

YOUNG MEN'S INITIATIVE

REPORT TO THE MAYOR FROM THE CHAIRS

AUGUST 2011

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction	4
II. Portrait of a Crisis	8
III. Recommendations	10
a. Education.....	10
b. Mentoring.....	13
c. Employment.....	15
d. Justice.....	17
e. Health.....	20
IV. Conclusion	22
V. Acknowledgements	22
VI. Bios of Co-Chairs	23

INTRODUCTION

In his January 2010 State of the City address, Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced a bold and important effort to grapple with the incredible challenges facing black and Latino young men in New York City. He said:

“We want all New Yorkers, in all communities, to succeed. To make that a reality, we must face some very sobering facts about who is succeeding and who is not.

Just think about this: Across the five boroughs, black and Latino young men have a poverty rate that is 50 percent higher than white and Asian young men. Their rate of unemployment is 60 percent higher. They are two times more likely not to graduate from high school, far more likely to become a teen father and—most troubling of all—more than 90 percent of all young murder victims and perpetrators are black and Latino.

These statistics aren’t so different from those in other cities, but they are totally unacceptable here.

As far as we’ve come in creating an equal opportunity society, we still have plenty of work to do in fulfilling Dr. King’s dream of making the promise of that society a reality in the communities where it is too often viewed as a fantasy.

So today, our question is: How can we connect black and Latino young people—especially young men—to the opportunities and support that can lead them to success and allow them to participate in our recovery?”



Mayor Bloomberg asked David Banks, President of the Eagle Academy Foundation and founder of the first all-boys public school in 30 years, and, Ana Oliveira, President of the New York Women’s Foundation, an organization that supports families and communities in New York City, to report back to him on what the City could do to illuminate the barriers that black and Latino young men encounter, the disparities between them and their peers, and what we could do to connect young men of color to opportunities they could seize. To underscore the seriousness of the charge, the Mayor assigned Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs and then-Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott to work with David and Ana to engage City agencies from the start.

The following report presents the cumulative research, findings, and recommendations from the two co-chairs, David Banks and Ana Oliveira.

THE STATE OF YOUNG MEN OF COLOR

The focus of this effort is on young black and Latino men. These young men of color fare poorly on every indicator of positive achievement along a life continuum, from the circumstances of their birth to their educational achievement to attainment of employment. They are more likely to grow up in homes without male role models. They are less likely to have access to quality early childhood care and education. Therefore, it is no surprise that significant achievement gaps appear as early as the 3rd grade. The health of young men of color is profoundly at risk. They are significantly more likely to be victims—and perpetrators—of violence. In New York City, young men of color are suspended, designated to special education, arrested and incarcerated at significantly higher rates than any other group. The barriers to obtain work and housing because of criminal records make it extremely difficult to re-enter into society and can limit young men of color to a cycle of instability and illegal employment.

Simply put: the state of young men of color represents a basic loss of lives and human capital. Mayor Bloomberg, in calling attention to this crisis and charging his administration with developing a concrete plan that produces better outcomes, has exercised true leadership. It is our hope that other elected officials will follow his lead and challenge their administrations to use every lever available to them to prepare young men of color to succeed.

To undertake our task, we collected data to understand clearly the conditions facing young men of color in New York City today; met with City agencies to understand their efforts; consulted with academics, service providers, non-profit organizations, philanthropists and experts in weekly briefings; and, finally, traveled to observe promising models of education, youth development, employment, and juvenile and criminal justice in New York and other cities where we had the opportunity to speak with young men themselves.

APPROACH TO THE WORK

As Co-Chairs, we worked alongside Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs and then-Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott and approached this work with an emphasis on learning as much as possible about young men of color in New York City and their families, and how City agencies currently interact with them.

RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION

- Gathered baseline data on life outcomes for young men of color in New York City drawing from national, Citywide and agency specific databases, highlighting disparities and opportunities. These data are woven throughout this final report, and directed the areas of focus for the Young Men's Initiative.
- Conducted extensive literature review on young males of color

LEARNING ABOUT CITY GOVERNMENT

- Surveyed every City agency to identify how they are currently serving young men of color and carefully analyzed where and how young men of color were served versus underserved
- Engaged City agencies to identify opportunities for innovation, asking them to design interventions that would produce better outcomes for the young men in their systems
- Convened a Summit at Gracie Mansion with Mayor Bloomberg, Deputy Mayors, Commissioners and staff to develop recommendations

HEARING FROM EXPERTS AND LEARNING ABOUT PROMISING MODELS

- Organized a briefing at Gracie Mansion by experts on issues of philanthropy and education
- Visited model programs in New York City and Chicago
- Held weekly Steering Committee meetings with briefings by experts (local and national) on issues including family structure and father absence, education, youth development, employment, and juvenile and criminal justice. These experts included:

Ken Braswell, Executive Director, Fathers Incorporated

Geoffrey Canada, Founder and President, Harlem Children's Zone

Shawn Dove, Campaign Manager, Campaign for Black Male Achievement at the Open Society Institute

Elizabeth Gaynes, Executive Director, Osborne Association

Derrick Griffith, former Director and Principal, CUNY Prep

Harry Holzer, Institute Fellow, Urban Institute, and author of "Reconnecting Disadvantaged Young Men"

John Jackson, President and CEO, Schott Foundation

Joanne Jaffe, Chief of Housing Bureau, NYPD

David Jones, President, Community Service Society

Majida Abdul Karim, Principal, Benjamin Banneker Academy

Khary Lazarre-White, Executive Director & Co-Founder, The Brotherhood/Sister Sol, Inc.

Sr. Paulette LoMonaco, Executive Director, Good Shepherd Services

Ron Mincy, Professor of Social Policy and Social Work Practice, Columbia University; Editor of "Black Males Left Behind"

Elba Montalvo, President, Committee for Latino Children and Families

David Nocenti, Executive Director, Union Settlement Association

Pedro Noguera, Professor of Education, New York University, Executive Director of the Metropolitan Center for Urban Education

Moises Perez, Executive Director, Alianza Dominicana

Laura Shubilla, President, Philadelphia Youth Network

Susan Batten Taylor, President and CEO, Association of Black Foundation Executives

Jeremy Travis, President, John Jay College

THE LESSONS WE LEARNED FROM THESE CONVERSATIONS

Young men of color are too often invisible in the policy and practice of City agencies; if we want improved outcomes, we need elevated attention and sustained strategies with accountability.

- It is insufficient to focus on overall improvement of City agency performance; young men of color require targeted strategies, particularly in the areas of education, work and public safety. In other words, the rising tide cannot be counted on to lift these boats.
- The task of improving outcomes for young men of color requires all hands on deck; government must do its part, as must all other sectors of civil society including employers, religious institutions, philanthropy, and the non-profit sector.
- Young men of color need to be viewed in the context of their family, neighborhoods, and experiences.
- To be successful, we must do more to associate masculinity with positive outcomes in the public and cultural sphere. This will require shifting the cultural conversation, sending positive messages, and rewarding success.
- We need to tap into the initiative of young men of color who are actively pursuing the path to success.

