

My Brother's Keeper Sacramento Guide to Action

2023-2026



THE CENTER
at Sierra Health Foundation

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

MBK
SACRAMENTO

We are our brother's keepers.

"The thing we fear most as parents is the safety of our children," former President Barack Obama said, speaking to the concerns of parents everywhere while [discussing the eighth anniversary](#) of the founding of My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Alliance. Instead of starting with data about the disparities that boys and young men of color face, he began with a story that many of us remember painfully: that of Trayvon Martin, a 17-year-old Black American boy who was murdered in Florida in 2012. His death was a stark reminder of what is at stake if we do not uplift the stories and humanity of boys and young men of color.

His death was a stark reminder of what's at stake if we don't uplift the stories and humanity of boys and young men of color.

In response, President Obama launched the MBK Initiative out of the White House in 2014. The following year, the MBK Alliance, now housed within the Obama Foundation, was launched as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. With management and resources from The Center at Sierra Health Foundation and working in partnership with the Office of the Mayor, the City of Sacramento; Sacramento County Office of Education, Sacramento Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce and dozens of other community-based organizations, Sacramento answered President Obama's 2014 call to address the persistent opportunity gaps boys and young men of color face. Today, community advocates continue shifting the false narratives that leave Black and brown boys and young men of color, like Trayvon Martin, vulnerable to harm.

“The idea that this teenager who was walking down the street could evoke such fear, and that a jury would find that the actions of that private citizen could not be considered criminal. That then spoke to a broader history in this country,” said President Obama. “The sense that not only were Black people devalued, but that we had a culture that had portrayed Black boys and Black men as threats. And that, in turn, justified potential violence against them.”

It is true: Boys and young men of color experience disproportionately negative outcomes in education, criminalization, and overall health and wellness. The false stories persist, often shaping boys of color’s lives before they can explore the world. When left unchecked, these narratives affect how boys and young men of color see themselves. Fortunately, communities are pushing back, and youth are leading the change. It is our job to amplify their efforts.

MBK Sacramento believes that when we embrace boys and men of color in the community, engage with them in dialogue, and give them the tools to lead, we prepare them to change the world. We want boys and young men of color to know that the people closest to the problem are often closest to the solutions.

Over the past five years, MBK Sacramento has equipped boys and young men of color to challenge the narratives that misrepresent them. We build on existing efforts by Sacramento’s boys and young men of color and their adult allies to advance meaningful engagement, advocacy, and systems improvement. We see the struggles boys and men of color face and know it does not have to be this way. Structural barriers were created by people and can be undone by people as well.

STAY
WAKE

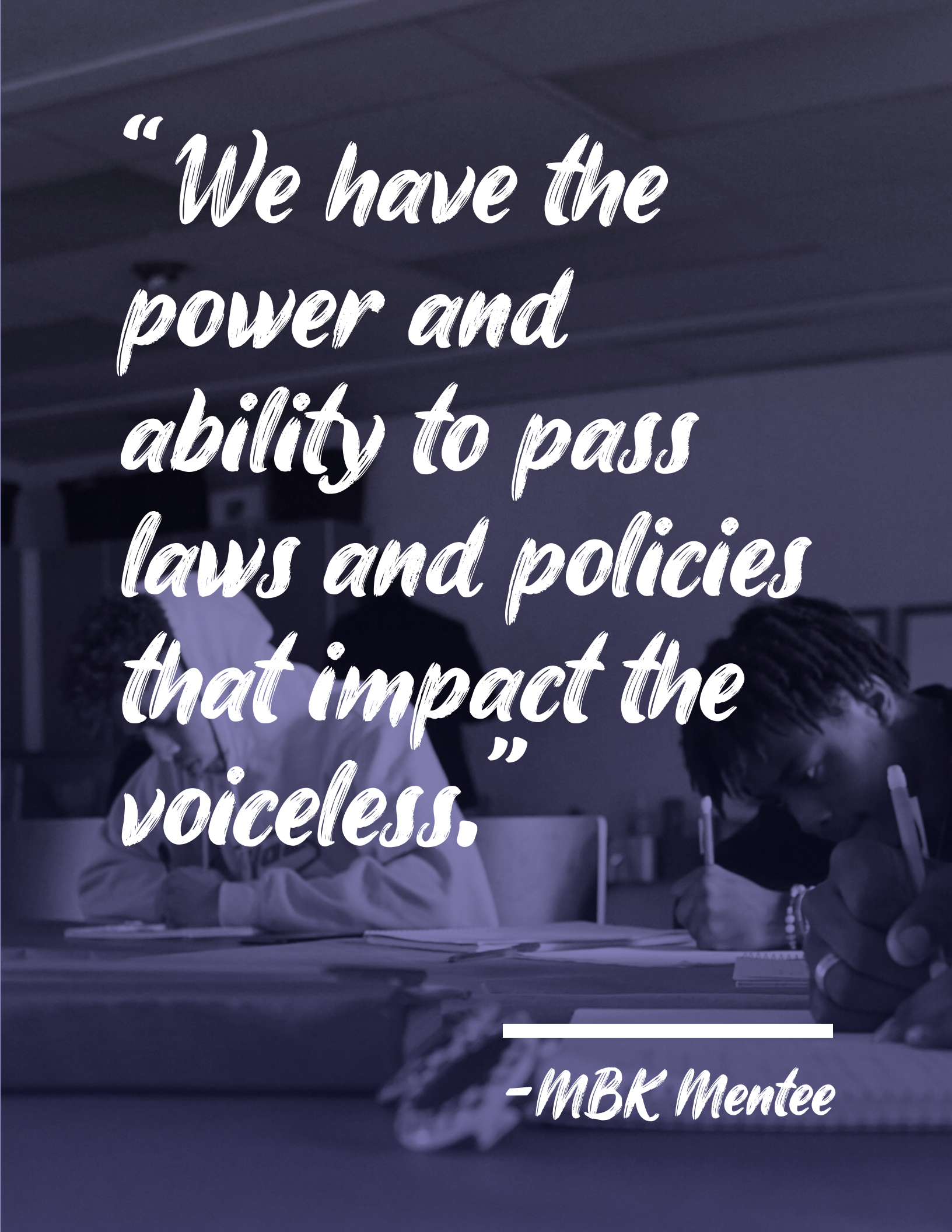


Changing the realities facing boys and young men in Sacramento, California

MBK Sacramento chose kinship as a foundational element of how and with whom we partner. Brotherhood and community are essential elements of the relationship mentors establish with mentees.

