

## INTRODUCTION

# MBK Community Action Resource Guide

## PURPOSE

In September 2014, President Obama issued a challenge to cities, towns, counties, and tribes across the country to join the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Community Challenge as "MBK Communities." The Challenge encourages communities (cities, rural municipalities, and tribal nations) to implement a coherent cradle-to-college-and-career strategy for improving the life outcomes of all young people to ensure that they can reach their full potential.

As an MBK Community leader, you have accepted this call to action indicating your commitment to enacting sustainable change in your community across some or all of the following key milestone areas identified by the May 2014 MBK Task Force Report<sup>1</sup>:

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

This guide is intended as an informational resource to support your MBK Community Challenge efforts. It introduces an illustrative sample of key principles, practices, and resources to consider in building your local initiatives. These materials are not meant as requirements and are not intended to be exhaustive or definitive. Ideas and resources may not apply equally in every community as there is no one-size-fits-all solution to these complex issues. Our hope is that you will build on the illustrative examples highlighted in this resource guide, adapting them to create tailored solutions for your community.

**The MBK Community Action Resource Guide series is a project of the National Convening Council, with support and technical assistance from the White House and a number of Federal agencies.**

In preparing this guide, the National Convening Council is also grateful for the expertise and experience shared by National League of Cities, StriveTogether, United Way, PolicyLink, Urban Institute, and Deloitte. These groups comprise a wide variety of nongovernmental organizations, philanthropies, and academics that have studied and provided ongoing support to communities implementing cradle-to-college-and-career approaches.

These resource guides include information and examples from nongovernmental sources. These resource guides are provided for informational purposes only. Inclusion of nongovernmental information and resources does not indicate endorsement by the White House or the U.S. government of entities, their products or services, and the **information contained at referenced sites does not necessarily reflect the official views of the U.S. government.**

## OBJECTIVES

**After reading this guide, you should:**

- Build a high-level understanding of milestone-specific issues, critical players to engage, and key considerations in activating your community around this issue
- Recognize evidence-based practices and examples of programmatic success that can be adapted to meet local community needs
- Conduct a detailed needs assessment benchmarking current performance on the critical metrics for each of the six milestones
- Begin to understand institutional resources available for use in launching local initiatives
- Identify outstanding questions to address when developing local solutions
- Feel empowered to drive systemic change in your community

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

This guide is designed to support your planning and execution process through a series of three core steps: first, it helps you (1) **build an understanding** of the milestone-specific issue area; then it (2) **identifies several illustrative leading practices** to help inspire your approach; and finally, it provides a selection of (3) **key resources** to help guide you as you begin to take action.

### (1) Build Understanding

- **Milestone Overview:** an introduction to the key drivers affecting the milestone issue area, as outlined in the MBK Task Force Report published in May 2014
- **Engaging Your Community Ecosystem:** initial thoughts on how to mobilize key stakeholders within your community to create joint accountability and a shared vision
- **Key Principles:** milestone-specific thought leadership to help provide a trusted foundation for local action

### (2) Identify Leading Practices

- **Evidence-Based Practices:** illustrative set of effective milestone-specific practices included to help inspire policy and program development in your community
- **Programmatic Success from the Field:** sample of strategies and programs communities have used to improve outcomes on this milestone - demonstrating how to apply and adapt leading practices to meet local needs

### (3) Take Action

- **Turning Theory Into Action – Institutional Resources:** examples of resources to help you begin to create change, organized by key drivers outlined within the milestone overview

<sup>1</sup> Access the MBK Task Force Report here: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/053014\\_mbk\\_report.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/053014_mbk_report.pdf)

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER  
*Community Challenge*

# Successfully Entering the Workforce

## STEP 1: Build Understanding

### MILESTONE OVERVIEW

Anyone who wants a job should be able to get a job that allows them to support themselves and their families.

Ensuring that all young people have the tools and opportunities to enter the workforce successfully is a goal we must strive to reach. Where there are barriers to participation, we should seek to remove them. Where there are too few opportunities, we should seek to expand them to ensure that all young Americans have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

To drive real change in our community, we must seek opportunities to:

- Implement Broad Growth and Opportunity Agenda
- Increase Entry-Level Job, Mentorship, Job Training, and Apprenticeship Options
- Help Grow and Improve Summer Jobs Initiatives

For a more detailed explanation of these drivers, see the My Brother's Keeper Task Force Report, May 2014, [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/053014\\_mbk\\_report.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/053014_mbk_report.pdf)

### ENGAGING YOUR COMMUNITY ECOSYSTEM

A key next step toward driving change involves assessing community needs, with a focus on engaging and connecting key stakeholder groups,\* including:



\*These key stakeholder groups are meant to serve as an illustrative sampling, to be validated and adapted as relevant to your specific community

