Black Male Achievement

Taking Stock, Moving Forward

Prepared for the Open Society Institute

January 2011
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Executive Summary

Through the support of their families, friends and communities, and their own efforts, a great many African American males do far more than survive; they thrive. However, if the presence of a sizeable and expanding group of Black male achievers suggests that structural barriers to opportunity in the United States have loosened considerably in recent decades, the large percentage of African American males who are not thriving confirms that structural forces continue to impede wide-spread progress. Large and persistent gaps in educational attainment, household income, unemployment rates and the like between African American men and white men indicate that the operations of our critical opportunity-shaping institutions and structures remain profoundly color-conscious. Whereas many communities and advocates have dedicated themselves to the challenge of empowering Black boys and young men over the last several decades, efforts to systematically change the structures of opportunity within which they move have lagged behind. That must change – and it can change.

With the generous support of the Open Society Institute, the Kirwan Institute has been able to further its longstanding commitment to improving Black male achievement in the United States. On behalf of the Campaign for Black Male Achievement we conducted research on the status of Black males in the arenas of education, employment, and family life; attended and presented our findings at convenings in the Mid-Atlantic and Midwest (see Appendix C); and benefited greatly from one-on-one conversations with Black male advocates in the two regions. These experiences and our reflections on them have helped crystallize a set of convictions about the main thrust of the additional work needed to complement existing efforts in support of Black men and boys. Critical to this work, we believe, is a wider appreciation of the structural impediments to opportunity for Black males and a greater determination among those of us working in the field to commit our resources to transforming those structures to better serve us all.

We are all situated within structures of opportunity that interact to shape outcomes for different groups in often dramatically different ways. Historically, mutually reinforcing government policies across multiple domains (for example, housing, schools, and transportation) produced racialized outcomes. Today, the racialized and substantially inequitable status quo is upheld largely by institutional and public policies and practices. This is not a story about intent. The incidence and contours of social vulnerability at any given time are mainly the unintended outcomes of dynamics both within and across these opportunity-mediating institutions (schools, families, businesses, neighborhoods, and so on). In this analysis, however, outcomes matter much more than intent.

The research, data, and other information presented in this report, including the testimony compiled from community-based advocates in the Milwaukee-Chicago and Philadelphia-Baltimore areas, paint a bleak picture. Unfortunately, that is the reality for too many Black communities and too many Black males. It is also an apt point of departure for marking our progress from this point on. Moreover, while it is certainly important to teach our Black boys and young men healthy, constructive responses to the
difficult circumstances in which they often find themselves, we emphasize that the state of underserved men and communities is mainly an indictment of our structural landscape and of social neglect, not of Black men themselves.

A Review of the Research Literature on Black Males

Section I assesses the research literature for recognition and analysis of structural impediments in the areas of Education, Work and Family. What we found was a limited examination of the structural forces at work in shaping Black men and boys’ access to opportunity. With respect to Education, we found that research focused more on the cultural factors at play, finding that teachers perceive Black males to be academically inferior, overly aggressive, and lacking leadership and social skills, and that these misperceptions result in more frequent disciplinary actions and placement into Special Education classes. We agree that these are critical issues worthy of research and that they undoubtedly have a negative impact on the educational outcomes of Black males. But we also found that, by and large, researchers (and advocates) have discounted the impact of extracurricular factors —factors beyond the school walls—on what occurs within schools. Advocates thus call for school reform without considering how the larger context, including the neighborhood context, might mediate any school-based interventions. And yet we know that neighborhoods have an independent effect on student achievement, and that school poverty also negatively impacts educational outcomes for every student within a school, regardless of individual promise and whether an individual student is poor or not.¹

The research into Work has involved a more structural analytical approach, including analysis of economic restructuring and the spatial mismatch between where Black men live and where jobs are located. And yet policy has at best poorly accounted for the severity of the recent recession on the Black community and Black men, in particular, or the continuing impact of previous recessions and economic restructuring on Black men’s economic opportunity. The fact that Black men tend to fare so poorly in post-displacement employment (i.e., earn less, fall from professional/managerial positions) is evidence of these aftershocks. Economists tell us that the Great Recession officially began in December 2007 and ended in June 2009.² In fact, an economic recession had been raging in communities of color long before December 2007 and continues largely unabated today.³ There is a clear need to force the fact of the “silent Black depression” to the center of the American public’s and government officials’ attention.

And lastly, research into Family has been overwhelmingly focused on the “dysfunction” of single-female headed households and the anti-social development of Black boys. While research in this area hints at the economic factors at play, especially regarding Black fathers and their role in their children’s lives, it does not treat the structural factors, such as poverty and unemployment, as critical drivers in extent and forms of Black fathers’ involvement with their children. We find an emerging consensus among researchers that “the child support enforcement system itself has critical implications for the economic situations and prospects [for Black men]...[a] significant portion of low-income African American men are non-custodial fathers who face barriers that are not typically recognized or understood by most social service policy providers.”⁴ However, as in many other arenas, public policy has failed to keep pace
with research. More research is needed to understand the connections between poor and declining employment opportunities for Black men, on one hand, and family (in)stability, on the other. Nor does the research pay sufficient attention to the less-than-ideal socioeconomic circumstances in which many single Black mothers are compelled to raise their children.

**Regional Analyses and Insights: Milwaukee-Chicago and Philadelphia-Baltimore**

Section II provides analyses of local demographic conditions and geographies of opportunity for Black men in the Baltimore, Philadelphia, Milwaukee and Chicago regions. Viewing the challenges facing communities in general and Black males in particular through a structural lens allows us to see how space interacts with race, and that disparities have a geographic footprint. We need only to look at the opportunity maps of Black males included for each of the four cities to see that this is true. In fact, in three of the four cities, about 75 percent of Black males live in the neighborhoods that offer residents the poorest opportunities to succeed. When we consider this alongside some of the grim numbers regarding educational attainment, unemployment, and poverty levels, it is clear that the issue of Black male achievement is more than an issue of individual choices, talent, or ambition.

Sections III and IV provide stakeholder assessments of the well-being of Black males in their respective regions. For the Mid-Atlantic region, when asked how Black males were doing in general and with respect to the issue areas of Work, Education, and Family, respondents painted a bleak picture. Nearly every respondent cited poor educational preparation and outcomes as major challenges, and described their relationship to poor work outcomes and high unemployment. Criminal records and challenges of reentry were also cited by most respondents as major challenges in the Mid-Atlantic region. When asked what gaps may exist in the support system for Black male achievement, a majority noted the lack of capacity and coordination regarding Black male achievement – nonprofits working in silos, not sharing information about who is doing what, not communicating with constituents about available services. Respondents readily identified several programs doing good work in their regions, a key reason cited for the success of those programs being their ability to meet participants “where they were” and therefore being able to reach those who were hardest to serve. However, several respondents said most of the programs doing good work operated “under the radar” and worked with few resources at limited scale.

In the Midwest region, every respondent noted that the challenges were many and growing for Black men in the region, especially in the areas of employment, incarceration, and education, and that these challenges affect family life and stability. Several respondents noted institutional and systemic gaps, as well as advocacy gaps, in the support system for Black males and families in general. Others noted the absence of policies targeted to Black males. While some respondents could list a few programs they felt were doing good work, every respondent noted that there were not nearly enough of them. Several said that programmatic approaches alone would always be insufficient to resolve systemic problems.
**Best Practices and Possible Next Steps**

Sections V and VI provide examples of best practices. We know that many of the most effective interventions are those that address both behaviors and structure. Drawing on the insights of advocates offered in the interviews and convenings, we outline a number of interventions we believe would respond effectively to widely expressed needs for greater policy attention, capacity building for policy advocacy, and field cohesion. We also offer possible prescriptions in two areas that received less notice from our respondents: the politics of Black male movement-building and the need to address “hidden” biases against Black men and boys (fuller descriptions available in Section VI).

**A. Demystifying Structural Racism: Workshops and trainings.** The Philadelphia meeting, in particular, underlined the need for broader structural racism training. Groups like the Aspen Roundtable for Community Change, the Center for Social Inclusion, and the Kirwan Institute can offer workshops to activists, advocates and organizers that introduce the principles of structural racism and begin to draw out the implications of the framework for their work.

**B. Demystifying Structural Racism: An interactive website for educators and organizers.** The website would include different exercises/tools (for example, racial disparity quizzes, interactive maps showing racial segregation and opportunity, small simulations showing how disparities are cumulative and mutually reinforcing) that can be used with or without a facilitator.

**C. Providing policy advocacy trainings and technical assistance.** Practitioners would learn to identify important gaps in policy advocacy along with emerging opportunities for policy reform. They would learn to develop effective models for collaboration, partnership, and dissemination with civil rights and other advocacy groups at the regional, community, state, and national levels working to influence and inform public policy debates and legislation.

**D. Establishing a venture capital fund for collaborative policy work.** Such a fund would encourage initiative-taking and collaborative outreach and exchange between groups and organizations in the field of Black male work with complementary skills, talents and resources, while providing incentives for them to devote more of those skills and talents to critical policy advocacy. This in itself would be an important, partial solution to the problem of field fragmentation. A portion of the fund could be designated for capacity building purposes, provided applicants were able to identify policy targets to which they would expect to apply their newfound advocacy skills and resources. The fund might also be broadened to support other non-policy kinds of advocacy, including administrative advocacy, media advocacy, litigation support, and voter education or even extended to important arenas beyond those of work, education, and family.

**E. Conducting Black male regional opportunity mapping.** Opportunity maps have great analytical and advocacy value, as well as significant communications value: maps can capture and compellingly summarize a great deal of information. The Kirwan Institute has already mapped the state of opportunity for Black men and boys in a dozen metropolitan areas. With information from the 2010
Census forthcoming and advocates working in many additional regions across the country, much more remains to be done.

F. **Creating a Black male researcher-advocacy database.** The field of people and organizations doing work on Black men and boys is deep and wide with respect to information and insights, but also extremely fragmented. One important partial solution would be to create and manage an interactive, web-based database that would allow policymakers, advocacy organizations or journalists to connect with data, research, researchers, policy-related materials and advocates quickly and efficiently – and vice versa.

G. **Documenting and remediating cognitive biases against Black males in K-12 settings.** Kirwan is already working to develop a computer software product called the “Virtual Social Lab,” an interactive research tool designed to assess a subject’s sensitivity to issues of race, gender, and other social factors in the K-12 context. We plan to use this tool to test for "hidden" and unintended teacher bias along various dimensions in selected schools, as well as to design interventions that hold the promise of mitigating those biases and/or their effects. Versions of this tool could readily be developed for application to other areas, including criminal justice, employment, and housing.

H. **Engaging the politics of gender and struggle in the movement for Black male achievement.** What roles do and should women – mothers, sisters, daughters, teachers, partners, employers – play in the advancement of Black men and boys? How do we support Black men to engage effectively in the political process, to fight for policies and practices that improve their communities, to develop and participate in movements meant to change not only the direction of Black communities but that of the country? These are critical and arguably missing pieces to the Black male movement puzzle we have started discussing with Cathy Cohen, Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago. We have not discussed a vehicle for moving work on these items, but believe it important to create a forum for engaging them explicitly.

Let us be clear: this struggle is not only about Black men and Black communities. The difficulties Black America confronts, and our ability to overcome them, have powerful implications for the social, political, and economic welfare of the country as a whole. Lifting up our linked fates and recruiting stakeholders across lines of race, class, gender, and sector may well be the most difficult challenge facing the Campaign for Black Male Achievement and the Black male movement. In the course of this work we have heard many people pose the question, “Who was not at the table but needs to be?” That question reflects a clear understanding that real progress around Black male achievement will not occur without representation and constructive input from all the major systems (education, criminal justice, employment, housing) engaged in the processes and outcomes we mean to transform.

With this report we hope to frame a conversation on the structural issues associated with poor outcomes for Black males. Interventions aimed at bolstering cultural resilience or improving individual responses to social and environmental challenges are critical components of the way forward, but issues
of scale, replication, and the stubborn reality of institutional and structural barriers mean that agency-centered approaches cannot, alone, move us where we want to go. We hope to provide a foundation from which to engage in transformative, strategic thinking about what it would take today to turn things around, so that twenty years from now we do not find ourselves describing similar or worse outcomes and posing the same disheartening questions.
I. A Review of the Research Literature on Black Males

“A tragic crisis of enormous magnitude is facing Black boys and men in America....For many, this is a fight for survival. And it is an awesomely difficult fight. But the alternative is to continue the terrible devastation that has befallen so many families and communities: the premature and often violent deaths, the inadequate preparation for an increasingly competitive workplace, the widespread failure to exercise one's intellectual capacity, the insecurity that becomes ingrained from being so long at the bottom of the heap.” --Bob Herbert, NY Times columnist

Despite more targeted attention to the plight of Black men in the United States, Black men continue to come out short on nearly every indicator of quality of life including health, education, employment, and so on. As Bob Herbert reflects, the situation is nothing short of a tragedy. Indeed, the group that has continuously borne the brunt of “American progress” has been Black men. A New York Times 2006 article warned that outcomes for Black men, especially in employment and education, continued to worsen despite the economic boom of the 1990s and welfare reform that benefited women and other groups. If the outcomes declined during times of progress, it is frightening to imagine what the outcomes from this current crisis—a recession where Black males have experienced astonishing rates of unemployment and where Black workers make up over 20% of the long-term unemployed—will be for Black men. The fallout for Black boys is equally concerning, with the growth in child poverty overall reaching 20% in 2009, and 26% for Black children. Using the 2007 poverty rate and estimating the impacts for 2010 and beyond, the Economic Policy Institute estimates the impact of high unemployment on child poverty will be severe; while children in general will see a 9.3 percentage point increase (from 18.0% to 27.3%), Black children will see an astonishing 17.8 percentage point increase (from 34.5% to 52.3%).

The situation for Black males has moved beyond ‘crisis’ level, and forty years of research confirms this. And yet, forty years of efforts to improve these outcomes have met with little measurable success as Black male performance on key indicators of social and economic health has continued to decline. Swift and targeted interventions into the structures that distribute opportunity are absolutely essential if we are serious about moving the needle and providing a path of opportunity to Black men—in education, work, health, and every other domain.

Towards this end, we assessed the research landscape for analysis of the structural impediments in the areas of Education, Work and Family. What we found was a limited analysis of the structural forces at work in shaping Black men and boys’ access to opportunity. In Education, we found that research focused more on the cultural factors at play, finding that teachers perceive Black males to be academically inferior, overly aggressive, and lacking leadership and social skills, and that these misperceptions result in more frequent disciplinary actions and placement into Special Ed classes. We agree that these are critical issues worthy of research and that they undoubtedly have a negative impact on the educational outcomes of Black males and must be addressed. But we also found that, by and
large, the literature (and subsequent advocacy) neglects the impact of neighborhood effects—factors beyond the school walls—in influencing what occurs within the school walls. Advocates thus call for school reform without considering how the larger neighborhood context could mediate any school-based interventions, let alone address the link between segregated neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, and concentrated poverty in schools. And yet we know that neighborhoods have an independent effect on student achievement, and that school poverty also negatively impacts educational outcomes for every student within that school, regardless of individual promise and whether an individual student is poor or not. This fragmentation in research and advocacy thwarts our ability to make truly transformative changes in Black males’ educational outcomes.