The model works based on our application and implementation practices prior to the grant. Our passion for and effectiveness in supporting the youth have had such positive outcomes that MBK Sacramento received the MBK Community Challenge Award from the Obama Foundation, acknowledging MBK Sacramento as one of the nation's best practice models to amplify. We know that boys and young men of color have value. We know youth should be equipped to control their own stories. And we believe we should know the disparities—not to linger or take a deficit-based approach, but to inform the movement.

We believe social inequities are pervasive, but we can change the policies and practices that drive disparities. The healing happens in three ways: intergenerational mentoring, brotherhood/peer-to-peer support, and advocacy for systems change.

A background image of a classroom with students sitting at desks, writing in notebooks. The image is dimmed and has a blue tint.

*"We have the
power and
ability to pass
laws and policies
that impact the
voiceless."*

-MBK Mentee

Sacramento County Data

Boys and young men of color are disproportionately affected by poverty. American Indian/Alaska Native, Black, Latinx, and Pacific Islander children are two to three times more likely than white children to live at or below the federal poverty threshold.

Boys and young men of color experience disparities in school suspension. The suspension rate for Sacramento County high school students overall is 5.8%. Among male high school students, the highest suspension rates in Sacramento County are Black students (15.7%), while the suspension rate for all other races/ethnicities is below 10%. The suspension rate for male high school students of color in Sacramento County (10.9%) is about 5% higher than the statewide rate.

Boys and young men of color experience racial and gender disparities in graduation rates. High school graduation rates in Sacramento County for American Indian/Alaska Native, Black, Pacific Islander and Hispanic students are 6.5–17 percentage points lower than that of white students.

Boys and young men of color, especially Black and brown boys, experience disparities in juvenile felony arrest. In Sacramento County, Black males make up about half of all juvenile male felony arrests and Hispanic youth make up about one-third of all juvenile male felony arrests. Juvenile felony arrests—for violent offenses, property offenses, drug offenses, and other offenses—can result in sentences to state prison.

Boys and young men of color face disparities in employment. In Sacramento County, the average unemployment rate for people of color is 29%, while the state rate for people of color is about 22%. Black or African American youth have the highest unemployment rate among youth in Sacramento County (41%).

These statistics do not offer a complete picture of life for boys and men of color. But they do offer a sense of the perceptions that shape how the world sees them. When we treat boys and young men of color as numbers, we miss the chance to see them as people who overcome many challenges to achieve success in the face of limiting narratives. MBK Sacramento provides knowledge of the disparities so youth can use them as fuel to move forward.



Our solution:

My Brother's Keeper

Sacramento

MBK Alliance created a framework that addresses six key milestones for success at the national level:



Milestone 1: Entering school ready to learn

Milestone 2: Reading at grade level by third grade

Milestone 3: Graduating from high school

Milestone 4: Completing postsecondary education or training

Milestone 5: All youth out of school are employed

Milestone 6: All youth remain safe from violent crime

MBK cities are free to choose the milestones congruent with their community. MBK Sacramento focuses on milestones 3-6, bolded above. In 2018, the Obama Foundation launched the MBK Community Challenge Competition and selected 19 grantees for participation, including The Center at the Sierra Health Foundation – the backbone for MBK Sacramento.

The Center at Sierra Health Foundation, founded in 2012, has long supported health and racial equity efforts with an awareness that employment, education, income, and community advocacy are essential for improving conditions.

My Brother's Keeper Milestones

01

**Entering School
Ready to Learn**

**Reading at Grade Level
by Third Grade**

02

03

**Graduate from
High School**

**Complete Postsecondary
Education or Training**

04

05

**All Youth Out of School
Are Employed**

**All Youth Remain Safe
from Violent Crime**

06

The MBK Sacramento network is committed to improving educational, economic, and overall wellbeing for boys and men of color.

We bring together systems leaders, advocates, community partners, youth-serving organizations, and young people to address health, education, employment, and justice system disparities for young men of color through policy advocacy, systems change, and support for effective programs. We achieve this through a collective impact model in which organizations from different sectors come together around a shared vision.