### KEY PRINCIPLES

1. Employers in high-demand sectors can reduce training costs by **working with post-secondary education institutions to ensure their curriculum prepares students to be work-ready** from day one of employment.
2. Offering **on-the-job training** – including pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, job shadowing, and internship programs for all youth – allows workers and employers to share the burden of training costs along with the returns of working.
3. Providing **low-cost childcare and transportation benefits and services** is essential to engaging low-income workers in the workforce.
4. Communities that **use data to understand future employment needs** in high-demand career sectors will be better positioned to ensure post-secondary programs meet the needs that will drive economic growth.
5. City officials should be strong advocates on behalf of underserved populations, using their influence and leverage to insist on **fair and equal access to workforce development programs**. They can also demand accountability for outcomes and results by pushing for performance management efforts that reward success in working with traditionally underserved communities, and either strengthen or discontinue contracts with underperforming providers.
6. Municipal leaders should look for **community partners** (e.g., civic groups, local foundations, One-Stop Career Centers, or chambers of commerce) **with an interest in promoting entrepreneurship and better employment opportunities** and then work with them to identify ways of expanding training and resources for young people interested in starting their own businesses or learning new skills.

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER  
*Community Challenge*

# Successfully Entering the Workforce

## STEP 2: Identify Leading Practices

### EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

*This section is intended as an informational resource to support your MBK Community Challenge efforts. It introduces an illustrative sample of principles, practices, and resources to consider in building your local initiatives. Ideas and resources may not apply equally in every community as there is no one-size-fits-all solution to these complex issues.*

**Practice 1: Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Programs**

Apprenticeship programs involve on-the-job training coupled with related classroom-based training for students. Apprenticeships also are called dual-training programs because participants receive training both in the workplace and at school. Registered apprenticeship programs – in which employers pay apprentices wages, while in industry-developed technical training, often in conjunction with unions and training institutions – are particularly effective, resulting in an average of around \$300,000 more in lifetime earnings than counterparts who do not complete apprenticeships. Pre-apprenticeship programs provide job training and education to young people and help prepare participants for successful participation in apprenticeship programs.

**Practice 2: Sectoral Training**

High-quality sectoral job training programs help workers and employers build the country's fiscal future. Initial findings from a rigorous, random assignment evaluation of sectoral strategies indicate that roughly two years after completing their sectoral training, participants were more likely to be employed and to be working longer than their control group counterparts. Members of this group, on average, worked more hours each month, received a higher hourly wage, and

earned about \$4,500 per year more than those in the control group. Participants who received the training were also more likely to obtain jobs that offered work-related benefits, such as employer-paid health insurance, vacation, and sick leave. Sectoral employment programs are promising because of their potential to help not only workers but also industries that are facing critical skills gaps, such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and information technology.

**Practice 3: Community-based Public Agency / Non-profit Partner Programs**

Community-based programs that partner public agencies with non-profits (e.g., YouthBuild) allow young people ages 16 to 24 to work full-time toward high school equivalency credentials or diplomas, while learning job skills by building affordable housing for homeless and low-income people in their communities. Emphasis is placed on leadership development, community service, and the creation of a positive mini-community of adults and youth committed to each other's success. Students may earn AmeriCorps education awards through their homebuilding and other community service. At exit, they are often placed in college, jobs, or both.

### PROGRAMMATIC SUCCESS IN THE FIELD

*The following programs are highlights received from organizations participating in the MBK Community Challenge. Their efforts are not sponsored, supervised, or independently evaluated by the U.S. Government.*

**Snapshot 1: Economic Opportunity Initiative (EOI) – Portland, OR**

The City of Portland's EOI funds community-based organizations that provide financial and / or technical assistance for low-to-moderate income small business owners through its microenterprise program. Each project is tailored to specific groups of low-income residents and assists participants – more than half of whom are members of racial or ethnic minority groups – in accessing the technical and legal services, capital, peer support, and mentoring needed for success.

**Key Takeaways**

- Contracted organizations are held accountable for providing personalized services and increasing the incomes and / or assets of the identified group by 25 percent over three years

**Snapshot 2: I-BEST – State of Washington**

Developed by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the I-BEST program integrates basic skills instruction and GED attainment with occupational classes to increase the rate at which adult basic skills students advance through coursework leading to certificates and associate degrees in high-demand fields. A basic skills instructor and an occupational instructor team teach occupational courses, and students receive college-level credit for the occupational coursework.

**Key Takeaways**

- I-BEST has shown positive results in terms of college credit, awards (ABE, GED, ESL), and basic skills test gains

**Snapshot 3: GED Bridge to Health and Business Program – New York, NY**

The GED Bridge program represents a collaboration between the New York City Mayor's Office of Adult Education, the New York State Department of Labor, MetLife Foundation, and LaGuardia Community College. Rather than focusing solely on helping students pass the GED test, the Bridge program is designed as a pathway to college and careers. Students attend more hours in class over the course of a semester than is typical for GED programs and receive intensive advising from full-time Bridge staff. The foundation of the GED Bridge program is its "contextualized curriculum," designed (1) to build the skills that are tested on the GED exam through the use of content specific to a field of interest (health or business); and (2) to develop general academic habits and skills that prepare students to succeed in college or certification programs.

