yet half of Black youth fail to graduate from high school on time—an astonishing educational and labor market crisis. In June 2010, the unemployment rate for Black males over the age of 20 was an astounding 17.4 percent, almost double the national average. For Black youth 16-19 years old, it was 39.9 percent.⁴ Further, Black men have the worst health outcomes in the United States, and have the shortest life expectancy of any racial or ethnic subgroup in the United States.⁵ In fact, today Black men live shorter lives than the average American did in 1960. Without attention and effort to address these issues, a large and vital segment of the population will continue to decline. When people of color are unable to prosper, the nation as a whole is less prosperous.

A subset of Black men have made significant progress in the last several decades, but a large segment of Black men and boys in America remain in a state of crisis. It's far too expedient and simplistic to point to some Black men's success as evidence that opportunity is out there for the taking. But time and again, we hear and read such refrains, most notably referencing the recent election of a Black president.



The far more difficult task is to examine the complex reasons underlying why far too many Black men are jobless or imprisoned. It's incredibly easy to note the exceedingly small number of Black men who are in positions of leadership in Fortune 500 companies. We shy away from the harder examination of why Black male college graduate earn, on average, about the same annual salary as a White male high school graduate. Tremendous structural roadblocks preclude most Black men from attaining the same level of success as their White peers. While we laud Black America's achievements and regard successful individuals as the embodiment of what is possible for Black men and boys, we cannot lose sight of the grim fact that these major successes are most often the exception rather than the rule. Despite the fact that some men have overcome social and economic barriers, the fact remains that structural and systemic roadblocks exist. Improving outcomes for Black men and boys requires first acknowledging and then addressing pernicious obstacles that keep so many from succeeding.

Black men begin on uneven footing and continue to play catch-up their entire lives. Unequal treatment, unconscious bias in policies and practices, and ineffective social policies pose barriers to Black men catching up and being equals in America. As a result, many Black men and their families continue to be gravely impeded in their climb toward economic prosperity and are unable to break the cycle of poverty. The cost of being Black and poor is tremendous. Poor Blacks pay more in money, time, stress and hazard. They pay more for food, housing, transportation and health care.⁷ While some transcend these obstacles, far more are unable to do so without supports that our nation is often reluctant to give.

Black men, their families and their communities began to flourish during some periods in our nation's history. The 1920s was a fruitful time for many Black families as they established solvent, independent communities in many places around the country. Also, the early 1990s saw a marked decrease in unemployment for Black males, higher levels of home ownership, and large numbers of young Blacks attending college. The Black community's ability to thrive, however, has always been fragile – subject to the winds of economic recession, negative public policies and blatant racism. For example, White supremacist groups often regarded Black communities established in the 1920s as threats, and they attacked or destroyed communities, leaving thousands of Black people dead. Survivors were left to rebuild their lives and their homes without any assistance from the government, which had a responsibility to protect them.

A stark example of blocked economic prosperity is in the redlining practices that began in the 1930s. This practice of characterizing neighborhoods in older districts in city centers, most often Black neighborhoods, as undesirable for lending blocked Black families in these neighborhoods from securing mortgage loans to purchase homes.⁹ Homeownership long has been regarded as "the American Dream," and viewed as a first step to acquiring wealth and securing the family's future. The illegal denial of this opportunity for Blacks has had a ripple effect on Black families and communities for multiple generations. Combined with restrictive covenants, which kept Blacks out of predominantly White neighborhoods, the result was a large increase in residential racial segregation and urban decay.¹⁰



The 1970s and '80s brought a marked decrease in industrial jobs as our nation's economic structure shifted in two ways: toward service-oriented jobs, resulting in many plants and factories closing, and existing companies moving from inner city locations to more modern facilities constructed in the suburbs. The overall number of jobs declined significantly, and the spatial mismatch of job and residence without adequate means of public transportation caused unemployment rates for Black males to skyrocket.¹¹ Simultaneously, the federal contribution of funds to cities declined during the Reagan years and services to the community's poor and unemployed were significantly curtailed right at the time when the need increased. Large numbers of Black men and their families suffered tremendous losses due to deindustrialization, and they found themselves living in concentrated poverty in communities without the resources to help support or sustain them. Due to policies and practice, prosperity and opportunity moved out of Black communities. The plight of poor Black communities was stigmatized and racialized because it was not being experienced to the same degree in suburban and wealthier communities. For many generations, it seems that for every step forward taken by Black families, they have been knocked back two steps and have had to fight to recover.

The media and entertainment industries have taken these complex conditions in the Black community and used them to vilify and mock Black families. Black men in particular. Media characterization of Black men and boys as jokesters or as irresponsible, lazy or dangerous has an immense effect on society's perceptions. As a result, people possess conscious and unconscious views about Black men, which lead to detrimental biases that shape practice. Crime is one major example. The public largely bases its perceptions about crime on what it sees,

hears or reads in the media. Studies have shown two things: violent crime dominates crime coverage, and the news media unduly connect race and violent crime. Newspapers are more likely to identify race in a story if the suspect or perpetrator is Black, and stories about Black victims are far less likely to be covered in newspapers at all. Black suspects are habitually depicted as poor, dangerous and indistinct from other Blacks who are not criminals.¹² Thus, debates around sentencing, prison reform and juvenile justice reform are heavily influenced by negative perceptions of Blacks. Similarly, the media's portrayal of the poor, and in particular poor people receiving welfare, as largely Black individuals and families has a tremendous effect on public will for welfare spending and other aid to the poor.¹³

Correcting these underlying biases and wrongful generalizations requires intentional efforts to develop new understanding. It affects everything from how national policies are shaped to how a grocery clerk treats someone in the check-out line. The way authorities handled Hurricane Katrina is a telling example of the way unconscious bias affects how society treats Blacks and the poor. In *Come Hell or High Water: Hurricane Katrina and the Color of Disaster*, Michael Eric Dyson wrote, "The collective racial unconscious, and the rhythms, relations, and rules of race, together constitute the framework for making decisions, even those that apparently have nothing to do with race... although one may not have racial intent, one's actions may nonetheless have racial consequences."¹⁴ Identifying and deconstructing unconscious bias is critical to altering outcomes for Black men and boys because it affects our ability to see structural barriers for what they are and have the will to make change.



Changing the landscape for Black men, youth, and boys requires tremendous commitment from all sectors and levels of government and society. It is a commitment that is both necessary and long overdue. The 2025 Campaign for Black Men and Boys focuses its work in five key areas: education, fatherhood and families, employment and wealth, health, and criminal justice. Across all of these areas, the campaign believes that four key things need to happen:

- Evaluate and amend existing public policies to support of the needs of Black males, their families and their communities.
- Support communities' need to create sustainable, systemic solutions to address the needs of Black males.
- Think differently about the manner in which programming and services are rendered and work more diligently to ensure that approaches are culturally appropriate and of high quality.
- Increase the level of investment for services and interventions that help low-income individuals and aid their implementation so these services actually reach Black males.

"We Dream a World" is a call to action for America to begin strategically addressing the problems that hinder Black men and boys. It lays out a comprehensive agenda of reform that, if implemented, will significantly change the life trajectory of Black men and boys. This document should be used in several significant ways to turn the dream into a true vision by committing to action:

- Policy makers can use the ideas and recommendations presented in this paper to be more intentional about their consideration of the needs of Black males as they deliberate about policies. Evaluate potential policies through a lens of race and gender, seeking to understand the impli-

cations of particular policies on Blacks and males.

- Advocates and organizers in communities can use the ideas and recommendations presented to work for local change. Elevate leadership and communities' consciousness and understanding. Help the community to make the connection between their direct actions and change for Black men and boys.
- Direct service organizations can consider how their services meet the needs of Black men and boys in their communities. Determine if services may be strengthened to be more effective, and identify ways to increase awareness of Black male issues to leverage partnerships in the community for the betterment of Black males served by your programs.

BY 2025, A BLACK BOY'S WORLD SHOULD BE DIFFERENT.

THE 2025 DREAM

EDUCATION:

We dream a world where all Black males receive a quality education that empowers them to be economically productive, thus able to support themselves and improve the quality of life for their families and communities.

EMPLOYMENT & WEALTH:

We dream a world where all Black males are prepared to secure living-wage employment based on their aspirations, will have equal access to careers and professions that will enhance economic wellbeing, and will have equal opportunities to accumulate wealth and assets that can be transferred to support their families and communities.

HEALTH:

We dream a world where all Black males live in communities that support their healthful living over the life span, and where Black males are able to enhance the health of future generations within their communities.

FATHERHOOD & FAMILIES:

We dream a world where all Black fathers are knowledgeable, informed and prepared to make positive choices about fathering, and all Black boys have relationships with either their biological fathers or a positive Black male at every stage of their development.

JUSTICE, RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, & OPPORTUNITIES:

We dream a world where Black males live free with all rights and responsibilities provided by a democratic society committed to justice, equality, due process and the pursuit of happiness, and where Black men and boys are accountable and engaged with self and community.



Imagine a group of 25 boys from your community are assembled in a room on a hot summer day, each considering his plans for the upcoming school year – high school, some of the best years of a teenager’s life. Sadly, two of them won’t even make it to the high school’s door. Four years later, only thirteen of them will graduate from high school, and the majority of those who didn’t graduate will have dropped out of school after only one year. By the time they reach age 25, five of these boys will not have completed high school. Nine of them will have finished high school or a GED program, but their education will have stopped there. Eleven of them will have started college, but half of them will not have finished. Two of them will have completed their associate degrees, while another three of them will have completed a bachelor’s degree. And one – just one – will complete graduate school. The vast majority of them are at the very bottom of the educational ladder and, therefore, at the bottom of the earnings ladder as well.

There is no question that this is a sad tale. Around the country, our education system fails huge numbers of Black male students each year. Along all points of the educational continuum, Black boys and youth are falling off. Many begin their school experiences already behind due to lack of access to quality early childhood opportunities. The decline in academic achievement continues through the K-12 years, deepening with each passing school year. Half of them do not complete high school in four years, and many of those who do are not adequately prepared for postsecondary education, training or work opportunities. Unequal educational opportunities have compound and lasting effects on academic achievement and educational completion in the short term, and overall life outcomes in the long term.¹⁶ A life of poverty due to sporadic employment in low-wage, dead-end jobs, more time spent in prison, and

shorter life spans than anyone else in America. In adulthood, the opportunities to complete education and create a better life are mired with hurdles that many low-income individuals cannot scale. Academic struggle and failure in youth often sets the bar for where one will be for a lifetime. Without early intervention, Black boys who are currently in kindergarten will face these very same outcomes in the year 2025.

“There has been a cloud over the whole race, the whole issue of education, and us stepping up to where we are supposed to be. Well, the sun is about to shine.” Marlon Marshall, college-bound high school senior, Chicago’s Urban Prep Academy¹⁵

Research points to key elements in schools that contribute to greater educational outcomes for all students, regardless of race/ethnicity or socio-economic level. These include rigorous and relevant curriculum, effective teachers, equitable instructional resources, engaged parents/caregivers, and services to support the development of the whole child – all of which are critical to assuring we can deliver on the promise of education for all students in our nation. Perhaps most important, though, is that teachers and administrators have high expectations and genuine belief in the promise and performance of Black male students. Sadly, too many Black boys lack access to all these key elements in their educational settings, which deny them their right to a high-quality public education.

Black boys are more likely to attend schools that are under-resourced and performing poorly.

Currently, only 15 percent of Black students attend schools that are well-resourced and high performing, while 42 percent attend schools that are both under-resourced and performing poorly.¹⁷

Black boys are three times more likely to be suspended or expelled from school than White peers, therefore missing valuable learning time in the classroom.

Black students, most often males, are punished with out-of-school suspension nearly three times more often than White students. In addition, urban school districts such as Philadelphia and Chicago have suspension and expulsion rates several times higher than the national average. According to the Schott Foundation, “If Black male students were suspended and expelled at the same rates as White male students, half a million fewer out-of-school suspensions and at least 10,000 fewer expulsions would occur to them.”¹⁹

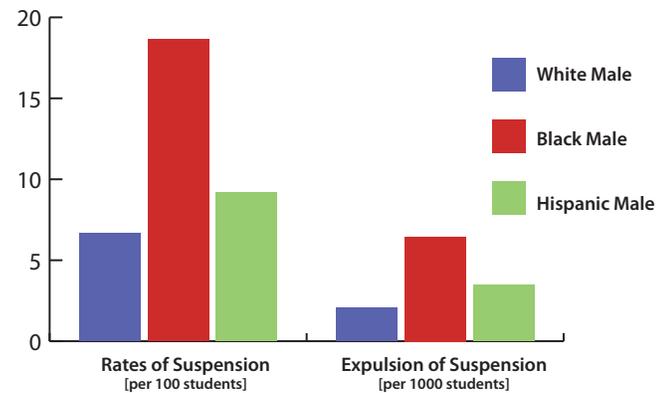
Black boys are 2.5 times less likely to be enrolled in gifted and talented programs, even if their prior achievement reflects the ability to succeed.

Only 3 percent of Black male students are enrolled in gifted and talented programs.²⁰ Once students are tracked into lower level coursework in elementary school, they tend to remain there for the rest of their academic years. There is a strong correlation between race, gender, class, and track placement.²¹

Black boys are 2.5 times more likely to be classified as mentally retarded by their schools.