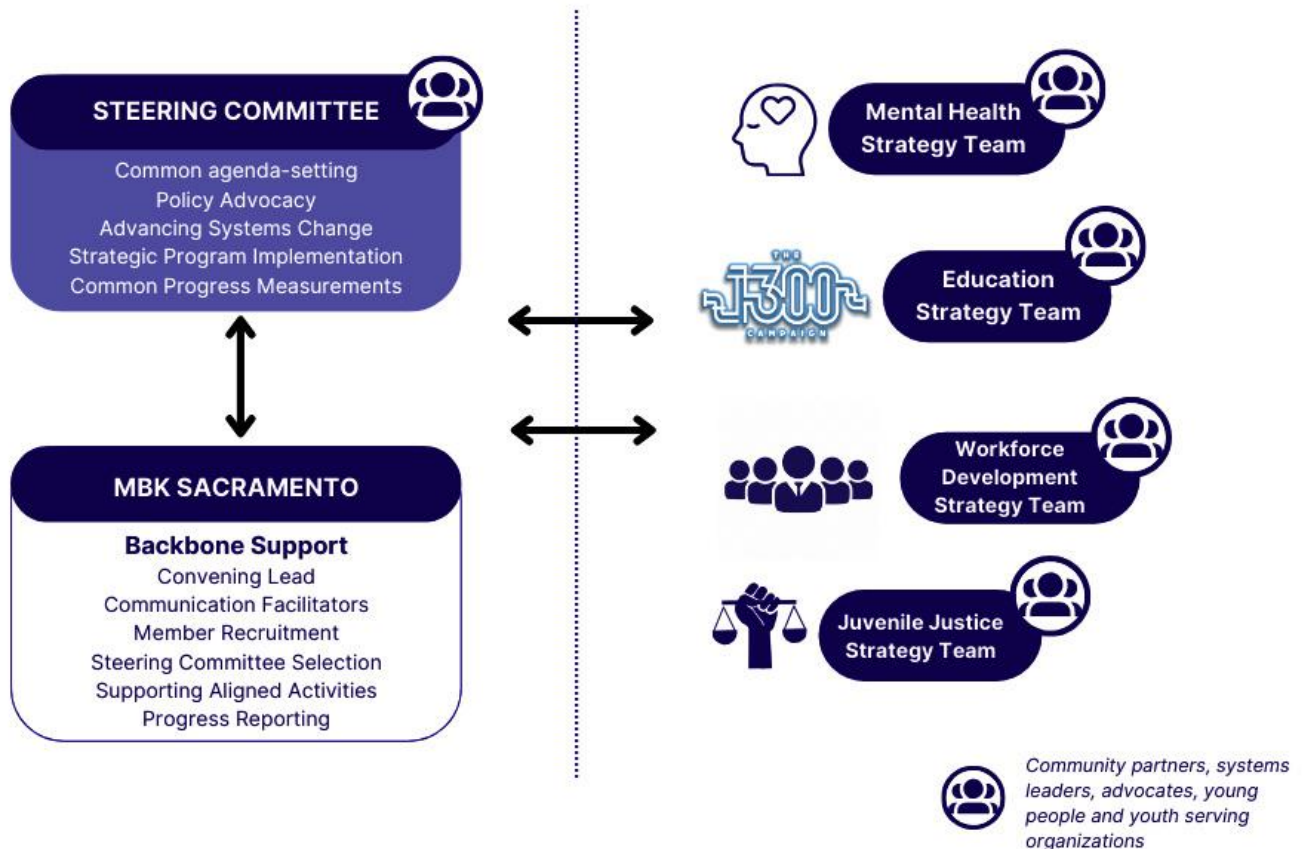


Former President Barack Obama met our inspired youth at the MBK Rising event in Oakland, California.

My Brother's Keeper Sacramento Network

SHARED VISION

Addressing health, education, employment and justice system disparities for young men of color.



2023 – 2026 Guide to Action Goals

Our 2018 Guide to Action explained our foundational structure, organizational partnerships, and objectives needed to level the playing field for boys and young men of color. It also solidified our understanding that boys and young men of color need support throughout their lifespans. The Life Course Framework presented by Forward Change, an organization that advances racial, gender, and economic justice, highlights this model for its ability to examine the impact of ecological, development, and institutional milestones on our lives to better understand boys and young men of color and develop interventions and solutions. We used this framework to create a plan of action in the impact areas of health, education, workforce development, and juvenile justice and public safety systems.

WE DEVELOPED THIS 2023 GUIDE WITH OUR CORE VALUES IN MIND.



MBK Sacramento Core Values

SERVICE.

Each member contributes to the greater good for boys and men of color to accomplish our goals. We serve with intention, common action, and impact.

PERSEVERANCE.

We will not be deterred and will not give up on our young men.

HUMILITY.

We come to this work with the full expression of respect, understanding, and humility toward one another.


TOGETHERNESS.

We collaborate across silos, integrating our efforts to maximize effectiveness with transparency, openness, and accountability.

EQUITY.

We center equity when developing strategies.

Our values have remained the same over the past five years, but our structure has evolved to better meet the needs of local boys and young men of color. We believe the best way to achieve change is through collective action, when we all use our time, talents, or treasures to achieve common goals.



REVAMPED MBK STRUCTURE

We created the MBK Steering Committee in 2022 to streamline communication and leadership roles. This body comprises 12–15 members with underlying values, commitment, insight, and influence in essential areas that shape the experiences of boys and young men of color to support the advancement of our mission. The Steering Committee makes decisions that formally influence the four Strategy Teams' collaboration, strategy, and initiatives. The Steering Committee members include representatives from organizations of influence like the Sacramento County Board of Education, the City of Sacramento Workforce Department, Sacramento County Chief Probation Officer, and advocacy organizations like the Anti-Recidivism Coalition (complete list presented in the appendix.)

STRATEGY TEAMS' PLANS

Strategy Teams spearhead policy, procedure, and practice shifts in health, education, workforce development, juvenile justice and public safety. A brief description of each Strategy Team's vision follows, along with the current lead(s), 2023–2026 goals, and current barriers to success.

Healthy Development Strategy

Our vision is that physical and mental health services are accessible and easy to access for youth, families, and community members. We hope that schools will become an access point for mental health and physical health services.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADS:

Chris Williams, Director of School-Based Mental Health and Wellness, Sacramento County Office of Education

APPROACH:

Enhance cross-systems collaboration at all levels

- 1** Expand the Sacramento County Student Mental Health and Wellness Collaborative.
- 2** Leverage collaborative events to build collaboration among diverse multi-sector partners.
- 3** Work with partners to facilitate shared learning between school-based mental health providers and other staff in public and private schools to strengthen coordination and services.
- 4** Identify and address interactions among systems and partners where coordination is inefficient or ineffective.

Streamline referral and enrollment processes for physical and mental health services

- 1** Work within a designated referral system at a school site to promote access to services.
- 2** Help to inform community members and partners about the process of referring students. Use navigators to facilitate referrals and help families enroll their students in services.

Promote an understanding of student mental health and wellness, share information, and reduce stigma

- 1** Equip community partners with skills and resources to communicate about mental health and wellness with their peers.
- 2** Conduct a culturally, linguistically, and age-appropriate community awareness campaign about student mental health and wellness resources.
- 3** Democratize mental health by promoting mental health (versus treating mental illness). Provide peer support, community support, and mentorship in schools and community centers.

Education Strategy

Our goal is to establish culturally responsive pathways that bridge the opportunity and achievement gap and interrupt harmful narratives about boys and young men of color. Through the 1300 Campaign, we are focusing on sending 1,300 additional young men of color to University of California Davis and to California State University Sacramento by 2025 and 2026, respectively, because postsecondary education unlocks tremendous health and economic opportunities and pathways for people of color. To do so, we will focus on removing systemic barriers to college, strengthening culturally responsive education, ending school-based tracking, and upending harmful narratives educators may hold about young men of color.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADS:

Michael Lynch, CEO, Improve Your Tomorrow, Inc.