It has become clear to us that the situation affecting young men of color is a crisis facing New York City. We cannot, as a City, look towards a strong future in the 21st Century with such a significant percentage of our fellow citizens out of the educational and economic mainstream. Our communities cannot thrive with so many of our young people ensnared in the revolving door of our criminal justice system. Our industry suffers, with so much potential entrepreneurial spirit and innovation arrested. The reasons are many for the place we find ourselves, but one thing is for certain - the urgency must be shared.

We believe City government must take the following five steps to mount a bold attack on the disparities that are crippling New York City's population of young men of color, and ultimately our shared progress as a City:

- Reduce the achievement gap in schools by implementing targeted strategies
- Connect more young men of color to employment by reducing the barriers they may experience in obtaining work
- Improve the health of young men by encouraging more fathers to be involved in the lives of their children, and by breaking the cycle of premature fathering
- Connect more young men of color to mentors to support, guide and challenge them
- Reform the juvenile and criminal justice systems so that our interventions produce young people prepared for second chances and not to return to jail

To accomplish the above, we believe the City must exercise all of the levers of power available to it: **policy** change, reforming the **practice** of its agencies, and launching or expanding promising **programs** that directly improve the quality of participants' lives. We recognize that the City government is a unique actor with unique strengths to be leveraged, including that young men of color are interacting with its institutions all the time. We also recognize our limitations. The City of New York cannot single-handedly change the fact that so many young boys are born in households without fathers; yet, it can reduce barriers in its policy and practice that would block fathers from being more involved in the lives of their children, and it can invest in promising mentoring initiatives. The City cannot single-handedly provide a job to every unemployed young man, but it can invest in targeted programs that will make a difference and use its leverage to encourage private employers to hire young people. If accepted, we believe these recommendations represent a bold, comprehensive, and systemic agenda for the City of New York.

This agenda cannot be fully implemented without a constant and steady eye monitoring its progress. Mayor Bloomberg is nationally known for his use of data to inform City policy and to evaluate the efficacy of City services. We encourage the Mayor to bring this same critical eye to the collection and evaluation of data when it comes to monitoring the progress of young men of color in New York City.

We thank the Mayor for the opportunity to weigh in on such a significant question. We hope that our recommendations are of use in determining the City's actions.

PORTRAIT OF A CRISIS

The Young Men's Initiative collected data from a variety of sources in order to understand the breadth and depth of the challenge. In some cases, we had to request that the data be produced including both race and gender as variables. The product, a data set that had never before compiled, paints a portrait of extreme disparity, dangerous cycles, and a real threat to the economic viability of New York City.

Young white, black and Latino young men are represented almost equally in New York City's population. But that's where the even distribution ends. Black and Latino children are two times more likely to live in poverty than their white peers. They are more likely to be born low birth weight. Latino children are four times as likely as white children to be born to mothers who have less than a high school degree; black children are twice as likely. More than one in two of black children, and 46 percent of Latino children, live in a household without a father.

These disparities continue, with black and Latino children interacting with the City's social service and criminal justice systems with much greater frequency than their white counterparts. Black children are overrepresented in New York City's foster care system; they are significantly more likely to receive preventive services from the Administration for Children's Services. During Mayor Bloomberg's tenure, New York City's incarceration rates have dropped significantly. From 1999 to 2009, the rate of New York City's probationers who were rearrested for a felony within a year dropped by 27 percent. However, 84 percent of admissions to the City's detention facilities are black and Latino males; four percent are white males. Nearly all of the admissions to New York State Office of Children and Family Services facilities are black and Latino youth.

The New York City Department of Education, under the leadership of Mayor Bloomberg, has seen dramatic improvement in achievement—and the first movement in narrowing the achievement gap in a generation. Since 2005, the citywide graduation rate has gone up 27 percent. Over that same period, the graduation rate for black and Hispanic students went up 14 percent; closing the black-white and Latino-white graduation achievement gap by 22 percent and 23 percent respectively. The gap in scale scores on New York State exams has shrunk, and enrollment at the City University of New York is up. Still, any achievement gap is unacceptable. It is in this area of education that you see the nexus of both race and gender. The black-white achievement gap in scale scores was still 26 percent in math and 19 percent in English Language Arts. The Latino-white achievement gap was 22 percent in math, and 19 percent in math.

Black and Latino male students are three times more likely to be in special education classrooms than their white



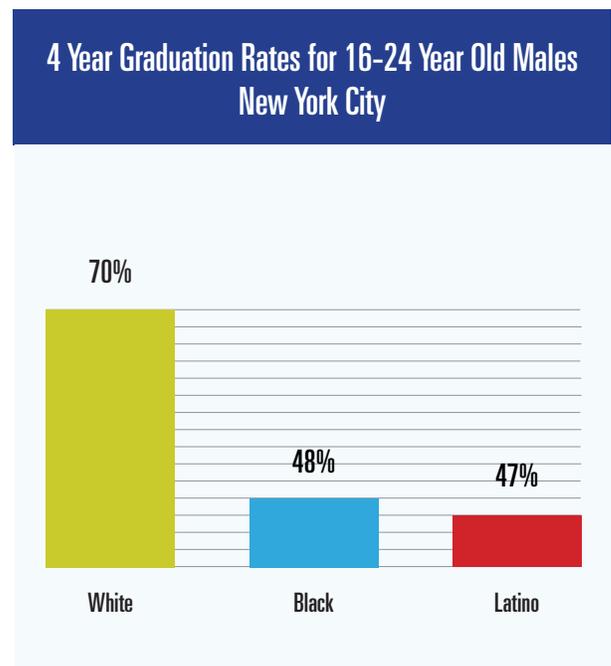
Source: American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample 3 year file, 2006-2008

counterparts, and less likely to graduate from high school. Male students represent 69 percent of students in Special Education or Collaborative Team Teaching classrooms. Black male students are more than twice as likely to receive a principal's suspension and four times as likely to receive the more severe superintendent suspension. Unfortunately, in a City where so few of our young men of color have fathers at home, young black and Latino boys also do not see positive male role models in their schools. Only seven percent of New York City's teachers are men of color.

