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[1]:

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

[1]*Access the MBK Task Force Report here:* **http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/053014_mbk_report.pdf**

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER
Community Challenge

Reducing Violence and Providing a Second Chance

STEP 1:
Build Understanding

MILESTONE OVERVIEW

All children should be safe from violent crime; and individuals who are confined should receive the education, training, and treatment needed to have a real second chance.

On the path to adulthood, youth may fall victim to violence or experience an interaction with the juvenile and criminal justice systems that permanently alters their trajectory for the worse. While crime and incarceration rates have generally decreased across the United States in recent years, violence continues to plague many communities and disproportionately affect communities of color. Persons of color disproportionately have contact with law enforcement, are overrepresented in correctional settings, and face disparate treatment in the juvenile justice system. Our criminal justice data needs to be improved to help us better understand the underlying issues in this realm.

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

- Reduce Violence in High-Risk Communities by Integrating Public Health Approaches
- Reform the Juvenile and Criminal Justice Systems to Keep Youth and Young Adults on Track
- Encourage Law Enforcement and Neighborhoods to Work Together
- Eliminate Unnecessary Barriers to Reentry and Encourage Fair Chance Hiring Options
- Address Possibility of Disproportionate Minority Contact
- Improve Data

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**

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:

Seek out DOJ resources to support local **law enforcement** in building trust within the community

Enlist local **non-profit leaders** to continue supporting youth in the system and reintegration efforts

Recruit, employ, and retain **highly qualified teachers** to create effective learning environments for youth in secure placement settings

LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIAL

Encourage **criminal justice officials** to increase diversion programs and use alternatives to incarceration

Urge **business leaders** to engage in fair hiring practices for young people with conviction records

Engage **youth** to help them understand their role in reducing violence and to educate on perceptions of law enforcement

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. The trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve can be strengthened through **deliberate efforts to facilitate racial reconciliation, enhance procedural justice, and reduce implicit bias.**

2. There is tremendous opportunity for policies and practices to help address the disproportionate contact of overrepresented youth with law enforcement and the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Where contact occurs, policies and practices should be implemented to **reduce reliance on confinement and produce better outcomes for those who do enter the system.**

3. **Successful reentry programs** are critical to addressing the many needs of and challenges faced by individuals released from prison, jail, or juvenile facilities. Services provided through reentry programs support individuals in making the initial transition back to the community and facilitate the development of skills needed to reduce the likelihood of future criminal activity. Multifaceted reentry and rehabilitation programs address necessities such as housing, medical care, and emergency assistance. These programs also assist individuals in obtaining educational support services, job training, as well as mental health and substance abuse counseling through referrals to community-based service providers. Furthermore, successful reentry programs address workforce development and reduce hiring barriers / collateral consequences that place returning citizens at a disadvantage when searching for viable employment.

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER
Community Challenge

Reducing Violence and Providing a Second Chance

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: Group-based Violence Intervention
Group-based violence intervention focuses enforcement and social service resources on the small number of individuals most likely to commit violent crimes. First developed by the Boston Gun Project, it uses a focused deterrence strategy to directly communicate the consequences of violence to at-risk gang members. When implemented with fidelity, the intervention has generated between a 31 percent and 63 percent reduction in homicides in cities across the country, while contributing to a decrease in shots-fired calls and gun assaults.

Practice 2: Justice Reinvestment
Justice reinvestment is a data-driven approach to improve public safety, examine corrections and related criminal justice spending, manage and allocate criminal justice populations in a more cost-effective manner, and reinvest savings in strategies that can hold individuals offenders accountable, decrease crime, and strengthen neighborhoods. Justice reinvestment provides technical assistance to states and localities as they collect and analyze data on drivers of criminal justice populations and costs, identify and implement changes to increase efficiencies, and measure both the fiscal and public safety impacts of those changes. Research has shown that justice reinvestment could save the nation billions of dollars over the next decade.

Practice 3: Reducing Unnecessary Use of Detention
Local juvenile detention alternative initiatives operate across the country to keep low-risk juveniles out of detention and increase the adoption of more effective interventions. Since its launch, sites participating in juvenile detention alternative initiatives have reduced their average daily detention populations by 43 percent.

Practice 4: Eliminate Disproportionate Minority Contact
The Models for Change program stresses local innovation to juvenile justice reform. The initiative supports a network of government and court officials, legal advocates, educators, community leaders, and families, focused on developing research-based tools and techniques to make juvenile justice more equitable, rational, and developmentally appropriate.