Francisco Ruiz, Associate Director of Policy and Advocacy, Improve Your Tomorrow, Inc

APPROACH:

- 1 Establish culturally responsive place-based mentorship programs in the eight [Black Child Legacy Campaign](#) neighborhoods' high schools.
- 2 Increase the number of young men of color who are on track to graduate from high school and are A-G eligible by 70%. *By 2025 we will be able to track the share of A-G eligible young men of color compared to our 2019 baseline.
- 3 Increase to six the number of K-12 school districts in Sacramento County that require ethnic studies for high school graduation.
- 4 Increase academic and social-emotional support for young men of color in the focus high schools and colleges.
- 5 Establish dual-priority enrollment across every Sacramento County School District: Sacramento Unified, Elk Grove Unified, Natomas Unified, Twin Rivers Unified, San Juan Unified, and Folsom Cordova Unified School District.
- 6 Establish corresponding racial equity assessment tool to monitor equitable implementation.

We anticipate having four school districts fully implement the racial equity assessment tool that the campaign developed and providing ongoing implicit bias training.

Workforce Development

Our vision is that youth and young adults have access to employment opportunities to support themselves and their families. It is imperative that they receive the education and training preparation needed to succeed in the high-quality jobs of today and tomorrow.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADS:

Kevin Daniel, Workforce Development Project Manager for the Office of Innovation and Economic Development, City of Sacramento

Chris Robinson, CEO, 4 Your Epiphany Inc.

Dr. Dawnté Early, president and CEO, United Way California Capital Region

APPROACH, BY 2026:

- 1 Government agencies and employers in Sacramento give hiring preference to men of color who have completed workforce development programs offered by priority community-based organizations. Priority community-based organizations are organizations working in the designated targeted communities and collaborating with MBK Sacramento.
- 2 Increase the number of men of color who successfully complete the workforce development programs and services.
- 3 Increase workforce development dollars from the City of Sacramento and Sacramento County granted to priority community-based organizations working in the designated targeted communities and collaborating with MBK Sacramento.
- 4 Increase the number of Sacramento City and Sacramento County youth-serving programs, employers, and youth-serving organizations adopting and participating in MBK's new framework to increase the number of jobs available to young men of color.
- 5 Increase the number of youth workforce providers that use the MBK-created navigation system to recruit participants for their programs.
- 6 By December 2026, connect 2,500 youth aged 16-24 with jobs.

Juvenile Justice and Public Safety

We are working toward justice systems that are fair, equitable, restorative, and redemptive. Youth, young adults, and families involved in the justice system must have access to resources, supportive services, and meaningful opportunities for civic engagement. We are focused on decreasing the number of new youths entering the justice systems by establishing a Sacramento County policy of law enforcement and school district referrals to community-based programs in lieu of arrests and suspensions/expulsions.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADS:

Marlon Yarber, Chief Probation Officer, Sacramento County Probation Department

Ray Lozada, Director of the Office of Safe Schools, Sacramento City Unified School District

Josef Gray, Director, Anti-Recidivism Coalition

APPROACH, BY 2025:

- 1** Increase the amount of public and private funding for youth-serving organizations to help these nonprofits build their capacity.
- 2** Through partnership with law enforcement, school districts, and community partners, shift 100 young people from the juvenile justice system to this diversion process through an established pathway.
- 3** Implement a diversion pilot in Sacramento County communities and school districts to create opportunities for diversion whenever possible.
- 4** Establish a consortium of MBK Sacramento Network community-based organizations to support restorative practices; contribute to the youth wraparound support model.
- 5** Interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline by developing school-based interventions with school districts.
- 6** Decrease re-arrests or violations with youth in pilot diversion program compared to youth on formal probation who are not in the program.

Portrait of an MBK mentee

In 2018, MBK Sacramento received a grant from the Obama Foundation to expand mentoring programs and violence-reduction strategies in Sacramento. From 2019 to 2021, we used this grant to support 1,374 youth. While the program prioritizes the needs of boys and young men of color, 117 participants were girls and young women, and 66 were white.

Devante Springer, a 27-year-old former MBK Sacramento fellow, is an alum from the first cohort. Now, he is a facilitator and mentor for the MBK Sacramento Youth Fellowship, serves on the MBK Sacramento Steering Committee, and is a CEO of local nonprofit Community House Activism. Devante says our program was crucial in his growth. He was recently highlighted by the national MBK Alliance, where he spoke about the impact of his participation in MBK Sacramento and how he connects with others.

"I spend my time with schools and community-based organizations collaborating with other boys and young men of color," Devante said in his MBK Rising! Portrait. "I want to provide guidance, mentorship, and any resources I can to help them reach their fullest potential."

He is not an anomaly. With the right investment, support, and resources, countless boys and young men of color in Sacramento can have a similar impact.



"I am bettering my community for boys and young men of color by dedicating myself and my time to be an impactful mentor."

-Devante Springer

RECOGNIZING THE SELF-AWARENESS AND POWER OF BOYS AND YOUNG MEN OF COLOR IN SACRAMENTO

In 2021, Innovation Bridge, an external consultant, conducted research and produced *Brotherhood: My Brother's Keeper Sacramento Youth Engagement Evaluation and Assessment Report*, an evaluation and assessment to explore engagement experiences of youth involved in MBK Sacramento-related activities and programs through the various touchpoints offered by the MBK Sacramento Network.

Survey responses show that MBK Sacramento fellows know what they are up against. Mentees are conscious of the climate that silences, oversimplifies, and erases them. We believe the fellows and mentees have experiences that make them experts on their realities. We support boys and young men of color in knowing that people closest to the problem are often closest to the solutions.

In their responses to the Youth Engagement Evaluation Survey, participants provided powerful quotes, several of which are included throughout this document. But one fellow highlight the self-awareness of boys and young men of color in especially powerful ways (full quote is in appendix).

"[E]verything keeps coming and circling back around.... Your parents are poor, have to work multiple jobs ... that leads to neglect or unable to fully experience family in a home ... not because of their parenting style but because they have to.... They cannot help you with college or do your schoolwork or take you to class ... so you come home, and you have to apply yourself and overcompensate for things you were born into ... and you repeat the cycle."