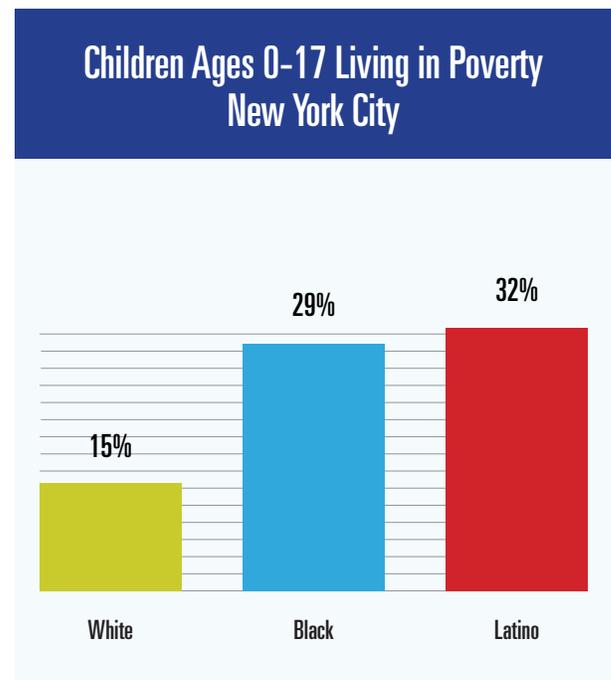
Young boys of color graduate at much lower rates than their white peers. Forty-three percent of Latino males ages 16-24 have less than a high school degree. The four-year graduation rate differs significantly by race: for the 2009 graduating class, 54 percent of black students graduated from high school in four years, compared to 74 percent of white students. Further, the achievement gap in college readiness persists across the City with 12 percent of black and Hispanic graduates deemed college-ready after four years of high school, compared with 41 percent of white graduates.

Advantage begets advantage. Disadvantage begets disadvantage. As boys of color age into men, they move to the margins of the economy. The unemployment rate for black men ages 16-24 without a high school diploma is 52 percent, compared to a rate of 22 percent for all men ages 16-24 in New York City. Thirty-eight percent of black males are not in the labor force at all. Young men of color, ages 16-24, have significantly more experience with the criminal justice system. Ninety-one percent of admissions to the City's Correctional facilities are black and Latino males. Though the population of men ages 18-24 in New York City is roughly divided among whites, blacks and Latinos, their outcomes couldn't be more different. Black young men are more than twice as likely to be "disconnected" than their white peers, defined as out of school and out-of-work (which includes neither working nor looking for work).

New York City is not alone in confronting this challenge. Disparities in educational, economic, and health outcomes by race and gender are a national phenomenon, as are the implications to employment of the national recession. But there is much within the City's control, including how the young people that interact with its systems fare. Our recommendations operate from this premise. The Mayor has offered the political will to name this problem and say that New York City can and must do better. We offer the following thoughts about how to fulfill his mandate.



Source: NYC Department of Education, Class of 2009 (2005 Cohort)



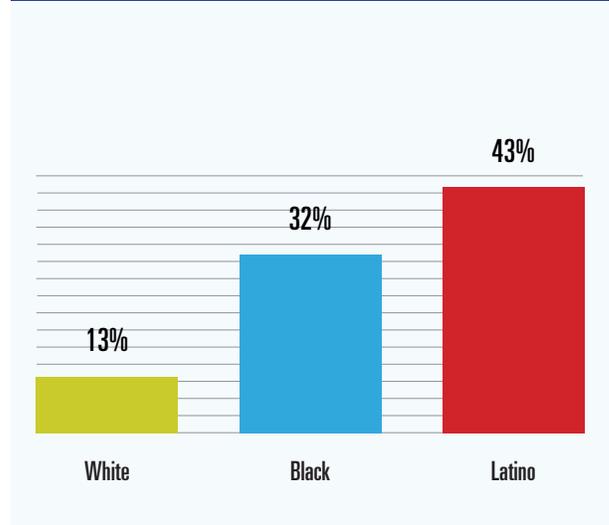
Source: ACS PUMS as augmented by CEO, 2008

EDUCATION

CHALLENGE

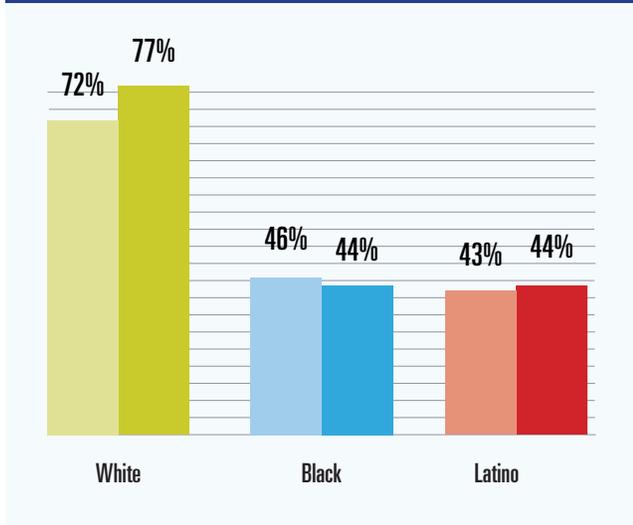
Innovations to help close the achievement gap have seen success over the last nine years. In addition to overall improvement in school performance, the Department of Education has opened small schools specifically designed to serve young boys and launched the groundbreaking work of the Office of Multiple Pathways to provide young adults who are over-age and under-credited with the opportunity to obtain a high school diploma or GED and prepare for post-secondary success. That said, the disparities between the achievement of boys of color and their female and white peers remain stark and unsustainable. Schools are the central institution with the potential to play a positive role in the lives of boys of color. Without their success in bridging the achievement gap, the rest of our efforts will remain futile. Building on the steps undertaken by Mayor Bloomberg to transform the Department of Education and the juvenile justice system, the City must direct targeted strategies and the same spirit of innovation and accountability to bridging the educational achievement gap. The recent appointment by Chancellor Dennis Walcott of the first-ever Deputy Chancellor for Equity and Access to oversee the Department's efforts is an encouraging development.

16-24 Year Old Males with Less than High School Degrees New York City



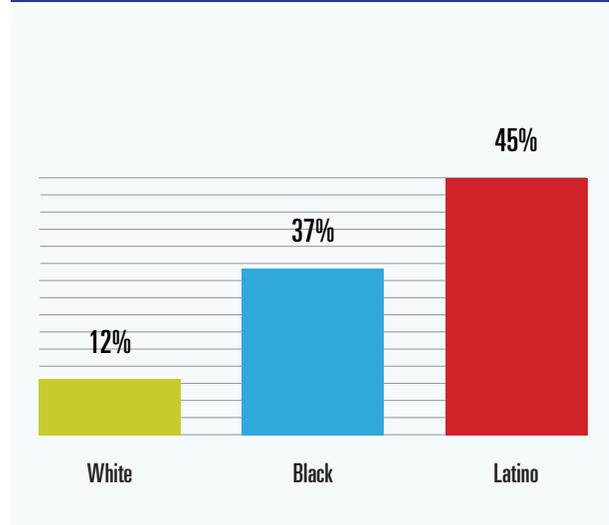
Note: Percentage are out of racial cohort. HS degree defined as high school diploma or GED equivalent
 Source: American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample 3 year file, 2006-2008.