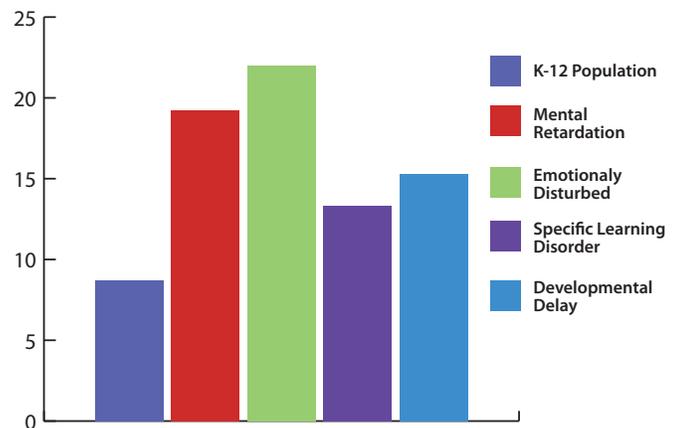
Three percent of Black male students are classified in this manner, as compared to only 1.4 percent of White male students. Black male students make up 20 percent of all students in the United States classified as mentally retarded, although they are only nine percent of the student population.

**FIGURE 1:
RATES OF SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION
OF MALE STUDENTS, BY RACE (2006)**



Source: US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, 2006.

**FIGURE 2:
RATE OF BLACK MALE PLACEMENT IN SPECIAL
EDUCATION**



Source: US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, 2006.

Black boys are more likely to have under-prepared and ineffective teachers. Research on high-minority schools shows that 28 percent of core academic teachers lack appropriate certification.²³ High-minority schools are also far more likely to have inexperienced teachers and teachers who perform poorly on teacher licensure examinations.²⁴ This certainly has an effect on learning and proficiency of Black students.

Most Black boys do not participate in a quality afterschool program that can augment their learning. Only 24 percent of Black children and youth are in afterschool programs. Twenty-nine percent are totally unsupervised after school, while 19 percent are cared for by a sibling.²⁵ Black parents have the highest level of demand for afterschool opportunities for their children, with 61 percent of parents stating that their child would likely participate in an afterschool program if one were available in their area.²⁶ For middle and high school students, the lack of age-appropriate offerings is an additional issue that hinders their participation.

Less than half of Black male students graduate from high school on time. Only 47 percent of Black males who begin high school will graduate four years later. Although many eventually complete a GED, there are still more than two million Black men in America without a high school level education.

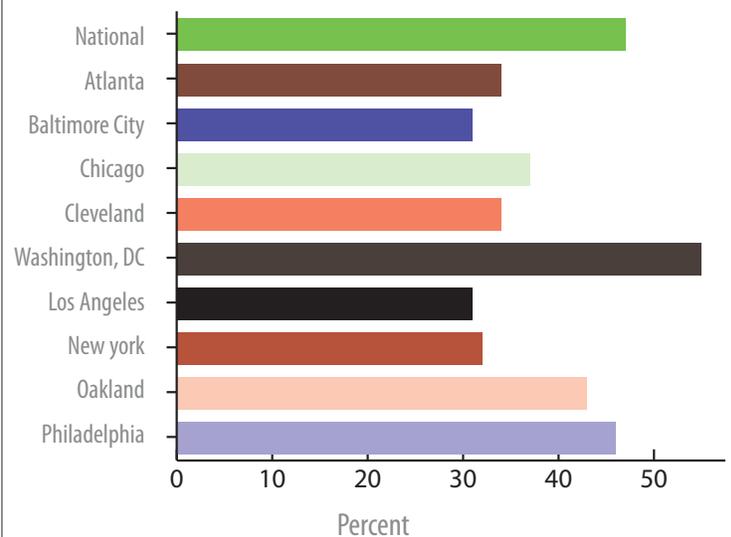
Black males lack resources and support to complete college. Those who attend are not likely to graduate. The college experience is quite a challenge for Black male students for two major reasons: their high schools did not offer adequate preparation for collegiate coursework and they lack the financial resources to complete a college education. In 2008, 4.6 million Black males had attended college, but only half actually graduated. Nationally, only 11 percent of Black males complete a bachelor's degree.²⁷

**FIGURE 3:
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR BLACK MALES (2008)**

Total Population of Black Males over age 25		10,298,348
Highest Education Level Attained:		% TOTAL
Less than 9th grade	631,948	6%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	1,506,459	15%
Regular high school diploma	2,966,685	29%
GED or alternative credential	568,379	6%
Some college, no degree	2,344,414	23%
Associate's degree	654,326	6%
Bachelor's degree	1,094,250	11%
Graduate degree	531,877	5%

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008.

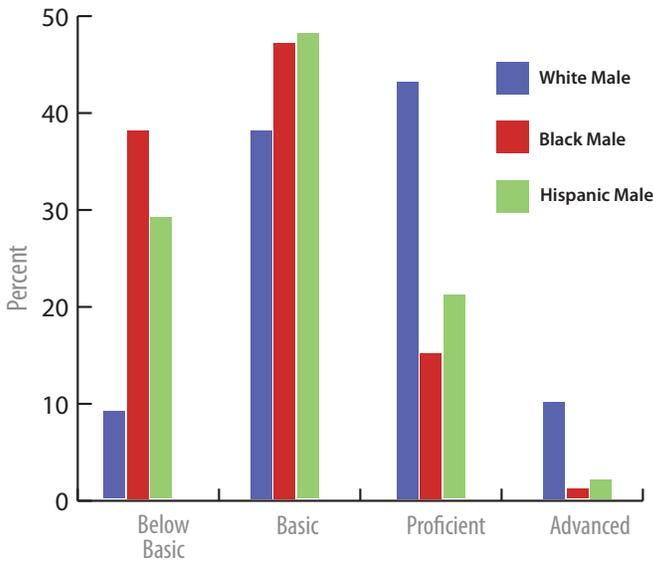
**FIGURE 4:
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE OF BLACK MALES
IN KEY COMMUNITIES (2006)**



Source: Schott Foundation, Given Half a Chance: The Schott 50 State Report on Public Education and Black Males, 2008.

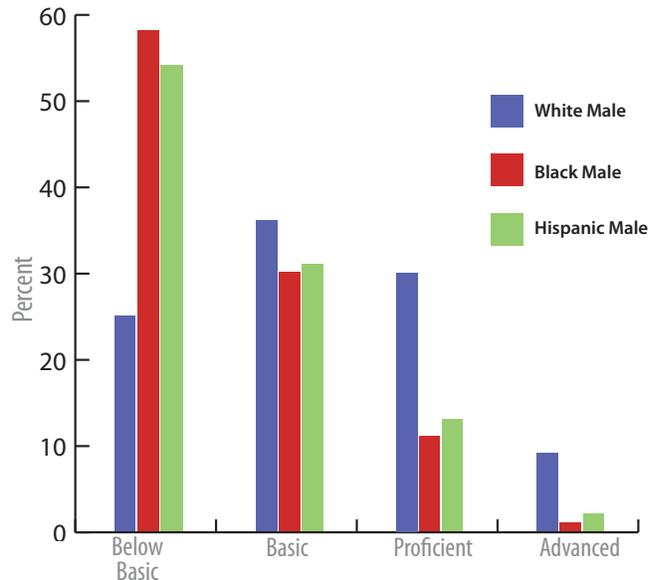
**ON AVERAGE, BLACK BOYS ARE THREE TIMES MORE LIKELY TO LACK BASIC SKILLS
IN MATH AND READING THAN WHITE BOYS.**

**FIGURE 5:
NAEP MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT
4TH GRADE MALES, BY RACE (2009)**



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2009.

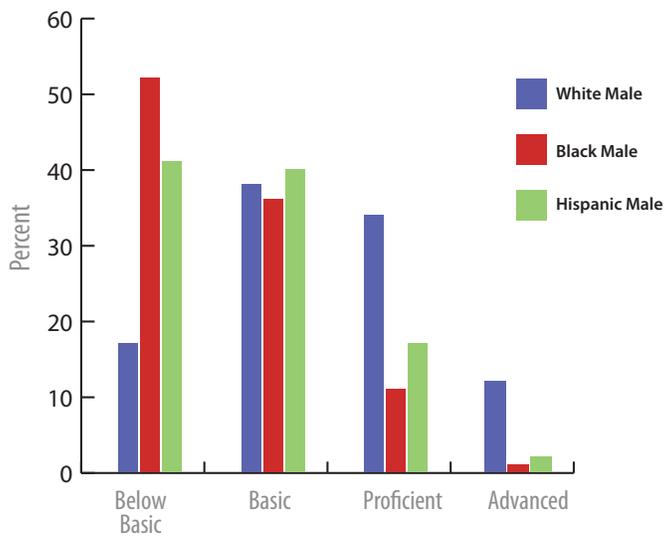
**FIGURE 6:
NAEP READING ACHIEVEMENT
4TH GRADE MALES, BY RACE (2009)**



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2009.

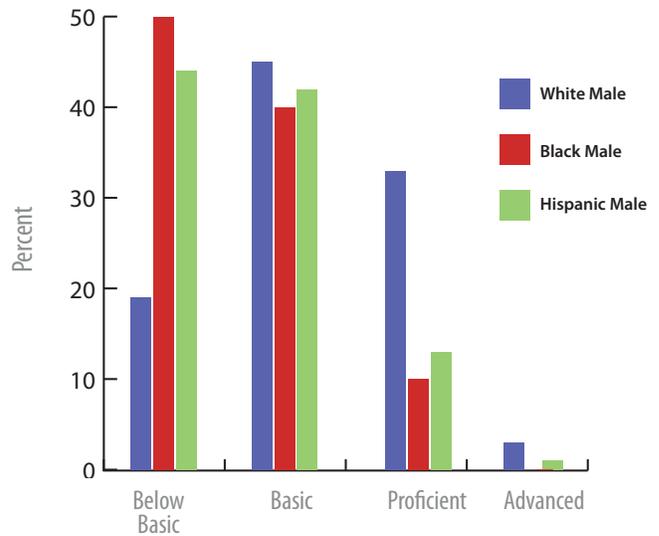
**BY THE 8TH GRADE, HALF OF ALL BLACK BOYS LACK BASIC SKILLS IN MATH AND READING. WHITE STUDENTS ARE
TWELVE TIMES MORE LIKELY THAN BLACK STUDENTS TO HAVE ADVANCED LEVEL MATH SKILLS IN 8TH GRADE.**

**FIGURE 7:
NAEP MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT
8TH GRADE MALES, BY RACE (2009)**



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2009.

**FIGURE 8:
NAEP READING ACHIEVEMENT
8TH GRADE MALES, BY RACE (2009)**



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2009.

We envision a time when our public education system will truly provide a quality education to all children and youth, where there is no gap in achievement between Black and White students. Schools will be supportive environments for learning for all students, and educators will see the potential and gift in Black boys. All Black boys will graduate from high school and pursue educational opportunities and skills training beyond high school that enable them to achieve the “American dream.” Adults who have been victims of the old systems will have greater access to education and training options that can prepare them for new opportunities and lift them out of poverty.

If we are to achieve the 2025 dream, Black males need:

- A quality educational experience along all points of the educational continuum from early childhood to post secondary
- Schools that address the multi-faceted developmental needs of the whole child by engaging the entire community in the educational process
- Educational pathways to re-engage Black males who have dropped out of school to get them back on track for better life outcomes
- Equitable education resources
- Families that are equipped to engage in the education of their Black boys and youth
- Greater access to post secondary educational options for youth and low-skilled adults

We can fulfill the vision of 2025. With timely action and cooperative effort, we can create significant change. On the following pages are potential actions that policy makers, school district leaders, teachers, parents, and advocates can take to create positive change in the area of education for Black men and boys.

Ensure a Quality Education Along the Educational Continuum that Provides Rigorous Curriculum, Strong Teachers, and Equitable Treatment of Students

- Promote access to high quality early childhood care and education options through increased funding for child care subsidies, Head Start, public preschool, and technical assistance to early educators and child care providers in low-income communities of color to ensure Black boys enter the K-12 education system ready to learn.
- Provide quality curriculum and instruction in core subjects from early childhood through secondary school to ensure Black boys possess the skills to successfully engage in higher-level learning and critical thinking and complete high school courses that are a prerequisite for postsecondary education.
- Encourage greater access to opportunities for Black male students to learn other languages to increase their ability to participate and compete in a global economy.
- Hold school districts accountable for ensuring all students successfully complete high school and are prepared for postsecondary opportunities. Create multiple pathways to graduation by thinking outside the paradigm of the traditional high school experience.
- Build on research and successes from specialized models and approaches of education for Black males students at all grade levels such as: single-gender schools, extended learning models, residential schools, community schools, or multiple intelligences teaching methods.
- Enhance recruitment and retention strategies to attract qualified teachers that are trained in specific academic content areas and have a track record of effectively teaching Black student populations, particularly in high-minority or high-poverty schools.
- Require robust cultural competence training to be a part of the preparation in college and ongoing professional teacher development.
- Establish teacher standards that racially disaggregate student achievement data and also assess more holistic teacher qualities, such as cultural competence and student engagement.
- Develop teacher pipelines at historically Black colleges and universities to train Black males to be educators.
- Reduce the disproportionate assignment of Black male students to special education by addressing lack of cultural awareness and unconscious bias in the assessment process. Continually assess Black male students and transition them out of special education as they progress.
- Increase the number of Black male students selected to participate in gifted and talented school programs by eliminating subjectivity from the selection process.
- Dismantle zero tolerance disciplinary policies, which push Black males out of school settings because of unnecessarily high rates of school suspension and expulsion.
- Remove criminal consequences from local truancy policies, as this often becomes an entry point to juvenile justice system. Identify and address the root causes of truancy in communities.
- Engage the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights as an active watchdog for accountability in unfair treatment of Black male students in the public education system.