The research into Work has involved a more structural analysis, including analysis of economic restructuring and the spatial mismatch between where Black men live and where jobs are located. And yet policy has ignored the severity of not only the current recession on the Black community and Black men in particular, but also the continuing impact of previous recessions and economic restructuring on Black men’s economic opportunity, even though research is clear the effects are still felt. The fact that Black men tend to fare worse in post-displacement employment (i.e. earn less, fall from professional/managerial positions, etc.) is evidence of these aftershocks. And economists today have stated that the official U.S. recession ended in June 2009, a statement that completely belies the economic ravaging still occurring in our communities of color, never mind that this ravaging has been ongoing for at least the last five to seven years. There is a clear need to take the fact of the “silent Black depression” out of the ivory tower and force it to the center of the American public’s and government officials’ attention.

And lastly, research into Family has been overwhelmingly focused on the “dysfunction” of single-female headed households and the anti-social development of Black boys. While research in this area hints at the economic factors at play, especially regarding Black fathers and their role in their children’s lives, it does not treat these structural factors, such as poverty and unemployment, as critical drivers in Black fathers’ involvement and ability to parent. Although there is growing consensus among researchers that “the child support enforcement system itself has critical implications for the economic situations and prospects [for Black men]...[a] significant portion of low-income African American men are non-custodial fathers who face barriers that are not typically recognized or understood by most social service policy providers.” Policy has failed to keep pace with research. Indeed, more research is needed to understand the connections between declining employment opportunities for Black men, and family stability. Nor does the research pay sufficient attention to the less-than-ideal socioeconomic circumstances in which single Black mothers are compelled to raise their children.

The following sections take on each issue area more comprehensively.
Education Opportunity

In comparison to other races, barriers to the educational attainment of African American male students abound. These include higher suspension and expulsion rates, a higher percentage in special education classes, and a lower percentage in advanced placement classes. For example, white male students are more than twice as likely to be placed in Talented/Gifted classes as Black male students, and four times as many white male students take advanced placement mathematics and science classes as Black male students.13 On the other hand, Black male students are more than twice as likely to be classified as special needs as white male students.14 This results in disparities in educational attainment that are reflected in proficiency scores on standardized tests—nationally, 9% of Black males scored at or above proficiency on the NAEP Reading test in 2009 compared to 33% of white male students.15 In turn, poor educational performance impacts the ability of Black students to graduate on time, if at all. Out of the 48 states reporting, Black males are the least likely to graduate from high school in 33 states; the graduation rate for Black male students for the nation as a whole for the 2007 to 2008 school year was only 47%.16 It is no surprise then that Black males are also the least likely to go on to college (see Figure 1 below). And of course, with fewer Black males enrolling in postsecondary education, they are less qualified for high paying jobs.

![Figure 1](image)


These statistics indicate a growing gap in educational attainment, leading us to question what accounts for such a dismal performance. While some would like to believe that it is a matter of student motivation, research indicates that such a disparity in educational attainment is the result of both institutional, school-based factors and neighborhood effects. Intertwined, these factors depress access
to educational opportunity for Black male students in particular. The following discusses the causes of these barriers and explores how such barriers affect Black male students’ educational attainment.

**School-based Factors**

Research has centered on two main school-based factors which affect the educational attainment of African American males: the problem of a cultural mismatch and the misclassification of students. These factors often times result in discipline disparities, which include suspension/expulsion, as well as the segregation of Black students into special education classes, and limited enrollment in advanced placement courses.

**Discipline Disparities.** According to research, African American male students are likely to be suspended or expelled for acts of disobedience at higher rates than their counterparts of other races. Based on data collected and analyzed from the National Center for Education Statistics in 2003, the suspension rate for African American males was 24.2%, significantly higher than the 14.9% rate for males of other races. The expulsion rate for Black males was three times that of males of other races, 6.7% compared to 2.2%.

Not only are Black male students overrepresented in disciplinary action, researchers have also found that they receive harsher punishments. According to a study in an urban Midwestern school district, the school district referred 29% of African American male students to a three-day out-of-school suspension, and nearly 30% of African American males were recommended for in-school suspension. In comparison, only approximately 14% of white male students received an out-of-school suspension and 15% received an in-school suspension. Moreover, although the African American male population comprised only 11% of the total student population, they made up 37% of all male students cited for disciplinary action.

What accounts for the harsher punishments of Black students compared to their counterparts? One explanation is the use of ‘zero tolerance’ policies. Zero tolerance refers to policies that “harshly punish all forms of student misconduct and wrongdoings with little or no regard to the severity of the offense that was committed.” This policy, as applied in schools across the country, has had drastic effects, with students receiving harsh sanctions for minor offenses. The fact that African American males are more likely to be punished for perceived disruptive behavior means such a policy has a disproportionate impact on African American male students, leading to more suspensions and expulsions and thus contributing to a growing disparity in educational attainment.

But why are Black male students singled out? These discrepancies are due in part to a cultural mismatch and teacher misclassifications.
Cultural Mismatch. Research on teachers’ perceptions of students has suggested that a cultural mismatch between teachers and their students leads to misunderstandings of behavior, resulting in increased rates of suspensions and expulsions. To better understand this, researchers focused on the behavior of African American male students and explored how such behavior is formed and how teachers react to this behavior.

Researchers discovered that African American males look to their surroundings and environmental context to construct masculinity. For instance, a father noted that the manner in which his son presented himself changed as he grew. According to the father, his son “‘felt the need to project the image of a tough and angry young Black man...to behave differently—too nice, gentle, kind or sincere—meant that he would be vulnerable and preyed upon.’”23

According to researchers, this belief carries over into schools and influences the way in which African American male students experience school and behave in school. For instance, sometimes African American male students may express their thoughts in what has been described as a flamboyant and nonconformist manner, known as “cool pose.”24

Although this is not inherently problematic, issues arise when this communication is misinterpreted by teachers. One study found that several “novice white teachers reported that they often perceived lively debates occurring between African American males as suggestive of aggressive behavior,” concluding that such behavior was disruptive and thus warranted sanctions.25 However, to African American male students, such communication is rooted in their construction of masculinity and is not a sign of defiance.

Misclassification. African American males are twice as likely to be classified as special needs as white male students in spite of research showing the percentages of students from all racial groups are approximately the same at each intelligence level.27 While African American males are more likely to be classified as special needs and placed in special education classes, they are also less likely to be placed in gifted/talented programs. In fact, white male students are more than twice as likely to be placed in such programs as African American male students.28

Given that college preparedness is a significant factor in the success and retention of students in universities, with fewer African American males enrolled in advanced classes and instead segregated into special education classes, the potential for success in college is diminished.29 These effects, of
course, are not limited to the domain of education, but also impact the economic opportunity available to Black men, lessening their ability to obtain high-paying jobs.

The cultural mismatch and misperceptions of African American male students, combined with structural forces such as zero tolerance policies, means that African American males are more likely to receive disciplinary sanctions and miss school. This, in conjunction with the fact that such students are more likely to be placed in special education classes and less likely to be placed in advanced placement courses, results in lower educational attainment for African American males when compared to their counterparts of other races. Unfortunately, much of the education research tends to stop here. But there is another vein of research that is critical in understanding the educational outcomes for Black male students—the literature on neighborhood effects.

**Neighborhood Effects**

Without a doubt, the in-school factors discussed above represent substantial barriers to the educational attainment of Black male students, but relying on these factors alone to understand the gap in educational attainment is not enough; research has shown that neighborhood factors, such as residential segregation and concentrated poverty, play a significant role in students’ educational.

Given the ways resources and opportunities are often distributed throughout U.S. society, racial segregation typically means segregation from a wide range of opportunities – both at the school and neighborhood level. In fact, one study has found that “one’s zip code has both direct and indirect, and both positive and negative, effects on student achievement.” Therefore access to a high-quality or low-quality education is often influenced by where one lives.

For example, one study focused on literacy achievement found that for two students with identical educational achievement and family backgrounds, and even with identical school membership, “the differences in educational achievement as a function of their neighborhood deprivation was estimated to be a difference of between the 10th and the 90th percentile on achievement tests.” Clearly neighborhoods have a great influence on educational attainment. Furthermore, school boundaries that include dysfunctional neighborhoods have a more difficult time fostering student achievement than schools that encompass healthier neighborhoods. The following explores the effects of neighborhood on academic achievement, particularly in regard to racial and economic isolation.

**History Matters**

Racial isolation and concentrated poverty continue to characterize many of our urban communities of color, and have long roots. In fact, there have been numerous practices and policies over the course of history that not only caused but entrenched the segregation of our neighborhoods.
First, federal insurance criteria encouraged the development of all-white neighborhoods in suburban areas and devalued or refused to insure integrated, minority, or old housing stock neighborhoods, also known as red-lining. Not only did this result in segregated neighborhoods, but it has also ensured unequal access to wealth, given that homeownership represents the primary source of wealth for most people in the United States.

Although red-lining has since been outlawed, a new practice, reverse red-lining, has recently taken shape. With reverse red-lining, communities of color that had been starved for credit for decades are flooded with high-cost, predatory loans. This fact was crystallized with the subprime and foreclosure crisis, and communities of color bore the brunt of this fallout. Extensive research documents how “the old inequality in home lending made the new inequality” possible, and that racial segregation played a critical role in, structuring not only “the causes of the crisis, [but also] the geographic and social distributions of its costs on the basis of race,” costs born not just by homeowners of color, but entire neighborhoods of color.33

Patterns of discrimination in housing markets have persisted today with suburban land use policies that enforce single-family large lot developments, depressing the quantity of rental housing in suburban communities and thus limiting the in-migration by residents of lower socioeconomic status, commonly African American and Latino families.34

As a result of these discriminatory practices and policies, we have created communities that are both racially and economically segregated and that contain some of the lowest-performing schools. Racial segregation is highly correlated with segregation from a range of opportunities, included well-funded schools with highly qualified teachers, new textbooks, a wealth of critical learning activities, robust infrastructures, and so on. African American children are much more likely to attend high-poverty schools than their white counterparts. This harms the quality of education children receive, subsequently affecting their educational attainment and their life chances.

This concentration of poverty impedes access to educational opportunity in a variety of ways. First, poverty limits the resources available to families and schools to promote child learning. According to one study, “high poverty schools have to devote far more time and resources to family and health crises, security, children who come to school not speaking standard English, seriously disturbed children, children with no educational materials in their homes, and many children with very weak educational preparation.”35 And in segregated neighborhoods, the number of kids experiencing such challenges is higher, thereby intensifying the problem and requiring even more resources to help those in need.

Low-income students of color are also likely to have less-qualified teachers, more likely to have teachers who completed an alternative certification program, and are more likely to be taught by substitute teachers.36 As a result, students attending high-poverty schools, which are commonly students of color, are more likely to have lower academic achievement. Third, research has found that there is a consistent “negative effect of high poverty concentrations in school on students’ academic
achievement.”37 The poverty of a school, far more than the poverty of an individual, influences students’ educational outcomes, and impoverished students do better if they live in middle-class neighborhoods and/or attend more affluent schools.38

What does this research tell us?

School poverty has serious implications not just for students, but for districts, communities, and entire regions. We have known these truths for a long time; the 1966 Coleman Report (a study of inequality of opportunity in education) concluded that concentrated poverty inevitably depresses achievement on a school-wide and a district-wide basis—the effects are not contained within school walls.39 All this should make clear to us that the disparities in the educational outcomes for Black male students are not just their problem, or the school’s problem, but it is our collective problem. Research has documented that the majority of the nation’s dropout problems are concentrated in segregated, high-poverty schools.40 And although popular attention may not be centered on the structural equity issues of residential segregation and poverty, these factors have continued to influence the educational outcomes of students of color, including Black males.

Residential segregation, concentrated poverty in schools, and the under-qualification of teachers in segregated schools all matter for the educational achievement of students of color, including Black males. However,

“[t]hese and many other inequalities do not mean that racial or socioeconomic integration is a magic bullet that can cure all the inequalities rooted in the broader society, but they clearly suggest that it is foolish to ignore the damage of segregation....Those who argue that because there are segregated schools that succeed we need not worry about segregation are engaged in a fallacy of using exceptions to the rule to prove a relationship.”41

Solutions?

Charter schools have often been presented as a solution to reducing the growing disparities in educational attainment. While some charter schools have proven to be effective, such as those in the Harlem Children’s Zone, relying on charter schools alone as the answer to our educational problems is not enough. In fact, according to some studies, students in charter schools do not outperform their counterparts in other schools. In 2004, “the Department of Education’s national assessment of educational progress sampled the reading and math scores of 6,000 fourth graders at 167 charter schools and found only 25 percent of the charter school students were proficient in both reading and math compared to 30 percent of public school students who were proficient in reading and 32 percent in math.”42 More recently in 2009, “researchers from Stanford University found that fewer than one-fifth of charter schools nationally offered a better education than comparable local schools, almost half offered an equivalent education and more than a third, 37 percent, were “significantly worse.”43
Others have looked toward the importance of increasing teacher accountability through No Child Left Behind as the answer to reducing racial gaps in educational attainment. However, this too has met with criticism. According to an article in the *New York Times*, the test results show that the achievement gap “between white and minority students has not narrowed in recent years, despite the focus of the No Child Left Behind law on improving the scores of blacks and Hispanics.”44 The article went on to say that “between 2004 and last year, scores for young minority students increased, but so did those of white students, leaving the achievement gap stubbornly wide.”45

Regardless of whatever one’s position on school reform may be, the majority of students of color are still attending public schools, and communities everywhere will have to grapple with the educational implications from state budget shortfalls. The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities estimates that in 2010 states were faced with $128 billion in budget deficits with another $260 billion in state budget deficits expected to follow in 2011 and 2012, forcing many schools to operate with less.46 And given that most public schools are heavily subsidized through local property taxes which are based on property values, and the ongoing housing crisis that has caused a sharp decline in property values, school budgets are likely to shrink even more.

As a result, schools across the country may have to make significant cuts. In fact according to one article, “national surveys of school administrators found that nearly 70% of districts cut staff positions in this last school year and 90% expect to have layoffs next year…and that recent state and local budget deficits would probably result in 100,000 to 300,000 teacher layoffs.”47 Therefore due to budget shortfalls, schools are losing more teachers and resources, which are likely to result in a new set of obstacles for the educational attainment of students in general, but may have an even stronger impact on Black male students in particular.

**Economic Opportunity**

Even in times of economic prosperity, let alone times of economic peril, Black unemployment rates are more than double that of whites (see Figure 2).48 But the impact of the Great Recession in the Black community has been severe. In fact, while the US economy has been in a recession going on three years, a “silent Black depression” has been raging for the past 5-7 years,49 or what has been referred to as simply, “Black America’s permanent recession.”50
The impact on Black men in particular has been severe. The jobs crisis facing Black men is not new; it has only deepened under the current economic recession. And in fact, unemployment rates underestimate—likely substantially—what the “true” unemployment is likely to be when discouraged workers and prisoners are taken into account. The jobs crisis is not just one characterized by current unemployment figures for Black men, staggering as they are, but is also characterized by long-term unemployment, underemployment, job insecurity, unequal pay, and structural racism.51

Equally concerning, although receiving little attention, is youth unemployment rates and their long-term consequences. For example, the unemployment rates for young Black men ages 16-19—about 33%—have not been experienced by any group since the Great Depression.52 Research has clearly shown the long-term negative consequences of high youth unemployment, including foregone work experience and skill development as some of the more immediate consequences of high youth unemployment. These may give way to gaps on resumes that lead to even further difficulty acquiring employment. Disadvantaged youth lacking basic education may also have longer-term negative consequences, especially if they are unable to find or keep a job.53 Not only may these youth face decreased earnings and career potential over the span of their careers, but they may also see long-term decreases in happiness, job satisfaction, and health.54

Analysis of the years immediately preceding the recession is extremely troubling and shows that racial inequality in the labor market continues to be a defining characteristic.55 Black workers and Black males in particular, are marginalized in several ways: in the distribution of employment across industries, in the median wage levels of workers, and in the distribution of earnings.56 For example, the top three industries of employment for Black men from 2005-2007 were Public Administration, Manufacturing,
and Wholesale & Retail Trade. Within Public Administration, Black males earned just 80% of white male wages; 72% of white male wages in Manufacturing; and 74% of white male wages in Wholesale & Retail Trade. Furthermore, in each of the three industries, Black men were concentrated in the lowest third of the earnings distribution. For example, 45% of Black men were in the bottom third in Public Administration; 46.3% were in the bottom third in Manufacturing; and 39.5% were in the bottom third of Wholesale & Retail Trade.

