



ABFE

**A Philanthropic Partnership
for Black Communities**

Current Black Men & Boys Investments in California: A LANDSCAPE SCAN



ABFE
A Philanthropic Partnership
for Black Communities

*Produced by Gregory Hodge, Khepera Consulting
for the Association of Black Foundation Executives*

August 2012

Section I: Landscape Scan

For purposes of this report, the investments are categorized as public systems transformation of two distinct types: (1) cross-agency system reform and individual agency/system reform, (2) Policy Advocacy & Community Organizing; (3) Direct Services; and (4) Research and Analysis on BMB issues.

Several of the investments also include efforts to change the public perception and image of Black males; while they are not as significant in scale, they are described here as well.

(1) Public Systems Transformation

Cross-agency Systems Reform

Boys and Men of Color (BMoC) Leadership Roundtable in Alameda County (Oakland, CA)

Funder: The California Endowment

Purpose of the Leadership Roundtable

Beginning in 2010, the California Endowment (TCE) has convened a range of stakeholders to pay specific attention to the needs and challenges of African American boys in the City of Oakland, California. Participants include a cross-section of all of the major youth-serving public systems - Oakland Unified School District, Alameda County Probation, Alameda County Social Services Agency, Alameda County Health Department, Oakland Police Department, City of Oakland- as well as community-based youth development organizations including Youth Uprising, Unity Council, Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, and others.

Supported by TCE staff, a team of consultants, and staff from the participating public entities, the Leadership Roundtable has worked to create a strategy to accomplish the following:

- 1. Synchronize work across systems and with community-based organizations.** The leaders identified the need to increase the synchronization of work across agencies and organizations to better serve boys and men of color in Alameda County.
- 2. Identify work that should move from synchronization to developing synergies.** The leaders recognized that while synchronizing work across systems and organizations represents a worthwhile goal, the Leadership Table also provides an opportunity to move some work from synchronizing efforts to creating synergies that yield more than the component parts - and that is essential to sustaining the Leadership Table efforts.

Introduction

The following report provides a brief description of current foundation investments in California aimed at improving the life conditions of Black Men and Boys (BMB). It will provide insight into the following questions:

- 1) What are the major funder investments in California that are focused on the opportunities and challenges facing (BMB) in California? Section I. Landscape Analysis
- 2) How, when viewed in the aggregate, do the current investments show potential for synergy and scalability? Section II. The Potential of Coordinated Investments
- 3) How might this work inform the field in the context of the national philanthropic landscape and make critical connections? Section III. Making the National Connections.



ABFE

A Philanthropic Partnership
for Black Communities



3. **“Re-culture” the public systems.** The leaders of the Roundtable identified the need to change the culture and behavior of public systems as it relates to males of color. This includes reframing the narrative of boys of color, rapidly responding to politically-sensitive agenda items, and capitalizing on resource and partnership opportunities. The Leadership Table could play a role in each of these areas and add value to individual agency efforts and initiatives.

- Development of a policy and advocacy agenda; and
- Work on common needs around communications, internal and cross systems capacity building to address issues of race, gender, equity, etc. to re-culture organizations (i.e. public systems data sharing, professional development, cultural proficiency of staff).

Individual Agency/System Reform

African American Male Achievement Initiative - Oakland Unified School District

Funder: Open Society Foundations

Though the effort began as a singularly focused effort on Black boys, the group has made critical decisions to work with their Latino, Asian Pacific Islander and Native American counterparts. This has been accomplished without losing the unique cultural focus that the group believes is necessary to drive toward better outcomes for Black boys. Using John Powell’s formulation of “targeted universalism,” the Roundtable is committed to the articulated racial focus, while exploring the lessons and implications for serving all children in the city.

The Oakland Unified School District (“OUSD”) African-American Male Achievement (“AAMA”) Program is an ambitious, holistic, systemic reform design. The Program has been incorporated throughout the OUSD. A new department focused on African-American males (“AAMs”) is overseeing a systematic change in the OUSD, including the way the District thinks about its curriculum, classroom pedagogy, instruction, community and parent engagement, and its interaction with a variety of government, educational, and private sector organizations.

For example, beginning with a focus on African American boys, the Oakland Unified School District’s African American Male Achievement initiative provided a focal point for services which are delivered to this set of students (see next section for details of the Initiative). After some conversations about the political ramifications and pitfalls of focusing on Black boys solely, the Roundtable engaged the Unity Council, a long standing community development organization with its base in the Latino community, as an anchor for Latino boys. The Unity Council has organized culturally specific training programs as a pilot project in partnership with OUSD which parallel those offered to Black boys. Recently, the East Bay Asian Youth Center and the Intertribal House have been engaged to address the Asian-Pacific Islander and Native American male populations, respectively. As the work proceeds, the Roundtable’s leadership remains committed to an intense focus on these populations of boys in ways which are culturally targeted and sustainable in the current political and social environment.

Although still in its early stages, this mixture of internal reform and external engagement is one of the most innovative district-wide K-12 approaches in the nation. In addition, the early success of the Program in attracting partners and winning support from internal groups, and the strong endorsement from outside experts provides access to best practices from around the state, region and country. AAMA provides an excellent example of how to integrate the concerns of AAM students throughout the culture and institutions of an entire public school district.¹

Roundtable leadership has identified four strategies that are essential to advancing a BMoC agenda in Alameda County:

Background Information

OUSD AAMA, located in Oakland, California, was founded in 2010 to address the large gap in performance between AAMs and other students in a number of key areas, including academic achievement, graduation, attendance, suspension rates, and incarceration. In the 2010-11 school year, 6,415 African American boys were enrolled in OUSD, accounting for 17% of the 37,527 students enrolled in the District.