Serve Needs of the Whole Child through School and Community Partnerships

- Address physical and mental health needs of Black male students by providing health services on-site in schools, providing healthful food choices in schools, and connecting students and families to other necessary health services.
- Connect Black boys to positive adult relationships, and programming that supports positive peer relationships and character development.
- Increase funding to support the expansion of afterschool opportunities and subsidies to defray participation costs.
- Create job training and work opportunities year-round for Black male youth through partnerships between school districts, community-based organizations, and Workforce Investment Board youth councils.
- Engage the faith-based community in developing civic engagement projects for Black boys and youth, which help to reinforce values that promote peaceful communities.
- Partner with local youth-serving systems to create a web of supportive services for very vulnerable Black male youth who are homeless, in the child welfare system, in kinship care, have incarcerated parents, are in the juvenile justice system, or live in deep poverty.

Create Educational Pathways to Re-Engage Black Youth Who Have Dropped Out Of School

- Hold school districts accountable for recovering Black males who drop out of school and guiding them to complete high school. Incentivize their efforts by integrating five- and six-year graduation rates, disaggregated by race, into federal high school accountability measures.
- Create a menu of well-supported educational options to re-engage high school dropouts, help them to gain a high school credential, and prepare them for postsecondary opportunities and success in careers.
- Bridge the worlds of education and work by ensuring high school dropouts can concurrently attain the skills needed to be gainfully employed in the 21st-century workplace.
- Create middle and high school early warning systems that identify Black male students at risk of dropping out and target academic and social interventions to keep Black male students on track.
- Restructure discipline-focused alternative programs into educational settings that enable these struggling students to benefit from smaller, more supportive academic learning environments.
- Strengthen educational programs provided in juvenile detention centers and create stronger transitional services to match Black boys reentering school to appropriate educational options, services, and resources.

Distribute Education Resources Equitably

- Conduct research to understand the spending patterns for school districts. Rework funding formulas to be equitable, and consider the particular needs of the student population as a part of this calculation.
- Supplement the funding of schools and districts serving considerable numbers of low-income students to increase the numbers of staff, the capacity to provide services to students, and the learning resources available in schools.
- Provide adequate funding to secondary schools to provide quality education, age-appropriate extra-curricular activities, supportive services and dropout prevention or recovery services for students.

Support Families' Engagement in the Education of Their Black Boys and Youth

- Provide a variety of flexible parental involvement options based on the convenience and availability of parents, not school staff.
- Develop multiple activities and materials to effectively provide information to parents about individual student progress and school policies and procedures.
- Provide programs for parents to strengthen their ability to engage with and support their children's learning at home. Consider the literacy levels of parents when providing programs and opportunities.
- Actively seek Black parents' involvement in educational advocacy through Parent Teacher Associations, school system task forces and advisory committees, school improvement planning committees, and other organized entities.

Remove Barriers to Participation in Post Secondary Educational Options for Youth and Low-Skilled Adults

- Overhaul content and delivery of adult education and college remediation to accelerate progress of Black male students. Encourage colleges to utilize a dual enrollment strategy for students requiring basic skills or remedial education.
- Create and expand flexible and comprehensive financial aid strategies and personalized career and academic counseling and support to support postsecondary access and success for low-income Black men.
- Create college bridge programs to prepare young Black men for careers in professional fields – medicine, law, education, human services, architecture, environment, finance, etc. – and provide support, mentoring, and career exposure throughout their matriculation.
- Track individual outcomes across workforce education services and into the labor market to hold communities accountable for implementing effective postsecondary strategies for Black males.
- Support Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to expand their ability to provide supportive, culturally appropriate havens of education for Black males. Also provide HBCUs with necessary resources and technical assistance to create pathways to post secondary success through expanded aid, personalized counseling and support for Black male students.

Successful Schools for Black Male Students

For Black boys to achieve in school, they need teachers and administrators who believe in their ability and do all in their power to catapult them to success. While no single model is the silver bullet, many single-sex schools serving Black boys have achieved unprecedented success that should not be ignored. Two organizations, The Eagle Academy Foundation (<http://eagleacademyfoundation.com>) and Urban Prep Academies (www.urbanprep.org), have taken on the challenge of educating Black boys from low-income neighborhoods and have embraced the motto, "We Believe." The Eagle Academy Foundation operates high schools in the Bronx and Brooklyn, NY and seeks troubled young men of color from the most difficult neighborhoods. Urban Prep Academies currently run two high schools in Chicago and plans to open a third in fall 2010. Both organizations use a rigorous academic model that includes an extended school day for students, adding up to an additional two months of schooling annually. They also use multiple approaches to do all that is necessary for their students such as mentoring, Saturday programs, summer bridge programs, and community services. Eagle Academies have an 80 percent graduation rate, as compared to less than 40 percent of boys of color in New York City, and more than 80 percent of their graduates go to college. In the spring of 2010, Urban Prep was recognized in national media for having 100 percent of its graduates accepted into college.

The Dream Manifested



Black males, young and old, don't have jobs. Regardless of educational level or past work history, Black males are less likely to be working than any other demographic in the United States. Some have limited employment options because they lack postsecondary degrees or additional training necessary for higher level jobs. Yet, regardless of how much training they may have, Black males are less likely to get a job interview simply because they have a name like "DeAndre" instead of "Andrew." Black males between ages 16 to 24 fare the worst, the time period that often establishes a person's earning trajectory for a lifetime.

According to Bureau of Labor Statistics, in June 2010, 17.4 percent of Black men over age 20 were unemployed, almost double the rate of White men.²⁸ In low-income communities of color, the percent is often even higher. Unemployment and underemployment in communities of color has been an issue for several decades. Black men who have jobs are often underemployed. Many Black men have jobs that pay wages not sufficient to support themselves or their families, and they also lack benefits such as paid sick leave and health insurance. Among Blacks who have a bachelor's degree, only 43 percent have "good" jobs where they make at least \$14.51 per hour and receive health insurance and a pension.²⁹ Across all education levels, only about one in five Blacks has a "good" job.³⁰

In terms of wealth, a recent study by the Institute on Assets and Social Policy at Brandeis University noted that the wealth gap between White and African-American families more than quadrupled from 1984 to 2007. The researcher noted that during the study period, the racial wealth gap between Whites and Blacks increased by \$75,000 from \$20,000 to \$95,000. Financial assets, excluding home equity, among White families grew from a median value of \$22,000 to \$100,000, while African-

Americans had a median wealth of \$5,000 in 2007.³¹ Equally troubling is the fact that analysis of intergenerational income among Black and White families reveals that the majority of Black children born to middle-income parents grow up to have less income than their parents.³²

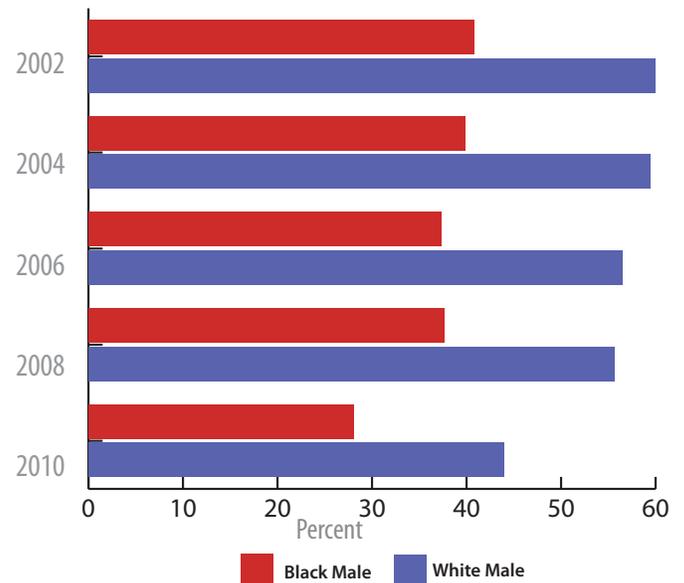
The current economic downturn has had a catastrophic effect on job prospects and overall financial stability for everyone, particularly Black men. While the late 1990s was a period of tremendous growth for Blacks, with poverty and unemployment at historic lows, the economic recessions of 2001 and the one that began in December 2007 have brought Black male unemployment back into the double digits.³³ This added decline presents a crisis for Black men, their families, and their communities – a crisis that cannot be ignored.

Mass unemployment is a breeding ground for trouble in Black communities. Lack of opportunity fuels criminal activity and violence due to frustration and necessity, with the eventual result being incarceration. The cycle in these communities persists decade after decade – Black males are impoverished, yet the community receives fewer resources and services to support its needs. The communities remain unstable and the people remain impoverished. The time has come for solutions that break down structural racism barriers that inhibit employment and instead: create opportunities for skills training to prepare Black males for meaningful careers, harness the entrepreneurial spirit of Black males and transform it into successful business ventures, and build the wealth of Black families and communities.

Black males are less likely to find a job than White peers with less education. At every education level, Blacks are less likely to be employed than their White peers. In fact, the unemployment rates for educated Blacks tend to be comparable to Whites with far less education. Additionally, University of Chicago research shows that an ethnic-sounding name is a job interview deterrent.³⁴ Whites with comparable credentials to Blacks were 50 percent more likely to get a call from prospective employers. If two Black candidates both applied for the same position, the one with higher skills was not more likely to get called in for an interview. In fact, having a White sounding name was found to be the equivalent of eight additional years of experience.

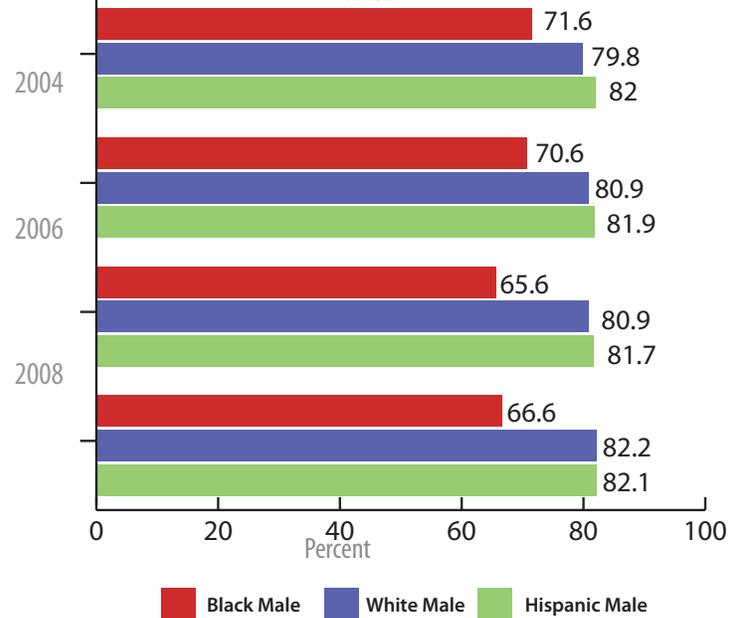
Black males earn less than White peers at every educational level. Black men with a bachelor's degree have earning comparable to White men with an associate's degree, and Black men with an associate's degree earn about the same amount of money as White men with only a high school diploma who have never taken a college course. This greatly affects Black men's ability to care for themselves and their families in the short term, and to accumulate any measure of wealth to pass on to future generations. While the need for increasing educational outcomes is certainly valid, it does not explain either blatant discrimination or unconscious bias present in hiring and human resource practices.

FIGURE 9:
PERCENT OF EMPLOYED MALES AGE 16-24, BY RACE



Source: US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, January 2010.

FIGURE 10:
EMPLOYMENT/POPULATION RATIOS FOR MALES AGES 25-64, BY RACE

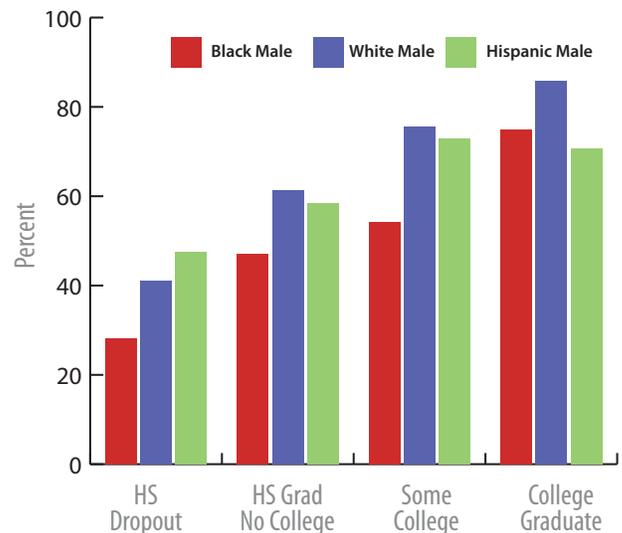


Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2002 – 2008.