Even when the economy begins to recover in a sustained way and job opportunities expand, research on post-displacement employment outcomes shows that Black men in particular lose ground once they re-enter the labor force following displacement (i.e. involuntary job loss). The costs of displacement to workers can be severe, resulting in long-term unemployment, an increase in part-time employment, and a decrease in earnings.

In fact, one study found that Black men had the third lowest reemployment rate of displaced workers in any group; were most likely to fall from professional and managerial occupations; and experienced the second highest drop in earnings (greater than 20%). The results showed that Black men’s reemployment opportunities were reduced not only because of their race, but that they faced an additional loss for being a Black man, compared to White men who benefited because of both their race and gender.

Perhaps most alarming is that the study period covered a time of substantial economic growth during the mid-1990s, and showed that displaced workers did not fully recover even during such a time. This study has grave implications for the potential outcomes and experiences of displaced workers, and most notably Black males, from the current economic recession. The implications may be even more severe when we consider that the disparate costs of displacement are likely to accumulate over time.

But what are the characteristics of labor markets that contribute to the ongoing and deepening deterioration of economic opportunity for Black men in particular? Below we will discuss how the structure of economic opportunity and the geography of that opportunity directly impact the economic outcomes for Black men.

The Structure and Geography of Economic Opportunity

Previous research on Black male economic opportunity has tended to focus on their high unemployment rates, the structure of employment, the disparity in wages with their white counterparts, and the correlations between unemployment and poor behavioral or social outcomes, such as mental health issues, marital discord, and so forth. Here, we pose five factors related to the declining economic opportunity for Black men.
1. Increasing demand for skills, reflecting the shift from manufacturing to a service- and knowledge-based economy. Rapid deindustrialization, especially in Midwest, has been most impactful for young, Black, less-educated men.

2. Effects of urban segregation on Black men in terms of spatial mismatch and the fact that suburban employers are more likely to discriminate.

3. Declining real wages over time due to economic restructuring through technological change, globalization, etc. Although real wages declined for all groups from the 1970s and beyond, they were arguably worse for young Black men given the barriers described here.

4. Employer reliance on informal networks to fill jobs. Isolation in distressed neighborhoods means there are not the kinds of informal employment networks available to men residing there.

5. Employer discrimination against Black men. In fact, a field experiment by Bertrand & Mullainathan found, among other things, that having an African-American sounding name on your resume reduced the likelihood that you’ll be called for an interview. They also varied neighborhoods and zip codes on the resumes they sent out, and found that that information (where the applicant lives), along with the applicant’s name, gave employers cues about the applicant’s likely racial identity – which in turn affected whether the applicant was called for an interview.

Economic Restructuring. The impacts of economic restructuring have been particularly injurious to Black men. Black men tend to be over-represented in globalizing industries (i.e. moved across seas) and in occupations that are increasingly automated. In particular, economic restructuring is likely to have a greater effect on lower-skilled Black men, and rising skills requirements are likely to be more pronounced for less-educated young Black men. Wagmiller (2008) found that economic restructuring played a critical role in expanding male unemployment in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods regardless of race, although the effects are more pronounced in Black (and Hispanic) than in comparable White neighborhoods.

The structure of employment and economic opportunity is critical, but so is the geography of opportunity that considers factors such as residential segregation and spatial mismatch.

Residential segregation. Table 1 below highlights that the persistence of residential segregation negatively impacts male employment outcomes in all neighborhood types. For example, from 1970-2000, Black male unemployment rates grew by 20% in low-income neighborhoods (from 25.9% to 46%). The growth was even more pronounced in moderate-income neighborhoods (by 21.7%), and substantially high growth in Black male unemployment occurred in even the more advantaged neighborhoods (by 18.4%). In 2000 alone, unemployment rates in all neighborhoods that were at least 80% Black had male unemployment rates that were 1.6 to almost two times greater than their white counterparts.
Spatial mismatch. A lot has been written about the spatial mismatch between centrally-located Blacks and suburban employment centers. One study found that as jobs become more decentralized, the unemployment experienced by Black (and Latino) males was more frequent and occurred for longer periods of time than that experienced by their white counterparts.70 Another study found negative earnings effects were significant for both Black and white male central-city workers resulting from decentralization, but that white males were more likely to move in response to these changes than Black males, suggesting that housing discrimination in the suburbs is a major impediment for Black males hoping to access job opportunities in the suburbs.71

However, suburban location in and of itself does not necessarily improve employment opportunities for Blacks. A study by Stoll (1999) revealed that while suburban location improved employment outcomes for Black male youth compared to their central city counterparts, the results were smaller than for comparable white youth, and race still accounted for a substantial degree of the Black-White disparities in male youth employment rates. In other words, discrimination in suburban labor markets can mediate the positive effects of suburban location. This study is especially telling because it uses the Washington D.C. region which had witnessed both substantial job growth and Black suburbanization during the 1990s.72

Networks. The lack of strong networks also contributes to the high unemployment rate of Black males. Networks, both personal and professional, are an important component of the job search; roughly fifty percent of jobs are found through networks.73 However, research has found that African Americans rely slightly less on networks to find employment than other races.74 One reason for this may be because both minority and low-income workers tend to be underrepresented in the labor force—racial and economic segregation create a barrier to linking in to larger professional networks.75 Moreover, low socioeconomic status is associated with smaller networks, suggesting even less opportunity for low-income Black males.76 Therefore, social networks and institutions that bridge diverse communities are important to connecting Black males with employers.77

Table 1. Source: Re-created from Wagmiller (2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Composition</th>
<th>Income Quintile</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>% Change 1970-2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black (80%+)</td>
<td>Quintile I (lowest)</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quintile II</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quintiles III through V (highest)**</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (80%+)</td>
<td>Quintile I (lowest)</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quintile II</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quintile III</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quintile IV</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quintile V (highest)</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*weighted by the number of working-age men
**these categories were combined because few Black neighborhoods 80%+ fall into the highest three income quintiles
Now that we have discussed some of the critical structural features of the economic system that produce such limited economic opportunity for Black men, we will turn our attention to some of the ‘external’ factors that also matter for economic outcomes. These include incarceration effects, child support effects, and educational effects.

Factors feeding into economic outcomes

The latter half of the 1990s was characterized by a strong labor market that improved the prospects for almost all groups, including young Black women; young Black men, however, continued their long-term decline in labor force participation. During this period, the educational attainment and skill level of young Black men was improving, crime rates were dropping, and the economy was booming. These factors should have led to improved employment prospects but did not. In addition to enduring employment discrimination, Holzer et al. (2005) cite two new factors for these trends: the growing importance of ex-offender status, and greater child support enforcement.

Incarceration effects. The political shift toward harsher punishment since the 1980s has led to mass incarceration of Black men despite the drop in criminal activity; punishment more than criminal activity has accounted for the swelling prison population.89 A 2008 Department of Justice report showed that Black men were 6.5 times more likely to be incarcerated than white men. In fact, mass incarceration may dramatically skew the employment rates for Black men.80 The BLS determines employment rates based on the civilian population that is not institutionalized. However, approximately 12% of young Black men are incarcerated (ages 16-24), and approximately twice as many are on parole or probation. Given the hardship of obtaining employment as an ex-offender, the observed employment rates for young Black men could be reduced by as much as 20%.82

Incarceration and criminal records limit employment options for young Black men; not only do they have poor skills in terms of education, but time in prison means that these men have little work experience. Some estimates cite that approximately 70% of incarcerated Black men are high school dropouts, and almost half are estimated to be functionally illiterate.83

Employer Discrimination. African American males not only suffer from deindustrialization, low wages, and lack of employment opportunities, but also from employment discrimination.84 Because overt employment discrimination has declined, racial discrimination rarely makes headlines. However, subtle discrimination has been found to be an important indicator for employment. A 2008 report that compiled recent employment discrimination studies which included a total of 2,820 participants found that “a black job seeker is between 50 and 500 percent less likely to be considered by employers as an equally qualified white job applicant.”85 Studies have shown that employers perceive black males as lacking “soft skills”—Black males were seen as having the lowest amount of people and teamwork skills,
motivation, and flexibility. One report states that “soft skills are increasing in importance to employers... black men are perceived by many as coming to the hiring gate with less soft skills.”

Employment prospects for men with criminal records are compounded by race. Research has indicated that without explicit knowledge about a Black male applicant’s history, employers tended to avoid young Black male applicants in general. In other words, employers may engage in a form of ‘statistical discrimination’: those employers who checked the criminal records of Black male applicants were more likely to hire the applicant than those employers who did not check the background and made judgments about qualifications based on race and work history, as well as other personal characteristics. Another study found that white applicants just out of prison were more likely to get a job than a Black applicant without a criminal record. In effect, men with records are overlooked by employers, and young Black men are avoided by association.

**Child support effects.** Holzer et.al. discuss how increased child support enforcement (i.e. garnishing wages) may in fact incentivize young men to leave the work force; if the child support is high relative to the wages of the father, there is less incentive to engage in legal work. An example illustrates how this operates: assuming a low-income father earns approximately $10,000 a year and is required to pay $300/month in child support - both reasonable assumptions - this support essentially represents a 32% tax on earnings. Child support debts often pile up while a father is out of work, including if he is in prison, and federal law allows the state to garnish 65% of wages to pay for support and debts accrued. Unfortunately, policy aimed at supporting families has largely benefited low-income women and children, to the neglect of single adult men and non-custodial fathers. This neglect only increases the hardship for Black men to enroll in and succeed in higher education, or for Black non-custodial fathers to provide financial support to their children. Instead, these men continue to bear the burden of woefully inadequate education, stagnating wages, declining employment opportunities, and child support orders that are above their ability to pay.

**Educational effects.** It is no stretch to argue that most, if not all, of the negative trends associated with Black males have their roots in poor educational outcomes. Nationally, studies show that more than half of Black men in inner cities do not finish high school. For example, in 2000, 65% of Black male high school dropouts in their 20s were jobless, meaning they were unable to find work, not seeking it, or incarcerated. By 2004, the share had grown to 72%, compared with 34% of white and 19% of Hispanic dropouts. For high school graduates, the picture is not much better. In 2004, half of African American male high school graduates were jobless, up from 46% in 2000. Even the data we do collect on youth drop-out rates likely underestimate rates among the poor because they do not include youth in prison.

A recent report by the Schott Foundation is especially troubling, finding that the majority of Black male students do not graduate with their cohort. The fact that such negative trends are easily identifiable by race and gender indicate that something more than personal failure is at work here, and yet American discourse holds tight to this frame. These trends provide compelling evidence of the structural barriers
to educational opportunity facing Black boys, barriers that only compound the economic barriers these Black boys will face in the labor markets as young adults and men.

**What does this research tell us?**

Pundits and policy alike have been striving for a return to the pre-recession norm. This goal fails to recognize that the Black community, and especially Black men, has been experiencing economic pain for decades. The data above clearly show that the pre-recession ‘norm’ is not good enough and this should not be our target. We need to establish a new ‘norm’ that acknowledges the pervasiveness of racial inequality in our labor markets.

This will require that we address the “school-to-prison pipeline.” The studies reviewed above show that incarceration is more likely for younger Black males with limited economic prospects, compounded by their lack of education—over one-third of Black males in prison are between the ages of 20 and 29, and as much as 70% of incarcerated Black men are high school dropouts.

Even in this domain, place matters. We cannot begin to repair these racial fractures until we address the disparities in educational outcomes, and this in turn will require that we address residential segregation. Quite simply, “in our democracy, a child’s access to the resources necessary to have a fair and substantive opportunity to learn should not depend on the zip code in which he resides.”

It has also come to light more recently that not only is incarceration concentrated among certain groups by race, gender, and age, but it is also concentrated by place. A new mapping project spearheaded by Columbia University and the Justice Mapping Center showcase “million dollar blocks,” or blocks where the concentration of incarcerated persons is so dense cities are paying over $1 million a year to incarcerate residents of a single city block. Indeed, on any given day, as many as one-fourth of the adult males in some US neighborhoods are behind bars—places that are both poor and African American. Education, incarceration, and employment are inextricably linked.

**Family**

After decades in transition, the majority of African American families today look very different than the “traditional” construct of a U.S. family. In 2009, 49.5% of U.S. adults were married, but only 29.5% of African American adults were married. Due to the African American non-marital birth rate and the divorce rate, it has been estimated that 80% of all African American children will spend a significant portion of their childhood living away from their fathers. The figure was only 2% in 1960. Past research has a lot to say about the break-down of marriages in the Black community and the negative consequences of single-mother families, but much of the research only scratches the surface of the
complicated issue of family structure. While there are certainly reasons that raising children in a single-parent home is difficult, existing research says little about the importance of place, stability, or social support, all of which play important roles in the successful development of children.

**Black Single-Mother Families**

Although the research on Black families is incomplete, it does provide insight on the current reality facing many Black single-mother families. A survey completed by Hill et al. (2008) found the average family income for households headed by both biological parents was $73,785, while the average income for single-mothers who never married was $19,277. The findings were even more troubling when race was considered. Black women who never married made an average household income of $15,180, which is less than a third of the average family income for Black families headed by both biological parents, which was $50,005. 108 The survey also found stronger indicators for healthy, stable households for two-parent families than single-mother families. The maternal knowledge of their children’s friends, the cleanliness of homes, the number of meals eaten at home together, and the availability of computers and dictionaries in the home decline in single-mother homes. And again, place matters—more children growing up in single-mother families live in distressed neighborhoods than children growing up with both biological parents, noting a higher percentage of children who heard gunshots on a weekly basis and a higher percentage of blighted buildings. 109

Research has shown that growing up in a single mother family can carry significant disadvantages for the future prospects of Black boys. For example, the same survey found that Black boys growing up in such a household had between 11% to 16% higher high-school drop-out rates, a 10% to 17% lower rate of being enrolled in or graduating from a four year college, an 8% to 11% higher rate of having children out-of-marriage, and a 7% to 8% higher rate of incarceration than children who grow up with both biological parents. 110

Moreover, research suggests that Black male children are more adversely affected by the single-mother family structure than Black female children. 111 Hill et al. found that the percentage of Black males not completing high school was over 8% higher than for Black females, 27.6% and 19% respectively, and Black males had almost 5% lower enrollment in four-year colleges than Black females, 9.7% compared to 14.4%. 112 Since 68% of Black children are growing up in single-mother families, these findings impact the Black community as a whole, creating a cycle difficult for many children, especially Black males, to overcome. 113

These findings paint a bleak picture of the future for Black boys. However, the issues facing Black families are much more complicated than family structure alone, and many of these findings cannot be solely attributed to the single-mother household. For example, Black families make less than White families in all family categories, seen in **Figure 3**. Black single-mothers who never married made only half of what White single-mothers who never married made. This suggests structural economic factors contribute to these findings. Poverty is widespread in the Black community; in 2009, 25.8% of African
Americans were in poverty, compared to 9.4% of the national population. Consequently, more single-mother households may live in low-income communities with limited access to a wide range of opportunities. Therefore, research must emphasize variables such as poverty, family stability, and place when understanding consequences of family structure.