Students Scoring 'At or Above Basic' in Grades 4 and 8 on NAEP Reading Test, New York City



Source: NYC Department of Education; U.S. Department of Education, National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), 2007 and 2009

Percent of Students in Special Education or Collaborative Team Teaching Classrooms that are Male, New York City



Source: Department of Education, ATS October 2009 Registers (unaudited)

RECOMMENDATIONS

LAUNCH COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL-BASED INTERVENTIONS TO SUPPORT BOYS OF COLOR

We must do more to support boys at schools that are not at risk of closure but who see too many of their male students fail to meet their potential. Schools should offer extra academic supports for boys before they fall irreversibly behind. Boys need mentoring and the support of their peers, resilience building, and a primary person in their schools to look out for them. We should also pioneer new models to educate boys of color including single-sex schools.



LAUNCH COMPREHENSIVE EARLY EDUCATION STRATEGIES

We know from standardized testing that black and Latino boys of color are behind by the time they take their first standardized exams in fourth grade, but we know from educators that they are actually behind by the time they enter kindergarten. They are less likely to have had exposure to quality early childhood care and educational opportunities. Research indicates that the most effective means to reduce the achievement gap is to invest in quality early education programming for low-income children. The kind of behavioral supports and non-cognitive skills development offered in early childhood educational programming could also be an important factor in reducing the number of suspensions experienced by boys of color later on in their academic careers.

HOLD SCHOOLS ACCOUNTABLE FOR SHRINKING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

From the belief that what gets measured gets managed, the Department of Education should create metrics that will allow for regular monitoring of efforts to close the achievement gaps based on race and gender.

STUDY SCHOOLS CURRENTLY SERVING BOYS OF COLOR WELL TO IDENTIFY EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES AND USE THAT RESEARCH TO INFORM AND TRANSFORM PRACTICES AT TARGETED SCHOOLS ACROSS THE CITY

The Bloomberg administration values the importance of data in transforming practice. We need to know more about which schools are producing break-out results for boys of color, and find out how and why. These lessons should then be used to help transform schools throughout the City. Furthermore, such an inquiry will be helpful in creating a culture of expertise among educational practitioners at the Department of Education on what works for boys of color and in undertaking system-wide staff development to help teachers work more effectively with young men of color.

BEGIN EARLY BY PREVENTING UNNECESSARY REFERRALS OF BOYS OF COLOR TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

Black and Latino male students in New York City's public schools are three times more likely than their white male classmates to be special education students. Many students are in need of the supports that special education provides. Unfortunately, an early referral to special education can also place boys on a pathway to drop-out. We support the Department of Education's efforts to incentivize school and classroom-based strategies that keep students in general education classrooms with extra supports. We urge the Department of Education to issue regular reports on how the system overhaul of special education impacts boys of color. We also urge the replication of successful efforts like Reading Recovery that provide supports to children at key moments before they would be referred to special education.

EXPAND EFFORTS TO ATTRACT MEN OF COLOR TO THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Only seven percent of New York City's teaching force is comprised of men of color. While we recognize that the most important priority should be that a qualified and passionate teacher stands in front of each and every classroom, we also must acknowledge that teachers do more than teach: they are role models and parental figures, and the lack of diversity in the teaching force misses an opportunity to inspire young men of color to dream about what they can be when they grow up. The phenomenon of the "Missing Men"—with fathers absent from homes, positive men of color absent from popular culture, and few men of color serving in the institutions that young people interact with all the time—has a cumulative impact on boys and their understanding of the role they play in society.

Universities and education programs should expand their efforts to attract more men of color into the teaching profession and to prepare them for these careers. Given the current fiscal climate, we call on the City of New York to bring together the Department of Education, local colleges and universities, organizations that bring outstanding young people into the teaching profession such as Teach for America, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities to develop a long range plan that will strengthen our pipeline so that our best teachers are fully representative of the diversity of our students.

IMPROVE SCHOOL CLIMATE AND ACADEMIC OUTCOMES FOR SUSPENDED STUDENTS

Schools are safer places today than they were nine years ago, a fact that is undoubtedly linked to the improvements in academic outcomes for students. Unfortunately, black males in grades 6-12 received twice as many principal suspensions as white males did and four times as many of the more severe superintendent's suspension. While students must be held accountable for their actions, we also acknowledge that suspensions are academic disruptions from which it may be difficult to recover. National research indicates a relationship between suspensions and juvenile justice involvement. And with such significant numbers of boys of color suspended, we must pay attention to the consequences. The Department of Education has revised its official Discipline Code to promote alternatives to suspension that preserve school safety, and pioneered Positive Behavioral Intervention and restorative justice models in some schools. The DOE should continue to explore these alternatives to suspension, while developing strategies to reduce suspensions and to facilitate successful academic transitions for students returning from Superintendents' suspensions back to schools. These strategies must be shared with all schools.

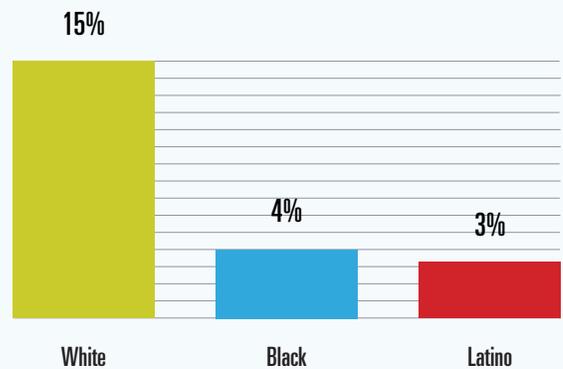
MENTORING

CHALLENGE

All young people need an adult in their lives who guides them and challenges them while creating a sense of possibility about the future. Mentors can play this role. Successful adults who inspire young people to follow their path can be mentors. Adults from the neighborhood who pursued a different path can also play a powerful role as mentors; they are “credible messengers” whose stories are both cautionary and inspirational. Young people can mentor one another. There are so many human resources in New York City; a citywide call for mentors could make a significant difference in the lives of young people.

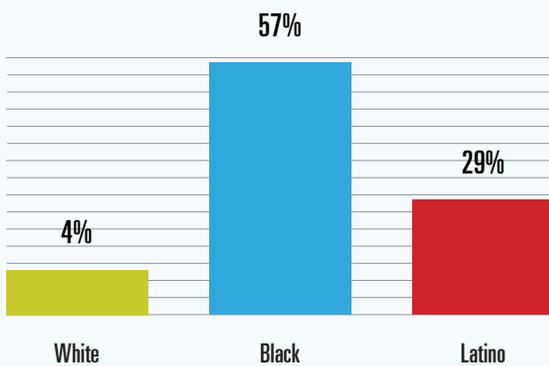
While the young men of color in the City do have significant needs that must be met, they are not simply problems to be fixed. At the core of the strategy to improve outcomes for young men of color is the civic engagement and participation of young people in strengthening their communities. Successful programs tap into young people’s potential as leaders, reinforce the strength of peer support, and offer milestones that mark and celebrate rites of passage into adulthood.