His thoughts provide a baseline for the experiences of many participants. MBK is not just a site where boys and young men can demonstrate self-awareness. It is also a place where those who are less self-aware have a chance to learn about the world around them.

Another participant suggested this when he noted how our program helped expand his thinking and perspective on what happens in his world: "Before I got to MBK, I did not really know much. I

was kinda stuck in a box, but I feel like MBK was kinda an outlet to get out the box and get more connections and see different things around the world and see what is going on.... It opened my eyes...."

This shows that MBK Sacramento is a place to learn and grow. Participants use mentorship and fellowship to explore the narratives that shape their lives with others at similar ages and stages. They learn how to push back against false ideas about who they are—and challenge the larger structures that impact them—as they participate, conduct research, influence policies, and feel empowered to call out unfair practices and procedures.

"There is not a thing that a person of color will not face... People are constantly being targeted, hurt and harmed ... whether you are going down the street to protest in a Black Lives Matter protest or going to school."

Boys and young men of color face many personal and social transitions between youth and emerging adulthood. The youth quoted above notes that it is easy to feel alone, overwhelmed, or stunted as they process these changes. We meet Sacramento youth where they are, so they have a safe place to process the world during these transitional stages.

Survey methods like our Youth Evaluation Survey ask youth what works for them. As our program manager, Ray Green, says, "Youth voice is data." We encourage boys and young men of color to use their voices through projects and presentations, so they share widely and further fine-tune their perspectives. Our fellows receive and offer information to find collaborative solutions to systemic issues with peers in the spirit of brotherhood. Each cohort explores these in new ways.

MBK Youth Fellowship

A brief breakdown of the past MBK Fellowship cohorts and their areas of focus is below:

Cohort 1

Fellows focused on boys and young men of color's mental health concerns. Participants developed a policy brief that addressed the barriers to good mental health, like stigma, stress, trauma, and limited culturally congruent mental health resources.

Fellows selected this topic for its individual and community impact, noting, "From street violence, domestic violence, deportations, all the way to normalized shootings, our brothers experience traumatic events that, if left untreated, could hinder their likelihood of success, of achieving a better life."

In their own words, "As a collective, we, the MBK Sacramento Fellows, took it upon ourselves to identify and address mental health for our brothers that haven't been born, for our brothers currently going through it, and for the past us that didn't have the support but welcomed it."

Results: [A policy brief](#) exploring the mental health concerns of their peers, complete with recommendations based on a 20-question survey with roughly 200 respondents.

Cohort 2

Fellows asked, "How can we better support single-parent families?" Participants selected this topic because being raised by a single parent was a common experience in the cohort, with half being raised by single mothers.

In their own words, "We just want to let our brothers and sisters know they are not alone. The point of our research is to try to find ways to support all of them."

Results: A policy brief titled "Understanding Single-Parent Homes" explores the [prevalence of single-parent homes and the needs of their peers](#), with policy recommendations for managing the struggles of transportation challenges, lack of mentorship, and need for increased mental health support.

Cohort 3

Fellows addressed financial insecurity during the Covid-19 pandemic. This cohort was interrupted, but not deterred by the pandemic. Fellows provided single-parent families with a one-time stipend in partnership with Innovation Bridge. They also sharpened their knowledge of violence-reduction strategies by interviewing Sacramento's crisis intervention workers and violence-reduction partners from the Black Child Legacy Campaign and Sacramento City Advance Peace, currently known as Movement 4 Life.

In their own words, "Going back to the fellowship reminds me of why I went to college, why I give back and as I go through a door, I will make sure to leave the door behind me open for others!" - Alejandro Galicia, MBK Alumnus

Results: Fellows distributed \$200 stipends to 91 local single-parent homes. These funds were used for groceries, rent, gas, personal protective equipment, and academic supplies.

Cohort 4

MBK Sacramento Youth Fellows launched a mental health navigation webpage in partnership with Mental Health California's Brother Be Well program and funding from Kaiser Permanente. This cohort dove further into supporting the mental health needs of boys and young men of color. The webpage makes mental health support more accessible and increases the cultural responsiveness of such services.

Fellows learned about adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and how to identify toxic stress in their lives. They also practiced self-care and calming techniques such as mindfulness, meditation, growth mindset, and deep breathing through interactive exercises.

Fellows also created the "Mastermind" podcast so youth could actively inform, inspire, and encourage their peers to engage in opportunities through MBK and beyond. They led conversations on issues that matter to them, like entrepreneurship, mindfulness, and moving toward their goals with intention.

In their own words: "The thing I love about MBK is that I know what we are doing here can make change.... I want everyone to understand that we are not to be underestimated, we are just as strong and capable as anyone else." - Chase Thomas, MBK Youth Fellow Cohort 4

Results: The [MBK All Access "Mastermind" podcast](#) and the [Brother Be Well](#) mental health webpage.

Our cohorts put a lot of effort into their projects, showing they know their community's problems and can develop creative solutions when given the chance. Each cohort has a unique mix of fellows and opportunities, but we have identified four consistent experiences that help youth develop crucial skills that establish their voice as they work to improve the community.

Powerful outcomes of youth mentorship and fellowship

Our youth cultivate a voice in community research.



Research is a powerful tool for community change. We believe our fellows and mentees should be exposed to research practices like data-based social learning and participatory action research as early as possible. Equipping boys and young men to conduct research gives them the tools to change the world. It also helps youth see their value even as structures fail to affirm them. One of our fellows reveals that supporting youth in research taught him that “boys and men of color matter and have value.”

We support our fellows in developing their research interests, goals, and recommendations with this in mind. They develop ideas and control the direction of their research projects. They share perspectives informed by their own lives to identify trends and patterns in their community and use these perspectives to conduct ethnographic research. And then they brainstorm solutions and develop research-based perspectives that look beyond the limits of what they see.

We believe Sacramento youth of color can use data and research to recognize and challenge false narratives and find the way forward.

MBK Sacramento understands its uniqueness in prioritizing the perspectives of youth of color. Though society rarely affirms boys and men of color as valuable and loved community members, we are committed to helping youth craft their own solutions.

Our youth develop a voice in intergenerational dialogue.



Boys and young men of color are rarely treated as individuals with valuable knowledge to offer to the larger community. Sadly, many youths of color come from communities where the expectation is that they should be “seen and not heard.”