![Figure 3. Source Hill et.al. (2008)](image)

**Contributing Factors to the Black Family Structure**

Rather than focusing heavily on the effects of family structure, researchers must consider the factors associated with family stability. It is clear that socioeconomic structures have significantly impacted the current state of African American families and indicate that many of the problems plaguing Black families are often beyond individual control. Holzer (2007) proposes that fatherless Black families are both a cause and a consequence of the declining economic opportunities of low-income urban Black men. Decade-long trends of wealth and income inequality have placed Black families, and especially Black men, on the losing end of the spectrum. Research has indicated that economic and societal constraints such as racism, inadequate education, high unemployment, underemployment, and disadvantages in training, hiring, and job maintenance play a significant role in Black family functioning and marital stability.

Although the percentage of Black married couples is lower than in other racial groups, that does not mean there is only one parent involved in Black families. Non-resident Black fathers have often been considered absent in past research, but that is frequently not the case. More recent research has found that African American fathers view themselves as important caregivers and would like more involvement in the parenting process. A longitudinal study determined that young African American fathers spent an equal amount of time with their eldest child as fathers from other racial and economic backgrounds. However, impediments of poverty, such as incarceration, unemployment, lack of
education, and crime, have been found to significantly inhibit Black fathers’ ability to be involved in their children’s lives. Several studies found that unemployment was a key obstacle for Black fathers’ involvement with their children. In a study of non-resident Black fathers, Perry (2009) found that income positively correlated with father involvement and suggested that financial support is a key access point for active fatherhood. Without it, Perry states that Black mothers, and often their extended family, may not value the father’s role in parenting. Consequently, income is even more significantly associated with father-involvement when the maternal extended family is heavily engaged in the child’s life.

Not only has unemployment been found to have a negative impact on the ability of the Black father to be involved in his child’s life, but it may also impact the quality of time spent together. For example, unemployment has been linked to depression as well as the father’s attentiveness to his child. In an observational study of 33 low-income fathers, Fagan (1996) found that the father’s responsiveness to the child was significantly related to the father’s employment status and self-esteem. However, the negative impacts of unemployment can be mediated. One study found that unemployed fathers receiving public assistance were more likely to live with their eldest child than fathers who were not receiving public assistance. It is possible that since assistance provided for housing, food, and healthcare, it increased opportunity for these men to seek employment. The study found that public assistance was providing the support it intended to and increased the fathers’ employment and earning potential.

A New Understanding of Family

While it is clear that unemployment, underemployment, and poverty have overarching effects on Black families in the U.S., Black families have adapted to these obstacles. Recent research has begun to look within the Black family structure to understand it in a more comprehensive way. The view of Black families is slowly shifting from only perceiving Black family structure (especially single-mother households) as dysfunctional to viewing it as a complex family structure that is not inherently harmful. Some recent studies account for family “constellations,” which consider family structures such as living with extended family or including “other father” role models, as part of the research equation.

Another study found that African American adults that grew up in single-mother households felt closer to their nonresident fathers than white children who grew up in single-mother households, suggesting that on average non-resident Black fathers are more involved than non-resident white fathers. Gutman and McLoyd (2000) interviewed parents of high- and low-achieving low-income Black elementary and middle school students and found important differences in parenting styles: successful parents structured time every day for schoolwork and were proactive in their children’s education, while lower-achieving families were not.
Many lament the breakdown of the traditional nuclear family in the Black community. However, these trends in family structure are not unique to Black families. A recent report by the Pew Research Center finds that marriage in the United States is on the decline for the whole population and a new definition of family is replacing it. While the percentage of Black married couples is significantly lower than in the White and Hispanic populations, it follows a similar trend. Instead of single-parent families as a “lack of” family, family structures viewed as constellations are providing an alternative.


*The Future of Black Families*

Families can and have overcome substantial obstacles and a variety of family structures can and do provide the critical support necessary for Black male achievement. But we also must acknowledge that the deck is stacked against Black males, and it is not reasonable or fair to expect Black families to take on these structural barriers alone and then blame their “dysfunction” when they cannot successfully do so.

Much of the research showing negative outcomes associated with single-mother families really show negative outcomes that are associated with the circumstances in which they are compelled to raise their children. The real takeaway is that in an environment where Black women, and especially single Black women and mothers, are subjected to social and economic stresses—living in impoverished neighborhoods, inadequate income, racism, and so on—it is not surprising that the outcomes in such families are poor. But it does not follow that these outcomes inhere in that family structure. They are the result of policy and implicit and structural biases against such families. Like the current foreclosure and employment crises, the difficulties afflicting Black America have astonishingly broad impact. In this context, single mother families are the canary in the coal mine.
Conclusion

The economic opportunities available to Black men and boys, especially in this current recession, look increasingly bleak, and the dismal educational outcomes for Black males force us to acknowledge that structurally things must change if we are to see any progress. The geography of opportunity must be re-mapped in ways that truly dismantle the isolation of Black men—and Black families in general—into opportunity-poor neighborhoods.

We know that neighborhood effects can trump even family effects, and impede educational opportunity,130 and that the relationship between school poverty and student achievement is stronger than the relationship between family poverty and student achievement.131 We know that discrimination in suburban labor and housing markets limit the ability for Black males to access employment opportunities. In fact, we know a lot about how the structures that distribute opportunity intertwine to withhold that opportunity from Black males. However, advocacy has not caught up with this knowledge. To truly change the trajectory for Black males in the U.S., we must take seriously the structural factors at work and target our efforts accordingly.
II. Regional Analyses

This section consists of three tiers of analysis done for each of the four cities: a media analysis, a demographic analysis, and an opportunity analysis. The media reviews for the cities provide a review of media articles to determine what the local media has said about Black male issues in the region, to the extent the issue areas of Work, Education, and Family have been covered at all.

The demographic analyses for the four cities that follow compare the metropolitan trends for Black males to the trends for the area’s overall population in order to provide insight on the local Black male population and about the overall metropolitan area as well. Understanding the existing dynamics of Black male achievement in the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic regions can point to what types of structural change are needed specifically to improve the future of the metropolitan area’s Black males.

And finally, the opportunity mapping conducted for all four cities allows us to see how space interacts with race, and that the disparities lifted up in the demographic analyses have a geographic footprint. “Opportunity maps” have substantial analytical and policy advocacy value, as well as significant communications value: maps can capture and compellingly summarize a great deal of information.
In Focus: Baltimore

Media Coverage

Jobs

Countless stories dating as far back as 1990 indicate that the loss of manufacturing and industrial jobs and the failure of job training in Baltimore and nationally have had disastrous effects on Blacks’ employment, especially for Black males. And although much has been written about the disparity in unemployment rates across racial groups, little progress has been made to reduce the gap. One such article, dating back to March 19, 1991, titled “Congress: Urban Blacks Need Education, Training,” detailed a panel discussion regarding Blacks in the workforce. According to panelist Sam Myers, Jr., a professor of Afro-American studies at the University of Maryland, "there is a crisis facing young black males in America...labor force participation rates are low; unemployment is soaring."  

The panelists went on to discuss statistics that point to a growing disparity, “The U.S. unemployment rate was 19 percent for black males in the fourth quarter of 1990, compared with 7.8 percent for white males.” Panelists attributed this to the failure of job training programs to help transition African American men for employment in the new economy and continued to train Black males for obsolete jobs. Despite these early warnings, a study conducted five years later came to similar conclusions—the lack of manufacturing jobs in Baltimore harmed Black employment: “Economic opportunities afforded to African Americans in the Baltimore area are limited by the loss of traditional manufacturing jobs and the lack of quality schools and job training programs in certain inner-city neighborhoods.”

In spite of the economic boom of the late 1990s, the jobs picture did not improve much for Baltimore Blacks. According to one article, “Here in Baltimore, a city that has suffered a sharp decline in manufacturing jobs and a drug scourge that has claimed an estimated one in eight adults, unemployment is at 6.1 percent, the lowest level in decades... [yet] the unemployment rate among blacks remains more than double the 3.5 percent rate for whites, a disparity that has persisted as long as the federal government has kept employment statistics.” The article went on to say that such a gap is “evident across educational levels, as blacks from college graduates to high school dropouts have unemployment rates that are double those of whites with comparable educations.” As one person said, "There is a feeling sometimes that even when the overall economy is doing well, some people are being left behind."

This was followed by a story in 2004 by The Sun that reported “in Baltimore, less than 40 percent of young black men with limited education had jobs.” The article also warned that "disengagement from the workforce for any period of time reduces future earnings potential and limits the ability to gain skills critical to job retention and advancement." Educational achievement will continue to increase in importance; in 2020, it is projected that 75% of jobs will require some post-secondary degree or
certificate\textsuperscript{141} while currently more than three quarters of the Black male population in Baltimore does not have a college degree.\textsuperscript{142}

\textit{Education}

Beginning in the late 1980s, several stories were printed in Baltimore newspapers regarding the disparity in educational attainment. One such story pointed to the gap in college attendance by Black males; according to the University of Maryland Baltimore County campus, in the previous year, only two Black men in Maryland received PhDs in a scientific field.\textsuperscript{143} In an attempt to encourage more black males to go to college and to train for scientific careers, a Baltimore philanthropist gave a large grant to the University of Maryland's Baltimore County campus to provide 10 Marylanders an all-expenses-paid college education, also known as the Meyerhoff Scholars Program. “The scholarships, open to all black male high school seniors in Maryland, respond to national concern over a decline in the number of black men pursuing higher education -- in particular, the number studying for doctoral degrees in the sciences and mathematics.”\textsuperscript{144}

While some efforts have been made to address gaps in educational attainment at the collegiate level, several efforts are also focused on the need to reduce disparities in elementary schools. One such early reform came in the form of all male Black classes. As one article wrote, “Milwaukee, Chicago and Baltimore are among the jurisdictions moving ahead with plans to put the black youths in an Afro centric curriculum as a way of steering them from the self-destructive path that has led many to drugs, prison and early death.”\textsuperscript{145} While some were critical of the move, others, such as Spencer Holland, Director of the Center for Educating African American Males at Morgan State University pointed out that "the mainstream educational system has already segregated African American boys and they call it special education."\textsuperscript{146} Proponents of the move cited the fact that in the three Baltimore elementary schools that created separate classes for Black males, progress was being made. According to Douglas Neilson, spokesman for Baltimore City Public Schools, "Behavioral problems have about disappeared, test scores are going up and their attitude toward life in general has improved."\textsuperscript{147}

Additional attempts in the early 1990s that targeted Black male students included Project 2000. Given the shortage of male teachers, particularly Black male teachers, Project 2000 sought to bring successful Black men into elementary schools as volunteer teaching assistants. While the program was intended to help Black males stay on track academically, according to one mentor, "the other objective is to show that African-American men particularly - but men in general - can be nurturing human beings."\textsuperscript{148}

Despite these educational reform efforts highlighted in the media, throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s, Black males in Maryland continued to lag behind in educational attainment. As one report warned, "On nearly every indicator -- from birth to death -- the black male is at a disadvantage....By almost any standard, he is in trouble." The task force noted that because Maryland's Black population
was increasingly becoming a major factor in the well-being of the state's economy, without educational support, that trend could be stunted; nearly 30 percent of Maryland's population was Black in 2000, 2.29 times the national average, according to the U.S. Census.\textsuperscript{149} 

Most recently there is reason to be optimistic. A story printed in \textit{The Examiner} on October 20, 2010 wrote, “Baltimore officials say black male students are the main reason behind the city school system's improvement in its graduation and dropout rates.”\textsuperscript{150} According to the article, in the past three years, Black males have improved their graduation rate and decreased their dropout rate. This is a marked improvement from just three years ago when in 2007, for every Black male student who graduated from high school, one dropped out—now three are graduating for everyone who leaves school.\textsuperscript{151} City schools CEO Andrees Alonso credits various factors for the decline in the dropout rate; he said an effort to go out on the street and invite dropouts back to school, although the number who initially returned was not large, sent a message that the school system was serious about keeping its students.\textsuperscript{152} The city has also started a number of alternative schools to help students who are a grade behind or more to graduate in as little time as possible. Alonso also said he believes the new state requirement that students pass the High School Assessments to graduate has helped improve the graduation rate. According to him, the requirement may have helped because “it sets a clear standard for students to attain.”\textsuperscript{153} 

Although these recent findings provide reason to be hopeful, Black males still lag behind other students- about 57% of Black male students graduated in the most recent school year compared to 66% of all students.\textsuperscript{154} While national educational experts say the city's achievement is unusual and that only Houston has seen similar improvements of the last three years,\textsuperscript{155} there is still work to be done to reduce the gap in educational attainment.

\textbf{Family} 

In the mid-1990s, the first Million Man March on Washington brought the issue of Black families to the forefront, particularly Black fathers. Although the march was not intended to promote family responsibility among Black men, according to an article by the \textit{Associated Press}, “the march unquestionably pushed the topic higher on the public agenda in black communities and prompted soul-searching even among men who didn't attend.” Joseph Jones, a recovered drug addict who runs fatherhood programs in Baltimore, said although it is hard to measure changes in attitude, but he senses them in the inner-city neighborhoods he serves. "In 1993, if you saw a guy walking down the street with a stroller, people looked at him as if he was some kind of enigma," Jones said, "now it's an everyday event to see guys holding their babies."\textsuperscript{156} 

Although the 1990s saw a growth in programs to help Black men, some fear it won't be enough: “despite surging interest in fatherhood programs among national policy-makers, some experts working
with poor, unmarried fathers complain that government policies often inhibit these men from strengthening ties with their children.” For example, they say the escalation of child-support enforcement has discouraged some unmarried fathers who fear they cannot earn enough to afford support payments.

And in spite of increased coverage of Black fathers, almost half of Black households were headed by single-mothers in Baltimore in 2009, which research suggests may affect, among other factors, children’s educational outcomes. Furthermore, single-mother households are at greater risk for being in poverty. In one study, Black women who never married made an average household income of about $15,000, which is less than a third of the average family income for Black families headed by both biological parents. Given studies which document the importance of male role models in Black males’ lives, more attention and headway must be made in this area.
Baltimore Demographic Analysis

This section provides an overview of conditions for Black males in the Baltimore region, and where available, provides historical changes in conditions over time. The analysis also provides a comparative analysis of how Black males in Baltimore are doing relative to the national Black male population, and the general metropolitan population. Table 2 below shows that from 1990 to 2008, Baltimore’s population increased 11.7% and Baltimore’s Black male population increased 21.3%. During the same time period, the national Black male population increased 25.3%.

Table 2. Population 1990-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Baltimore Metro Area Total</th>
<th>Baltimore Metro Area Black Male</th>
<th>National Black Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2,882,506</td>
<td>288,255</td>
<td>14,112,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2,952,994</td>
<td>292,647</td>
<td>16,264,336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2007</td>
<td>2,860,496</td>
<td>280,275</td>
<td>17,806,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2008</td>
<td>2,662,960</td>
<td>299,569</td>
<td>17,655,429</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 3. Median household income 2000-2008 ($2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National median Black household income</th>
<th>Milwaukee median Black household income</th>
<th>Milwaukee median household income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$36,788</td>
<td>$31,353</td>
<td>$57,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2007</td>
<td>$34,690</td>
<td>$27,455</td>
<td>$53,653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2008</td>
<td>$35,086</td>
<td>$28,010</td>
<td>$54,127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Economic Conditions

Adjusted to 2008 dollars, Black median household income in Baltimore has decreased 13.5% since 2000, while the overall Baltimore median household income has increased 2.5% (Table 3). The median income for Black households in Baltimore has been substantially lower than the overall Baltimore median household income, and the disparity has increased from $12,050 in 2000 to $20,652 in 2008. However, the Black median household income in Baltimore has been significantly higher than the national median for Black households. Comparable data is not available for previous years.
Substantial disparities exist in Baltimore between the median for individual earnings for Black males and the overall population’s median individual earnings (Table 4). In 2008, Black males made 16.1% less than the area median. However, the median for Black male individual earnings in Baltimore was 14.3% higher than the national median for Black male individual earnings in 2008. This data is not available before the 2005-2007 data set, but is important because it is the best economic approximation for Black males.