Percentage of NYC Teachers that are Male New York City



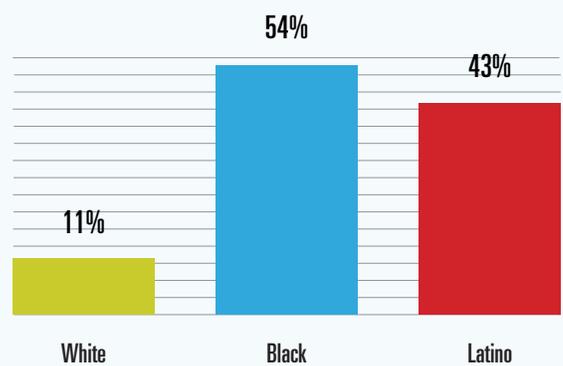
Note: Data represents active DOE teachers on 10/31/09
Source: Department of Education, 2009

ACS Foster Care Population New York City



Note: Data includes both males and females.
Source: Administration of Children’s Services, 2008

Share of Children, 0-17 Years Old, Living in a Household Without a Father New York City



Source: Tabulated from the 2008 American Community Survey PUMS, as augmented by CEO

RECOMMENDATIONS

ORGANIZE CITYWIDE MENTORING SUMMIT WITH NON-PROFITS, FOUNDATIONS, CITY AGENCIES AND PRIVATE COMPANIES.

While there are organizations throughout the City organizing mentoring programs, there remains much unfulfilled potential to connect young people to mentors. The Mayor can play an important role in bringing public and private partners together to focus on the importance of mentoring our young people as a Citywide priority. Such a summit would enable organizations and agencies to learn about their work, share best practices, and connect communities to potential sources of new mentors.

DEVELOP A CITYWIDE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF YOUNG MEN OF COLOR WHO GRADUATE FROM NEW YORK CITY SCHOOLS TO SERVE AS MENTORS.

There are success stories all around us of young men of color who have graduated from our high schools and gone on to pursue higher education and/or employment. Engaging these young men formally offers two benefits to the community: their stories of success counter the popular and negative narratives about young men of color, while they themselves can inspire boys who do not have access to such role models in their homes and neighborhoods. An alumni association would be an enormous resource to schools, City agencies and community-based organizations.

LAUNCH A CITYWIDE MENTORING STRATEGY THAT INCLUDES SUPPORTING POSITIVE “RITES OF PASSAGE” FOR YOUNG MEN, PAIRING SCHOOLS AND AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS WITH MENTORING ORGANIZATIONS AND LEVERAGING PEER SUPPORTS.

Schools and after-school programs should be paired with public and private organizations that can recruit mentors to work with students. “Rites of passage” programs are designed to promote life success and resilience in young people through culturally appropriate activities that associate manhood with responsibility and success. Boys of color should be given opportunities to mentor one another at critical moments, such as the transition into college.

LAUNCH INTENSIVE MENTORING PROGRAMS FOR HIGH-RISK YOUNG PEOPLE.

Young people at a high risk of dropping out of high school, such as those who are already involved in the juvenile justice system, require more intensive programs beyond those that might work for their peers. We recommend that the City identify those young people most at risk and pair them with mentors and advocates who can help them to turn their lives around. These investments will be cost-effective; the City spends significant resources in the form of policing, incarceration and health care on a very small number of the highest-risk young people.

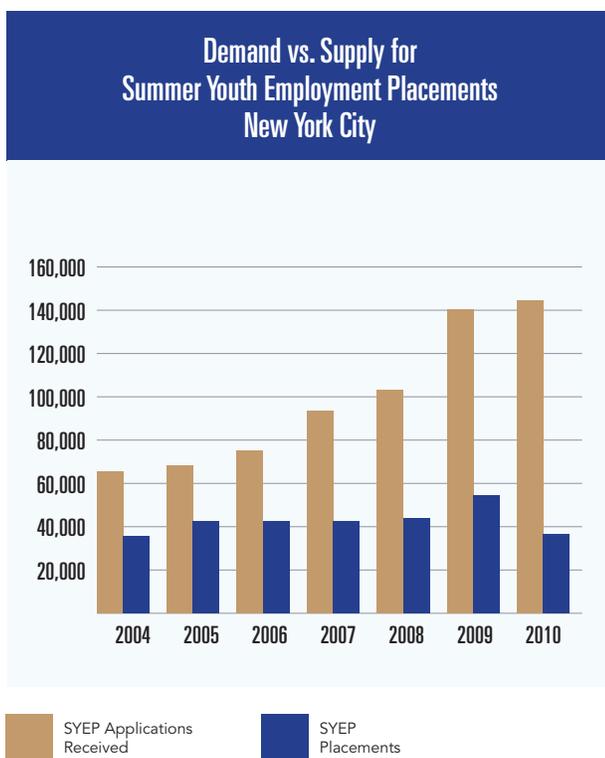
LEVERAGE THE EXPERIENCE OF YOUNG MEN WHO HAVE TURNED THEIR LIVES AROUND TO PREVENT OTHERS FROM COMMITTING ACTS OF VIOLENCE.

Experts have recommended that practitioners take a “public health” approach to the issue of youth violence, focusing on changing the behavior of the young people at the highest-risk of becoming perpetrators. Black and Latino males are significantly more likely to be involved in such violence: black young men, ages 16-24, are more than four times as likely as their white peers to die a victim of homicide, and Latino young men nearly three times as likely. The CeaseFire model employs “violence interrupters” and “outreach workers” from the community who have themselves experienced violence and also have strong relationships with youth, community leaders, and service providers. Violence interrupters stop conflicts before they happen and outreach workers re-direct the highest-risk youth away from life on the streets. These interrupters are young men right from the community who are “credible messengers” because they have struggled before overcoming adversity to start the next chapter of their lives. These connections result in the cooling of crime hot spots and increased safety for community residents, in addition to positive outcomes for the people who participate—both the outreach workers who would otherwise be hard to employ, and the lives they touch. We must experiment with evidence-based models such as this one to tackle the entrenched problem of youth violence in our black and Latino communities.