- Development of a portfolio of BMoC programs and strategies;
 - Family and community supports specific to Black males, such as:
 - School Environment conducive to Black male students
 - Individualized academic and wellness plans for all Black male students (as well as Latino boys who are the rising 5th graders in the District – 1250 students total)
- Public and community systems alignment around efforts to facilitate economic and workforce development for BMoC;

AAMA is a mixture of school-based programmatic changes, community involvement, and data gathering and dissemination to identify and rectify structural conditions hampering the development of AAMs. The Program disseminates information designed to create a greater

¹ From an undated report from the Barthwell Group.

understanding and sensitivity to AAMs within the OUSD, in the broader Oakland community, and among other educational leaders.

For example, in a recent report prepared and released by Urban Strategies Council, "[A Closer Look at Attendance of African American Males \(AAM\) in OUSD](#)," the Council examines data, best practices, and policies related to attendance and chronic absence and offers recommendations for reducing the levels of chronic absence for AAM in OUSD. The report analyzes one year of attendance data (2010-2011) for AAM in OUSD, looking at chronic absence by grade level, types of absence, and reasons given for absence, as well as comparing rates of chronic absence for AAMs to other male groups in OUSD. Also examined and analyzed are reasons for attendance disparities for AAMs and recommendations for addressing them from a survey of research literature. Finally, the report's authors analyzed California Education Code, OUSD School Board policy, teacher contracts and guides, and the OUSD Parent Guide to help formulate recommendations for OUSD policy, procedure and practice to address disproportionately high levels of chronic absence among AAMs.

(For the full report, go to:
www.urbanstrategies.org/aamai/images/docs/AAMAI_AttendanceReport.pdf)

Beginning in 2011, AAMA has developed a series of pilot programs (leveraging national K-12 reform program best practices) to improve academic performance of AAM students throughout the OUSD. Much of the programmatic effort is focused at the middle-school level, because rectifying gaps in AAM performance is most effective when implemented early in the academic careers of students.

AAMA is currently organizing regular parent summits, has implemented manhood training classes in ten Oakland public school classrooms, and will open a Black male academy, in partnership with 100 Black Men, in the fall of 2012.

(3) Policy Advocacy & Community Organizing

California State Assembly Select Committee Hearings on the status of Men and Boys of Color

Funder: The California Endowment

During the first few months of 2012, the Assembly Select Committee on the Status of Boys and Men Color held successful, local hearings in Oakland, Los Angeles and Fresno, California. The committee, which is chaired by Assembly Member Sandré Swanson, heard the testimony of a diverse cadre of youth, community, and leaders in front of audiences of hundreds of people collectively in the three cities.

Planning and outreach for the hearing was led by leaders of a local partnership to improve the health, educational, and economic outcomes among boys and men of color in each venue. The partners, who are focusing their attention on the Statewide Building Healthy Communities

sites, BMoC leadership tables and local alliances and coalitions representing vulnerable communities, presented the committee with data on the status of boys and men of color in their cities and recommended that the state take comprehensive action to strengthen and expand community and system efforts that are in progress in the three cities who participated.

There are a number of bills from the California State Assembly Select Committee on the Status of Boys and Men of Color that are currently being targeted for community support. These bills focus on education, employment and wealth, health, safety and juvenile justice, and youth development. In particular, the current package of bills related to school push-out issues that a number of community advocates and civil rights organizations are moving. They include:

- SB 1235 (Steinberg): Requires schools with high rates of suspension to implement evidence-based, school-wide behavioral strategies aimed at reducing behaviors that lead to suspension.
- AB 1729 (Ammiano): Strengthens the existing law that says suspensions may be imposed only after "other means of correction" have failed to bring about proper conduct.
- AB 2145 (Alejo & Dickinson): Requires that expulsion and suspension data already collected by the state be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, special education status, English learner status, socioeconomic status, and gender and cross-tabulated by gender and race.

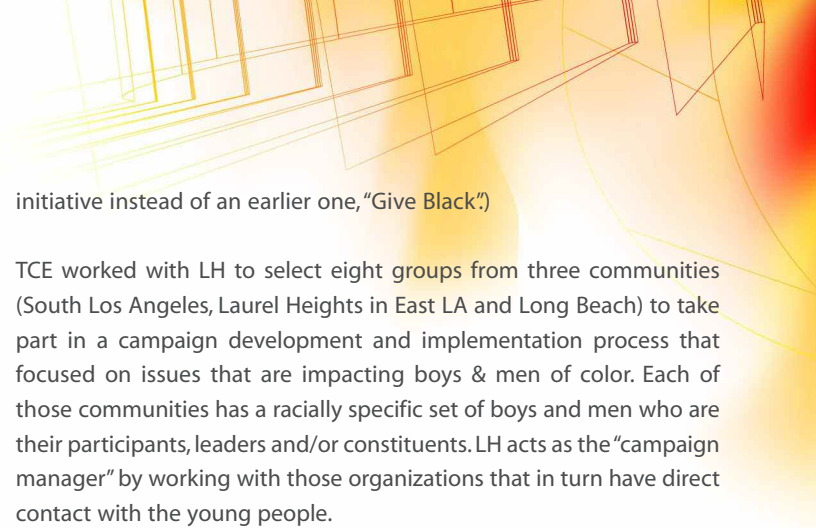
The Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, a partnership of advocates, organizations and individuals was formed in to advance the state-wide policy advocacy work. Its efforts include training Black and Brown boys and others to be advocates for the policy agenda in the state during the Assembly hearing process. Those efforts may very well be the basis for a broad-based effort to create public will that will sustain the BMB work. In addition, it has encouraged cross-city information sharing and network development in Oakland, Los Angeles and Fresno.