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: Neighborhood Opportunity Network (NeON) – New York, NY

The NeON initiative is a decentralized, community-based probation approach that is tailored to the unique needs of neighborhoods with a high concentration of individuals on probation. The core component of a NeON site is a network of community organizations, government agencies, local businesses, and community residents that connects probation clients to opportunities, resources, and services. The network aims to improve clients' outcomes and make communities safer and stronger.

Key Takeaways

- By working in their clients' communities and building supportive relations between the department and local communities, probation officers are more engaged with their clients and their families, and more likely to collaborate on community events and projects

- Initial outcomes reveal that six-month re-arrest rates are lower among clients aged 16-24 assigned to a NeON site (25.6 percent), compared to individuals with the same risk level assigned to a traditional probation caseload (33.1 percent)

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER
Community Challenge

Reducing Violence and Providing a Second Chance

STEP 3:
Take Action

TURNING THEORY INTO ACTION: INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

Now is the time to drive impact by ensuring community safety, including building trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve and improving overall outcomes for justice-involved youth and young adults by helping them get the education, treatment, and training they need to succeed in life.

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.***

Reduce Violence in High-Risk Communities by Integrating Public Health Approaches

Center for Disease Control's (CDC) STRYVE Online: STRYVE Online is CDC's Youth Violence Prevention Technical Assistance Portal and offers the essential "how to" that enables the strategic planning, implementation, and evaluation of a youth violence prevention approach. Preventing youth violence is a shared responsibility among all those who shape the relationships and environments where youth live, learn, and develop. STRYVE Online connects people who create safe and healthy communities to resources that help communities prevent youth violence.

Access the online platform here:
http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/STRYVE/index.html

Reform the Juvenile and Criminal Justice Systems to Keep Youth and Young Adults on Track

Information Sharing to Support Juvenile Justice Reform: Cities are joining and strengthening a national juvenile justice reform movement. Sharing information and aligning policy decisions are key steps that communities can take to further juvenile justice reform goals. This National League of Cities brief outlines important first steps for building an information sharing structure to enhance juvenile justice reform. **This is not a U.S. Government guidance document.**

Access the NLC brief here:
http://www.modelsforchange.net/publications/647

Encourage Law Enforcement and Neighborhoods to Work Together

National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention (the Forum) Strategic Planning Toolkit for Communities: The Departments of Justice and Education launched the Forum to begin a national conversation about youth and gang violence. In addition, the Forum was created to build the capacity of communities to raise awareness about and more effectively address youth violence through comprehensive planning and the sharing of common challenges and promising strategies. The strategies employed in Forum cities are available through a toolkit that describes how to coordinate resources.

Access the toolkit here:
http://ojp.gov/fbnp/pdfs/forum_toolkit.pdf

Eliminate Unnecessary Barriers to Reentry and Encourage Fair Chance Hiring Options

Improving Correctional Education: When young people are incarcerated, it is important, and sometimes required, that they be provided educational programming. According to research, a one dollar investment in prison education translates into reducing incarceration costs by four or five dollars during the first three years after release. Those who receive vocational training are significantly more likely to be employed after release than those who did not receive this training.

Access the Bureau of Justice Assistance study here:
https://www.bja.gov/Publications/RAND_Correctional-Education-Meta-Analysis.pdf

Ban the Box: U.S. Cities, Counties, and States Adopt Fair Hiring Policies to Reduce Unfair Barriers to Employment of People with Criminal Records: This National Employment Law Center guide summarizes the approaches of almost 70 cities and counties across the U.S. that have taken steps to adopt "ban the box" fair hiring initiatives. The guide provides key information for local officials and advocates to initiate reforms in their communities. **This is not a U.S. Government guidance document.**

Access the guide here:
http://www.nelp.org/page/-/SCLP/Ban-the-Box-Fair-Chance-State-and-Local-Guide.pdf?nocdn=1pdf?nocdn=1

To learn more about the Federal Interagency Reentry Council, see:
http://csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc/projects/firc/

Address Possibility of Disproportionate Minority Contact

Ensuring Fairness in Juvenile Justice Systems: Under the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 2002, states are required to address the overrepresentation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system. By preventing Disproportionate Minority Contact with the juvenile justice system, a community can lower the rate of disproportionate minority confinement and enhance the administration of justice.

Access Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Bulletin Here:
https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/218861.pdf

Improve Data

National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS): Many jurisdictions have moved from the summary Uniform Crime Report (UCR) to incident-based data collection and reporting. NIBRS can furnish information on nearly every major criminal justice issue facing law enforcement today by providing more comprehensive data for planning, training, management, and operations. Furthermore, it offers a larger capability to break down and combine crime offense data into specific information, which assists law enforcement in acquiring the resources needed to fight crime.

Access Information about NIBRS Here:
http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/nibrs/2012

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