Table 4. Median individual earnings ($2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National median Black male individual earnings</td>
<td>$26,784</td>
<td>$26,623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore median Black male individual earnings</td>
<td>$30,678</td>
<td>$31,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore median individual earnings</td>
<td>$36,947</td>
<td>$36,999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Sources: 2005-2007 ACS, 2006-2008 ACS.

The percentage of Black males at or below the poverty level in Baltimore has substantially decreased from its height in 1980 at 27.3% to 15.5% in 2008 (Table 5). The overall Baltimore population at or below the poverty line has slowly decreased and is significantly lower than the percentage of Black males at or below the poverty line. The disparity has ranged from its height in 1980 at 15.4% to 6.5% in 2008. The percentage of Black males at or below the poverty line in Baltimore has followed a similar trend as the national percentage of Black males at or below the poverty line, but since 1980 the percentage of Black men at or below the poverty line in Baltimore has been substantially lower than the national percentage of Black men, and in 2008 the difference was 5.5%.

Table 5. Population at or below poverty level, 1970-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Black male population at or below poverty level</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore Black male population at or below poverty level</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore population at or below poverty level</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Sources: 2005-2007 ACS, 2006-2008 ACS.
Today more than two-thirds of African American male dropouts are expected to serve time in state or federal prison. Table 6 shows that for the 2007-08 school year, Black males in Baltimore County had higher graduation rates than the nation. Baltimore City, on the other hand, only graduated about one-third of its Black male students, and the rates for white males were not that much better.

Table 6. High school graduation rates 2007-2008

Table 7 shows the percentage of the adult population (ages 25+) that has an educational attainment level of a High School diploma (or equivalent) or more. This data is being used in lieu of more accurate and consistent High School graduation rates at the metro level, which were unavailable for all four metros in question.

This data represents the persistent gap, about 10%, between the Baltimore metro average for educational attainment, and that of Black males at the metro and national level. Additionally, these figures show that the average educational attainment level of Black males in the Baltimore metro is less than that of Black males at the national level, indicating a marginal level of local disparity.
Table 8 shows that there is a substantial difference between the percentages of Black men in Baltimore and the total Baltimore population that have a college degree. In 2008, 16.9% less of the Black male population had a college degree than the total Baltimore population. However, the trend for Baltimore’s Black male is almost identical to the national Black male population’s trend, which reflects the consistent pattern of lower Black male achievement. The increase in all groups in the 2006-2008 American Community Survey can possibly be attributed to the fact that this data set included an Associate degree as not having a college degree.

**Family Conditions**

The percentage of female-headed households in Baltimore has increased from 1970 to 2008, but has begun to stabilize since 2000 (Table 9). The percentage of Black single-female headed families in Baltimore increased 16.6% from 1970 to 2000 and has remained steady since, while the overall percentage of female-headed households in Baltimore increased 12% from 1970 to 2000 and then decreased 3.8% by 2008. The percentage of Black female-headed households in Baltimore was consistently much higher than the percentage for the entire Baltimore area and the gap has grown from 16.8% in 1970 to 24.8% in 2008. The increase of Black female-headed households in Baltimore shows a similar trend to the national percentage of Black female-headed households, again signaling a widespread trend in Black families. Milwaukee has been significantly higher than the national Black percentage (12% higher in 2008).
Housing Conditions

The percentage of Black homeowners, both nationally and in Baltimore, has been substantially lower than the overall Baltimore population from 1970 to 2008, illustrating the persistent difference of over 20% in homeownership rates between Black homeowners and all homeowners in Baltimore (Table 10). However, homeownership increased for all populations between 1970 and 2000, but has remained relatively unchanged since 2000. In Baltimore, the percentage of Black homeowners increased 12.5% from 1970 to 2007.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National percentage of Black homeowners</th>
<th>Baltimore percentage of Black homeowners</th>
<th>Baltimore percentage of homeowners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>59.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
<td>63.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
<td>66.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2007</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>47.0%</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2008</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Focus: Philadelphia

Media Coverage

Jobs

Although the entire Philadelphia region has not been immune to the fallout of the Great Recession, the effects have been most profound for Black males, who suffer significantly higher unemployment rates than other populations across the nation.\textsuperscript{161} Unemployment intersects with race, gender, and geography in profound ways. For example, in April 2009, the \textit{Philadelphia Inquirer} reported that the 5700 block of Spruce Street in West Philadelphia was one of the city's hardest-hit neighborhoods. The unemployment rate among African American male teenagers stood at nearly 40 percent in that area compared to the national average of 8.9 percent. During this period the Philadelphia region experienced nearly 210,100 unemployed persons, translating into a $2.7 billion loss in monthly production for the national economy.\textsuperscript{162}

Despite the bleak conditions, there are support efforts in place that promote job training opportunities. Kia Gregory, staff writer to the \textit{Philadelphia Inquirer} writes about the job training program geared towards green jobs, implemented in Philadelphia in January 2010. The Greenworks Pilot Energy Technology (G-PET) Program is an initiative to assist the unemployed through job readiness training, improvement of reading, writing, and math skills, and case management to help navigate the job search and overcome any barriers, such as a criminal record, lack of high school diploma, or bus fare. The program is supported by $225,000 in federal stimulus to recruit and train, and hopefully place, unemployed people in green jobs, including weatherization, installing green panels, constructing green buildings, and so on.\textsuperscript{163}

Education

Much attention has been focused on Black males and their drop-out rates in the Philadelphia area. Mayor Nutter has defined the high school drop-out rate as one of the most serious problems the city is currently facing,\textsuperscript{164} and has set out to cut the city's dropout rate in half by 2015. After a ten month study of drop out problems among Black and Latino males, recommendations to reduce drop-out rates included offering single-sex classes, and adding music and arts programs to help engage students' interest, and raise academic standards.\textsuperscript{165} Overall, only 56 percent of district students graduate in four years, according to 2009 data. The rates for minority male students are worse: only 45 percent for African American males and 43 percent for Latino males graduate.\textsuperscript{166}
Students and former students of the Philadelphia school district reported to the *Philadelphia Inquirer* that “the district's hard-line policy on violence prevents students from learning from their mistakes and just transfers them to other schools.”\(^{167}\) In an article from the *Philadelphia Daily News* “Working to Keep Black and Latino males in School,” School Reform Commissioner Johnny Irizarry said that keeping Black and Latino youths from dropping out of school is the most important work he can do as a board member: "We want to emphasize that what we're aiming for is a four-year graduation rate. We don't want a lower standard." Irizarry also suggested creating all-male classrooms in neighborhood schools, or dividing boys into subgroups to give certain ones more cultural instruction. Integrating effective multicultural lessons and urban culture into the curriculum is also key, he added. Jerry Jordan, president of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers called for district schools to provide more services to improve graduation rates for minority male students. Said Jordan: "Being born poor, minority and male shouldn't be synonymous with a high risk of dropping out of school."\(^{168}\)

Mentorship programs have also received a lot of media attention in Philadelphia. Tykeem Williams, 13, relays to the *Inquirer* his hopes of one day becoming a judge with the support of his “Big Brother,” a 58-year-old banker named Craig Williams who has mentored Tykeem for 7 years. "I look around and see a lot of things I don't want to be," Tykeem said. "But when I look at my Big Brother, I see a lot of things I want to become - a success." The Big Brothers Big Sisters of America in Philadelphia has now partnered with the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. The partnership is aimed at finding mentors for at-risk African-American boys, particularly those with absent fathers. AME's 2.5 million church members across the nation will join forces with nearly 400 local Big chapters to pair men and boys. "This partnership is not about replacing fathers; it's about giving boys access to Big Brothers Big Sisters, a program proven to help kids of single, low-income and incarcerated parents succeed," said Bishop Richard Norris, who presides over the First Episcopal District AME Church on Market Street.
Family

In 2007, the Urban League of Philadelphia released a report entitled *State of Black Philadelphia*. This report confronted the conflicting images of Black families in Philadelphia, images such as single-parent households and violence, which reportedly affected 300 Black families in 2006, and poor parenting. To counteract these statistics, in 2007, approximately 10,000 men with mothers and friends rallied and made commitments to protect their children by patrolling the streets, mentoring children, and reclaiming the neighborhoods from the influence of violence. On February 6, 2008, The *Philadelphia Citypaper* reported that the 10,000 Men Movement had “won the hearts of Philadelphia residents.” Frederick L. Whiten, founder of Because Mentoring Works, commented on the 10,000 Men Movement to the Philadelphia City paper saying “[it’s] exactly what the community needs...the same thing is happening here that happened after the Million Man March...[but] it’s fading away. Things like this need continual resurgence.”
This section provides an overview of conditions for Black males in the Philadelphia region, and where available, provides historical changes in conditions over time. The analysis also provides a comparative analysis of how Black males in Philadelphia are doing relative to the national Black male population and the general metropolitan population. Overall, Philadelphia’s population decreased slightly, 1.3%, from 1990 to 2008, but its Black male population increased 6.5%. Table 11 shows that while Philadelphia’s Black male population increase is significant since the city lost population (however slightly), the national Black male population increased 25.3% during the same time period.

### Table 11. Population 1990-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National Black Male</th>
<th>Philadelphia Metro Area Black Male</th>
<th>Philadelphia Metro Area Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>14,112,722</td>
<td>511,190</td>
<td>5,000,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>16,284,366</td>
<td>551,802</td>
<td>6,183,463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-07</td>
<td>17,666,353</td>
<td>545,596</td>
<td>5,010,526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-08</td>
<td>17,695,429</td>
<td>544,192</td>
<td>5,022,868</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Economic Conditions

Severe disparities exist in Philadelphia between the median income of Black households and the overall population’s median household income. In 2008, Black households made $23,713 less than the area median, an almost 40% difference (Table 12). However, the median income for Black households in Philadelphia is slightly above the national median for Black households. Comparable data is not available for previous years.

### Table 12. Median household income 2000-2008 ($2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National median Black household income</th>
<th>Philadelphia median Black household income</th>
<th>Philadelphia median household income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$36,788</td>
<td>$38,860</td>
<td>$59,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-07</td>
<td>$34,690</td>
<td>$35,870</td>
<td>$60,051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-08</td>
<td>$35,086</td>
<td>$36,618</td>
<td>$60,331</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar to the median household income, the median individual earnings (Table 13) for Black males in Philadelphia has been significantly lower than the area median individual earnings. In 2008, the median earnings for Black males was 15.5% less than the overall median individual earnings for Philadelphia. Nonetheless, the median for Black male individual earnings for Philadelphia has been slightly higher than the national median for Black males. This data is not available before the 2005-2007 data set, but is important because it is the best economic approximation for Black males.

Table 13. Median individual earnings ($2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National median</td>
<td>$26,784</td>
<td>$26,623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individual earnings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>$28,390</td>
<td>$29,581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>median Black male individual earnings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>$34,438</td>
<td>$35,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>median individual earnings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Sources: 2005-2007 ACS, 2006-2008 ACS.

The percentage of Black males at or below the poverty level in Philadelphia has substantially decreased from a high of 29.6% in 1980 to 21.3% in 2008 (Table 14). The overall Philadelphia population at or below the poverty line has remained fairly stable and is significantly lower than the percentage of Black males at or below the poverty line. The disparity has ranged from its height in 1980 at 17.5% to 10.1% in 2008. The percentage of Black males at or below the poverty line in Philadelphia is fairly consistent with the national percentage of Black males at or below the poverty line and in recent years has become nearly identical.

Table 14. Population at or below poverty level, 1970-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Black</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at or below</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poverty level</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>population at or</td>
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<tr>
<td>below poverty</td>
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<tr>
<td>level</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>population at or</td>
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<td>below poverty</td>
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<tr>
<td>level</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Sources: 2005-2007 ACS, 2006-2008 ACS.
**Education Conditions**

Philadelphia’s graduation for both White and Black males are severely lower than the national graduation rates. **Table 15** shows that while the discrepancy between the graduations rates of Black and White male students nationally is 31%, the difference is only 5% in Philadelphia. In its most basic terms, the Philadelphia educational system is failing between two-thirds to three-quarters of its male students. This is especially troubling when we consider that today more than two-thirds of African American male dropouts are expected to serve time in state or federal prison.

**Table 15. High school graduation rates 2007-2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Sources: Schott Foundation, 50 State Report on Public Education and Black Males

**Table 16. Percent of population 25+ with at least High school (or equivalent) educational attainment.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Black Males</th>
<th>Philadelphia Black Males</th>
<th>Philadelphia Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2006*</td>
<td>2007*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>78.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>79.4</td>
<td>80.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>87.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Table 16** shows the percentage of the adult population (ages 25+) that has an educational attainment level of a High School diploma (or equivalent) or more. This data is being used in lieu of more accurate and consistent High School graduation rates at the metro level, which were unavailable for all four metros in question.

This data represents the persistent gap, about 10%, between the Philadelphia metro average for educational attainment, and that of Black males at the metro and national level. Additionally, these figures show that the average educational attainment level of Black males in the Philadelphia metro is greater than that of Black males at the national level, indicating a marginal level of local parity.
Table 17 illustrates the substantial difference between the percentage of Black men in Philadelphia that have a college degree and the percentage of the total Philadelphia population. In 2007, 17.3% less of the Black male population had a college degree than the total Philadelphia population. On the other hand, the percentage of Black males that do not have a college degree in Philadelphia is almost identical to the percentage of the national Black male population. The increase in all groups in the 2006-2008 Community Survey can possibly be contributed to the fact that the 2006-2008 Community Survey considered having an Associate degree as not having a college degree.

Family Conditions

The percentage of single-female headed families has steadily increased from 1970 to 2008 for each group. The percentage of Black single-female headed families in Philadelphia increased 18.1% while the area percentage rose 8.4% (Table 18). The gap between the percentage of Black female-headed households in Philadelphia and the percentage for the entire Philadelphia area widens over time, from 17.8% in 1970 to 27.5% in 2008. The increase of Black female-headed households in Philadelphia is very similar to the national percentage of Black female-headed households, but the percentage is consistently slightly higher in Philadelphia.

Table 17. Percentage of population 25+ with less than a College degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Black male population</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
<td>78.2%</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia Black male population</td>
<td>83.6%</td>
<td>79.1%</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia population</td>
<td>67.4%</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18. Single Female-headed households, 1970-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Black female-headed families</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia Black female-headed families</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>49.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Housing Conditions

The percentage of Black homeowners, both nationally and in Philadelphia, has been substantially lower than the homeownership percentage for the overall Philadelphia population since 1970 (Table 19). While the national percentage of Black homeowners has significantly increased between 1970 and 2008, Philadelphia’s Black homeownership rate has stayed relatively constant. Nonetheless, the Black homeownership rate in Philadelphia has been consistently higher than the national percentage of Black homeowners for the entire time period. The Black homeownership rate in Philadelphia follows a unique trend, although the causes for this divergence are unclear.