Alignment With Place-Based Community Change Initiatives

Building Healthy Communities Initiatives (BHC)

Funder: The California Endowment

This effort is a 10-year, \$1 billion program that involves 14 communities across the state that are taking action to make where they live healthier including strategies to improve employment opportunities, education, housing, neighborhood safety, unhealthy environmental conditions, access to healthy foods and more. The goal is to create places where children are healthy, safe and ready to learn. In each BHC community, there is an intentional effort to connect the initiative's outcome to improvements for African-American and Latino males.



Specifically, in the ten articulated outcomes of the BHC, each community is committed to the following: “Health gaps for boys and young men of color are narrowed. Addressing the social, educational and economic disadvantages faced by boys and young men of color is essential to community health. Success here means equity in schools, more job opportunities, more alternatives to incarceration and new youth development approaches tailored to them.”

Grant Investments, Leadership Training, and Alliance Building

Funder: The California Endowment (TCE)

Managing Partner: Liberty Hill Foundation (LH)

This major effort in southern California is funded primarily by TCE and managed by LH. Its purpose is to support a cohort of Los Angeles nonprofits to work with core at-risk Black and Brown populations to improve their health and well-being. Through community based participatory research and community organizing, these organizations will identify priorities – discovering what policy changes to fight for, what new practices to support, and how to be heard by elected officials, government agencies and voters. LH is supporting the work through grant making, leadership development, technical training and support, and network building.

The long-term aspects of LH’s work with their partners in the region is two-fold:

- To advocate for policy change which disrupts the school to prison pipeline; and
- To build the leadership capacity of young boys of color to advance that change.

Because of the particular dynamics in a region where African Americans comprise no more than 8% of the population, it has not been viewed as practical or politically feasible to articulate the work as “Black male” specific. As one informant indicated, “BMOC was the code word for Black male work” within major philanthropy when efforts began in earnest in the last several years. In contrast, smaller foundations, (namely the California Community Foundation), have referred to its efforts as Black male focused and specific.

The City and County of Los Angeles is huge and complex in almost every regard- politically, socially, and economically. There are not very many effective county-wide coalitions. It is hoped that this effort will have impact and inform other efforts over time. What has emerged is called the Brother, Sons, Selves Coalition. Prior to selecting a name for the effort, LH commissioned researchers at UCLA to provide advice. It was determined that a more inclusive term would help secure key allies. LH followed the advice to use a name which might resonate with concerned parents as opposed to concerned residents. (Similarly LH choose the name “Uplifting Change” for its Black Philanthropy

initiative instead of an earlier one, “Give Black.”)

TCE worked with LH to select eight groups from three communities (South Los Angeles, Laurel Heights in East LA and Long Beach) to take part in a campaign development and implementation process that focused on issues that are impacting boys & men of color. Each of those communities has a racially specific set of boys and men who are their participants, leaders and/or constituents. LH acts as the “campaign manager” by working with those organizations that in turn have direct contact with the young people.

The work is focused on leadership development and skill building of boys and young men of color to enable them to become real leaders in their communities. The goal is to train 200 boys and young men from these three communities that have obtained significant skills to support their change efforts.

Prior to making a major investment, TCE engaged LH to conduct a landscape analysis: they asked who were the major players in this arena; what issues should be addressed; what would be effective intervention points; what policies should be changed or advocated for. They conducted interviews with approximately 75 informants in focus groups settings. Three key themes emerged –

- First, the populations that were at the center of the inquiry were not connected to health services in meaningful ways. As a result, the scan identified opportunities associated with the implementation of the federal Affordable Care Act. In addition, they found that care, when accessible, was not culturally competent. They learned that by and large, that care did not account for trauma that happened to clients.
- Secondly, meaningful employment opportunities were practically non-existent for the young men and boys in those neighborhoods. There is a dearth of jobs and men and boys of color are not getting them. The reality of mass incarceration in various parts of an insidious system - county jail, juvenile hall, state and federal prison – made for major challenges for a group of men who find re-entry extremely difficult.
- Thirdly, public schools in Los Angeles were pushing kids out in staggering numbers. Suspension and expulsion data showed the pipeline from school to jail in full effect.

There is an additional strand of work with elected officials and systems leaders. It is an offshoot of the State Assembly hearings referenced above. That effort convenes regular policy briefings with 40 people on a quarterly basis. The idea is to engage conversations with elected official to get them involved with the coalition effort.

Dr. Robert Ross, the president and CEO of TCE has augmented this work by convening a “LA boys and men of color kitchen cabinet”. Thirteen

high visibility political movers and shakers convene to provide advice, to increase the profile of these issues, to leverage opportunities for change, and to use their prestige to advance the MBOC agenda. The group includes the California Attorney General Kamala Harris, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, the Los Angeles Unified School District Superintendent of Schools John Deasy, Congresswoman Karen Bass, attorney and activist Connie Rice, Liberty Hill CEO Kaffi Blumenfield, UCLA professor Manuel Pastor, faith leader Bishop Charles Blake and others.