At MBK Sacramento, we actively assert the value of youth perspectives through an environment that promotes intergenerational dialogue. Asking questions, challenging traditions, and pushing boundaries are essential for youth to grow into future changemakers.

“I am able to put myself in other’s shoes.... We can play a lot of distinct roles ... outside of being a student.... We can be teachers ... mentors.... Our role always changes and can change ... young person to adult, to elder...”

We support fellows as they make sense of the world by encouraging them to speak up and express their perspectives with people of all ages. We also position them to assess our different leadership roles because we know they will show up differently at various stages of life.

Our youth assert their voice in their mental health and healing.



There are many obstacles to mental health support for boys and men of color. There are limited spaces where males of color can show up, find support, and feel affirmed in their experience. Our emphasis on brotherhood and kinship helps fellows feel safe to share their feelings. Fellows

appreciate the chance to be vulnerable in a community of peers who understand and will not criticize.

“Talking during the zoom calls ... we get down talking about deep conversations, and a lot of people can relate ... talking about how our lives are the same ... letting stuff off your chest....”

We hope fellows develop lifelong skills that help them express their emotions, find new ways to manage anger and conflict, and understand that their feelings matter. It takes the support of the MBK Sacramento Network partners to ensure we are providing opportunities for boys and young men of color to express themselves and advocate for their mental health needs.

Our youth gain and fine-tune a voice in local policy.



Our framework aims to bring change through policy, practices, and procedures. Our fellows work on these strategies. Their projects, like the policy briefs they developed on single-parent families or youth mental health, and the skills they learn through collaborations like Brother Be Well help them challenge the way things are to see and work for what could be.

We see this in every step of the cohort experience. Our fellows selected topics based on the qualities they shared with their cohort peers. And they went beyond dialogue and sharing common ground. They noted how the issues—violence, Covid-related financial insecurity, and limited access to mental health services—make their community vulnerable. Fellows conducted research and theorized about how to solve these problems. With help, they crafted their ideas into policy recommendations to benefit all youth, not just boys and young men of color. Fellows can do this—not despite who they are, but because of who they are.

We remind fellows and mentees that there's power in their vantage point. Our fellows have the rare opportunities to develop research for the community from within the community. This perspective helps them to find innovative solutions and see things uniquely. The *Understanding*

Single-Parent Homes policy brief provides a clear example of this. An external researcher might have focused on the disadvantages, but these boys and young men of color were able to identify benefits.

They did not frame growing up in a single-parent home as inherently bad. Fellows asked participants to explain the benefits of being a child from a single-parent home, and they received responses like “[I] learn independence and how to have a good support system” and “I believe having a heightened sense of compassion and patience. And a stronger relationship with the one parent.” They explore the structure, policy, and procedure as the source of disadvantage. Our fellows devised creative solutions based on needs instead of respectability, like increasing after-school support, homework, and mental health support opportunities. They are clear that the shifts should happen in the structures and systems that negatively impact families and leave these youth without support.

We believe boys and young men of color consistently develop innovative solutions when given the opportunity.



MBK graduation day marks a turning point for our youth.

The Covid-19 pandemic had a detrimental effect on boys and young men of color.

Research shows that the coronavirus has had a [devastating impact](#) on every aspect of our lives. Boys and young men of color and their [families in Sacramento](#) were no exception. Our youth were especially vulnerable to the effects of the pandemic due to income inequality and access to resources. We committed to supporting our fellows during the global pandemic. Still, our youth say Covid limited their opportunities, especially chances for in-person gatherings, travel, and connection.

“I feel like I got cheated with Covid 19. We had our meetings on Zoom. I look forward to [meeting] in person on Wednesday after school,” one fellow said in his response to the Youth Evaluation Survey.”

Despite this, fellows said they were happy to be involved with MBK Sacramento. Another fellow shared: “[I would change] nothing; everything is perfect just the way it is, other than I didn’t get to meet Barack Obama because of Covid.”

MBK Sacramento adjusted to the crisis and found creative, meaningful ways to support the community’s youth and their families, like meeting and conducting projects online. Our organization’s overall budget increased during the pandemic because of government funding for statewide Covid-19 emergency relief and outreach and education projects.

We also received assistance from the Obama Foundation Pandemic Grant and Sierra Health Foundation. We used the funds to support our community’s health and wellness by:

- 1 Providing 91 households with a \$200 gift card for immediate needs like personal protective equipment, food, shelter, gas, travel, utilities, and school supplies.
- 2 Distributing 450 high-quality MBK Sacramento custom logo masks for partners’ relief efforts.
- 3 Expanding the MBK Youth Fellowship program for social connection and engagement.

Many of the Covid protections and support have ended. But the long-term impacts of Covid and pre-existing inequities persist. Addressing these realities will require new partnerships, and we are focused on building those relationships.




MBK Sacramento Youth Fellowship Cohort 3.

Conclusion:

We need to follow boys and young men of color's lead

*“Equal opportunity despite your skin color
there wouldn't be any discrimination based
on their appearance and they'd be equally
qualified”*



As we prepare to implement our plan for 2023–2026, we reflect on the expertise of previous fellowship and mentorship cohorts, the success of our strategy teams' collaborative actions, and the deep impact of continued community support. In the next three to five years, we intend to use everything in our toolkit to grow our program and support our youth.

Fellows are already using their MBK experiences to challenge the narratives that plague them.

“MBK has changed my outlook by showing me a better way of thinking and a better way of being of service to my community communities I operate in ”

In the future, we hope to expand access, reach more boys and young men of color, and meaningfully support queer and gender-nonconforming youth. Research shows the number of youth who identify as LGBTQIA+ is [rising among Gen Z](#). Along these lines, we are working to identify survey methods that increase Gen Z and future generations' participation to help programs and procedures connect with participants and shift structural barriers.

MBK fellows have made it clear how they want to be perceived and have highlighted the opportunities that they want to see. Their awareness can be a benefit or a disadvantage, based on the outlets available to them to discuss and change these narratives.