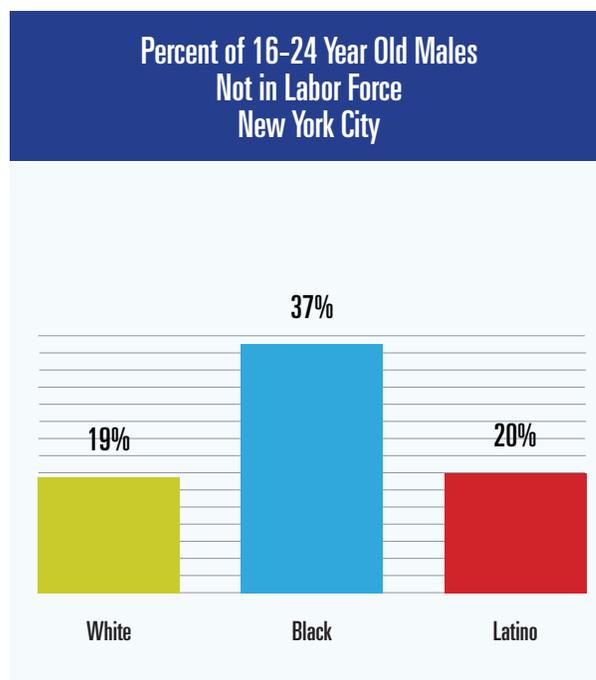
EMPLOYMENT

CHALLENGES

New York City’s black young men are more than twice as likely to be disconnected from education and employment as their white peers; Latino young men are 1.5 times more likely. New York City has the lowest teen employment rate of the 50 most populous cities in the nation—roughly half the national average. The damage is long term. According to labor economist Andrew Sum, “The costs of reduced work among male teens today are not limited to the present. They will also reduce employment and earnings in the future, lower future labor productivity, and reduce the future real output of the U.S. economy. Jobless, economically disadvantaged male teens are more likely to dropout of high school, less likely to attend college upon graduation, and more likely to become involved with the criminal justice system.” At the same time, we know that opportunities to connect young people to employment are critical. For every year that teens work, their income in their twenties rises 14 percent to 16 percent. Exposure to early work experience dictates later work success. Young men of color are in the worst job market since such data have been collected. This rampant unemployment robs them, and our City, of the opportunity to build a sustainable future. We will be unable to bridge the gap over the long-term between white and black and Latino men until we connect more young people to employment.



Source: Department of Youth & Community Development Summer Youth Employment Program



Source: CEO tabulation from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2006-2008

RECOMMENDATIONS

CREATE MEANINGFUL YOUTH EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

The statistics are dire. This is especially true as the City of New York is faced with an exceptional budget situation that will result in serious cuts to agencies across the board. Yet, the cost of the unemployment of young people is borne by the City and taxpayers in many ways: from reduced tax collection due to decreased earnings over the lifetime of each young person to the costs of interventions for young people who become disconnected. The City needs to articulate a strategy for connecting its young people to employment in this economic moment. This strategy should include:

EXPANDING PROGRAMS THAT TRANSITION DISCONNECTED YOUTH BACK INTO EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

The New York City Center for Economic Opportunity, established by Mayor Bloomberg to implement innovative ways to reduce poverty in New York City, has pioneered, developed and implemented educational and employment programming with success. These proven models include the Young Adult Internship Program, the Young Adult Literacy Program, and Jobs-Plus, piloted in partnership with the Department of Youth and Community Development, the New York City Libraries and the Department of Youth and Community Development, and the Human Resources Administration and the New York City Housing Authority, respectively. These models should be expanded and replicated to reach more young men in targeted neighborhoods. These programs offer educational services, internships, seminars, stipends, job training and placement opportunities.



EXPAND AND STRENGTHEN THE SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The City of New York's commitment to youth employment is evident through its continued support of the Summer Youth Employment Program, which has connected young people to employment opportunities for over 40 years, even in the face of federal and state budget cuts. However, this program faces the challenge of lack of access to reliable funding from federal, state and local sources in this economy, and, even at its peak of support through the federal stimulus, coming nowhere close to providing jobs for all of its applicants. The City must develop a strategy for the long-term viability of its Summer Youth Employment Program such that it a program that can meet the demand of young people to work. For starters, the City must continue to engage the private sector as a source of contributions and sponsorships, following the lead of cities including Boston.

REDUCE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT BY HELPING MORE YOUNG PEOPLE ACCESS OFFICIAL ID'S

Lack of official identification poses a significant challenge to young people. Without an official ID, it is very difficult to obtain legitimate employment, open a bank account, cash a check, sign a lease, enter government buildings, or travel. Unfortunately, young people lack ID's at much higher rates than their older adult counterparts—in great part, according to focus groups, because they don't know how to get them. The Young Men's Initiative proposes that the City help more New Yorkers—especially young people—who voluntarily want to get an ID by offering a service that would connect them to the State DMV and facilitate their application process.

JUSTICE AND REENTRY

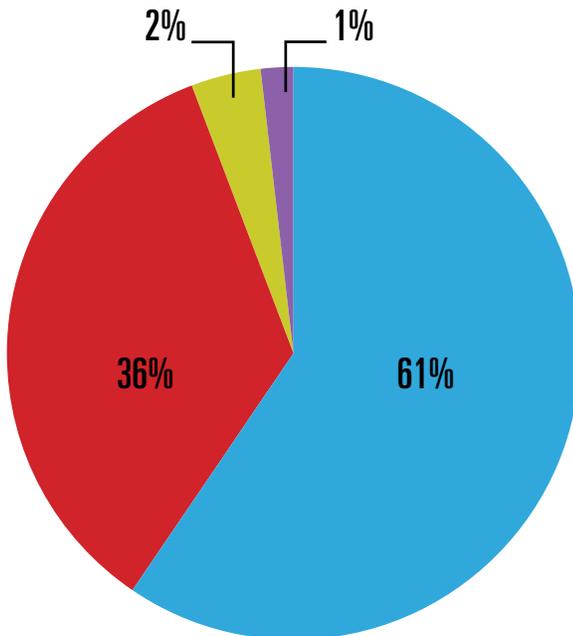
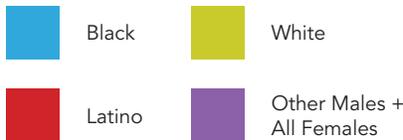
CHALLENGE

Over the last four years, significant advances have been made to improve outcomes for young people involved in the criminal justice system. A collaborative of New York City agencies launched the Detention Reduction Program to reduce the City’s reliance on detention for juveniles awaiting trial or disposition in delinquency cases. NYC’s juvenile detention reform program has yielded significant results. Between 2006 and 2008, the City’s detention rate at arraignment has declined by 22 percent and the recidivism between arrest and final disposition has dropped by 35 percent. During this time the detention rate of low-risk, black youth declined from 29 to 9 percent and the rate for low-risk, Latino youth went down from 18 to 10 percent. As a result the detention rate gap between low-risk white, black, and Latino youth is closer (6 percent, 9 percent and 10 percent). Further, the Department of Correction has focused on supporting adolescents in custody and post-release through objective assessments and evidence-based programs. The Institute for Inner Development provides a therapeutic community where youth learn basic life skills and the Faith in Reentry connects young men in custody to mentors.

However, a sizable segment of young men who have become disconnected are involved with our juvenile and/or criminal justice systems. We must completely reform the pipeline that incarcerates young men of color. There is often inadequate adjustment in these systems based on risk to public safety and unacceptable outcomes post-incarceration. We must break the cycle. The Young Men’s Initiative proposes a fundamental systems reform, informed and supported by innovative interventions at each step along the continuum from juvenile justice to adult justice to the reduction of barriers to the supports that we know prevent recidivism. Young people must continue to take responsibility for their actions; in no way do people who have committed dangerous acts deserve a free pass. But the ultimate question for the City of New York is whether the young people that interact with its Departments of Correction and Probation emerge more or less inclined to commit criminal acts, and more or less prepared to turn the page in their lives.