LH is also managing media work connected with the campaign. The goal is to change public perceptions and create an alternative narrative about "brother, sons and selves". LH has produced a report, catalyzed social media, engaged in a number of radio interviews, and conducted briefings with local journalists, who are being convinced to do sustained coverage.

In addition, Uplifting Change is Liberty Hill's initiative to connect local donor-activists and help them leverage community assets to strengthen Black Los Angeles through philanthropic investment in grassroots community organizing. In February 2010, Liberty Hill hosted a transformative summit that convened African American donor-activists interested in investing in new solutions, strong leaders and effective organizations. Since that time, more than 100 people have been inspired to become an active part of Liberty Hill's Uplifting Change community. It is hoped that this work, though not specific to the MBOC work, will provide opportunities for leveraging resources to sustain the work over time.

At the Summit, participants:

- Connect with an intimate group of donor-activists committed to advancing social justice and building a movement of African American philanthropy;
- Learn practical tools to leverage their giving to build stronger organizations and develop new leaders in the community; and
- Hear from noted researchers about trends in African American philanthropy.

(4) Direct Services

Intergenerational Circles of Support

Brotherhood of Elders Network – Oakland, CA
Funder: The California Endowment

The Brotherhood of Elders Network is an intergenerational network of men of African descent who are developing a systematic approach to the manhood training of boys and young men in their communities. Trusted and respected elders lead the network. The purpose of the Brotherhood is to promote intergenerational fellowship and support, and to engage in "radical healing" designed to combat the effects of

racism on boys and young men of African descent by addressing the social crisis that besets youth in the community. The Brotherhood has begun to address this crisis by creating communal space for the inter-generational transfer of cultural wisdom, knowledge, and wealth, and by establishing cumulative pathways to support African-American male development – from childhood to manhood. At the heart of The Brotherhood's work is an African-centered character and manhood development training system that is fully articulated with training guidelines/procedures, detailed lesson plans, outlines, and activities designed to assist in the development of competent, confident, and conscious boys and young men of African descent.

The Brotherhood of Elders Network is composed of four age groups totaling approximately 100 men:

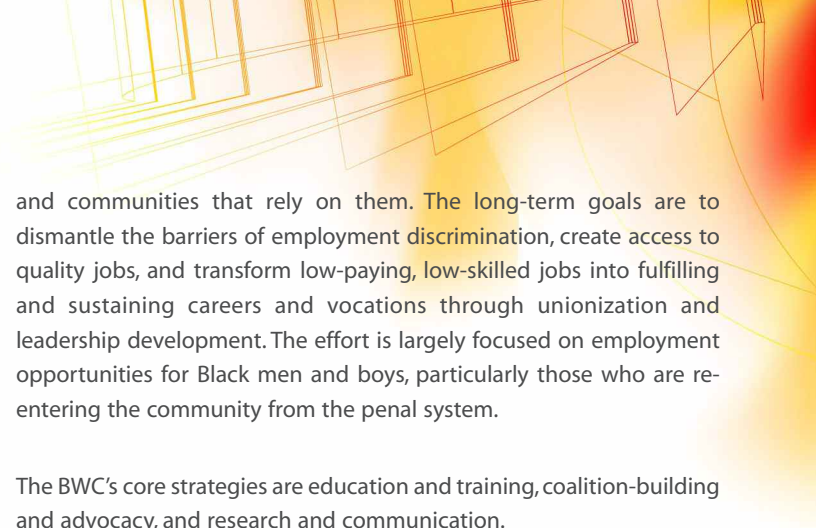
- *The Elders* - men ages 55 years and older;
- *The Brothamanhood Group* - men ages 35-55 years old;
- *The Young Warriors* - men ages 21-34 years old; and
- *The Young Brotha's* - boys and young men ages 13-20 years old.

Taken together, the Network refers to the outcomes of the training system as "The 5Cs". It is belief that as a result of the character and manhood development training system, boys and young men of African descent will become *competent, confident, and conscious* people that can and will make a positive *contribution* to the human *community* which they are part of.

Drawing on the collective talent, resources, and commitment of African-American male leadership, the Brotherhood intends to:

- Clarify and re-energize a culturally-rooted value system as a framework to build and communicate to male youth an ethics-of-character pedagogy;
- Develop and implement a community-based plan of action to strengthen a fragmented service delivery network of services/programs especially for male youth; and
- Initiate a system of manhood development training and initiation for African-American males growing into young manhood.

As part of its ongoing work, the group has been working with the City of Richmond (CA) Office of Neighborhood Safety as mentors, advisors and planners. The work entails regular support circles with young men who were formerly involved in the street culture of violence, drug dealing and despair. Those young men are now being exposed to a range of enrichment activities, mentoring and fellowship. They serve as "fellows" who are outreach workers in the toughest neighborhoods in their city.



Creating and Strengthening the College Pipeline

Funder: Mitchell Kapor (MK)Foundation
College Bound Brotherhood

The goal of this initiative is to expand the number of African American young men in the Bay Area who are prepared for a college education. MK Foundation supports nonprofit organizations that work on college readiness with young Black men in Bay Area high schools, through grants, events, and networking.

