



Celebrating ten years of creating pathways to opportunity and building brighter futures for boys and young men of color with the My Brother's Keeper Alliance.

In February 2014, in the wake of Trayvon Martin's death, President Obama launched the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) initiative, calling on all Americans to take action on behalf of our nation's boys and young men of color. Today, as part of the Obama Foundation, the My Brother's Keeper Alliance (MBK Alliance) leads a cross-sector national call to action focused on building safe and supportive communities for boys and young men of color where they feel valued and have clear pathways to opportunity.

Together, we have implemented evidence-based programs to solve problems that disproportionately affect boys and young men of color. Our work is rooted in [six key life milestones](#) that research shows are especially predictive of later success and where interventions can have the greatest impact. For a decade, we've worked hand-in-hand with communities that are leading initiatives aimed at ensuring every child enters school prepared to learn, achieves grade-level reading proficiency by age 8, attains a high-quality high school education, completes post-secondary education or training, secures employment post-graduation or training, and remains safe from violent crime.

Thanks to all of these efforts, and our network of changemakers. We're inspired by the way they're bringing change home, and we look forward to continuing this work at our new home base currently under construction on the South Side of Chicago: the Obama Presidential Center.



HOW IT STARTED

The My Brother's Keeper White House Task Force focused on improving the lives of young people by engaging with state and local communities, increasing engagement by businesses, philanthropic organizations, and nonprofits, and reviewing and reforming public policy that impacted our communities. Over the first two years of the initiative, MBK:

Reformed federal policy by helping launch the MBK School Success Mentor Initiative in partnership with the Department of Education and Johns Hopkin University, pairing 250,000 6th and 9th graders with trained mentors in 30 communities; and helped to improve the lives of at-risk youth by establishing the "Second Chance Pell" pilot program that enabled incarcerated Americans to receive Pell Grants to finance the post-secondary education and training.

Worked with state and local governments to enact place-based programming, such as helping 10,000 Philadelphia teens and young adults secure jobs and internships, and working with local leaders as part of the "Compton Empowered" Gang Violence intervention program to decrease homicides by nearly 50% from 2014 to 2015.

Encouraged private sector action by forming a consortium of private, public, and philanthropic organizations that committed more than \$600 million in grants and in-kind resources, along with \$1 billion in low-interest financing to support activities that aligned with My Brother's Keeper priorities.

HOW IT'S GOING

The work didn't stop after President Obama's time in the White House. In 2017, the My Brother's Keeper Alliance became an official program administered by the Obama Foundation, resulting in even more community action. Highlights of the My Brother's Keeper Alliance include:

Community Challenge Competition: The MBK Community Challenge Competition sought to identify and invest in communities that are making progress in improving the lives of boys and young men of color and could serve as national models of what it takes to reduce youth violence and grow effective mentorship programs. One year into the \$5 million investment in 19 organizations across ten states and Puerto Rico, nearly 18,000 young people were served by our inaugural group of Impact and Seed Communities, with over 1,000 specifically connected to employment. Several sites report reductions in community gun violence, murder rates, youth incarceration, and unemployment rates, and noted increases in college enrollment and job obtainment.

Freedom Summers: In 2022 and 2023, the MBK Alliance awarded grants totaling \$2 million to organizations that developed creative ways to keep children safe and engaged in their communities during the summer months when many underserved communities tend to experience an uptick in crime.

Supporting the Next Generation of Changemakers: Since its founding, MBK has crossed paths with aspiring leaders hoping to make their community a better place. Jerron Hawkins, who participated in the first cohort of White House mentees, and after earning his law degree from Howard University, became a federally appointed policy advisor in the Department of Justice's Office of Community Relations Services where he's tasked with building and leading its Youth Division.

Noah McQueen struggled in school and by the age of 18 had been arrested multiple times. However, when his high school extended him the chance to become a White House mentee, Noah saw it as an opportunity he couldn't miss. He went on to graduate high school, attain a sociology degree from Morehouse College, and today, Noah is the founder and CEO of Lifting Our Voices, a nonprofit organization focused on empowering the voices within vulnerable populations through need-based service projects.



Daniel Fairley II served as an intern in the Obama White House, inspired by the opportunity, he then went on to become a youth coordinator for MBK Charlottesville, making clear strides to support boys and young men of color.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

From a White House initiative to a program at the Obama Foundation, My Brother's Keeper has catalyzed a national call to action focused on building safe and supportive communities for boys and young men of color where they feel valued and have clear pathways to opportunity.

Most recently, in 2023, the MBK Alliance announced four MBK Model Communities. MBK Newark, New Jersey; MBK Omaha, Nebraska; MBK Tulsa, Oklahoma; and MBK Yonkers continue to receive ongoing support to continue implementing evidence-based practices that impact the lives of young people. Specifically, the MBK Alliance has begun to provide the four selected MBK Model Communities with access to direct coaching, evaluation support, and peer-to-peer learning; direct resources, including an \$800,000 grant (\$400,000 a year for two years); and ongoing technical assistance for each Model Community's work. Each selected MBK Model Community has achieved significant impact in at least one of the six MBK Milestones by instituting programming and initiatives that have positively shifted outcomes in the educational or violence reduction ecosystems throughout their municipal areas.

- MBK Yonkers: According to the New York State Department of Education, Yonkers, New York, has the highest high school graduation rate for young people of color in the state of New York at 91 percent.
- MBK Tulsa: Between 2013 and 2019, the number of students of color enrolled in Pre-K in Tulsa, Oklahoma increased by 33 percent. A 2022 study reported that Tulsa's free, universal, and full day pre-Kindergarten program has successfully produced a wide range of outcomes—from early academic progress and socio-emotional development, to high school graduation, college enrollment, and even participation in civic life as young adults.
- MBK Newark: In Newark, New Jersey, homicides are at a 60 year low. 2022 reports indicate that homicides were down by 55 percent, as compared to 2013, and shootings reduced by 35 percent in the previous year.
- MBK Omaha: In Omaha, Nebraska, city-wide homicides were reduced by 30 percent from 2011 to 2022.



Our efforts to support the next generation of changemakers will not falter. In fact, with construction nearing its end, the Obama Presidential Center will serve as our homebase. And while we recognize the need to plant seeds of the MBK Alliance throughout the country, we are committed to creating transformational change in the City of Chicago.

The Presidential Center provides a unique opportunity to address critical issues, such as job creation, education, and opportunity gaps, and to unleash the vast potential that exists in Chicago. Thanks to our South Side structure and resources, young people will have the space and support they need to explore their interests, envision a brighter future for themselves and their families, and create lasting change in their communities.