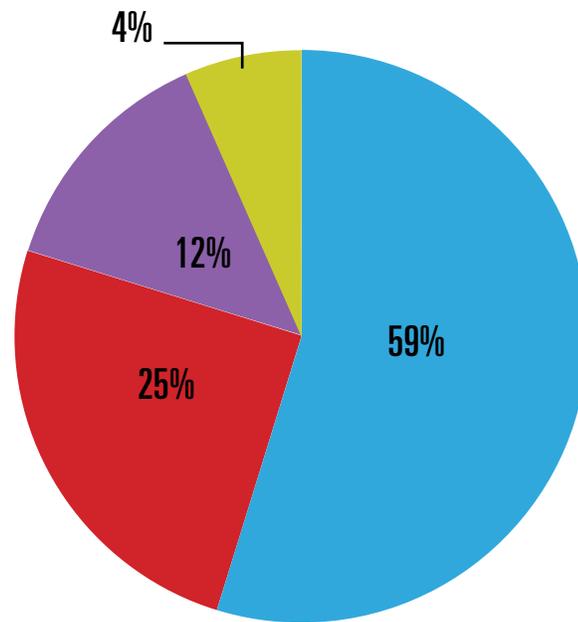
At the same time, we need to do what we can to facilitate the reentry of people with criminal records back into their communities. People who have paid their debt need an opportunity to start again to obtain legitimate employment and educational opportunities. The absence of such opportunities makes inevitable a return to crime.

**OCFS Facility Admissions (NYC Youth)
New York City**



Note: Data includes males and females
Source: NYS Office of Children and Family Services,
Race and Ethnicity: Path Through
the Juvenile Justice System, March 2008.

Dept. of Juvenile Justice Admissions New York City



Source: NYC Department of Juvenile Justice, FY 2009.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CORRECT OUR SYSTEMS OF YOUTH AND ADULT CORRECTIONS FOR BETTER OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG MEN OF COLOR WHO HAVE BECOME JUSTICE INVOLVED

The juvenile and adult criminal justice system is too often a revolving door. The recidivism rates for young people who go to Rikers Island are astronomical: There has historically been a 75 percent readmission rate for this population. This means that three out of four young men who leave Rikers will come back. As a system and a City, we must do better. There must be more “correction” in our Correction system. Young people should receive appropriate services for their age that prepare them for their eventual release and life on the outside. Systems should be in place that allow Rikers-based staff to pick up where they left off when a young person re-enters. Evidence-based alternatives to incarceration and detention should be expanded. Young people should no longer be sent upstate to detention facilities that are dangerous, unproductive and poor uses of taxpayer dollars. Instead, realignment of the juvenile justice system and creation of local control is needed so that all New York City youth stay close to home and receive the individualized services, supports and opportunities they need in the communities where they live.

REVAMP THE DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION SO THAT IT BECOMES AN A MORE ENGAGED PARTNER IN COMMUNITIES

The Department of Probation (DOP) has an enormous opportunity to facilitate the successful reintegration of people with criminal records into their communities using evidence-based incentives to produce better outcomes. The Department has expressed a commitment to co-locating specially-trained DOP staff in communities with disproportionately high numbers of residents on probation; we support this effort and the promise it offers in transforming the Department of Probation into becoming a community partner and a problem solver, helping to make the experience of people on Probation meaningful and to encourage and motivate clients to fulfill their probation requirements, avoid unlawful behavior, experience success at work and school, and give back to the community.

ELIMINATE BARRIERS TO REENTRY FOR THE FORMERLY INCARCERATED IN WORK, EDUCATION, HOUSING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TO FACILITATE A SECOND CHANCE.

It is a cruel irony that the resources we know make it more likely for a person to right his or her path—access to education, to employment, to safe housing, to healthy living, to a sense of belonging in the community—are precisely the same resources that people with a criminal record have a harder time accessing because of their record.

We urge the City to reduce barriers for people with criminal records attempting to obtain legitimate employment so they can successfully turn the page, lowering recidivism rates and making our communities safer. We also urge the City to foster civic participation among individuals involved in the criminal justice system, which has been proven to reduce the likelihood of re-offending, including advocating that the State allow parolees who have successfully completed their incarceration to vote. The New York City Center for Economic Opportunity, in partnership with the Department of Probation, the Department of Correction and the Prison Reentry Institute at John Jay College has piloted programs that serve the court involved young adult population. We recommend the expansion of the NYC Justice Corps model and investment in new programs to push this agenda forward.

IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF BOYS AND THEIR FAMILIES

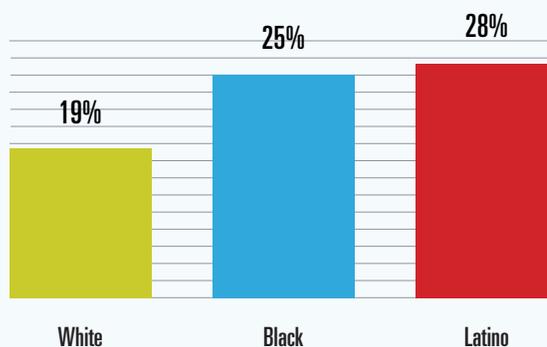
CHALLENGE

Young people with mental health problems are more likely to suffer absenteeism, face suspension and expulsion, have low grades and test scores, and drop out of high school. Black and Latino male youth in New York City are twice as likely to experience frequent mental distress as their white peers. Young men involved in service systems such as juvenile justice, foster care, and special education have elevated rates of mental health disorders.

At the same time, we know how important family support is to the health of our children. Children who grow up without active fathers in their lives are more likely to live in poverty, do poorly in school, run afoul of the criminal justice system, and become teenage parents. This is particularly true for New York City's black and Latino children, who are more likely to grow up in single-parent households. While 33 percent of all New York City children under the age of 18 live in households without a father, 51 percent of black and 46 percent of Latino children grow up in father-absent households. The active engagement of fathers in the lives of their children—emotionally, physically and financially—will strengthen families and improve the life outcomes for young boys of color in the City. For many fathers, this will mean active acceptance of responsibility. Yet, we also know that fathers who seek an active role regularly face institutional barriers, from the difficult pursuit of custodial rights through Family Court to the lack of benefits for non-custodial fathers.

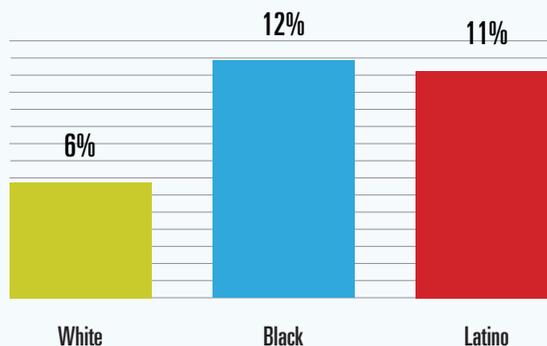
Too many boys of color are becoming parents too soon. The New York City teen pregnancy rate remains much higher than the national rate, and there are large disparities by race and poverty. Teens living in high-poverty neighborhoods are almost 3 times as likely to get pregnant compared to their peers in more affluent neighborhoods. Young Latino men, ages 16-24, are 2.5 times more likely to have a child in New York City than young white men and nearly twice as likely as their black peers. Those fathers are less equipped for active and responsible parenting, and so this cycle with such profound economic and health consequences, is perpetuated.