The foundation lists profiles and contact information for over 100 programs working on youth development and college readiness in their free CollegeBoundBros.org online directory; makes \$25,000 grants to nonprofit organizations that work on college readiness with young Black men, mostly in Bay Area high schools totaling \$1 million; co-organizes and co-sponsors the annual Black & Proud to Be College Bound conference (March) and the annual College Bound Graduation Celebration (June); and provides leadership and outreach opportunities through their Brotherhood Leadership Advisory Council, which consists of high school students who ensure that the foundation's projects and events remain relevant to young Black men.

Interrupting the Cycle of Mass Incarceration

BLOOM Initiative
(Building a Lifetime of Opportunities and Options for Men)
Funder: California Community Foundation (CCF)

BLOOM seeks to create a more positive and productive future for a specific population of the L.A. community: 14-18 year old Black males living in South L.A. who are or have been under the supervision of the L.A. County Probation Department. CCF and an advisory committee of community members and residents, based on research and experience over the course of more than two years, developed the initiative.

With grants and other assistance through CCF, and support and involvement by other foundations, businesses, schools, colleges, groups and concerned individuals, BLOOM provides career-based mentoring services, encourages community advocacy and organizing, changes public perception, and strengthens local nonprofits serving this population. CCF intends to open avenues to real and immediate opportunities such as scholarships, training, internships and jobs to educational and employment opportunities for 14-18 year old Black males.

Workforce Development, Job Training and Employment

Los Angeles Black Worker Center
Funder: TCE, OSF, Marguerite Casey, The California Wellness Foundation et. al.

The mission of the Los Angeles Black Worker Center (BWC) is to change public policies and corporate practices in Los Angeles in order to advance economic justice for African American workers and the families

and communities that rely on them. The long-term goals are to dismantle the barriers of employment discrimination, create access to quality jobs, and transform low-paying, low-skilled jobs into fulfilling and sustaining careers and vocations through unionization and leadership development. The effort is largely focused on employment opportunities for Black men and boys, particularly those who are re-entering the community from the penal system.

The BWC's core strategies are education and training, coalition-building and advocacy, and research and communication.

Black Labor Construction Council (BLCC)

The Black Labor Construction Council is a space for Black building and construction workers from all trades to network and develop strategies for equal access to work and leadership in the industry. The BLCC serves as an advisory committee for the development of the Black Leaders in Green leadership institute and participates on the steering committee for the Equity, Transparency, and Accountability initiative.

Black Leaders in Green (BLING)

The keystone project of the education and training strategy is the BLING Construction Institute; popular education trainings that prepare Black youth to enter pre-apprenticeship programs for green construction jobs. The main objectives of this program are to develop workers' leadership skills and build a politically conscious base of activists with a shared understanding of the Black jobs crisis.

(5) Research and Analysis on BMB issues

Investment in Research Organizations

Urban Strategies Council / The Warren Institute at Berkeley Law School
Funder: The California Endowment

Based on TCE's investment, three new studies were produced and released by the Urban Strategies Council (USC) in partnership with OUSD demonstrating that efforts to improve the education of African American boys in the District must focus on improving attendance and cutting the shockingly high suspension rate for these students. Nearly one in five OUSD students is an African American boy, and improving their educational experience is essential to achieving the District's ambitious goals for all students. The reports are posted on www.urbanstrategies.org/aamai.

USC is hosting a series of webinars to share those research findings:

- The African American Male Achievement Initiative (AAMAI) This first webinar will explain the District's African American Male Achievement Initiative, why it was formed and what work has begun to address systemic, policy and practice-based inequities for African American male students. It will provide an overview of the three major reports released focusing on suspension,

absenteeism and graduation as well as the goals established for this initiative to ensure the work is data driven and the impact can be objectively measured.

- Suspension Research Webinar. Using records from OUSD, Urban Strategies Council found that African American boys were suspended at a rate six times higher than that of white males. In 2010-2011, 18 percent of African American males were suspended at least once, compared to just three percent of white males. Almost half (44%) of these students were suspended for “willful defiance or disruption,” a highly subjective offense.