**Key Takeaways**

- Compared with students who went through the traditional GED Prep course, Bridge students were much more likely to complete the semester of classes
- Bridge students were more than twice as likely to pass the GED exam as GED Prep students
- GED Bridge students were more than three times as likely to enroll in a City University of New York community college as GED Prep students

## MY BROTHER'S KEEPER *Community Challenge*

# Successfully Entering the Workforce

## STEP 3: Take Action

### TURNING THEORY INTO ACTION: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

Now is the time to drive impact in helping youth successfully enter the workforce.

Here are some helpful resources to get you started. *These resources include information and examples from nongovernmental sources. These resources are provided for informational purposes only. Inclusion of nongovernmental information and resources does not indicate endorsement by the White House or the U.S. government of entities, their products or services, and the information contained at referenced sites does not necessarily reflect the official views of the U.S. government.*

#### Implement Broad Growth and Opportunity Agenda

**FindYouthInfo.gov:** This federal website provides information, strategies, tools, and resources for youth, families, schools, and community organizations related to a variety of cross-cutting topics that affect youth.

Access the platform here:

<http://www.FindYouthInfo.gov>

**Innovations and Future Directions for Workforce Development:** The U.S. Department of Labor's Workforce Systems Strategies website identifies a range of effective strategies and practices that are based on evidence and research. The Urban Institute has also published a paper that highlights both challenges and promising workforce innovations and practices for ensuring an effective U.S. workforce system. ***This is not a U.S. Government guidance document.***

Access the Workforce Systems Strategies here:

<http://strategies.workforce3one.org/>

Access the Urban Institute paper here:

<http://www.urban.org/publications/412884.html>

#### Help Grow and Improve Summer Jobs Initiatives

**Connecting Youth & Business: A Toolkit for Employers:** This Gap Inc. toolkit provides information for businesses to create clear, community-supported, and mutually beneficial experiences for young people. Complete with case studies of best practices, the toolkit guides businesses down the pathways that best match the company's assets and readiness to provide youth the skills they need for employment and adulthood. ***This is not a U.S. Government guidance document.***

Access the toolkit here:

[http://oppportunitynation.org/app/uploads/2014/06/ON\\_Youth\\_Business\\_Toolkit.pdf](http://oppportunitynation.org/app/uploads/2014/06/ON_Youth_Business_Toolkit.pdf)

#### Consult Research Evidence on What Works

**Department of Labor Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR):** CLEAR's mission is to make research on labor topics accessible to practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and the public more broadly. CLEAR summarizes the research evidence on labor-related issues to inform decisions about policies and programs.

Access CLEAR here:

<http://clear.dol.gov>

**Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse:** The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) is a resource for informed education decision making. To reach this goal, the WWC identifies studies that provide credible and reliable evidence of the effectiveness of a given practice, program, or policy (referred to as "interventions"), and disseminates summary information and reports on the WWC website.

Access WWC here:

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

#### Increase Entry-Level Job, Mentorship, and Apprenticeship Options

**Career Pathways Exchange:** This U.S. Department of Education platform provides interested stakeholders access to resources and guidance to assist them in developing, expanding, and strengthening their career pathways systems.

Access the platform here:

<https://lincs.ed.gov/programs/movingpathways/career-pathways-exchange>

**Expanding Apprenticeship:** Apprenticeship is a time-honored method for preparing workers to master occupational skills and achieve career success. This Urban Institute paper explores ways apprenticeship training can increase skills and help more workers enter rewarding careers. ***This is not a U.S. Government guidance document.***

Access the paper here:

<http://www.urban.org/publications/901384.html>

**Office of Apprenticeship:** The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship website provides information about a wealth of apprenticeship topics, including grants, the Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium (RACC), military and veteran-specific information, data and statistics, a Competency Model Clearinghouse, success stories, and E-tools. It also includes a playbook for employers, educational institutions, training providers, and workforce development professionals on how to leverage federal funding sources to support apprenticeships.

Access the Office of Apprenticeship here:

<http://www.doleta.gov/oa>

Access the Playbook here:

<http://www.doleta.gov/oa/federalresources/playbook.pdf>

**Grads of Life:** The Grads of Life campaign seeks to change perceptions employers have of young people with atypical resumes. The GradsOfLife.org website offers the tools to connect leading employers to employment pathways, including mentoring, school-to-work, internships, and hiring. ***This is not a U.S. Government guidance document.***

Access the platform here:

<http://gradsoflife.org/about/>

**Young Entrepreneurs:** The U.S. Small Business Administration provides online training courses that introduce young entrepreneurs to the basics of creating and financing a successful business. Young entrepreneurs will learn to evaluate ideas, choose the best financing options, and legally register their business.

Access the training here:

<http://www.sba.gov/tools/sba-learning-center/training/young-entrepreneurs>

En Español:

<http://www.sba.gov/tools/sba-learning-center/training/>

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