“All we need is love, wisdom, intelligence, and courage”

“We work hard...We are misunderstood and need someone to talk to ”

“We are not the average stereotype. We are all what the media portrays, we are all young, kind and wonderful ”

"Not to be underestimated, we are all strong and capable just as anyone else"

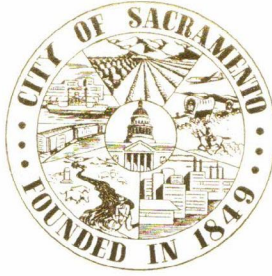
"We do not let situations define us"

We have listened to what youth want for themselves and their communities, and our strategy is aligned to the same vision. Our vision goes beyond additional career pipelines, workforce training, and new experiences. We envision a Sacramento where all boys and men of color have equitable access to plentiful connections, resources, and opportunities to create an abundant life. Their health—and that of our community—would be stronger for it. To do this, the entire community must come together to give youth the necessary resources to challenge narratives, develop their voices, and step into their power.

We are seeking additional funding and partnership, as well as new strategy members and continued support from network members, to make this possible. We invite (urge) you to join us.



The MBK Sacramento Steering Committee.



OFFICE OF THE
MAYOR

DARRELL STEINBERG
MAYOR

CITY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA

August 3, 2023

Dear Obama Foundation and My Brother's Keeper Alliance,

On behalf of the City of Sacramento, we enthusiastically accept the My Brother's Keeper Alliance Challenge to improve the lives of boys and men of color. We acknowledge that this work now lives within the Obama Foundation under MBK Alliance and are committed to continuing to take positive steps in building safe and supportive communities for young men of color in our city.

In 2018, My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Sacramento, through our partners at The Center at Sierra Health Foundation, released the initial MBK Guide to Action that was committed to addressing health, education, workforce, juvenile justice, and public safety milestones. We have put in place action steps outlined in that initial report and will make the same level of commitment to the next iteration of plans and implementation for 2023 and beyond.

We are grateful for the chance to network with similar MBK California cities and throughout the nation. To contact the mayor's office please feel free to contact Chinua Rhodes, Director of Civic Engagement by email at Crhodes@cityofsacramento.org or phone 916 808-7740. You may contact Ray Green, the MBK Sacramento Coordinator with The Center at Sierra Health Foundation, who serves as the backbone organization for MBK Sacramento and can be reached by email at rgreen@sierrahealth.org or by phone (916) 715-6306.

Sincerely,

Darrell Steinberg
Mayor, City of Sacramento

Appendices

Appendix A: Key Supporters

At MBK Sacramento, we know this work is not possible without the collective efforts of our generous partners, donors, and supporters. We acknowledge our current supporters below and invite future supporters to visit www.shfcenter.org/mbk-sac for information on how to get involved.

SPECIAL THANKS

Like our work, this guide is a collaborative effort. It builds on many key documents, including *Brotherhood: My Brother's Keeper Sacramento Youth Engagement Evaluation and Assessment Report* developed by Innovation Bridge, the policy briefs developed by our first and second cohorts, and the research and projects developed by our third and fourth cohorts. We offer additional thanks to our partner organizations and community leaders from multiple sectors, including Sierra Health Foundation.



Advance Peace (Movement 4 Life)
Always Knocking, Inc.
Anti-Recidivism Coalition
Asian Resources, Inc.
Board of State and Community Corrections
(California)
Brown Issues CA
Black Child Legacy Campaign
California Funders for Boys and Men of Color
Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento City
of Sacramento
EBAYC Greater Sacramento
Hawk Institute
Health Education Council
Hmong Innovating Politics
Improve Your Tomorrow
Innovation Bridge, Inc.
Kaiser Permanente
La Familia Counseling Center, Inc.
MBK Sacramento Youth Fellows–Alumni
Cohorts 1-4
MENTOR CALIFORNIA
MILPA
Public Health Advocates
Roberts Family Development Center
Sac BHC HUB
Sacramento Region Community Foundation
Sacramento Area Congregations Together (SAC
ACT)
Sacramento City Workforce Department
Sacramento County Office of Education
Sacramento County Probation Department

Sacramento County Sheriff's Department
Sacramento Employment and Training Agency
Sacramento Kings
Sacramento Native American Health Center
Sacramento State University
San Juan Unified School District
Self-Awareness and Recovery
Sierra Health Foundation
SMUD
Sol Collective
The California Endowment
UC Davis Center for Regional Change
United Way California Capitol Region
United and Guided Inc.
Urban League of Greater Sacramento
Urban Partnership
Urban Strategies
Voice of the Youth
Sacramento Youth Forward

Appendix B:

MBK Sacramento Milestones

2018

- Completed Cohort 1 of the MBK Sacramento Youth Fellowship focused on mental health.
- Selected as one of 10 Obama Foundation national impact site grant recipients.
- Launched 2nd cohort of the MBK Sacramento Youth Fellowship, focused on single-parent homes.

2019

- Launched 10 mentoring organizations and served nearly 1,100 students of color.
- Launched 3rd cohort of the MBK Sacramento Youth Fellowship, focused on violence reduction and poverty.

2020

- Sacramento Unified School District ended its use of school resource officers, an effort in which the MBK Sacramento network participated.
- Launched the Restorative Youth Justice program, which diverts up to 240 youth of color (ages 10–17) in Sacramento County from the criminal justice system.

2021

- City of Sacramento passed public safety resolution that redefined public safety, an initiative advanced by network members, redirecting public safety funds toward community-based programs and youth programs to help combat street violence and helping create an alternative plan for non-emergency responses.
- Pivoted in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic to support 91 families with \$200 gift card and provided 350 MBK-branded reusable face masks.
- Partnered with the Sacramento County Office of Education.
- Launched pilot partnership Sacramento Healthy HeARTs and Minds Collaborative, effectively expanding mentoring to more than 14,000 youth across the county.
- Launched 1300 Campaign to ensure 1,300 additional young men of color are prepared for and admitted to Sacramento State University and University California at Davis by 2025.

2022

- Launched 4th cohort of the MBK Sacramento Youth Fellowship, focused on access to mental health supports.
- Launched the MBK Sacramento Mental Health Navigation webpage.
- Announced newly created MBK Sacramento Steering Committee to anchor the network.
- Launched the MBK Sacramento All Access podcast series with “Mastermind,” created by MBK fellows.