Unemployment and underemployment in younger years creates an employment gap that cannot be bridged. The time between ages 16 to 24 represents a critical period for developing labor market attachment and skills. Early work experience positively correlates with future labor market success and earnings.³⁵ The longer young Black men go without steady work, the less likely they are to become a part of the labor market in the future and the less attractive they are to potential employers. Limited access to jobs during this critical developmental period will have impact well into adulthood. Lifetime earning potential decreases when young Black men don't successfully begin employment in these formative years. When young Black men cannot financially support themselves, their partners and their children, this takes a toll on the Black family. During periods of economic downturn Black males are the first to lose employment. Their White counterparts are less likely to lose their jobs and therefore continue building their work experience while young Black men of color remain jobless.

There is a spatial mismatch between where jobs are located and where Black men live. For Black males who reside in low-income communities, lack of jobs within the community is often a barrier to employment. Following the flight of companies out of urban areas in the 1970s and 1980s, many Black males found themselves without employment prospects close to home. Limited transportation options shrunk the pool of potential jobs even further. Sometimes the cost of the commute as compared to the salary of a position made jobs outside the immediate area not cost-effective.

FIGURE 11:
EMPLOYMENT/POPULATION RATIOS FOR YOUTH
AGES 16-24, BY EDUCATION LEVEL AND RACE (2010)

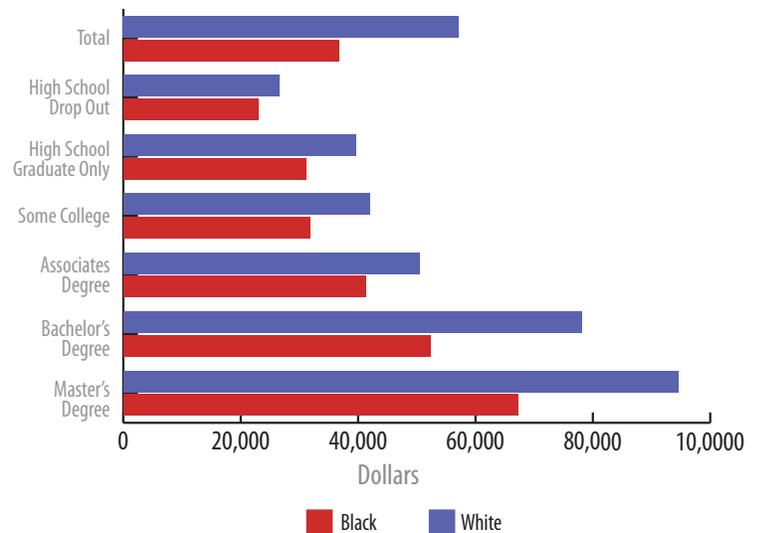


Source: US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, January 2010.

Black males face discrimination in the workplace. Polling data shows that Blacks face discrimination and unfair treatment in the workplace. Half reported issues such as not getting credit for their work and not having their concerns taken seriously, while one-third reported feeling their input was not regarded seriously or being looked over for a promotion. Eleven percent reported being directly addressed with a racial slur in the workplace.³⁶ Faced with these employment barriers, it is hardly surprising that Blacks report feeling defeated before even beginning their search for work.

Black males who are ex-offenders struggle to find employment. While all Black males have difficulty obtaining jobs, Black males who are ex-offenders have an even more difficult time. Researchers find that 19.5 percent of employers report that they definitely would not hire ex-offenders, and another 42.1 percent said they probably would not hire ex-offenders.³⁷ Black males face the double stigma of racial discrimination and employer bias about people with criminal records.

**FIGURE 12:
MEAN EARNINGS FOR MALES AGES 18-64,
BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AND RACE (2008)**



Source: US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2008.



We envision a time when Black men will have equal opportunities to earn a living wage, and accumulate wealth and assets that can be used to support their families and communities. Black males will be adequately prepared for employment based on their aspirations, and will not face structural barriers to entering the labor market because of the color of their skin. Businesses owned and operated by Black men will be supported equally, and will flourish. Black families and communities of color will be more financially stable.

If we are to achieve the 2025 dream, Black males need:

- A full-scale, community-wide employment strategy to address wide-spread unemployment
- Career pathways to put young Black males on the right road to economic success
- Training and subsidized employment opportunities
- Fair hiring practices
- Strategies to support expanding Black enterprise and wealth accumulation

We can fulfill the 2025 vision. With timely action and cooperative effort, we can create significant change. On the following pages are potential actions that policy makers, states, workforce boards, educational entities, and advocates can take to create positive change in employment and wealth for Black males.

Turning Ideas into Action

Take a Community-Wide Approach to Employment Issues for Black Males

- Request state and local workforce boards, higher education commissions, and justice commissions focus on the disproportionately high unemployment rate of young Black men and their underrepresentation in higher education as a priority when developing comprehensive plans. Set goals, benchmarks and timelines for action and devote discretionary funding to incentivize innovation in addressing this challenge.
- Use the collective resources and programming of the many systems that seek to train their constituencies for employment: workforce system, K-12 education, adult education system, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.
- Direct funding to high poverty communities of color to plan and implement comprehensive programs, interventions and supports to reach out to disconnected young men, engage them in the education, training, personal development, and career exposure activities and support their connection to good jobs, with decent wages and opportunities for advancement.

Create Career Pathways for Young Black Males

- Engage employers and industry leaders in creating career pathways to provide education, training, work experience, internships, mentoring, and access to high-wage jobs in growing industry sectors for Black males, particularly those who are high school dropouts and formerly incarcerated.

- Expand funding for public job creation to increase employment opportunities in communities of extremely high unemployment. This should include summer and year-round jobs for youth, on-the-job-training, youth corps, and transitional jobs programs.

Identify Black Males as a Priority Group for Funding and Services

- Make low-income Black males an absolute priority for training and employment services provided by regional and local workforce investment system. Ensure that financial investments in targeted efforts for Black males are made, and that accountability measures are in place and enforced.
- Use community benefit agreements or other formal referral mechanisms to assure that young Black men are trained for and connected to emerging economic or community development opportunities in local or regional areas such as transportation projects, renewable energy or “green jobs” projects, health care expansion, or infrastructure repair.
- Provide transitional jobs and reintegration services for formerly incarcerated Black males.

Adopt Policies to Eliminate Discriminatory Hiring and Employment Practices

- Require all publicly funded projects that create jobs to assure diversity in their workforce; engage in affirmative outreach to assure diversity; work with local and community-based entities, including WIA one-stop centers; and increase access of trained minority candidates.

- Increase the enforcement capacity of the Department of Labor, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Civil Rights Commission and other relevant agencies to assure compliance with antidiscrimination laws that are supposedly in place to protect Black males.
- Increase transparency in the job market by mandating specific job posting requirements for all publicly funded positions, which enables the public to be fully aware of all available positions and increases opportunities for all to apply.
- Use incentives for employers to increase workplace diversity.
- Ensure that Black males are engaged in education and training that lead to higher-paying careers that enable them to accumulate wealth.
- Increase Black male home ownership in affordable, high quality homes with sound financing.

Create Strategies to Expand Black Enterprise and Wealth Accumulation

- Expand opportunities for financial education and asset development programs. Financial institutions, colleges and universities, employers, community-based youth programs, adult education programs, and job training programs should provide financial education to their populations as a core part of their programming.
- Increase access to mainstream financial institutions for banking services, savings, and long-term investment.
- Provide greater access to support services for Black males to aid them in establishing and start-up funding for viable Black-owned businesses.
- Engage Black males in cooperative economic ventures that lead to stable, viable businesses within their communities.

Leading the Way to Economic Prosperity for Black Men in Oakland, CA

Mayor Ron Dellums was elected in 2006 to lead the City of Oakland, California. After serving as a U.S. congressman for almost 30 years, Dellums became engaged in a number of activities in the private sector but lent his name and reputation to create of the Dellums Commission, a group convened by the Joint Center for Economic and Political Studies. After taking office, Dellums charged his appointees to the Workforce Investment Board, a public body that oversees the use of federal grants to support and sustain the workforce development system, with a focus on three vital areas of work – create meaningful employment opportunities for re-entry/reintegration of formerly incarcerated men into their communities; engage players in the emerging green economy; and pay special attention to men and boys of color as part of the workforce in Oakland. That mandate has begun to shape priorities for how the city's workforce system addresses what is now double-digit unemployment for Black men in Oakland. Mayor Dellums created a position on his staff to focus on training the re-entry population in soft skills; providing a range of social services to support housing, health and other needs, and providing access to appropriate entry level employment.

The Dream Manifested





Black men are sicker and die sooner than anyone else in America. According to the American Human Development Project, the life expectancy of Black males ranks lowest among all races and gender in the United States.³⁹ The death rate for Black men is higher than White men for virtually every medical category – heart diseases, stroke, cancer, asthma, influenza and pneumonia, diabetes, HIV/AIDS and homicide.⁴⁰ Children in the Black community also face significant health risks. Babies born to Black mothers are more likely to have low birth weight, and Black children have higher rates of asthma. Black boys are far more likely than Whites to be diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and other learning deficiencies. These disparities have gone unaddressed for decades in the United States. Despite large, quantifiable disparities in health outcomes for Black males, there has been little response from the public health community to address this in a systemic and targeted manner.

“There is no time like the present to begin focusing on the goal of health equity – a goal that is not only consistent with the American promise of opportunity, but in our long-term economic interest, as well.”
- Ralph B. Everett, Esq.³⁸

Health issues cannot be looked at in a vacuum. The interrelationship of socioeconomic status, race and health is clear. The impact begins literally at conception. Black mothers have less access to high quality prenatal care, which has lifelong effects on children. Developmental delays resulting from premature birth and low birth weight are often quite treatable, but many Black children do not receive necessary services and are forever at an educational disadvantage. Black boys are then labeled as learning deficient, thus beginning their journey in the school-to-prison pipeline. Black men, who have high rates of unemployment and

underemployment, are least likely to have health insurance coverage. Economics and race also dictate the types of communities in which people reside, which impact food choices, neighborhood violence, opportunities to exercise and other mediators of health. These physical, social and economic conditions correlate with chronic diseases and health conditions that are prevalent among Black males. Poverty and conditions in impoverished communities also have an extreme effect on life choices that affect the long-term health of Black males. Having goals and the resources to work toward them mitigates risky behaviors in people, particularly youth. Sexual irresponsibility and alcohol and drug abuse increase as individuals find themselves stuck in seemingly hopeless circumstances. Such behavior leads to many adverse, life-altering health problems, most notably HIV/AIDS.

Racial and ethnic health disparities have tangible costs. The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies cites direct costs related to providing care to a population that is sicker and more disadvantaged, as well as indirect costs such as lost productivity at work, lost wages, absenteeism and lower quality of life. Our nation loses when individuals die too soon due to illness or violence. Tax revenues from the income of the deceased are gone, while safety net services to remaining families are often increased. Research shows that:⁴¹

- Eliminating health disparities for Black people would have reduced direct medical care expenditures by \$135.9 billion for the years 2003-2006.
- Eliminating health inequalities for Blacks would have reduced indirect costs associated with illness and premature death by more than \$782.8 billion between 2003 and 2006.
- Blacks account for 59 percent of direct medical care expenditures and 77 percent of indirect costs associated with illness and premature death (most of which is related to premature death).

Black boys face health disparities from birth, the effects of which are compounded over time.

Black children are more likely to be born pre-term or have a low birth weight, which often causes infants to have developmental delays in their early months and years. Black parents are less likely than Whites to access early intervention services, therefore many Black children continue to be delayed while White children receive services that put them back on track. Research shows that there is also significant racial disparity in diagnosing and treating ailments among children. Black children and adults have much higher prevalence, more frequent emergency room visits, and increased death from asthma. Black children are less likely to be accurately diagnosed as having autism, and are usually diagnosed at older ages than Whites.⁴² The same holds true for Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in which Black children are more likely to be misdiagnosed and more likely to be under treated. Specifically, Black boys are half as likely as White boys to receive adequate treatment.⁴³ This has a direct relationship to special education classification in schools because Black children with ADHD are more likely to be labeled learning disabled. These issues have a cumulative effect on the physical and psychological well-being of Black children and extends into adulthood.

Black men are less likely to have health care insurance coverage.