16-24 Year Old Males Living in Poverty New York City



*Poverty rate are based on CEO's methodology. They are for all males in the city. Source: CEO tabulation from the American Community Survey, 2006-2008

Percent of 18-24 Year Old Males that Experience Frequent Mental Distress New York City



Note: Percentage are out of racial cohort
Source: DOHMH Community Health Survey, 2007

RECOMMENDATIONS

PROMOTE ENGAGED FATHERS AND REDUCE OBSTACLES TO FATHER ENGAGEMENT

The issue of father absence must be addressed as part of any comprehensive effort to improve the outcomes of young men of color, right now and across the generations. Already acting on a recommendation of the Young Men’s Initiative, the City launched the Citywide Fatherhood Initiative and hired the first Citywide Fatherhood Services Coordinator. The goals of the Initiative were to: reduce barriers to father engagement, promote father friendliness at City agencies, create new opportunities for memorable moments between dads and their children, and promote the message Citywide that dads matter. The Initiative has shown initial success, but the work must continue and deepen. The Fatherhood Initiative should measure the progress each agency has made since the Initiative’s launch, further identify and reduce barriers to father engagement, where possible and appropriate share and replicate processes that promote organizational change within City agencies as they support fathers engagement with their children.



HELP MORE YOUNG MEN OF COLOR ACCESS APPROPRIATE HEALTH CARE

Both the City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) play a significant role in the provision of health care services to young New Yorkers, and both must play a role in ensuring young men of color are able to access health care that is both age-appropriate and culturally-appropriate. The City’s clinics, in particular, must be places that teens feel comfortable entering, with practitioners who bring an expertise in serving this population. The City should also explore means to ease the process by which young people can access the Family Benefit Planning Program, which will enable young people to access confidential sexual health services. And HHC, which provides care to approximately 35,000 female and 28,000 male adolescents (ages 12 through 19) in outpatient primary care clinics, should be a laboratory for the provision of effective and age-appropriate health care services.

PROVIDE MORE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES TO YOUNG MEN OF COLOR

Schools are a critical vehicle for the delivery of mental health support for young people in need, and to respond to immediate crises. The Department of Education must be given the appropriate resources to enhance and increase school-based mental health clinics in high-need schools, developed in consultation with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and experts in youth development.

CONCLUSION

While the data paint a grim portrait, the City has an enormous opportunity in this moment. There is boundless untapped potential in young men of color and their families. There are so many success stories to tell, tales of resilience and perseverance, of leadership and commitment to community. By simply removing the barriers they encounter and providing new opportunities, and refusing to accept the disparities that characterize today's society, we will inevitably make a significant difference.

We've interacted with City officials since the launch of the Young Men's Initiative. Their commitment is apparent, and they responded with unparalleled enthusiasm to the challenge. We are confident that they can fulfill the Mayor's expectation of an initiative that changes lives.

The Mayor has demonstrated before that his administration can take on big challenges of poverty, environmental sustainability, economic recovery. We know that with his leadership, New York City will once again be a national model in tackling a problem that others would fear to engage. Success here means strengthened communities of black and Latino boys who deserve the same chance as anyone to achieve the American Dream, and, a strengthened City.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Carson Hicks, Deputy Director of Programs & Evaluation
Mark Levitan, Director of Poverty Research
Kristin Morse, Director of Programs & Evaluation

ABOUT THE CO-CHAIRS



DAVID C. BANKS, *President*

David C. Banks is the President of The Eagle Academy Foundation. He was the Founding Principal of The Eagle Academy for Young Men, the first school in a network of innovative all-boys public school in New York City. As President he is responsible for the successful leadership and management of the organization, which is charged with the replication of the successful Eagle model. Since opening in 2004, the Eagle Academy family has grown to encompass a total of three schools in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens, and is expanding its vision nationally.

The Eagle Academy for Young Men, the first all-boys public high school in New York City in over thirty years, is a nurturing institution which believes that excellence, both in character and scholarship, opens doors and provides a bridge to equality. The Eagle Academies represent a partnership between students, school staff, parents, mentors, and community partners, who are all committed to the guiding principles of academic excellence, leadership and character development. These principles are supported by our core initiatives of mentoring, community service, extended day activities, Saturday Institute, summer programs, and parental involvement. The first Eagle Academy for Young Men was established as part of New York City's twenty-first century high school reform initiative, an accomplishment achieved through a unique partnership with One Hundred Black Men, Inc. After five years of sharing space with the Bronx School for Law, Government & Justice, it has since moved into its own, state of the art facility.

Prior to becoming principal of Eagle, David served as the Founding Principal of The Bronx School for Law, Government & Justice. This theme-based high school provided a unique opportunity for him to combine his law and education background. During his tenure, David helped spearhead a community-wide effort to secure a permanent home for the school. As a result, Bronx Law is now housed in a \$75 million, state of the art facility, representing an unprecedented partnership between the criminal justice community and an inner-city high school.

David is a graduate of Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey and received his Juris Doctorate from St. John's University. He earned his Educational Administration and Supervision certification in only one semester by attending three colleges: Brooklyn College, City College and Baruch College.

David and his wife Marion reside in New Jersey. They have four children, Jamaal, Aaliyah, Ali and Malcolm Rashaad, and one grandchild, Hayley.

ANA L. OLIVEIRA, *President & Chief Executive Officer*

Ana Oliveira became the President & CEO of The New York Women's Foundation® in February 2006. She has worked in the health and human services field for over 20 years, developing programs for vulnerable populations throughout NYC. She served as the first woman and Latina Executive Director of Gay Men's Health Crisis for over seven years, overseeing a complete turn-around of the agency. Before working at GMHC, Oliveira directed innovative community-based programs at Samaritan Village, the Osborne Association, Kings County and at Lincoln Hospitals. Oliveira was a member of the New York City HIV Planning Council and was appointed by Mayor Bloomberg to the New York City Commission on AIDS in 2004. Her awards feature: Mutual Welfare League Certificate, (Osborne Association); Liberty Award, (Lambda Legal & Education Defense Fund); Community Service Award (Empire State Pride Agenda); and Rosie Perez Fuerza Award, (Latino Commission on AIDS). She was profiled in Newsweek (2005) as "America's Best," a series highlighting ordinary individuals using their extraordinary vision on behalf of others. Oliveira was born and raised in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and resides in Manhattan. She has an M.A. in Medical Anthropology from the New School for Social Research and is a Licensed Acupuncturist.