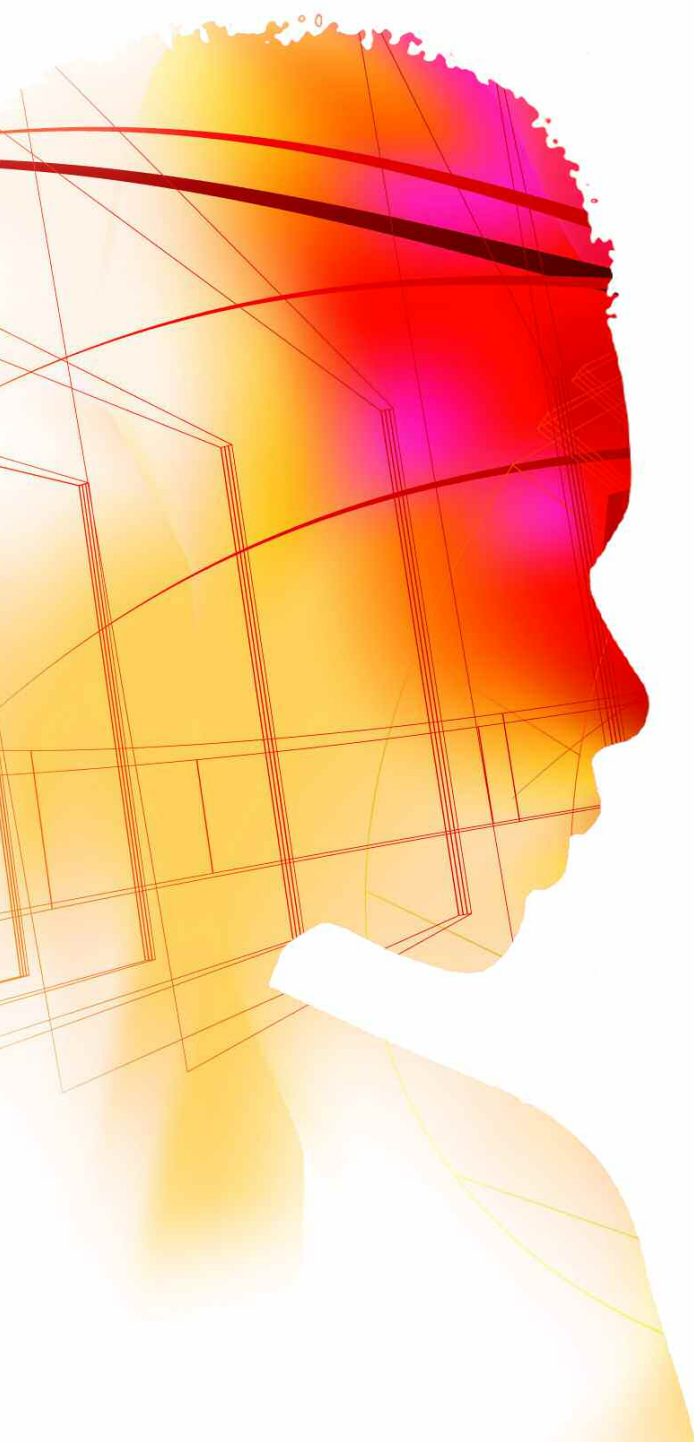
- Attendance Research Webinar. USC’s analysis found that in 2010-11, almost one in five African American males was chronically absent, missing more than 10 percent of the school year – a rate double the OUSD average. Further, not a single middle school in the district in 2010-2011 achieved the district’s goal of less than six percent of African American males chronically absent. National research shows that students who are chronically absent at any grade level are less likely to graduate or experience academic success. Improving attendance among African American boys, particularly in the earliest grades, has the potential to boost dramatically their chances of succeeding academically.
- On Track to Graduate Research Webinar. Using well-established warning signs that a student faces increased risk of not graduating from high school, Urban Strategies Council found that in 2010-11, one-third of African American boys in grades K-12 (34%) were off course for graduating from high school, compared to 20% of all students in OUSD. The warning signs were most pronounced among African American boys in middle school, 55% of whom displayed one or more signs of dropout risk. The warning signs vary by school level, but fall into the categories of poor academic performance, chronic absence, and suspensions.

The Warren Institute

The Warren Institute’s contribution to the effort has been the publication of Changing Places: How Communities Will Improve the Health of Boys of Color. Released in October 2010, the volume provides a series of articles which provide insights into a range of circumstances and strategies which are being used in California and across the nation to address the crisis of Black Men and Boys: demographic overview; public education systems and their communities; transitions to post-secondary education and employment; health, human services and justice systems; the built environment; and the road ahead.

Of particular interest in our current context is the article, “Minding the Gap: Strategic Philanthropy and the Crisis among Black Young Men and Boys,” authored by Tia Elena Martinez, Susan Colby and Lisa Quay. It provides an overview of national investments over the last 30 years. “Recognizing the crucial work of entrepreneurial program officers, (the writers) observe that funding has fluctuated significantly across (the period) but failed to reach necessary levels. (They) note particularly low levels of investment among “new” philanthropists who entered the field after 1980...(the writers) outline three barriers to foundation investment: the challenges involved in directly addressing race and gender in the United States; foundation staff’s reluctance to take on a highly complex social problem with few proven solutions; and the absence of sustained institutional support.”²

² Changing Places: How Communities Will Improve the Health of Boys of Color , Edley Jr. et. al, page 537.



Section II: The Potential of Coordinated Investments

With sound knowledge management across the field, coordinated investments, and the replication of programmatic interventions at scale, a substantial shift in the capacity to provide services, protections and opportunities for BMBs might be within reach in the state of California. Working in concert with shifting community culture and a new public will to address the crisis, there is reason for optimism.