Health insurance is most frequently linked to employment among non-elderly. Lack of employment and insurance is a barrier to receiving preventive health services. Currently, Blacks are twice as likely as Whites to be uninsured.⁴⁴ Even among those who are employed, less than half of Blacks have health insurance through their employ-

FIGURE 13:
ASTHMA PREVALENCE, HEALTH CARE USE AND MORTALITY AMONG CHILDREN 0–17 YEARS OF AGE IN UNITED STATES, 2003–2004

	Black	White	Black/White Ratio
Current prevalence (2004-05)	146%	92%	1.6
Emergency department visit rate	254%	66%	3.8
Death rate	354%	50%	7.1

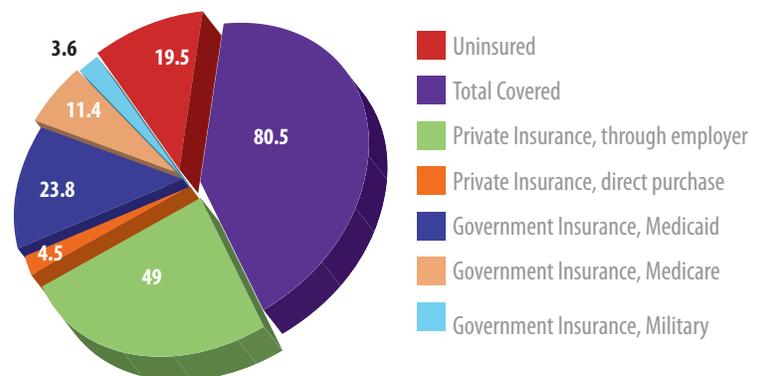
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, The State of Childhood Asthma, United States, 1980–2005.

FIGURE 14:
ASTHMA PREVALENCE, HEALTH CARE USE AND MORTALITY AMONG ADULTS IN UNITED STATES, 2003–2004

	Black	White	Black/White Ratio
Current prevalence (2008)	10.3	7.8	1.3
Emergency department visit rate (per 10,000)	195.0	43.6	4.5
Death rate (per 10,000)	2.8	0.9	3.1

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003–2005.

FIGURE 15: HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE, BLACKS (2008)



Source: US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2008.

What Holds Black Men and Boys Back?

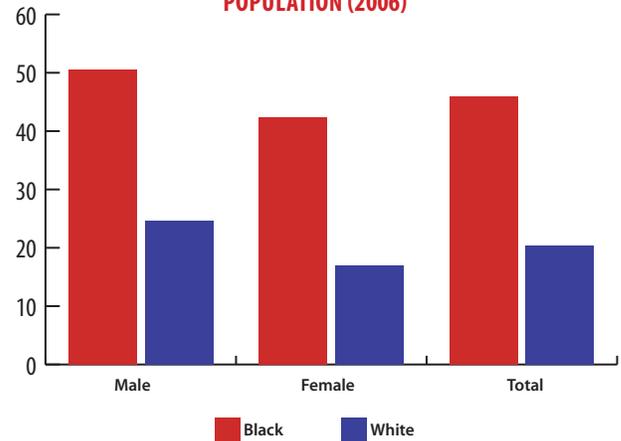
What Do the Numbers Say?

ers, while about two-thirds of Whites do. Research shows that individuals with health insurance are more likely to undergo routine screenings for diseases, and are also more likely to access preventive health services.

Black men experience unequal medical treatment. Structural racism inherent in the health care system places barriers on health care access and service quality. Several barriers exist in the current operational structure of the healthcare system, which leads to unequal treatment: cultural or linguistic barriers, fragmented health care mechanisms that do not allow for seamless patient care, and incentives in the system to contain costs that may come at the expense of quality patient care. In addition, Black males experience unequal treatment in their individual encounters with medical professionals. In 2002, the Institute of Medicine concluded that “(a)lthough myriad sources contribute to these disparities, some evidence suggests that health care provider bias, prejudice, and stereotyping may contribute to differences in care.”⁴⁵ Bias against Black males, stereotypes about the health or health-related behaviors of Black males, or general uncertainty about dealing with Black male patients affect the diagnostic and treatment decisions of medical care providers.

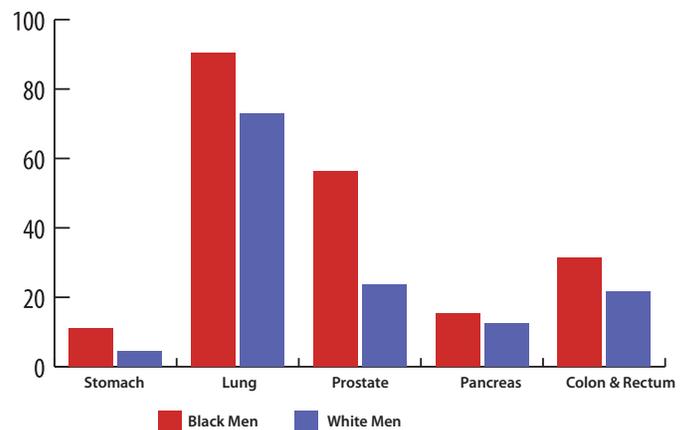
Black men and boys are more likely to experience stress that leads to poor mental health. Black people are disproportionately represented in populations at high risk for mental illnesses: the homeless, the incarcerated, those exposed to violence, those with low levels of income or education, and children in foster care.⁴⁶ In addition, Black males live in an environment of inequality which exposes them to racism, discrimination, poverty and violence. All of these factors have an effect on mental health.⁴⁷

FIGURE 16:
DIABETES DEATH RATES PER 100,000 POPULATION (2006)



Source: US Department of Health and Human Services – Office of Minority Health, African American Profile: Diabetes and African Americans, 2006.

FIGURE 17:
CANCER DEATH RATES PER 100,000 MEN (2002-2006)



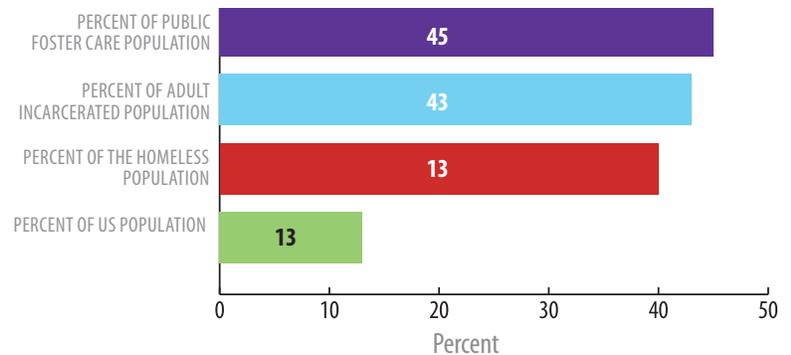
Source: US Department of Health and Human Services – Office of Minority Health, African American Profile: Cancer and African Americans, 2002-2006.

The statistics for adolescent Black males are particularly alarming. While 30 years ago, adolescent Black males were far less likely than their White peers to commit suicide, that is no longer the case. Black boys are now as likely as Whites to take their own lives.⁴⁸ As with physical health, significant racism in treatment poses barriers to effective care. There is evidence of clinician bias and stereotyping. In addition, Blacks are underrepresented in outpatient care, but overrepresented in inpatient treatment. There is also a dearth of Black psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers who can provide culturally appropriate care in communities.⁴⁹

Black men and boys have more exposure to violence, both as victims and witnesses.

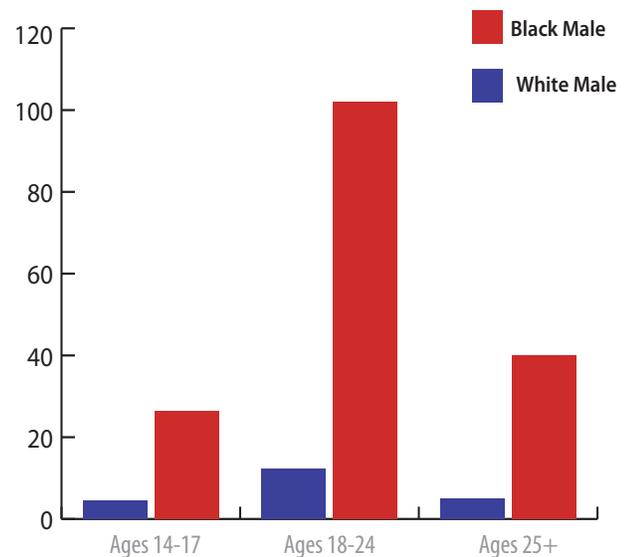
Black males of all ages are more likely to die from homicide than White males. The violence experienced in many low-income Black communities directly relates to poverty. Low-income communities operate in a state of tremendous instability and, as such, foster more violence.⁵⁰ This environment of violence has several health-related effects. Exposure to violence, either as a victim or witness, has both immediate and long-term effects on mental health.⁵¹ Victims of violence often sustain permanent injuries, such as traumatic brain or spinal cord injury, which require long-term care and impede their ability to be productive members of society. In the worst cases, individuals die prematurely, which leaves a large gap in our nation's economy as potentially talented and productive individuals are no longer available to contribute to society. Black families and communities also suffer emotionally and economically when they lose as fathers, brothers and sons to violence.

**FIGURE 18:
BLACKS' DISPROPORTIONATE EXPOSURE TO
MENTAL HEALTH STRESSORS**



Source: US Department of Health and Human Services – Office of the Surgeon General, Mental Health Fact Sheet: African Americans, 1999.

**FIGURE 19:
HOMICIDE DEATH RATES PER 100,000 (2003)**

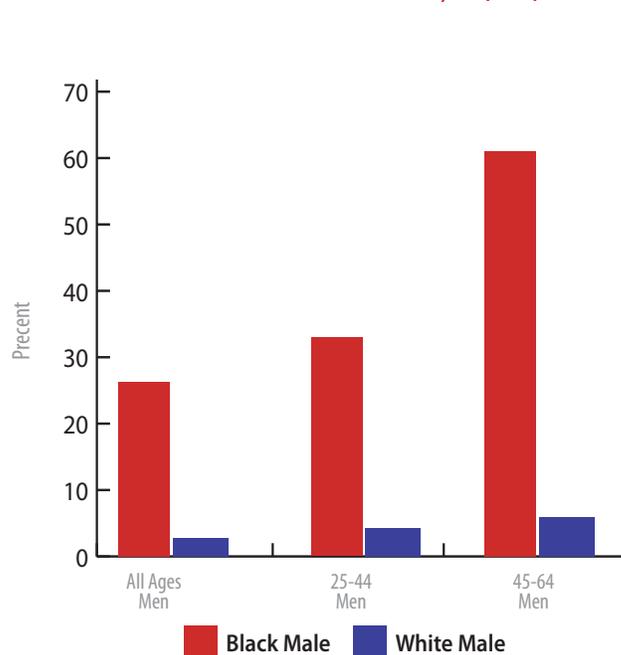


Source: US Department of Justice – Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005.

Black men and boys living in low-income communities have limited access to opportunities to support healthful living.

Impoverished conditions create a breeding ground for poor health. Black men and boys are exposed to many community ills that are deemed social determinants of health outcomes such as unemployment, poor education, lack of healthy food, crime, violence, stress, social exclusion, and pollution.⁵² Low-income communities of color have fewer resources to create and sustain services such as public safety, sanitation, public health, financial assistance, education, and employment training to combat these ills. These communities, however, have larger concentrations of people and greater numbers who rely on these services.

FIGURE 20:
HIV/AIDS DEATH RATES PER 100,000 (2006)



Source: US Department of Health and Human Services – Office of Minority Health, African American Profile: HIV/AIDS and African Americans, 2006.



We envision more healthful communities, where Black males and their families have the access and support to be more physically and emotionally healthy. By 2025, the health and well-being of future generations of Black men and boys should be significantly changed. Addressing barriers to health and health care for Black males requires meaningful partnerships between the health care industry, government, academia, communities, and employers. The cost of doing nothing will have adverse consequences on our nation and our economy.

If we are to achieve the 2025 dream, Black males need:

- Goals and benchmarks for tackling health disparities
- Greater access to health services that address specific needs of Black males
- Culturally competent medical workforce and practices
- Holistic approaches to health issues, which consider the interplay of social determinants of health

We can fulfill the 2025 vision. With timely action and cooperative effort, we can create significant change. On the following pages are potential actions that policy makers, states, health institutions, educational entities, and advocates can take to create positive change in health for Black males

Create National and State-Level Goals for Reducing Health Disparities for Black Men and Boys.

- Benchmark progress toward these goals through annual monitoring and reporting on specific goals at the national and state level.
- Create an accountability structure that rewards or penalizes states for their ability to impact health disparities.

Develop Health Services That Address the Health Needs of Black Men and Boys.

- Push public health departments, educational institutions, and employers to collaborate to create sustained health campaigns, programs and services to promote healthier living and improve health outcomes for Black men.
- Open community clinics that specifically focus on men's health issues, staffed with individuals that are skilled at dealing with Black male patients and have superior understanding of Black male health.
- Open counseling centers in communities that have competent staff who are skilled at working with Black males.
- Provide more community-based screening services and outreach programs to provide preventive education and care for illnesses that are prevalent for Black males, such as asthma, heart disease, diabetes and HIV/AIDS. These programs should have convenient access hours, be properly staffed with knowledgeable medical care professionals, use more advanced technologies to reduce wait time for any screening results, and allow for quicker follow-up with participants.

- Provide more treatment opportunities within low-income communities to Black males struggling with substance abuse, and offer them referrals for additional services for which they may be eligible.
- Establish partnerships with community institutions such as faith-based organizations, barber shops or community centers to offer health education, screenings and referral services in venues that Black males trust and frequent.
- Allow greater access to holistic healing practices developed by the Black community for prevention and treatment

Develop a Culturally Competent Medical Workforce and Practices

- Ensure medical staff reflects racial and ethnic diversity.
- Require courses on cultural competency as a part of all medical training programs.
- Provide ongoing professional development for medical workers on issues affecting Black males and on cultural sensitivity in the provision of medical care, and routinely assess their abilities in this regard.
- Develop career pipelines with high school, community college, four-year institutions and the workforce system to incentivize Black males entering into various medical professions.
- Ensure the healthcare industry bases services on the Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) mandates, guidelines, and recommendations issued by the United States Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health.