Table 19. Homeownership Rates, 1970-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National percentage of Black homeowners</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia percentage of Black homeowners</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia percentage of homeowners</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
<td>67.9%</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
<td>69.9%</td>
<td>70.7%</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Focus: Chicago

Media Coverage

Jobs

Over the past thirty years, media attention pertaining to Black men and the job market has emphasized disappearing jobs and discrimination which has resulted in an increase in Black unemployment. Research released in 1987 by William Julius Wilson showed that between the late 1960s and late 1970s, the four largest northern cities, including Chicago, lost more than one million unskilled or relatively low-skilled jobs—the types of jobs available to under-educated men which tend to be Black men. Meanwhile, job growth shifted towards positions requiring better skills and advanced training, creating “a serious mismatch between the skills of inner-city Blacks and the opportunities available to them.” This shift caused Black unemployment to grow; according to researchers, from 1970 to 1986, the Black employment rate plunged from 81.1% to 49.6%. While Black employment in 1970 was on par with white employment (80.2%), although both groups experienced a substantial decline by 1985 (white employment fell to 69.7%), the downfall was much more severe for Black workers.

While Blacks have historically found work in industrial sectors and therefore bore the brunt of the impact when the job market shifted away from such jobs, they too have found more job opportunities in government and were therefore also affected in cutbacks during the 1990s. According to Gary Orfield, government employment has been "an absolutely critical route of mobility for blacks." He went on to say that many Blacks were able to take advantage of the rapid expansion of government, especially on the local level, in the 1960's because as more and more Blacks migrated from the South to the cities of the North, their voting strength increased, forcing the local governments to pay more attention to their needs. However, with an increase in government layoffs in the early 1990s in Chicago, Blacks were expected to suffer disproportionately.

These factors resulted in an increase Black unemployment in the 1990s and into 2000. In fact, according to researchers, in 2004, 45 percent of Black men ages 20 to 24 were out of school -- most without a diploma of any kind -- and out of work. Educational achievement will become an even larger factor for employment; it is projected that in 2020 75 percent of jobs will require some post-secondary degree or certificate. This is especially ominous for Black males in Chicago because according to 2006-2008 ACS data, over 80% of the Black male population in Chicago does not have a college degree. A study released in 2005 showed similar findings, stating that the Black unemployment rate was much higher than the unemployment rate for others in Chicago: “the city's 22 predominantly black neighborhoods had an unemployment rate almost twice that of the city as a whole.” This disparity in unemployment contributed to a growing gap in income between Whites and Blacks; from 1970 to 2000, the median family income in Chicago rose by 2 percent for blacks, compared with 19 percent for whites.
While Black men faced a shifting labor market which resulted in higher unemployment rates as well as a growing income gap, such problems were also compounded by discrimination in the job market. According to an Urban Institute study released in 1991, young white men seeking entry level jobs in the metropolitan area of Chicago received favorable treatment, including job offers, three times more often than their equally-qualified black counterparts. Discrimination continued into the twenty-first century and as recently as 2010, the “Supreme Court reinstated a discrimination ruling ...in favor of 6,000 black applicants for Chicago firefighting jobs in the 1990s, saying they had properly sued after it was clear that an entry-level test had a “disparate impact” based on race.”

These findings from the past couple decades emphasize a need to address employment practices and the job market in order to reduce disparities.

**Education**

In the early 1980s, the Chicago public school system was facing significant problems. According to a survey by William Julius Wilson, of the 39,500 students who enrolled in the ninth grade of Chicago’s public schools in 1980, four years later in 1984, only 18,500 or 47 percent graduated; of these only 6,000 were reading at or above the national twelfth grade level. With the school system failing and Blacks consistently performing worse than White students, the Department of Justice initiated a study of Chicago’s housing, employment, and education. Their study found widespread segregation in Chicago and issued a court order for the Chicago public schools to desegregate.

Despite the ruling to desegregate and improve the school system, by 1987 there had been little improvement; more than half the city’s public high schools scored in the lowest one percent nationally on college entrance exams. With Black and Hispanic students accounting for 84 percent of the 421,000 students in the Chicago public school system this led some to conclude that Black students were being particularly ill-served, after all “in the city's most isolated districts, a mere eight percent of the students who entered high school as ninth graders both graduate and read above the national average.” While these circumstances were likely the result of a combination of factors, a decrease in funding for the schools certainly did not help the situation; according to figures compiled by the Chicago Urban League, “state funding for city schools declined by $98.5 million between the fiscal years 1977 and 1987.” At this time, William J. Bennett, the United States Education Secretary, described Chicago schools as the worst in the nation, saying “You’ve got close to educational meltdown here.”

To address the state of its public schools, in 1988 Illinois legislators passed the School Reform Act, which concentrated on reshaping the entire school system. The most significant feature under the legislation was the provision that city schools were to be run by parent-controlled Local School Councils (LSCs) which had the right to hire and fire principals. The legislation also established a commission to nominate members of a permanent 15-member school board, put a cap on administrative spending, and
revised the formula for Chapter One funding to allow more resources to be allocated to low-income schools.\textsuperscript{190}

Reform efforts continued in the early 1990s when Chicago established a pull-out program for Black fourth-through-eighth graders in one of its schools in order to target and provide extra help for Black youths. "One of the things we wanted to improve was student self-esteem," said Antoinette Patton, director of the project at Jensen Elementary School. "We felt that could be accomplished if our students knew more about themselves as a race of people . . . and could understand the contributions of many Africans in history and all areas."\textsuperscript{191} The program, which was created with a $7,500 foundation grant, identified about 30 black boys in grades four through eight and pulled them out of the classroom two or three times a week to work with a black male role model who taught them African history. "We're not saying this is the answer or this will work, but we'll keep trying until we get it right," she said. Although there were some critics of the program who believed that isolating Black males could have negative side effects, given the situation and the state of education, some believed that there were no other options and that the experiment was worth it.

Despite these reform efforts and programs, the state of education did not improve; in the 1990s findings showed that nearly half of Black youths in Chicago failed to graduate from high school.\textsuperscript{192} The educational attainment between white and Black students continued to widen in later years as well; between 2003 and 2007 "white students' reading scores went up while black, Hispanic and low-income students' scores went down. Black students' math scores also dropped."\textsuperscript{193} According to Rep. Monique Davis, "The students who are least well-prepared will fall further and further behind if there is not a net -- I don't see a net."\textsuperscript{194} Some blamed the competitiveness of highly selective schools in the widening of the achievement gap. Schools CEO Arne Duncan argued "White Chicago students are clustered in the city's selective college preps and the competition to get in has skyrocketed since 2003, increasing the ability of such schools to take top students. Scores for incoming freshmen are significantly higher than they were five years ago. Chicago's white students are also better off financially than they were five years ago. The percent of low-income CPS whites has dropped from 47 to 42 percent since 2003. At the same time, CPS' dropout rate has declined. This likely means more low-scoring kids are still around to take eleventh grade tests."\textsuperscript{195} Duncan went on to say that, "the Chicago public school system has been abandoned by the middle class. Its 415,000 pupils are 90 per cent black and Hispanic. Most live below the poverty line. Something like 9000 are effectively homeless. Many rely on their school to feed them."\textsuperscript{196} With educational achievement for Black students showing little improvement despite reform efforts and programs in the 1980s and 1990s, some educators believed that more needed to be done to target Black male students. In 2002, Urban Prep, a single-sex charter school, was founded. According to an article written about the school, "a part state-funded school, all of the 450 male students are African-American,
and 85% come from single-parent households. About 90% of the teachers and all the school leaders are African-American men. Urban Prep, which emphasizes academic rigor, extracurricular involvement and community service, has a longer school day than most US schools, and the curriculum is designed to be culturally relevant to young urban males.”^{197} Within a few years the school was showing signs of success, for instance when students joined the school “just 7% were able to read at the expected grade, within a year 79% were able to pass the necessary courses to graduate, compared with 34% for the neighborhood. Daily attendance is 93%, compared with 75% locally.”

While schools and programs specifically targeting Black youths hold promise that the gap in educational attainment can be reduced, there remains a lot to be done in Chicago. A recent court desegregation ruling which resulted in the decision to use socioeconomic data for the students’ neighborhood instead of race to achieve classroom diversity^{198} may help in part, but additional reforms may be needed. This is because although there is a “general correspondence between income and race”^{199} schools that are integrated by income may not also be substantially integrated by race. According to research, “persistent racial segregation in housing and the fact that there are more whites in poverty than people of color would combine to thwart many efforts at racial integration that rely on income measures.”^{200} Therefore the entire educational system and surrounding neighborhoods must be addressed to improve the outcomes for all students, requiring a more holistic, structural approach.

**Family**

Over the past twenty years, there has been limited media coverage specifically pertaining to Black families in Chicago. However, the stories that have covered the topic have largely painted a picture of the need for Black role models in the community. For instance, in 1991 a story printed in USA Today discussed the lack of positive Black role models in Chicago, highlighting the need for more Black males in leadership roles. According to one third-grade teacher at a Chicago elementary school, “The kids see guys driving by in a Mercedes, wearing long, gold chains and putting out pockets full of money….that’s the wrong role model, but that’s the image they’re seeing.”^{201} He went on to say that “it’s important that students see a black male in a leadership role…A lot of these kids don’t have fathers. I may be the only male that’s doing something positive in their lives.”^{202} The importance of Black male role models grew as the number of single women head of household increased; according to an article in 2004 “one in five black men in their twenties in the Windy City is in prison, on probation or on parole, and single women head 69 percent of all black households.”^{203}

Most recently there is reason to be hopeful as some fathers have taken a more active role in parenting. For instance, the Million Father March has grown in popularity: “beginning in the basement of a South Side Chicago church seven years ago, about 600 cities across the world now participate.”^{204} And in the Chicago area alone, about 100 public, private, and charter schools took part in the march this year, with
dads walking their kids to school on the first day. While this is a step in the right direction, more programs and efforts are needed to address the many issues facing Chicago families.
Chicago Demographic Analysis

This section provides an overview of conditions for Black males in the Chicago region, and where available, provides historical changes in conditions over time. The analysis also provides a comparative analysis of how Black males in Chicago are doing relative to the national Black male population, and the general metropolitan population. Table 20 below shows that Chicago’s population increased 16.3% from 1990 to 2008, while the Black male population in Chicago increased only 8.3%. During the same time period, the national Black male population increased 25.3%.

### Table 20. Population 1990-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National Black Male Population</th>
<th>Chicago Black Male Population</th>
<th>Chicago Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>14,112,722</td>
<td>712,324</td>
<td>8,165,532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>16,204,966</td>
<td>779,296</td>
<td>9,157,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2007</td>
<td>17,606,355</td>
<td>777,850</td>
<td>9,468,477</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Economic Conditions

The median Black household income in Chicago is significantly lower than the overall Chicago median household income. Table 21 below shows that the median household income in Chicago decreased significantly from 2000 to 2008 for both Black households and all households. Adjusted to 2008 dollars, Black household income in Chicago decreased only 14.6% from 2000 to 2008, while the overall Chicago median household income decreased 18.3%. Comparable data is not available for previous years.

### Table 21. Median household income 2000-2008 ($2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National median Black household income</th>
<th>Chicago median Black household income</th>
<th>Chicago median household income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$36,788</td>
<td>$41,076</td>
<td>$63,823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2007</td>
<td>$34,690</td>
<td>$34,690</td>
<td>$51,927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2008</td>
<td>$35,086</td>
<td>$35,086</td>
<td>$52,175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2008, the median individual earnings for Black men in Chicago was 11% less than the median individual earnings for the overall Chicago population but was 10% more than the national median individual earnings for Black males. Table 22 shows that from 2007 to 2008, the median earnings for Black males in Chicago and the overall Chicago population remained relatively stagnant while the national Black male median individual earnings decreased.

Data Sources: 2005-2007 ACS, 2006-2008 ACS.

Table 22. Median individual earnings ($2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National median Black male individual earnings</td>
<td>$27,812</td>
<td>$26,623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago median Black male individual earnings</td>
<td>$29,393</td>
<td>$29,359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago median individual earnings</td>
<td>$33,243</td>
<td>$32,884</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 23. Population at or below poverty level, 1970-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Black male population at or below poverty level</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Black male population at or below poverty level</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago population at or below poverty level</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 23 reveals that the percentage of Black males in Chicago that live at or below the poverty level is significantly higher than the percentage for the total Chicago population, reaching its biggest discrepancy in 1990 when 18.4% more of the Black male population was at or below the poverty level than the overall population. This difference remained at 12.2% in 2008. Since 1980, Chicago’s Black male poverty rate has been very similar to the national Black male poverty rate, although it’s been slightly higher since 2005. The poverty rates for all populations have stabilized since 2000, but it is possible that it has changed due to the current recession.

Data Sources: 2005-2007 ACS, 2006-2008 ACS.
Education Conditions

Disparities exist between the high school graduation rates of Black males and White males, both nationally and locally. Table 24 shows that in 2007-2008, White males in Chicago graduated at a rate 15% lower than the national White male population, but the national and local graduation rates for Black males were comparable. Nonetheless, the percentage of Black males in Chicago that graduated in the 2007-2008 school year was 19% less than the percentage for White males in Chicago, illustrating a persistent achievement gap in Chicago.

Table 24. High school graduation rates 2007-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>National White Male</th>
<th>National Black Male</th>
<th>Chicago City White Male</th>
<th>Chicago City Black Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Sources: Schott Foundation, 50 State Report on Public Education and Black Males

While it is clear that an achievement gap exists, Table 25 shows that between 2000 and 2008, the Black male population in Chicago made significant gains towards closing the gap with the overall Chicago population. Black males remained less likely to achieve a high school education or higher than the overall population, but in 2008 the difference was only 4.7%, compared to 8.7% in 2000.

Table 25. Percent of population 25+ with at least High school (or equivalent) educational attainment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National Black Male Population</th>
<th>Chicago Black Male Population</th>
<th>Chicago Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>70.9%</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
<td>81.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2007</td>
<td>70.9%</td>
<td>79.9%</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2008</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
<td>85.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 26 illustrates the sizeable difference between the percentages of Black men in Chicago that have a college degree and the percentage of the total Chicago population with college degrees; in 2008, the difference between the two populations was 16.1%. However, the percentage of Black males in Chicago that have a college degree is higher than the percentage for Black males nationally. The increase in 2008 for all groups can possibly be attributed to the fact that the 2006-2008 Community Survey considered having an Associate degree as not having a college degree.

**Family Conditions**

The percentage of female-headed households has increased in all populations from 1970 to 2008, but the growth has stabilized in recent years. Table 27 shows that the percentage of Black single-female headed families in Chicago increased 27.6% from 1970 to 2008 but has not changed significantly since 1990, while the overall percentage of female-headed households in Chicago increased only 8% from 1970 to 2008. Not only was the increase in Chicago’s Black population more severe, but the percentage of Black single-mother families in Chicago is also substantially higher than the total Chicago population; in 2008 it reached the difference between the two groups reached its height at 30.9%. Conversely, the percentage of Black female-headed households in Chicago follows the national trend, but has been 4-5% higher in recent years than the national percentage.

Table 26. Percentage of population 25+ with less than a College degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Black male population</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Black male population</td>
<td>80.7%</td>
<td>76.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago population</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 27. Single Female-headed households, 1970-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Black female-headed families</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Black female-headed families</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago female-headed households</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Housing Conditions**

While the percentage of homeowners in Chicago steadily increased from 1970 to 2007, the percentage of Black homeowners in Chicago and national increased slowly at roughly half the pace from 1970 to 2000 and then stopped increasing (Table 28). Not only are the trends dissimilar, but the Black homeownership rate is much lower than for the overall population; in 2008 the difference was 25.2%.

