

Hispanic Boys and Young Men

Unlocking Their Full Potential to Benefit All Americans



"We need to give every child, no matter what they look like, where they live, the chance to reach their full potential. Because if we do – if we help these wonderful young men become better husbands and fathers, and well-educated, hardworking, good citizens – then not only will they contribute to the growth and prosperity of this country, but they will pass on those lessons on to their children, on to their grandchildren, will start a different cycle. And this country will be richer and stronger for it – for generations to come."

– President Barack Obama, February 27, 2014

The American economy has confronted severe challenges in recent years, and is now growing again. The President has called upon his administration to make sure that every American shares in that growth. That includes guaranteeing every child in America has access to a world-class education that builds the skills they need to compete in the workforce, access to a job with decent wages, the opportunity to save for retirement, and access to quality, reliable healthcare. The President's agenda is designed to build more ladders of opportunity into the middle class for anybody who's willing to work hard to climb them.

But for decades, opportunity has disproportionately lagged behind for boys and young men of color – particularly in African American and Latino communities. By almost every measure, the group that continues to face some of the most severe challenges in the 21st century in this country is boys and young men of color.

THE NEED

Data shows that Hispanic and other boys and young men of color, regardless of socio-economic background, are disproportionately at risk throughout the journey from their youngest years to college and career. For instance, large disparities remain in reading proficiency, with 82 percent of Hispanic boys reading below proficiency levels by the fourth grade, compared to 58 percent of white boys. Additionally, the disproportionate number of Hispanic young men who are unemployed or involved in the criminal justice system alone is a perilous drag on state budgets, and undermines family and community stability. These young men are more than six times as likely to be victims of murder than their white peers and, when combined with African American men, account for almost half of the country's murder victims each year.

Reducing these disparities is critical because Hispanics are the largest, youngest, and fastest-growing minority group in the nation, and will account for an ever larger portion of the workforce in the future. According to the U.S. Bureau

of Labor Statistics, Latinos will account for 80 percent of the total growth of the labor force from 2010 to 2050, doubling from just 15 percent to 30 percent, and making up nearly one-third of all workers. Currently, Hispanic men tend to be concentrated in lower-skilled, lower-wage jobs. The career paths of the Hispanic community, men in particular, will affect the future economic success of the nation.

THE GOAL

Across the country, communities are developing and implementing promising and proven approaches to help put young people on paths to opportunity and success. Building on those efforts and marshaling the resources of the federal government, the President has announced a new initiative, [*My Brother's Keeper*](#) to build ladders of opportunity for boys and young men of color, including Hispanics.

The My Brother's Keeper effort will improve measurably the expected educational and life outcomes for and address the persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color. The initiative will help determine the public and private efforts that are working and how to expand upon them, how the Federal Government's own policies and programs can better support these efforts, and how to better involve State and local officials, the private sector, and the philanthropic community.

By focusing on the critical challenges, risk factors, and opportunities for boys and young men of color at key life stages, we can improve their long-term outcomes and ability to contribute to the Nation's competitiveness, economic mobility and growth, and civil society. The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics (WHIEEH) will work to reduce barriers and build on promising and proven practices to ensure that Hispanic boys and young men are able to reach their full potential.

THE PLAN

To advance the goals of the President's My Brother's Keeper initiative, the WHIEEH is focusing on identifying and increasing impact in key areas, including: early learning and school readiness, parenting and family engagement, third grade literacy, educational opportunity and college access, school discipline, postsecondary affordability and completion, diversity in the teaching profession, interactions with the criminal justice system, ladders to jobs and economic opportunity, and health families and communities.

WHIEEH also will work closely with the leadership of the My Brother's Keeper federal task force, which will:

- Assess the impact of Federal policies, regulations, and programs of general applicability on boys and young men of color, so as to develop proposals that will enhance positive outcomes and eliminate or reduce negative ones.
- Recommend, where appropriate, incentives for the broad adoption by national, State, and local public and private decision makers of effective and innovative strategies and practices for providing opportunities to and improving outcomes for boys and young men of color.
- Create an Administration-wide "What Works" online portal to disseminate successful programs and practices that improve outcomes for boys and young men of color.
- Develop a comprehensive public website, to be maintained by the Department of Education that will assess, on an ongoing basis, critical indicators of life outcomes for boys and young men of color in absolute and relative terms.
- Work with external stakeholders to highlight the opportunities, challenges, and efforts affecting boys and young men of color.
- Recommend to the President means of ensuring sustained efforts within the Federal Government and continued partnership with the private sector and philanthropic community as set forth in the Presidential Memorandum.

Finally, the WHIEEH will hold events – roundtable discussions, listening sessions, online forums, and other

activities with community stakeholders to highlight this issue, identify "bright spots," or promising and proven practices that support Hispanic boys and young men, and encourage investment in efforts that advance the goal of helping Latino males reach their full potential.

A CLOSE PARTNERSHIP

Leading foundations and businesses have long worked with others in philanthropy to create opportunities for young men and boys of color and today are committing significant resources to research critical intervention points in the lives of boys and young men of color; change the often-damaging narrative about them; and catalyze coordinated investments to seed, replicate, and scale up effective community solutions. An [Executives' Alliance](#) of philanthropic leaders is meeting the President's My Brother's Keeper challenge by committing resources to advance its goals.

At the same time, researchers and institutions are increasingly focusing on this population, collecting and analyzing data to determine its needs and challenges. For the Latino community, there is a particular need for more data, analysis, and scholarship on Hispanic boys and young men, as well as more awareness about the challenges they face, so that solutions can be implemented and supported. The WHIEEH will work closely with partners in the academic, philanthropic, business, and nonprofit sector, as well as leaders at the state and local level to lift up what works and help expand proven solutions.

The WHIEEH is committed to unlocking the full potential of Hispanic boys and young men, and other males of color – something that will not only benefit them, but all Americans.

Learn more about My Brother's Keeper at www.whitehouse.gov/my-brothers-keeper, and about WHIEEH's efforts at <http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/hispanic-initiative/2014/02/my-brothers-keeper/>



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