Turning Ideas into Action

Increase the Access Rate of Black Males to Health Services.

- Create medical environments that are inviting and do not stigmatize Black males.
- Incentivize the serving of uninsured patients through financial supports to medical institutions.
- Hold public health facilities accountable for serving more Black males through reporting monthly service data, disaggregated by race/ethnicity, age, and unique visitors.
- Provide more ongoing case management services to keep Black men connected to medical care beyond initial diagnosis.
- Remove barriers to accessing medical coverage and health services for Black males who have been incarcerated.
- Conduct targeted outreach in Black communities to break down barriers and fears about medical and mental health care, and enlist community leadership to create trust. Create campaigns that encourage families to look at their overall health and well-being, highlighting major illnesses in the Black community such as diabetes, asthma, prostate cancer, and heart disease.

Take A More Holistic Approach to Black Male Health Issues.

- Consider the impact of social determinants of health such as lack of unemployment and education, inadequate housing, crime, poverty, incarceration, limited access to healthy food, and racial discrimination when creating new policies focused on the health of Black males.
- Identify specific strategies to reduce social stressors as a part of a state- or community-level health disparities reduction strategy.
- Address issues of violence within low-income communities as part of a public health strategy to increase the overall health and well-being of Black males.
- Train medical and social service professionals on diagnosing and appropriately treating Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in both adults and children. Provide greater understanding of how issues in low-income communities can lead to PTSD, and end over-reliance on prescription medication by utilizing more therapeutic methods to manage and reduce the effects of trauma.
- Conduct an evaluation of environmental hazards located within close proximity to low-income neighborhoods, and create an action plan for reducing these hazards as a part of state- or community-level health disparities reduction strategies.

Creating Our Own Solutions to Community Health Issues

Black residents in low-income communities across the country are taking the lead to create healthy change for themselves and their families. They are identifying areas of concern and being proactive and vigilant in identifying policy makers and partners who can engage with them in creating solutions to benefit their community. For example, in 2007 Detroit became the first big city without a major chain supermarket. The community suffers because the selection of foods in local stores is inferior. Many community-led efforts have arisen to combat this problem, such as urban gardening projects and local farmers markets. Community residents have organized and formed the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network to empower Blacks to address the problem of food system inequities through food production, cooperative buying power, and policy change. The group has successfully worked with the local city council to create the Detroit Community Food Policy Council.

“For more information, see <http://detroitblackfoodsecurity.org/> or “Healthy Food for All: Building Equitable and Sustainable Food Systems in Detroit and Oakland” and “Promoting Healthy Public Policy through Community-Based Participatory Research: Ten Case Studies” at www.policylink.org.

The Dream Manifested

FATHERHOOD AND FAMILIES



The story of Black fathers is rarely accurately told. Media and society paint a picture that depicts Black fathers, particularly poor fathers, as irresponsible and uncaring. They are characterized as having a large number of children with multiple women, and providing adequate care for none of them. Such egregious examples are most often seen in the media but stories of strong fathers who maintain stable two-parent families; fathers who are financially and emotionally “present” for their children, although not in the home; or men like John and the other half million single-parent Black fathers in America⁵⁴ rarely receive public attention. The vast majority of Black fathers are not deadbeats who don’t love their children. To the contrary, research has shown that Black fathers who don’t reside in the home are more likely to sustain regular contact with their children than fathers of any other racial group.⁵⁵

“...my kids are my life... you know for a parent, a man to be involved with his kids is one of the greatest things a kid can experience... I can train ‘em right, put ‘em out in the world...”
-John, single father of three daughters⁵³

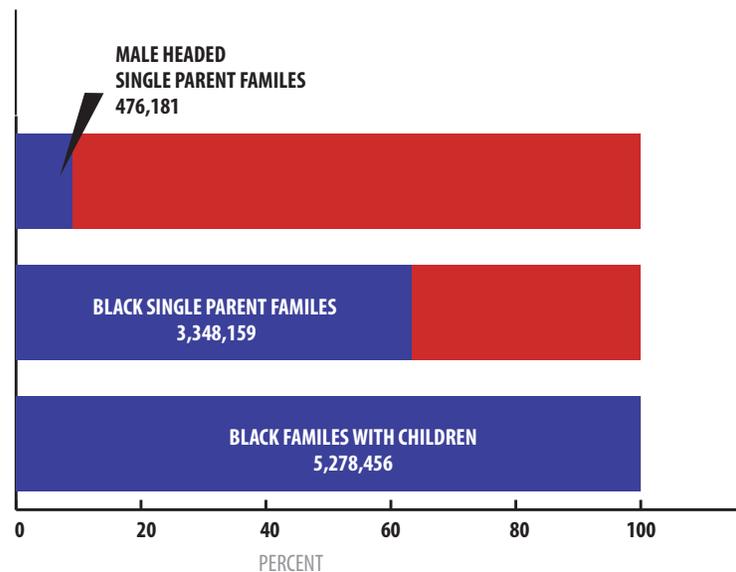
Black men do, however, face significant obstacles in trying to support themselves and their children. These obstacles – such as unemployment, low wages, incarceration/criminal history, child welfare issues, or lack of parenting skills – can sometimes be so daunting that they compel men to make poor choices. Failing to address systemic causes for some Black men’s absence, however, is “like telling a starving child that he needs to stop losing weight but keeping a lock on the refrigerator.”⁵⁶ Addressing these obstacles through systemic

policy reforms will remove barriers that stymie so many otherwise well-intentioned men. When Black men fail to actively participate in their children’s lives, there is the potential for long-term and far-reaching effects for both parents and children. Fathers’ absence places children at risk for negative life outcomes. While many Black boys raised in low-income, single-mother household grow up successfully and become thriving, productive citizens, these boys are vulnerable. Research has shown that children who are raised solely by one biological parent are more likely to drop out of school, to be disconnected (not in school and not working), to be involved in criminal activity, and to become teenage parents.⁵⁷ Further, adolescents who have active parental relationships with fathers, even when their fathers don’t reside in their homes, engage in fewer delinquent behaviors.⁵⁸ The absence of fathers has a definite financial impact, particularly for lower income children. Children in single parent homes are far more likely to be raised in impoverished conditions, which is a major risk factor for appropriate youth development and academic success. Additionally, for Black boys in particular, identifying the biological father as a positive role model has significant impact on their self esteem. Mentoring programs and relationship building with positive Black male role models are quite helpful in Black boys developing positive self-image and putting them on a path to success. These programs, however, are really only a necessary solution to meet a need that is unfulfilled by the biological father. Tackling the issues plaguing fathers will put them back in their appropriate roles as role models, leaders, and guiders of their children’s development.

High unemployment and low wages affect Black family formation and father involvement. Economic insecurity drives fathers out of consistent and active relationships with their children.⁵⁹ This is often self-inflicted when fathers feel they are not fulfilling their first and most important role as financial providers. Some Black men reduce their overall involvement until they can regain financial footing. For many Black fathers, being able to financially contribute the major support in the home often determines whether they remain in the home. Society’s definition of manhood places the expectation of primary financial provider squarely on men’s shoulders. By virtue of this definition, Black men’s chronic levels of unemployment and underemployment condemn many to bear the label of failures as men and fathers.

Incarceration and criminal history has a far-reaching effect on Black men as fathers. Black men are several times more likely to be incarcerated, and they receive harsher sentences than their White counterparts for similar crimes. Too many receive prolonged jail sentences for nonviolent and other property offenses, most notably drug-related crimes. This has a marked effect on family formation. Rising incarceration rates for Black males have caused the aptly named “depletion effect” in communities in which Black males are noticeably absent.⁶⁰ Further, Black men with criminal records have significantly reduced employment prospects, making it more difficult to provide financially even after serving time. An additional consideration is the many restrictions on benefits for convicted felons, including education assistance and subsidized housing. These restrictions prevent formerly incarcerated men from improving their life prospects after release, thus making it more difficult to reunite with their families.

**FIGURE 21:
BLACK SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES (2008)**



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008.

**FIGURE 22:
RACIAL & ETHNIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MINOR CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS (2008)**

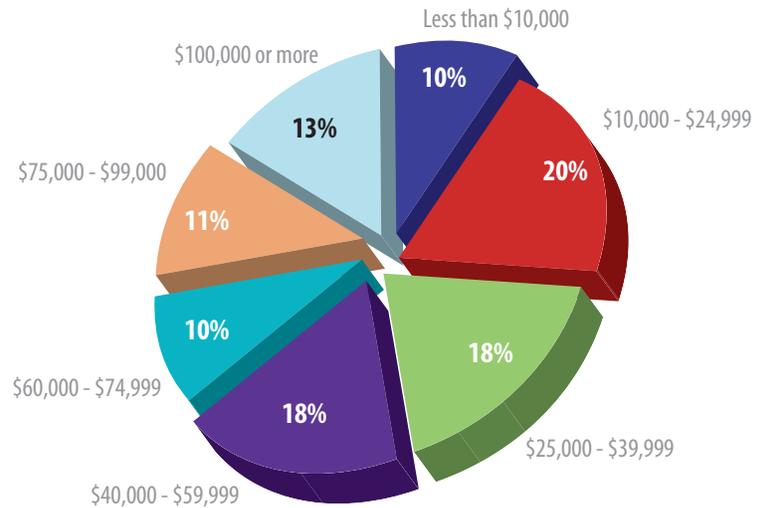
Race	Number of Children	Rate: One in
White	484,100	111
Black	767,400	15
Hispanic	362,800	42

Source: The Sentencing Project, Uneven Justice: State Rates of Incarceration by Race and Ethnicity, 2007.

The regulations of the welfare system negatively affect parental relationships and family structure. The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program provides support to low-income parents with children, but its stipulations can create a systemic barrier to fathers' involvement and two-parent family formation. These rules disproportionately affect Black fathers and families, as a far larger percentage of Black families live in poverty. Participating in TANF requires the custodial parent (most often the mother) to identify the father for the purposes of obtaining a formal child support order. In most states, the child support payments are used to repay the TANF system and the federal government for the aid that was provided to the mother and children, and families receive little or no direct benefit. Fathers often feel as though their resources do not directly benefit their child, while mothers feel they aren't receiving the help they need to raise the children.⁶¹ In addition, income thresholds often preclude low-income two-parent households from receiving benefits. Low-income families sometimes have to dissolve to enable the mother to qualify for benefits to support the family. Finally, although TANF funds may be used to support family strengthening activities, these activities are often not robust and put limited focus on the support needs of non-custodial fathers.

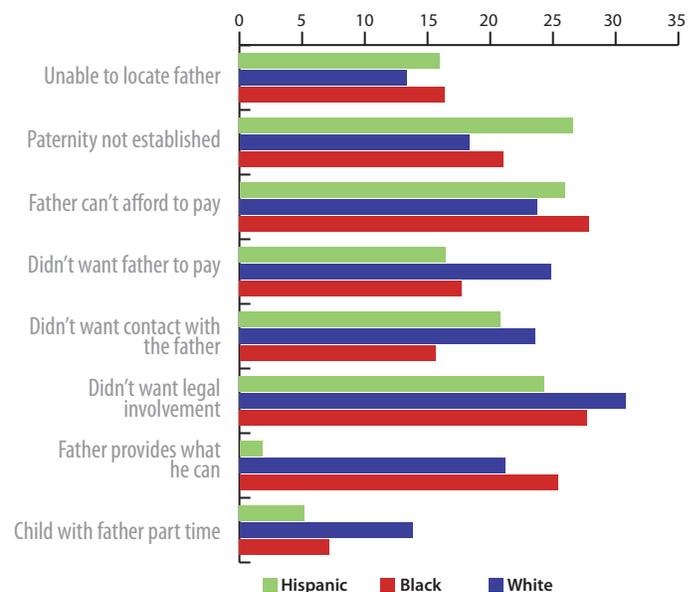
Low-income Black fathers struggle to become self-sufficient and support their children. The issue of child support calculation and enforcement is tenuous and complicated. While everyone believes that both biological parents should contribute financially to their children, there is intense debate over how to determine a fair contribution or assure that contribution occurs.

FIGURE 23:
INCOME LEVELS FOR BLACK FAMILIES IN THE UNITED STATES (2008)



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008.