**Table 28. Homeownership Rates, 1970-2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National percentage of Black homeowners</th>
<th>Chicago percentage of Black homeowners</th>
<th>Chicago percentage of homeowners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td>55.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>61.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>42.72%</td>
<td>65.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2007</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>69.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2008</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Focus: Milwaukee

Media Coverage

Jobs

In March 2009, Governor Jim Doyle announced a "Strategic Workforce Initiative" that could go a distance in addressing Black male joblessness. A total of $1.5 million in grants from the stimulus package went toward assisting low-wage workers with no high school diplomas to apply to technical colleges for short-term training, and an additional $140,000 for pilot programs that develops interest in high school students for high-demand jobs. That same month a panel of experts held a forum on the factors that contribute to high Black unemployment in Milwaukee, finding:

- Most companies that operated or recruited from the near north side have disappeared: Schlitz, Pabst and Blatz, Allis-Chalmers and Master Lock.
- Poor public transportation means workers have problems commuting to jobs outside the central city.
- Many potential workers have suspended driver's licenses. Restrictions on reinstatement are an impediment.
- Broken homes: More than 20,000 children in Milwaukee have one or both parents incarcerated.
- A seeming disconnect between private-sector needs, workers with at least some college, and public education outcomes. Our analysis shows that 89.2% of Black males in Milwaukee have less than a college degree.

A recent University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Center for Economic Development study says almost half of all Black men (47.1%) between the ages of 16 and 64 in the Milwaukee metro area were out of work last year. On the contrary, unemployment for white males and Hispanics wasn't anywhere near as startling: 18.1% for white males and 22.1% for Hispanics. These statistics placed Milwaukee as fifth-worst city for Black male joblessness among the nation's 35 largest cities in 2009.

But people are not sitting idly by in the midst of the depressing economic and jobs statistics. A group of Milwaukeeans, Build Milwaukee, put together a plan for change. The plan involves designating a wide area of the central city - from W. Burleigh St. to W. Highland Ave. and from the Milwaukee River to N. 60th St. - for improvement. The plan would cost approximately $400 million. Martha Brown, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of City Development, called the plan "an interesting concept." The plan was presented in mid-October 2010 to a city task force. The conversation was centrally focused on dealing with unemployment among the city's Black males.

But to deal with this issue, strategists need an accurate unemployment rate for Black males in Milwaukee. Currently, there is a debate about the actual unemployment rate among Black males in the
Marc Levine, a professor at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and member of the unemployment task force, recently published a paper putting the Black male jobless rate at 53.3%. Reviewers have labeled this figure as highly misleading because it includes those who are unemployed and looking for work, the standard measurement, but also those incarcerated, disabled, in school, or out of the workforce because they’ve given up or retired. The standard measure by the U.S. Census, which looks only at the number out of work but looking, places the unemployment rate for Black males aged 16 to 64 at 27.7%, about half of what Professor Levine estimates as the “true” unemployment rate. Overall, defining a common language or definition of who qualifies as unemployed will be Milwaukee’s first step towards decreasing Black male unemployment.

**Education**

Educational outcomes have been poor for Black students in Wisconsin in general, but particularly in Milwaukee. The Schott 2010 *50 State Report on Black Males and Education* reported that more than two-thirds of the state’s Black male students read below the basic level at grade 4, and 60% of Black male students in Milwaukee do not graduate from high school.

Reading scores for Wisconsin's Black fourth-graders trail those of their racial peers in every other state and the District of Columbia. Furthermore, the Black eighth-graders in the state scored lower in reading than the ESL students. When we consider the alarming poverty rates Milwaukee’s communities are experiencing in the context of today’s bleak economic environment, a perfect storm is developing. Poverty is clearly interrelated to education—what happens outside the school walls impact what happens inside the school walls. Michael Bonds, President of the Milwaukee School Board, told the *Milwaukee Wisconsin Journal Sentinel* he was not surprised by the newest poverty figures, "Not only do schools have to deal with traditional education, but now they also have to provide supports that were traditionally provided by other agencies, because those institutions are also facing financial challenges," he added. Schools are also faced with the challenge of preventing higher drop outs, and in Milwaukee’s case, the fear of youth not making it out of grade school. Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu, a national education consultant and author of the newly released book "Reducing the Black Male Dropout Rate," expressed to James Causey of the *Wisconsin Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* in the article “Educating Minority Boys” that “schools only have children 9% of the time,” which can ultimately be difficult to have impactful change in a youths life without effective programming.

Just as poverty is interrelated to education, so is employment. Educational achievement is becoming an even larger factor for employment; it is projected that in 2020 75% of jobs will require some post-secondary degree or certificate. This is especially ominous for Black males in Milwaukee because currently almost nine out of ten Black males in Milwaukee do not have a college degree.
There is good work underway to change the course for these students. In response to the low reading scores that were issued at the beginning of the year, Milwaukee Public Schools and former Milwaukee Public Schools Superintendent Howard Fuller developed a summer reading program for Black third and fourth graders. The result: sixty-two percent of the Black students who participated in the six-week Summer Reading Project performed at a higher reading level and none of the students regressed. In addition, other progress notes from the summer reading project was that more than 80% of the students showed up every day; 90% improved in spelling; and 95% increased their vocabularies.

Another example of success lies within the Craig and Maryland Avenue Montessori schools in Milwaukee. Phillip Dosmann, Principal of MPS' four Montessori schools says he has found a way to effect change locally. Black students in the Milwaukee Montessori Schools scored above the district average and the state average for Black students on all subject areas of the state's standardized assessments last school year. He credited the schools' approach of starting with phonetic-based reading instruction at age 3, infusing reading in every subject area, and keeping students with their teachers for three-year cycles. Parents also play a big role: "Parents are helpful in terms of following up with homework and reading with their children and enriching their children's lives through different experiences."

Regarding high drop-out rates, one solution offered to Milwaukee schools has been Violence Free Zones. VFZ, a program that incorporates adult intervention, has reduced the number of violent incidents in schools, increased the number of minority mentors, and reduced suspensions. Other tactics that keep youth in school and reduce dropout rates include single-sex school like Englewood Urban Prep Academy for Young Men in Chicago. Englewood Academy is the only public, all-male, all-African-American high school in the Chicago district and in March 2010 the school announced that its entire senior class (107 Black males) was accepted to four-year colleges. Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu also suggested as a retention tool “incorporating books into the classroom that boys actually want to read .... [M]ost public education books are geared toward girls. Boys have shorter attention spans and need to read books that they like. Books on cars, sports and even hip-hop are worth a try if it gets boys reading.”

**Family**

**Black marriage**

In 1965, Daniel Moynihan’s report, “The Negro Family: The Case for National Action,” alerted individuals across the nation of the challenges the Black family faced. Forty years later, Moynihan’s warnings of the consequences of female-headed households, children born out-of-wedlock, and joblessness have become a reality for many Black families across the nation. In 1963, when Martin Luther King gave his “I Have a Dream Speech,” more than 70% of Black families nationally were headed by married couples; by 2002 the number was 48%. To deal with issues of single parent, female-headed households and the
declining number of Black marriages, Black churches in Milwaukee celebrated Black Marriage Day in March 2009. Black Marriage Day is a holiday created by Nisa Islam Muhammad, a Washington, D.C. woman who is Executive Director of Wedded Bliss Foundation. The concept behind Black Marriage Day is to promote the benefits of marriage in the Black community while educating young Black couples on the value of the institution. In 2001, according to the U.S. Census, 43.3 percent of Black men and 41.9 percent of Black women in America had never been married, in contrast to 27.4 percent and 20.7 percent, respectively, for whites. Sociologist Andrew J Cherlin examined the rift in Black marriages by analyzing three trends: the slave experience, the Black migration and urbanization in the early twentieth century (moving from a "folk" to an "urban" society), and recent developments such as high unemployment, government social welfare policies, the lack of educational attainment or the emergence of a "Black underclass."

Policymakers have increasingly focused on marriage as one potential solution to poverty. Single-mother households are at greater risk for being in poverty. In one study, Black women who never married made an average household income of $15,000, which is less than a third of the average family income for Black families headed by both biological parents. In previous years, many youth were told to “stay in school” as the way to avoid poverty; now the message is “get married.” This solution is also taken up by researchers. For example, Robert Rector, a Senior Research Fellow at the Heritage Foundation, in his work "Marriage: America's No. 1 Weapon against Child Poverty," examines the benefits of marriage and how this union of two people can help to improve and benefit family household income.

Last year, the Census Bureau tracked poverty rates in America and results showed the total of impoverished individuals grew, now standing at 44 million-- or one in seven Americans. More importantly, Milwaukee ranked fourth as the most-impoverished big city in the country in 2009. An estimated 158,245 Milwaukeans lived in poverty last year, and nearly 4 in 10 children in Milwaukee were considered poor, compared to 1 in 5 nationally. With these numbers, it is hard to see how marriage alone can significantly change the trajectory for these families, especially when we consider the full spectrum of economic and social challenges that Black men and women face, including living in impoverished neighborhoods, inadequate income, racism, and so on. Two loving parents – two loving adults – in the homes of children are surely a best-case scenario, but is that really typically the alternative? In practice, we seriously doubt it. And in fact, recent research bears this out. A 2010 Pew Report on marriage and families found that not only are marriage rates for all groups decreasing, but that marriage itself may be becoming obsolete, even as family remains as important and resilient as ever, and that many Americans have an expansive view of what constitutes a family.

Black children

In 2005, NPR announced that 70 percent of births amongst the Black population are out-of-wedlock. Even more frightening are the statistics of children placed in foster homes. In Milwaukee more than 2,000 children live in temporary homes, having been removed by Milwaukee Child Welfare because of abuse or neglect. Children who grow up in foster homes suffer long-term effects of emotional trauma
which they carry the rest of their lives. A recent study, entitled *Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth* by the Chapin Hall of the University of Chicago, evaluated the status of former foster children who aged out of the system without finding a permanent home. Findings showed that participants (who were in their 20s) suffered from educational deficiencies, higher incarceration rates, higher rates of single motherhood, and high unemployment.235
Milwaukee Demographic Analysis

This section provides an overview of conditions for Black males in the Milwaukee region, and where available, provides historical changes in conditions over time. The analysis also provides a comparative analysis of how Black males in Milwaukee are doing relative to the national Black male population, and the general metropolitan population. **Table 29** below shows that Milwaukee's population increased 7.8% from 1990 to 2008 while Milwaukee's Black male population increased 15.4%. During the same time period, the national Black male population increased 25.3%.

![Population 1990-2008 Chart](chart.png)

**Data Sources:** US Census, 2005-2007 ACS, 2006-2008 ACS.

**Table 30. Median Household Income ($2008)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National median Black household income</th>
<th>Milwaukee median Black household income</th>
<th>Milwaukee median household income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$36,788</td>
<td>$31,353</td>
<td>$57,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2007</td>
<td>$34,690</td>
<td>$27,455</td>
<td>$53,653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2008</td>
<td>$35,086</td>
<td>$28,010</td>
<td>$54,127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Economic Conditions**

Black median household income in Milwaukee is much lower than the national median Black household income and, more drastically, compared to the overall Milwaukee median household income. **Table 30** shows that adjusted to 2008 dollars, Black household income in Milwaukee decreased 10.7% since 2000, over double the decrease that the overall Milwaukee median household income experienced, 4.6% Comparable data is not available for previous years.

**Data Sources:** US Census, 2005-2007 ACS, 2006-2008 ACS
In 2007 and 2008, the median individual earnings for Black males in Milwaukee was significantly lower than the national median earnings for Black males and was only 69% of what the total Milwaukee population median individual earnings in 2008 (Table 31). All three groups saw a decline in median individual earnings in the 2008. The median individual earnings discrepancy between the Black male population in Milwaukee and the overall Milwaukee population is the largest seen in the four metropolitan areas, two times larger than in Baltimore and Philadelphia and almost three times larger than in Chicago.

Table 31. Median Individual Earnings ($2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National Median Black Male Individual Earnings</th>
<th>Milwaukee Median Black Male Individual Earnings</th>
<th>Milwaukee Median Individual Earnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005-2007</td>
<td>$27,812</td>
<td>$23,553</td>
<td>$32,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2008</td>
<td>$26,623</td>
<td>$21,682</td>
<td>$31,365</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Sources: 2005-2007 ACS, 2006-2008 ACS.

The percentage of Milwaukee’s Black male population living in poverty is much higher than the total Milwaukee population. Curiously, in 1990, the poverty rate of Milwaukee’s Black males spiked up to 41.3% and then fell over 12% in 2000. Table 32 shows that this is not a trend seen in the national Black male population; in fact, the Black male population in Milwaukee has a much higher poverty rate than the national Black male population consistently since 1990.

Table 32. Percentage of Population at or below poverty level, 1970-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National Black Male Population at or below poverty level</th>
<th>Milwaukee Black Male Population at or below poverty level</th>
<th>Milwaukee Population at or below poverty level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2007</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2008</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Education Conditions**

Black male students are graduating at a lower rate than White male students, both nationally and locally. **Table 33** shows that the high school graduation rates for both White and Black male students in Milwaukee are lower than the national percentages, both to different degrees; Black males in Milwaukee graduate at a 7% lower rate the Black males nationally, but White males in Milwaukee graduate at a 24% lower rate than White males nationally. It is clear that the Milwaukee educational system is not serving either population well.

**Table 33. High-school Graduation Rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>National White Male</th>
<th>National Black Male</th>
<th>Milwaukee White Male</th>
<th>Milwaukee Black Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Sources: Schott Foundation, 50 State Report on Public Education and Black Males

There is a substantial difference between the percentages of Black men in Milwaukee that have a college degree and the total Milwaukee population. **Table 34** shows that in 2008, the disparity was 20.2%. The percentage of Black males in Milwaukee that do not have a college degree is also higher than the national Black male population. The increase in all groups can possibly be contributed to the fact that the 2006-2008 Community Survey considered having an Associate degree as not having a college degree.

**Table 34. Percent of population 25+ with less than a College Degree**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Black male population</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milwaukee Black male population</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
<td>83.6%</td>
<td>89.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milwaukee population</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
<td>69.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 35 shows that between 2000 and 2007, the Black male population in Milwaukee made significant gains towards closing the achievement gap with the overall Milwaukee population, surpassing the percentage of black males who have graduated from high school or higher degree nationally. However, the number of Black males that have graduated from high school or achieved a higher level of education stayed relatively constant while the percentage of Black males nationally increased in 2008.

Family Conditions

The percentage of female-headed households has increased in all populations from 1970 to 2008, but has begun to stabilize in recent years. Table 36 shows that the percentage of Black single-female headed families in Milwaukee increased 8.1% from 1980 to 2008 but has not changed significantly since 1990, and the overall percentage of female-headed households in Milwaukee increased 5.7% from 1980 to 2008. The three populations follow a similar trend, but the percentage of Black single-mother families in Milwaukee is substantially higher than the percentage for the total Milwaukee population. In 1990, nearly 40% more Black households were headed by single-females than for the overall Milwaukee population and this disparity continued at 37.5% in 2008.

The single female-headed household discrepancy between the Black male population in Milwaukee and the overall Milwaukee population is the largest seen in the four metropolitan areas, roughly 10% larger than in Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Chicago. Furthermore, the percentage of Black female-headed households in Milwaukee has been significantly higher than the national Black percentage (12% higher in 2008).