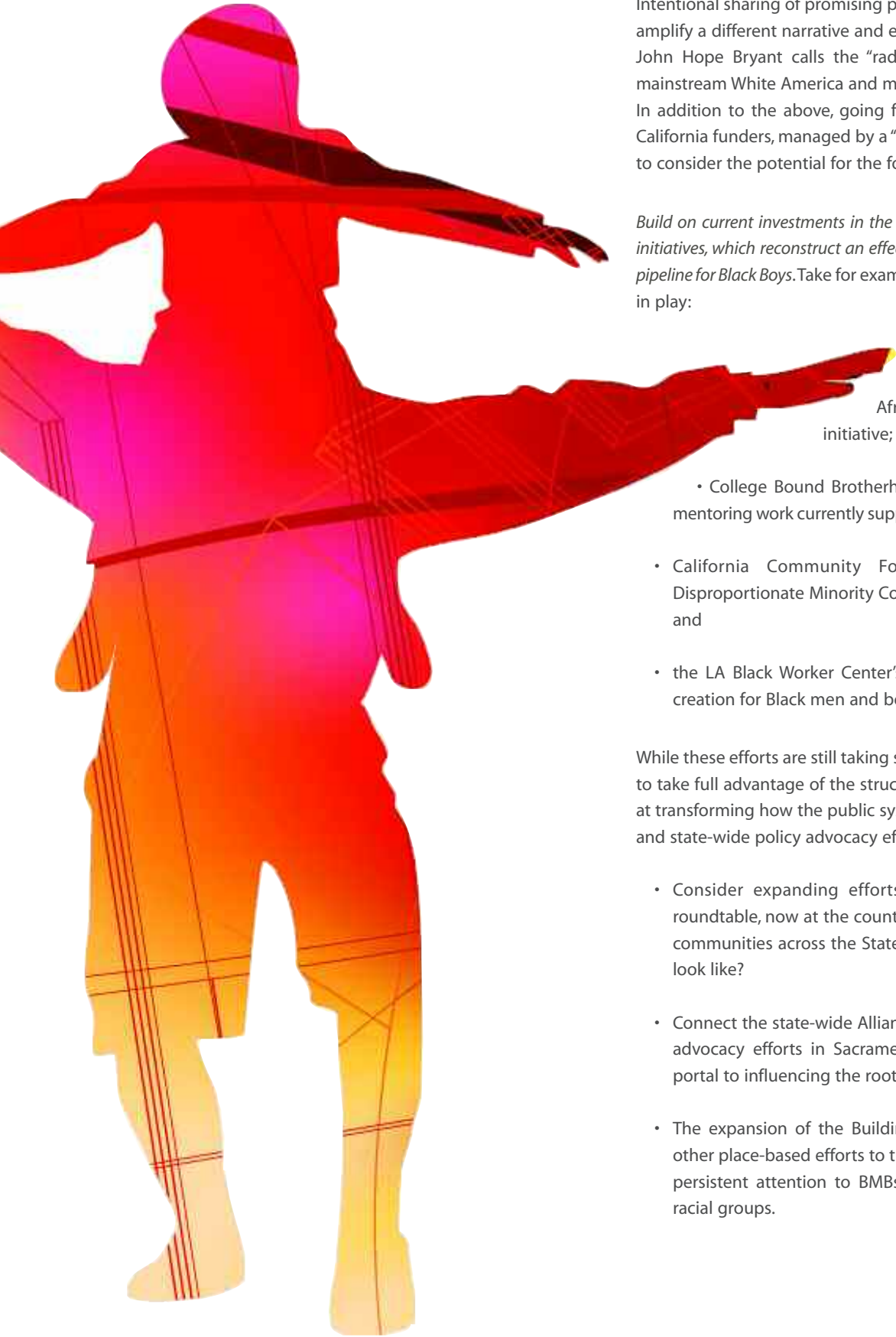
In a recent summary of “what works” in large-scale social change efforts, John Kania and Mark Kramer, articulated the fundamentals of what has been apparent to many who have worked in comprehensive community initiatives for years. They distinguish efforts that result in isolated impacts from those which demonstrate success, or what they call, “collective impact.”

“Collective Impact Initiatives” are long-term commitments by a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem. Their actions are supported by a shared measurement system, mutually reinforcing activities, and consistent communications, and are staffed by an independent backbone organization. (See full article, *Collective Impact*, By John Kania & Mark Kramer, *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2011). Below are a few thoughts regarding the use of this framework as a point of analysis:

- **Shared Measurement Systems.** A state-wide, shared measurement system on the key measures of success and population-level change in the areas of education, employment, health care, housing, incarceration, social skills and leadership development, to which the major players in this arena subscribe, would enhance the possibilities of aligning California-based investments, tracking what works, creating renewed public will and identifying gaps in the support systems we seek to create. In addition, a shared system to measure increased *capacities* in the tenants of *Responsive Philanthropy in Black Communities (RPBC)* including policy/advocacy, system reform, constituency engagement/leadership, effective use of data and communications – the *tools* used to facilitate change for Black men and boys would help leverage private and public investments. Philanthropy in California is well suited to convene the appropriate players to develop shared measurement systems; this work will undoubtedly require expanding our notions of impact and moving the field beyond the sole reliance of evidence-based interventions.
- **Mutually Reinforcing Activities.** In the context of the work briefly described above, there are a multitude of investments to advance BMB work in California. Our scan identified work happening in a few areas: key among them are public systems transformation, policy advocacy and organizing, direct services, comprehensive community change, communications and research. Many of

these efforts are happening in different parts of the state. If the current sets of programs, systems change initiatives, research agenda, and place-based efforts were in fact, brought to scale in multiple geographies, the possibilities of having “mutually reinforcing” activities across the state would take on greater meaning and impact.

- **Consistent Communications.** The task of supporting communications may be the most important work for California-based investors to consider as it relates to improving outcomes for Black males. There are two considerations in this area:
 - the first is keeping the network of funders and key partners up-to-date and informed with what is happening. This may require a communications plan with an infrastructure and process that can do so. This role may fall to what Kania and Kramer refer to as a “backbone” organization.
 - the second has more to do with strategic communications to change perceptions of Black males. This work could be created and enhanced by coordination with the work of the 2025 BMB Network, the work of Fenton Communications (a TCE consultant) and others who are seeking to change the current narrative about the identity, assets and aspirations of Black men and boys. There are opportunities in California for synergy in this area: three efforts are explicitly building strategies to address the public perception of Black males: AAMI, Liberty Hill’s efforts and BLOOM. As this work is innovative and it is not clear what works in this area, it will be important for these three efforts to stay connected locally as well as to the national work happening in this area. While these three initiatives have explicit strategies in this area, other California investments can provide critical content, messages and images for a strategic communications strategy. For example:
 - College Bound Brotherhood is a source of positive images of young Black males on the path to college.
 - Uplifting Change provides images and stories about Black men active in philanthropy.
 - The Los Angeles Black Worker Center is a source of Black male leadership and Black males in the workforce.