FIGURE 24:
REASONS CITED BY MOTHERS FOR NOT HAVING CHILD SUPPORT ORDER

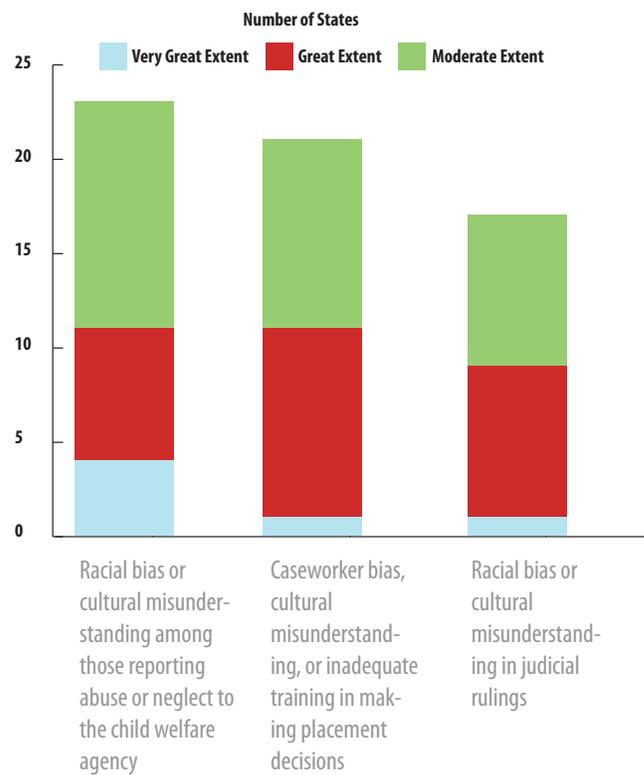


Source: US Department of Health and Human Services – Office of Child Support Enforcement, Minority Families and Child Support – Data Analysis, 2007.

Current policies often make it more difficult for fathers to support their children financially. Child support laws assume fathers are working full-time, yet the reality is that many low-income fathers do not have consistent employment. This generally leaves low-income fathers in the difficult situation of accumulating arrearages during periods of unemployment, from which they are rarely able to recover. Often, high arrearages lead to punitive measures such as wage garnishment that leave fathers

Black biological fathers receive little consideration in child welfare cases. Black children are disproportionately represented in child welfare populations. Nationally, data show that while Black children represent about 14 percent of the child population, they represent 32 percent of children in foster care.⁶² This is due to several factors. First, research shows bias in the way child welfare cases for Black families are handled. Second, low-income, non-custodial fathers are often not regarded as viable caregivers. Instead, they are stereotyped as apathetic and irresponsible.⁶³ More than half of children and youth involved in the child welfare system come from single-parent, female-headed households. Often, the assumption is that fathers are uninvolved and, by extension, their families are as well. Little effort is generally made to find the father. In many cases, particularly in low-income families, fathers are very involved in informal ways above and beyond what is mandated in child support or parental visitation orders. “Quicker and more informed permanency outcomes are likely for children and youth in the foster care system if fathers are more consistently identified and located.”⁶⁴

**FIGURE 25:
STATE VIEWS ON HOW BIAS OR CULTURAL MISUNDERSTANDING AFFECT BLACK CHILDREN'S ENTRY TO FOSTER CARE**



Source: US Government Accountability Office, African American Children in Foster Care: Additional HHS Assistance Needed to Help States Reduce the Proportion in Care, 2007.



We envision for 2025 is an America where all Black fathers or male care-givers are knowledgeable, informed, and prepared to make positive choices about fathering. All Black boys have relationships with either their biological fathers or a positive Black male at every stage of their development. The systemic hindrances to supportive parental relationships are mitigated. Black fathers will be capable of leading their children and families, which will be a vital step in keeping the next generation of Black children on the path to positive futures.

If we are to achieve the 2025 dream, Black males need:

- Work support programs for unemployed or under-employed fathers
- Parental support services aimed at aiding Black fathers and their families
- More equitable child support and welfare policies
- Social services workers who do not have racial or cultural biases toward Black men and their families
- Greater consideration as potential custodial parents if their children are in crisis
- Social services workers who do not have racial or cultural biases toward Black men and their families

We can fulfill the 2025 vision. With timely action and cooperative effort, we can create significant change. On the following pages are potential actions that policy makers, states, service providers, and advocates can take to create positive change in the area of fatherhood and families for Black males.

Scale Up Work Support Programs That Work

- Provide funding to expand and replicate effective community-based program models that have a proven track record of working successfully with Black low-income fathers to develop job skills and find and maintain employment.

Make Child Support and TANF More Supportive of Fathers and Fatherhood Involvement

- Make child support a true family support program by eliminating requirements for custodial parents to cooperate with child support enforcement to receive state benefits.
- Pass through and distribute child support payments directly to TANF families.
- Fund states to improve child support policies and services for vulnerable families, such as connection to employment services for non-custodial parents, management of arrears, and better processes for modifying orders.
- Encourage states to offer programs through TANF that support fathers and mothers to enhance parental relationships and supports toward economic self-sufficiency.
- Coordinate multiple family child support cases to ensure fathers have realistic orders that do not exceed a certain percentage of their income.

Open Doors for Black Men to Be Custodial Parents

- Increase access to parenting support services that enable Black males to become custodial parents and/or maintain visitation if their children become involved in the child welfare system.
- Train and prepare all levels of staff in child welfare and social service agencies to support of Black fathers and Black family structure.

Increase Parent Support Services Targeted to Black Fathers and Their Families

- Support school-based family development & training courses that foster family.
- Provide funding to expand and replicate effective program models that work well with Black fathers and support them in developing strong parenting and communication skills.
- Increase access to parental training to equip Black men to parent their children with developmentally appropriate expectations.

Provide Specific Supports to Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Fathers and Their Families

- Assess parental status at prison intake and use this information to inform planning for inmate programming and the plan for post-release.
- Create procedures to support parent-child engagement during incarceration.
- Provide parenting education courses to prepare inmates for eventual re-unification.

Turning Ideas into Action

- **Prohibit states from categorizing incarceration as “voluntary unemployment,” which enables states to allow child support debt to continue to accrue while an individual serves time.**
- **Establish incentives and adjustments to aid formerly incarcerated fathers with the management their child support debt.**
- **Provide post-prison child support services such as assistance to resolve child access disputes and legal services.**

Remove Racial or Cultural Bias from the Practices of Social Service Workers

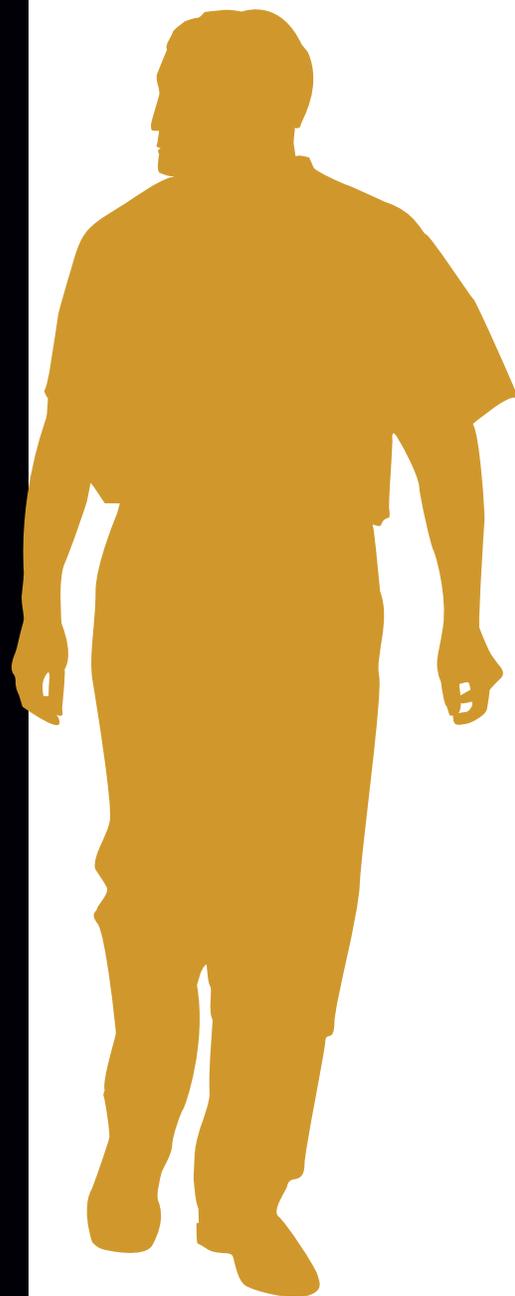
- **Train and prepare all levels of staff in family and social service agencies to support of Black fathers and Black family structure.**
- **Work with state social service agencies to develop culturally sensitive approaches to engaging and sustaining father involvement with children.**

Training Black Men to Be Fathers

More than 400 Black men have completed the Concerned Black Men Fatherhood Initiative program in the past four years. The fathers, ranging in age from 18 to 62, participated in a 14-session curriculum that helps improve parenting and relationship competencies, as well as job readiness and self-sufficiency skills. Funded by the Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children, Youth and Families, post-survey analysis reveals that the majority of the participants demonstrate improved parenting skills, better relationships with their children and an increased level of involvement with their children. These improvements are significant given that more than 50 percent of the fathers in the Concerned Black Men program are formerly incarcerated and restricted by law from residing in many of the public housing communities in which their children live.

When asked why they attend, many of the younger men say they want to be better fathers, but also enjoy the collegiality and mentorship of the older men who are close to the age of their “missing” fathers; the older men appreciate the role of “mentor” and also seek an opportunity to reconnect with their adult children and grandchildren.

The Dream Manifested



JUSTICE, RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES



The statistics around Black men and boys and their interaction with the justice system are all too familiar. Society can almost fill in the blanks without you having to finish the sentence. The media plays a major role in keeping these statistics front and center and in reinforcing the stereotype that Black males are perpetrators of violent and drug-related crimes. The headlines read, “Black boys are disproportionately represented in juvenile justice system”, “Black men make up 40 percent of the federal and state prison population”, “prisons are now built based on the literacy outcomes of third graders”, “Black males are more likely to go to jail than to college,” and so on.

There is the will to write about it, but where is the will to fix it? Scarce attention is paid to the story behind the numbers. Why are so many Black males incarcerated? What are the root causes of these horrible statistics? There is significant inequality in the criminal justice system. Black youth are more likely to be subjected to secure confinement as a punishment for their infractions than Whites in the same system. Similarly, research shows that Black adults in the criminal justice system receive harsher punishments than Whites for similar crimes and are incarcerated at nearly six times the rate of Whites.⁶⁶ A state-by-state analysis showed that the lowest state rate of Black incarceration was still 15 percentage points higher than the highest state rate of white incarceration.⁶⁷

The high rates of criminal activity among Blacks, particularly males, are due to other issues. The complex interplay among lack of quality education, lack of employment, low wages and racism in the judicial system leads to the major criminalization and incarceration of Black males, beginning in youth and continuing into adulthood. Because the system is

broken in so many places, fixing our criminal justice system problems requires a multi-pronged approach. From initial arrest to eventual re-entry after incarceration, there are opportunities for the juvenile and adult justice systems to think differently and change policies and practices that will result in more equitable treatment for Black males. Outside of the justice system, there are reforms necessary to make re-entry a better experience for those returning to their communities. There are also improvements that must happen in communities – better schools, more jobs, and access to supportive services – that must be put in place if we hope to change and dismantle the pipeline that puts too many of our Black men and boys into the criminal justice system.

“This, in my opinion, is the worst crisis in the Black community since slavery. Incarceration is becoming the new American apartheid. We are feeding poor children, by the hundreds of thousands each year into this pipeline to prison and to dead end lives... we’ve gotta say STOP.”

~ Marian Wright Edelman⁶⁵

There is deep-rooted systemic bias in decision making at all levels of law enforcement and the justice system and very little accountability for addressing it. Bias in law enforcement leads to disproportionate contact with the system, including more arrests and harsher punishments. Mandatory sentencing laws have often resulted in widening racial disparities in the criminal justice system because particular offenses are targeted.⁶⁸ For example, national research has shown that although Black, White, and Latino youth report similar rates of drug use, Black youth are five times more likely to be detained for drug offenses.⁶⁹ In the adult population, 2.3 percent of all Blacks are incarcerated, compared to 0.4 percent of Whites and 0.7 percent of Hispanics.⁷⁰ It should be noted, that there is huge variation in the rates of incarceration from state to state across the U.S.

Residing in low-income communities is a contributing factor for the over-representation of people of color in both the juvenile and adult criminal justice system. Often in low-income communities, being “tough on crime” is successfully used as a political platform that resonates with residents who feel fearful due to the crime in their communities. For example, in Ohio researchers found that 3 percent of one county’s census block grouping comprised 20 percent of the state prison population.⁷¹ In addition, local juvenile justice systems in low-income communities often take a very harsh approach to juvenile crime, which assails the fears of residents but creates a self-perpetuating problem by not effectively dealing with the youth.⁷²

**FIGURE 26:
RACIAL AND ETHNIC RATES OF INCARCERATION (2005)**

Racial/Ethnic Group	Rate Per 100,000
White	412
Black	2,290
Hispanic	742

Source: The Sentencing Project, Uneven Justice: State Rates of Incarceration by Race and Ethnicity, 2007.

**FIGURE 27:
STATES WITH HIGHEST AND LOWEST RATES OF BLACK INCARCERATION (2005)**

State	Rate Per 100,000
HIGHEST	
South Dakota	4710
Wisconsin	4416
Iowa	4200
Vermont	3797
Utah	3588
LOWEST	
Hawaii	851
District of Columbia	1065
Maryland	1579
New York	1627
Massachusetts	1635

Source: The Sentencing Project, Uneven Justice: State Rates of Incarceration by Race and Ethnicity, 2007.

Juvenile justice systems more often use detention as punishment for Black boys than for White boys.