Appendix C: MBK Sacramento Strategy Leads

HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT:

Chris Williams, Director of School-Based Mental Health and Wellness, Sacramento County Office of Education

EDUCATION STRATEGY:

Improve Your Tomorrow, Inc.

Michael Lynch, CEO

Francisco Ruiz, Associate Director of Policy & Advocacy

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:

Kevin Daniel, Workforce Development Project Manager, City of Sacramento Workforce Department

Chris Robinson, CEO, 4 Your Epiphany Inc.

JUVENILE JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY:

Marlon Yarber Sacramento County Chief Probation Officer

Ray Lozada, Director, Office of Safe Schools at Sacramento Unified School District

Josef Gray, Director at Anti-Recidivism Coalition

Appendix D:

MBK Sacramento Steering Committee

1. **Adrian Williams**, Education Specialist, Community Education and Technology, SMUD
 2. **Alejandro Galicia**, MBK Sacramento Youth Fellow Alumni
 3. **Chris Cooper**, California Funders for Boys and Men of Color, Sierra Health Foundation
 4. **Chris Robinson**, CEO-4 Your Epiphany Inc.
 5. **Chris Williams**, Director of School-Based Mental Health and Wellness, Sacramento County Office of Education
 6. **Dr. Dawnte Early-West**, CEO, United Way California Capital Region
 7. **Ejiro Okoro**, Public Policy & Advocacy, United Way California Capital Region
 8. **Francisco Ruiz**, Associate Director of Policy & Advocacy, Improve Your Tomorrow Inc.
 9. **Josef Gray**, Director, Anti-Recidivism Coalition Sacramento
 10. **Kevin Daniel**, Workforce Development Project Manager, City of Sacramento Workforce Department
 11. **Marlon Yarber**, Sacramento County Chief Probation Officer
 12. **Michael Lynch**, Co-Founder, Improve Your Tomorrow Inc.
 13. **Ray Lozada**, Director, Office of Safe Schools at Sacramento Unified School District
 14. **Tak Allen**, President, International Faith Based Coalition, California Democratic Party Black Caucus Legislative Committee Chair
- MBK Sacramento Coordinator:
Ray Green, Program Officer, The Center at Sierra Health Foundation

Appendix E: Notes

Forward Change is an organization that advances racial, gender, and economic justice that defines the Life Course Framework as a socio-ecological model that “examines ecological factors, human development dimensions, and institutional milestones that contribute to life outcomes” and notes it “serves as a framework for better understanding social problems as well as developing interventions and solutions that will result in improved life outcomes for people of color and low income communities.”

For more information on the neighborhoods Black Child Legacy Campaign supports, see:
“Where We Are: Overview of BCLC Neighborhoods” <https://blackchildlegacy.org/neighborhoods/>

Brotherhood: My Brother’s Keeper Sacramento Youth Engagement Evaluation and Assessment Report was produced in collaboration with Innovation Bridge in 2021. The evaluation and assessment helped MBK Sacramento gain a deeper understanding of youth involved in MBK Sacramento-related activities and programs. Survey participants answered questions anonymously; identifying data to attribute quotes to specific respondents is not available.

Full quote from Brotherhood: My Brother’s Keeper Sacramento Youth Engagement Evaluation and Assessment Report on page 10:

“Everything keeps coming and circling back around...your parents are poor, must work multiple jobs...that leads to neglect or unable to fully experience family in a home...not because of their parenting style but because they must...they cannot help you with college or do your school work or take you to class...so you come home, and you must apply yourself and overcompensate for things you were born into...and your school is usually underfunded or under resourced...you have guidance counselors or teachers that discriminate you...so you go out to the streets that have vocational school that you lead you to a different path...there’s nothing wrong with that but you are presented a distorted image of what you can achieve...that leads to disproportionate outcomes...and if you are lucky enough to go to college...you are presented with an entire system that was dedicated to benefiting others...this impacts your future earnings...then you enter a labor force that is discriminatory against your color or your name and then you end up working multiple jobs...and you repeat the cycle...”

Appendix F: Sources

- My Brother's Keeper Alliance. "A Movement Inspired By Trayvon Martin Unleashes the Power of Communities to Work Together to Solve Problems for Boys and Young Men of Color." Retrieved from <https://www.obama.org/mbka/eighth-anniversary/>.
- My Brother's Keeper Alliance. "About." Retrieved from <https://www.obama.org/mbka/about-mbka/>.
- California Department of Public Health Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health Division. "Children in Poverty." Retrieved from <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DMCAH/surveillance/Pages/Children-in-Poverty.aspx>
- California Department of Education, Data Reporting Office. "2021-22 Suspension Rate." Retrieved from <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqCensus/DisSuspRate.aspx?year=2021-22&aggllevel=State&cds=00>
- California Department of Education Sacramento County Report Data Reporting Office. "2021-22 Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate." Retrieved from <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/CohRate.aspx?aggllevel=county&year=2021-22&cds=34>
- Office of the Attorney General. "2012 - 2021 Arrest Rates." Retrieved from <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/exploration/crime-statistics/arrests>, The Department of Justice Criminal Justice Statistics Center. "Arrests/Arrest Dispositions." Retrieved from https://data-openjustice.doj.ca.gov/sites/default/files/dataset/2022-08/Arrests%20Context_081122.pdf
- State of California Office of The Attorney General Bureau of Criminal Information and Analysis. "Criminal Justice Statistics Center Report Series: Report on Juvenile Felony Arrests in California, 1998." Retrieved from <https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/cjsc/publications/misc/juvarr98.pdf>
- United States Census Bureau. "2015 American Community Survey Employment 5-Year Estimates (filtered by sex, age, and employment status) for the Population 16 Years and Over." Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/table?q=employment+rates+16-24&t=-01:-03&g=050XX00US06067&tid=ACSDT5YSPT2015.B23001>
- Forward Change. "Life Course Framework." Retrieved from <https://fwdchange.org/life-course-framework/>.
- Obama White House Administration. "My Brother's Keeper." Retrieved from <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/my-brothers-keeper>





 @MBK_Sacramento

Email: MBKSacramento@shfcenter.org

Visit the MBK Sacramento website:

www.shfcenter.org/programs-and-initiatives/my-brothers-keeper-sacramento