Intentional sharing of promising practices and products could serve to amplify a different narrative and emerging public will to address what John Hope Bryant calls the “radical indifference” to Black boys by mainstream White America and much of philanthropy.³

In addition to the above, going forward, a coordinated approach by California funders, managed by a “backbone organization” could begin to consider the potential for the following:

Build on current investments in the area of education by creating a set of initiatives, which reconstruct an effective K-16 educational/career pathway pipeline for Black Boys. Take for example the following elements currently in play:

- Oakland Unified School District’s K-12 approach embedded in the African American Male Achievement initiative;
- College Bound Brotherhood and the college-readiness and mentoring work currently supported by Mitchell Kapor Foundation;
- California Community Foundation’s interruption of the Disproportionate Minority Confinement/Mass Incarceration cycle; and
- the LA Black Worker Center’s apprenticeship programs and job creation for Black men and boys.

While these efforts are still taking shape, California funders should plan to take full advantage of the structurally-focused initiatives which aim at transforming how the public systems could work on behalf of BMBs and state-wide policy advocacy efforts calling for such a shift:

- Consider expanding efforts like the BMoC Systems leaders roundtable, now at the county/city level in Oakland, to key urban communities across the State. What would that scale-up strategy look like?
- Connect the state-wide Alliance for Boys and Men of Color policy advocacy efforts in Sacramento to each of the initiatives as a portal to influencing the root causes of inequity for Black males.
- The expansion of the Building Healthy Communities work and other place-based efforts to the full set of local communities, with persistent attention to BMBs as well as their peers from other racial groups.

³ Brothers Sons Selves: Young Men in Los Angeles Are Ready for Change, Liberty Hill’s recent report, released 2012.

Section III: Making the National Connections

California has often led the nation in innovation, research and new trends in social, educational and political endeavors. The state of the work suggests as national funder driven efforts take shape, there are opportunities for mutual lesson sharing, coordinated investments and comprehensive evaluations designed to improve performance. Great examples exist for infusion of pilot-informed work. Considerations include:

1. The Knight Foundation's Black Male Engagement initiative could be replicated in California to support the communities and individuals who are engaged in the work. Knight's approach to Black Male Engagement is premised upon two related insights:
 - Black men and boys are assets to our communities and must be considered as such.
 - We don't need to "fix" people, we need to inform them and engage them.

The Foundation's efforts are a good example of a strength-based approach to investing in Black males and builds on the leadership and organizing efforts of Liberty Hill. As Knight continues to engage national networks with thought partners on this work like Open Society Foundation's Campaign for Black Male Achievement, Context Partners, American Values Institute, Citizen Engagement Lab, Spitfire Strategies, Color of Change and BET, there are great possibilities to expand that network in California.

2. A clear connection point in the near future will be OSF's Leadership and Sustainability Institute (LSI). Several California funders are supporting this effort and it will provide important lessons for strengthening the institutions and leaders that support Black males. We are excited about this bold effort. Targeted philanthropic efforts of this kind are important to coordinate with broader efforts that aim to change private and public financing patterns to provide more capital for Black-serving organizations.
3. California's investment to create and promote a "new narrative" about Black men and boys which properly characterizes black men as assets to their families and communities may benefit from peer conversations with two foundations. The Heinz Endowment's work which analyzes media portrayals of Black men and how those images are at dissonance with the self-image that the Black community holds could be harnessed and replicated in California. The Endowment's early investments in this area led to a series of recommendations that aim to change public perception (see their report, *Portrayal and Perception*). The Northwest Area Foundation's support of the Twin Cities African American Leadership Forum carried out similar efforts in their

region which resulted in a change in local coverage of the African American community. In addition, the ongoing efforts of the 2025 BMB Network, Question Bridge, and several media products that have been produced could be enhanced by a state and/or national communications strategy. As new stories are being told by digital story tellers like Forward Ever Media's Game Changers fellows about work across the state and nation, more media market penetration is possible. A tipping point of sorts might be achieved with such a coordinated effort.

4. OSF's regional investments and in Chicago, Milwaukee, Jackson, New Orleans, and the Northeast Corridor could be strategically connected to the work in California. There are two considerations here:
 - a. California has much to offer the OSF (and other regional work) around building state-wide policy agendas for Black males. This is critically important work that should be distributed to other funders.
 - b. While TCE has committed to state-wide convenings in the past, it is not clear if and how those activities connect to the national landscape and investments. More intentionality between OSF's regional work and California funders would create a clearer path to connecting the dots across the state and nation. National policy and system reform opportunities exist in multiple areas (education, health, justice, etc.) if these regional efforts are purposefully aligned to produce a broader domestic strategy.

Given ABFE's role in creating and launching its Learning and Action Network with BMB funders, the opportunities for collaborations which avoid the duplication of efforts are striking. The Network aims to connect California funders with others funders nationally to learn and align investments for Black males with other funders nationally and to share lessons, build capacity and craft collaborative strategy for collective impact.



ABFE

A Philanthropic Partnership
for Black Communities

www.abfe.org

333 Seventh Avenue

14th Floor, New York, New York 10001

Phone 646.230.0306 | Email information@abfe.org