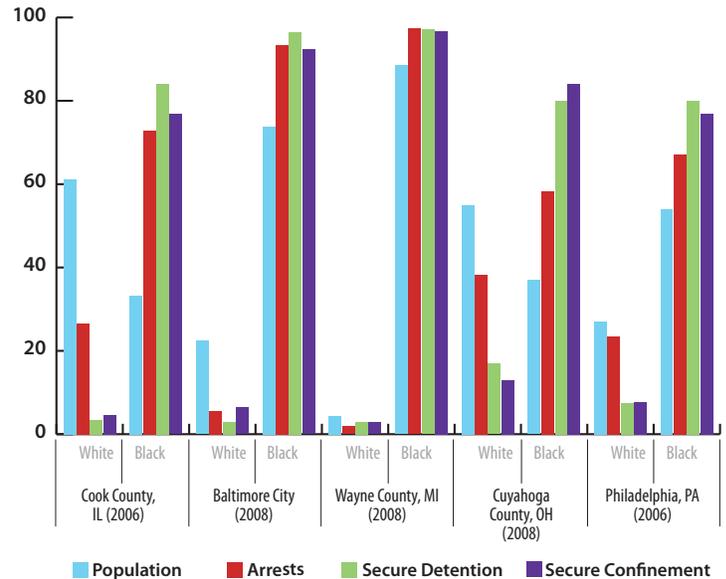
Evidence shows that secure confinement is harmful to youth and not an effective means of deterring crime. An analysis of national data gathered across the country shows that Black youth are much more likely to be placed in secure detention and confinement⁷³ than Whites in the same system.

The juvenile and adult criminal justice systems fail to provide supports that put former offenders back on the right path.

Effective transitional planning is not done to help juveniles and adults reenter society after confinement or imprisonment. Individuals need significant supports to obtain skills, training, and employment to be successful. In addition, federal and state laws create significant barriers to success. Former felons are denied educational assistance, housing, or public assistance which cripples their ability to regain their economic footing and function as productive citizens. It is often difficult to even obtain a state identification card after release. Denying their voting rights alienates them from civic participation, which reduces the likelihood that they will become an asset to their communities. Recidivism then becomes a major issue.

⁷³ Secure detention refers to the holding of youth, upon arrest, in a juvenile detention facility (e.g., juvenile hall) for two main purposes: to ensure the youth appears for all court hearings and to protect the community from future offending. In contrast, secure confinement refers to youth who have been adjudicated delinquent and are committed to the custody of correctional facilities for periods generally ranging from a few months to several years. Definition from US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, OJJDP Bulletin September 2005, <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/208804.pdf>

**FIGURE 28:
JUVENILE ARREST, DETENTION, AND CONFINEMENT RATES IN KEY COMMUNITIES, BY RACE**



Source: W. Haywood Burns Institute, Juvenile Justice Disparities Map, 2006-2008.



We envision for 2025 is an America where Black males receive equal and just treatment by our legal system. They are provided the same opportunities as all other Americans who interact with the criminal justice system. Black men and boys are accountable and engaged with self and community. Their communities are empowered to support their positive growth and development.

If we are to achieve this 2025 dream, Black males need:

- **Equity in sentencing and incarceration**
- **A less punitive juvenile justice system**
- **Pathways for successful re-entry into their communities**
- **A more racially and ethnically diverse justice system**

We can fulfill the 2025 vision. With timely action and cooperative effort, we can create significant change. On the following pages are potential actions that policy makers, states, the justice system, and advocates can take to create positive change in the area of criminal justice for Black males.

Turning Ideas into Action

Address Disproportionate Incarceration of Black Males

- Review state and federal justice policies for their racial impact, and make appropriate changes.
- Repeal mandatory sentencing statutes and enable judges to consider circumstances and conduct of alleged criminals in sentencing.
- Redirect a portion of justice funding for use in prevention and treatment rather than law-enforcement approaches for drug offenses.
- Change drug sentencing laws to target high-level distributors instead of the low-level offenders in low-income communities, who tend to be mostly Black males.
- Increase the quality of public defense services provided to low-income Black males. Ensure those providing services are knowledgeable about and effectively use alternatives to incarceration as possible sentences for defendants.
- Conduct research on criminal justice practices of states with the lowest disparity in Black-White incarceration to identify key strategies that may be transferrable.
- Expand the use of treatment of community-based sanctions to divert first-time and non-violent offenders from prison.
- Improve flexibility in the policies and practices of parole revocation to reduce the number of Black men returning to prison based on a technical violation.
- Train parole and probation officers to be more culturally appropriate in how they deal with Black clients, and to better support returning prisoners as they re-enter community life.

Reform the Juvenile Justice Systems to Be Less Punitive

- Engage in a visioning process to create appropriate alternatives to detention and confinement for all youth, and ensure that Black male youth receive equal opportunity to access these alternatives.
- Redirect a portion of justice funding for resourcing culturally-relevant alternative interventions for juveniles.
- Revise gang suppression policies to be more developmentally appropriate.
- Engage individuals from communities where large populations of juvenile offenders reside in dialogue about reform of the juvenile justice system.
- Engage young people impacted by the system in dialogue about reform of the local juvenile justice system.

Create Pathways to Successful Reentry for Youth and Adults Returning to Impoverished Communities

- Repeal federal and state laws that create substantial barriers to former felons receiving education, professional certifications, housing, public benefits, or the right to vote.
- Create partnerships across systems to enable returning prisoners to receive services such as substance abuse treatment, assistance in obtaining state-issued identification, and transitional housing immediately upon release.

Turning Ideas into Action

- Create individual plans for re-entry for prisoners that into account their needs, strengths, and risks and puts them on a path to positive re-entry prior to release.
- Use local community- and faith-based organizations in the re-entry process to provide key services and supports in a culturally-relevant and trusted environment.
- Create programs to provide returning prisoners with transitional employment and job training while they seek permanent jobs. Create partnerships with local workforce systems to help fund these programs.
- Work with families of re-entering prisoners to prepare them for the release of their family member.
- Provide resources to create transitional housing for returning prisoners operated by organizations that will also provide support services during their stay.
- Encourage the use of individuals who reside in communities of high crime as probation and parole officers, as they bring a different level of understanding to the position.

Make the U.S. Justice System Better Reflect the American Population

- Enhance recruitment and retention strategies to attract Black males to all levels of legal professions.
- Develop pipelines in historically Black colleges and universities to train and prepare Black students for various legal professions.
- Incentivize service in positions as public defenders and prosecutors to have adequate diversity in staffing these offices.
- Enforce fair hiring practices that enable Black males to enter positions in legal service.

Reinvesting Criminal Justice Resources into Communities

An effective policy strategy aimed at disproportionate minority contact, and the ballooning investment in the prison industrial complex has been “Justice Reinvestment,” which advocates for reallocating resources from the prison industrial complex to preventive measures such as mentoring, leadership development and community corrections to keep African-American youth from entering into the juvenile or criminal justice system. States like Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Texas have experienced success with these reinvestment strategies in the adult system. Since implementing this strategy in 2007, the growth of the prison population in Texas has slowed enough that in 2009 it abandoned plans to build three new prison facilities.⁷⁰

The Dream Manifested

THE CAMPAIGN STRATEGY



The 2025 Campaign for Black Men and Boys will be a galvanizing force for a national movement ensure our Black men and boys have a brighter future. The Campaign will advocate nationally and support communities to be local advocates for the change that is needed to realize the dream of a better world for Black men and boys by the year 2025.

CAMPAIGN STRATEGIC GOALS:

- Raise the visibility of critical issues facing Black men and boys nationally and in select local communities in a manner that informs substantive action and positive change.
- Develop effective strategies and affect positive change on the circumstances and conditions that negatively impact Black men and boys by closing the gap on inequities.
- Foster the development of programs and systems that will positively impact the understanding, knowledge, values and skills that enable Black men and boys to succeed in American society.
- Develop and sustain partnerships and coalitions that reflect Black men and boys' needs and impact systemic change.

Develop and steward financial resources that exist within and external to our communities by maximizing existing resources and continuously surfacing new support sources from individual donors, community organizations and institutional philanthropy to supplement this effort.

CAMPAIGN APPROACH:

The 2025 Campaign has developed a three-pronged strategy designed to advance campaign goals. That strategy is based on:

RAISING AWARENESS

The Campaign for Black Men and Boys will work to raise public awareness about issues confronting Black men and boys, promote healthy and positive images about Black men and boys, share information and resources about programs, services, and support for Black men and boys, support knowledge creation and dissemination around these issues, and provide a forum for Black men and boys to speak for themselves. Taken collectively, these actions will begin to change institutional, individual and systemic behaviors that affect on the people we seek to serve.

We believe that creating the political will to narrow the gaps in academic achievement, access to meaningful employment, parenting efficacy and measures of health and well-being requires creating an authentic narrative of who we are. We must work to shift our nation's perception of Black men and boys from a collective problem to people who are caring, competent and committed members of society. We must tell our story, the story of who we really are. Knowledge workers, fathers, problem-solvers, brothers, uncles, students, doctors, sanitation workers, teachers, preachers, singers, engineers, lawyers – and much, much more.

The leadership of 2025 has begun to create a communications approach to raise awareness of the assets, skills and capacities possessed by Black men and boys, and to change the critical behaviors that are driven by popular culture, individual perceptions and policymaking often rooted in structural racism. As an integral part of that work, we are creating tools and opportunities to communicate our identity, our potential and our aspirations. Currently, the primary tools are the following:

- **Website and Social Networking:** Be a Game Changer – We are creating an authentic narrative of what Black men and boys have contributed, what we are doing now, and what we aspire to be. We are telling our own story and encouraging others to add their voices using internet 2.0 tools and communications tactics.
- **Bring Your A Game & Fair Game** - two films produced by director/actor Mario Van Peebles to spark discussion and action in communities across the country
- **2025 Game Changers** – a training and action effort designed to train youth as videographers who can tell the story of what is going on in our cities
- **Quick Response Team** – a method of responding to real time issues on behalf 2025

CREATING LOCAL IMPACT

The 2025 Campaign for Black Men and Boys will work to develop relationships with local collaborative efforts and place-based coalitions focused on Black men and boys through offering support and assistance to enhance their positive local impact.

Emerging 2025 coalitions' efforts in cities around the country signal an opportunity to create momentum at the local and regional level. We know that to be sustained and meaningful, the goals of 2025 will have to take hold in local communities who own the process, define success in their own terms and engage local resources. National meetings convene these players and provide an opportunity to share ideas about what works, as well as further define the role and activities that should be undertaken by the Campaign. The 2025 Steering Committee, comprised of representatives of these local coalitions as well as others, has committed resources to support capacity building for those alliances.

In creating these local coalitions, we must engage a committed and informed cross-section of people capable of planning and acting on behalf of and with Black men and boys in their communities. We anticipate that local communities will continue to add their voices to the national call to make positive change a reality. In addition, we hope to connect our work with other national and local efforts to create synergy in service of Black men and boys.

We know our colleagues will be called upon to justify a gender and race-specific campaign. Our partners will have to convey that we simply have not dedicated ample resources. Our Campaign will counter ambivalence with meaningful data illustrating the crisis proportions of need. We will advance strategic,

sustainable solutions to change systems and services to be equitable for people of all races. Our voices will inspire, energize and demand informed action from ourselves as well as those who control the resources impacting the lives of people in our communities. Currently, 2025 local impact coalitions exist in Chicago, Oakland, Los Angeles, Atlanta, New Orleans, New York, Baltimore-Washington- Philadelphia 'triangle' and in two statewide efforts in Illinois and Ohio.

The 2025 Campaign works in partnership with the California Endowment's Men and Boys of Color initiative; Open Society Institute's Campaign for Black Male Achievement; Association of Black Foundation Executives' Responsive and Effective Philanthropy in Black Communities effort; Marguerite Casey Foundation's Equal Voice for America's Families campaign.

ADVANCING BETTER POLICIES

The 2025 Campaign for Black Men and Boys will create an advocacy plan to influence decision makers and promote changes in policies important to improving life circumstances for Black men and boys. This federally-focused agenda will also be relevant at the state and local levels, aimed at specific legislation, as well as policy, structures, and systems that impact Black men and boys, both directly and indirectly.

The Campaign's objective is to craft and promote an actionable policy agenda that connects the goals of local coalitions to our national advocacy work. After its adoption, the 2025 platform will be used in local communities to generate meaningful public discussions and planning efforts to address the substantive challenges we face. We believe that local communities will choose to work on issues that will ultimately inform a national conversation and policy advocacy efforts inside state houses and in Washington, D.C. We want to create a vibrant and robust process that produces new approaches to seemingly intractable problems. Among the actions in the near term that will advance the policy advocacy agenda are:

- Building the capacity in local impact sites by sharing what works across the nation and creating peer-to-peer learning opportunities.
- Rallying support for national policy change opportunities when they arise in the passage of new legislation, the reauthorization of existing legislation, and other potential policy and regulatory actions that affect Black men and boys.

The time is now to improve the lives of Black men and boys. We envision that the headlines will be different. We aspire for great schools that are full and prisons that sit empty. We imagine thriving families and communities with Black men standing proudly in leadership. We see a picture so different from now and hope it's not just a fantasy. We dream of a better world.

It's 2025 ... do you see it?

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