Table 35. Percent of population 25+ with a high school degree or higher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National Black male population</th>
<th>Milwaukee Black male population</th>
<th>Milwaukee population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>70.9%</td>
<td>67.2%</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2007</td>
<td>70.9%</td>
<td>77.8%</td>
<td>87.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2008</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
<td>77.1%</td>
<td>88.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 36. Single Female-headed households, 1970-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National Black female-headed families</th>
<th>Milwaukee Black female-headed families</th>
<th>Milwaukee female-headed households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>49.8%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
<td>58.0%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
<td>55.7%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2007</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2008</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Housing Conditions**

Table 37 shows that from 1970 to 2008, the percentage of Black homeowners in Milwaukee has been inconsistent and often much lower than the national percentage of Black homeowners. The percentage of Black homeowners in Milwaukee has been drastically lower than the percentage of overall homeowners in Milwaukee, reaching the biggest discrepancy in 2008 at 29.7%. This table illustrates the wide homeownership gap between Black households and the rest of Milwaukee’s population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National percentage of Black homeowners</th>
<th>Milwaukee percentage of homeowners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2007</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2008</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Sources:** US Census, 2005-2007 ACS, 2006-2008 ACS
Opportunity Mapping Analyses

What is opportunity mapping?

Opportunity mapping is a way to quantify, map and visualize the opportunities which exist throughout neighborhoods, cities, regions and states. This methodology explores which communities have the structures and pathways to opportunity needed to excel and thrive in our society. Access to opportunity includes obtaining a quality education, living in safe and affordable housing, access to employment networks, living in a community that has access to fresh, healthy foods, and a variety of features similar to these.

Why Map Opportunity?

First, access to the pathways to opportunity in healthy neighborhoods is critical. Decades of social science research have demonstrated that neighborhood conditions and access to opportunity play a significant role in life outcomes. Second, mapping of these factors has shown that opportunity has a geographic footprint. In other words, access to opportunity is important, and unfortunately, some places have greater access than others.

Why Opportunity Matters

In 1968, the Kerner Commission Report, in response to the 1960’s urban uprisings, noted that “the single overriding cause of rioting in the cities was not any one thing commonly adduced – unemployment, lack of education, poverty, exploitation –...it was all of those things and more....” The description of the systematic challenges facing distressed communities was repeated nearly 40 years later in a study of concentrated poverty released by the U.S. Federal Reserve and The Brookings Institution. The report authors noted that “[e]ach of the headline issues examined in this chapter – schools and skills, housing, lack of mainstream investment, and limited community capacity – plays a role in perpetuating the disadvantage confronting these high-poverty urban and rural areas today.” The quality of neighborhood conditions affects the life chances of all families and their access to social, political, and economic resources. The powerful effects of neighborhood conditions on life outcomes for residents are well-documented in over forty years’ worth of research. For example, some studies have linked residential segregation to an increased likelihood of being victimized by violence and crime.

High-poverty communities also have an indirect negative impact on children’s educational outcomes. Nationwide, children in high-poverty urban communities have levels of lead in their blood that are nine times the average, a condition linked to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and irreversible loss of cognitive functioning. Children growing up in very poor families with low social status can also experience unhealthy levels of stress hormones, which impair neural development. The impact of health status on school achievement is so important that an estimated 25% of the “achievement gap” in education is attributable to difference in child and maternal health. Thus, it is clear that neighborhood
context and access to opportunity, from preventative health care to high-performing schools, can deeply affect children’s opportunities to learn and grow.

In this context then, the opportunity mapping presented here provides a geographic overview of the pathways to opportunity—or lack thereof—for Black males in the Baltimore region.

**Overlay Analysis**

In this analysis, the following indicators were used to map opportunity for Black males in all four cities: Baltimore, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Milwaukee:

- Indicators of economic well-being and mobility
  - Percentage of population on Public Assistance
  - Mean Commute Time

- Indicators of educational well-being
  - Adult Education Attainment

- Indicators of housing neighborhood quality
  - Homeownership rate
  - Residential vacancy rate
  - Neighborhood poverty rates
A. *Baltimore*

About 60% of Black men and boys in Baltimore live in low to very low opportunity areas.
### B. Philadelphia

About 75% of Black men and boys live in the lowest opportunity areas.

![Bar chart showing the distribution of opportunity levels for different populations in Philadelphia.](chart)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>General Population</th>
<th>Black Population</th>
<th>Black Males</th>
<th>Black Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Low</td>
<td>18.85%</td>
<td>53.15%</td>
<td>51.32%</td>
<td>56.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>19.69%</td>
<td>23.14%</td>
<td>23.88%</td>
<td>23.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>19.33%</td>
<td>11.83%</td>
<td>12.17%</td>
<td>10.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>20.84%</td>
<td>7.70%</td>
<td>8.09%</td>
<td>7.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very High</td>
<td>21.28%</td>
<td>4.19%</td>
<td>4.54%</td>
<td>2.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sum</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
African American Males and Access to Opportunity
BALTIMORE REGION, MD

This map displays African American Male population overlaid on opportunity index based on a number of indicators representing education, economic, health and housing conditions in Baltimore region, MD.

Source Data: Opportunity Index Scores supplied by the Kirwan Institute, U.S. Census 2000. Date: October 22, 2010
PHILADELPHIA MSA: BLACK MALES & OPPORTUNITY

Description: This map represents a compilation of factors which indicate the level of access to opportunity throughout the region. The indicators used in this map are based on social science research findings about the role of education, socioeconomics, mobility, housing and neighborhood environment in successful life outcomes. The map also shows the geographic distribution of the Black Male population in relationship to these indicators of opportunity.

Sources: 2000 Census, ESRI 2009 Business Analyst, HUD User 2010, 05-09 ACS
C. Chicago

Nearly 75% of Black men and boys live in the lowest opportunity areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>General Population</th>
<th>Black Population</th>
<th>Black Males</th>
<th>Black Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Low</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very High</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D. Milwaukee

About 78% of Black men and boys live in low to very low opportunity areas

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Black Population</th>
<th>Black Males</th>
<th>Black Boys</th>
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</table>
CHICAGO MSA: BLACK MALES & OPPORTUNITY

Description: This map represents a compilation of factors which indicate the level of access to opportunity throughout the region. The indicators used in this map are based on social science research findings about the role of education, socioeconomics, mobility, housing and neighborhood environment in successful life outcomes. The map also shows the geographic distribution of the Black Male population in relationship to these indicators of opportunity.

Sources: 2000 Census, ESRI 2009 Business Analyst
MILWAUKEE MSA: BLACK MALES & OPPORTUNITY

Description: This map represents a compilation of factors which indicate the level of access to opportunity throughout the region. The indicators used in this map are based on social science research findings about the role of education, socioeconomic mobility, housing, and neighborhood environment in successful life outcomes. The map also shows the geographic distribution of the Black Male population in relationship to these indicators of opportunity.

Black Male Population
- 1 Dot = 100

Sources: 2000 Census, ESRI 2009 Business Analyst
III. Local Assessments of Black Male Well-being in the Mid-Atlantic region

Interviews were conducted with stakeholders in Philadelphia and Baltimore to provide a more localized understanding of the context within which Black Men and Boys are situated within the region, assess gaps in resources, capacity and services, and identify the opportunities and assets available to Black males in the region. The following is a summation of their responses. Appendix A provides additional analysis of questions the convening participants were asked to answer during registration.

Local Challenges to Black Male Achievement

“I would say they’re catching hell whichever way [they] turn.”

When asked how Black males were doing in general and with respect to the issue areas of Work, Education, and Family, in general the picture painted by respondents was bleak. With respect to Education, nearly every respondent cited poor educational preparation and outcomes as major challenges, and how this in turn fed into poor work outcomes and high unemployment. Criminal records and challenges of reentry were also cited by most respondents as major challenges in the Mid-Atlantic region.

A few respondents noted how the situation seemed especially grave for youth—especially with respect to the school system and single-mother households and absentee fathers, the lack of positive role models or mentors. For example, one interviewee noted that younger adults in the college-age range had some good opportunities in the Baltimore area. She noted that Morgan State and Coppin State Universities were easily accessible. But for older men over the age of 25, there again seemed more challenges than opportunities, especially when drugs and criminal records were considered. One respondent noted that Black males even without criminal records were still perceived as criminals, and that this was especially true the younger the male was.

However, interviewees noted that there were successful Black men and boys—who were going on to college, being responsible parents, or responsible citizens. There were those who were doing quite well. The key pivot point cited by many respondents was education. And while several respondents noted that there were good programs or good school models that seemed to be effective, these positives were overwhelmed by the magnitude of the challenges.

Identifying Sources of Challenges

“Break down in the family, poverty, racism, poor educational systems. The usual suspects.”

When asked what accounts for the difficulties Black men and boys are experiencing, the responses to this question were twofold. Some located difficulties in the “individual” or outside the system, as it were, while others located the majority of the difficulties within the system.
For example, many respondents cited the lack of parenting, or fragmented families, and little family support as the key departure point for difficulties Black males are facing. Several noted again the lack of fathers or positive role models in the lives of Black boys. As part of the fallout from this lack of positive role models, interviewees remarked that “mindset” was an issue, noting that Black youth have “bought into the survival mindset,” and so they do not have a sense of hope or possibility.

In terms of systems, several noted that systems and policies “were not friendly to African American males,” and that the design of policies and how they are carried out, especially school and criminal justice policies, do not appropriately address the needs of Black men and boys. For instance, one respondent in Baltimore noted the policing policy of “lock them up and ask questions later” was especially damaging, especially when youth were arrested because of “nuisance” crimes (i.e. loitering) that seemed minor offenses but would land them in jail. Others noted school policies such as tracking, which according to one respondent “made it easier for people to put those young people out of school and thus into the hands of law enforcement or other less than optimal places.”

**Identifying Support Gaps**

When asked what gaps may exist in the support system for black male achievement in the region or in general, a majority of respondents noted the lack of capacity and coordination at all levels regarding Black male achievement, from nonprofits working in silos and not communicating with each other on who is doing what, to nonprofits not communicating with their constituents about what services were available. In a sense, respondents were talking about a lack of a holistic infrastructure that supported Black men and boys. For example, one respondent remarked that the critical gap for him was that “there is not one network in place to really allow for someone to go and say ‘I’m looking for assistance and this is the type of assistance I think I need.’ So if there were a human services or social services location where men could go and be assigned a case manager who would work with them—‘Ok, you have a job but because it is not livable wage we need to strengthen your skill set....’”

As one respondent noted, “I can’t tell you where the gaps are other than between and amongst the do-gooders. Maybe a knowledge gap between who is helping. From drug treatment to job assistance, to child care, you name it, community development and youth programs, at least in my zip code, we’re saturated. Yet the issues haven’t changed. This is not a phenomenon, I’ve seen it play in New York, in Cleveland, in DC...you have these issues, a concentration of Black people, and a concentration of do-gooders...all of these things exist and so do the conditions. I’m still trying to tease through the conditions myself—why do conditions not change when there are good forces in the community?”

Another common theme was the lack of attention from a prevention standpoint, that there is too much focus on men after they have gotten into trouble. The emphasis needs to shift to the front end of young men’s lives and development and education.
Local Assets and Opportunities for Black Male Achievement

While respondents were able to easily identify the challenges facing Black men and boys in their regions, they were also able to easily identify several programs doing good work in the regions, and the key reason cited for their success was the ability to meet these men where they were, and because of this willingness, these groups were able to reach the hard to serve. However, several respondents noted that most of the programs doing good work were “under the radar screen” and doing so with little to no resources, and not at the scale needed. As one respondent stated, “There are a lot of smaller organizations doing great work, but many of the problems are systemic, so when we talk about the challenges in the school or court systems….The programs that are successful really are based on one-one engagement, a lot of research around resiliency and strength-based approaches, and what you see is an individual who is leading that, and are doing so with limited resources. And probably not to scale needed.” (Lamar Davis)

Respondents were also quick to point out the numerous assets to which Black males lay claim, especially in terms of resiliency and strength in the face of numerous challenges.

“Cultural assets...there are a lot of people who have a history with Baltimore, who have a connection to the community that can inspire young people. We don’t utilize them enough.”

“We have a lot of efforts. It doesn’t meet the demand, but if we were to work smarter, I think that we would see an increase in the outcomes of our efforts.”

“There is a strength African American boys bring to the table. We need more work that helps them discover and identify the strengths...For community-based assets, we have one another, peers. [We] talk and figure things out, so we need to foster that discussion and group problem-solving. Connecting the input of young people with the policy power of elected officials.”

“...in terms of assets the strongest assets are from within, what I see is our kids are exceptionally resilient. And in fairly good places considering how traumatic many of their experiences have been and they are succeeding in spite of the challenges. I see the informal networks, not just family, but neighbors, grandparents in particular.”

Appendix B1 and B2 provide examples of “asset maps” where participants in the convenings were asked to identify the location of programs of which they were aware that supported Black males in the Baltimore and Philadelphia regions. The value of such maps includes being able to see that there are people and organizations working in close proximity to one another who could potentially collaborate more, as well as highlighting parts of the region(s) that have concentrations of Black males, but few resources, at least that participants were aware.
IV. Local Assessments of Black Male Well-being in the Mid-West region

Interviews were conducted with stakeholders in Milwaukee and Chicago to provide a more localized understanding of the context within which Black Men and Boys are situated within the region, assess gaps in resources, capacity and services, and identify the opportunities and assets available to Black males in the region. The following is a summation of their responses.

Local Challenges to Black Male Achievement

“Basically in a downward spiral...almost in destruction mode.”

“The future is dire. And I really don’t think there is a sense of urgency about it.”

Every respondent noted that the challenges were many and growing for Black men in the region, especially around the areas of employment, incarceration, and education, and how challenges in these areas feed back into families.

With regards to work, several noted that many African American males simply do not have the skills required for the jobs available. One respondent in particular spoke of how men in his program “are frustrated. They are filling out applications, but their backgrounds, experience, issues with literacy—they just aren’t able to get employment.”

In terms of education, respondents spoke of alarming dropout rates and the achievement gap, especially in Wisconsin, which in 2006 ranked first in the nation with the highest gap between black and white male high school graduation rates (84% versus 38% respectively). One respondent reflected that for young males, there was a mindset of “Where is this going to get me?”—that they did not see the value of education in their lives. He went on to note that for men over 25, they did see the value of education, but could not see how it could help them right now—it was not going to provide money to pay back bills, or child support arrears.

Respondents spoke of how families were suffering—that if the Black male in the family is suffering, everyone in the family is suffering as well. Several respondents noted a loss of family values, a loss of male models. One respondent in particular noted that in an effort to ease family suffering, young Black males trying to find a way out of the suffering may end up adding to it because the only options available to them, the only “role models” available, are on the street.

One respondent raised an issue that has heretofore been unmentioned, but which is critical in affecting the outcomes of all these areas. He noted the increases in unemployment and incarceration, as well as an increase in the policies that affect men in disproportionate ways, such as child support or policies related to incarceration, for example, the increases in fees in child support, or probation and parole fees. In one example he explained how incarcerated men living in ‘so-called ‘transitional housing,’

where he can work every day, but has to pay to live there, even though [he is] really incarcerated, [he’s] paying to be incarcerated.” In terms of accessing jobs, he discussed how men in Milwaukee in particular find themselves working in temp agencies, and how these agencies take advantage of men because after 90 days, the point at which the agency has to either hire the worker full time or let them go, they choose to let them go. In effect, as a result of these fee-based policies and other practices, Black men find they are unable to save enough to become economically independent.

**Identifying Sources of Challenges**

When asked what accounts for the difficulties Black men and boys are experiencing in the Midwest region, the majority of respondents located the root of the issues in one of three areas: family, structures (especially education), and lack of support.

In terms of family, respondents spoke of a breakdown in family structures, a lack of fathers as positive role models, how from boys’ perspectives, “a crosscutting theme is that they don’t see success modeled in any of the arenas (work, family, education), not seeing their father as a role models. They may see females as good models in these areas, but not seeing their fathers in this way hurts.”

Other respondents noted that the issues are located in the structures and systems that Black men and boys are part of and how the systems are ill-equipped to help Black males achieve. As one respondent noted, “It’s not individual...if you say this boy is not doing well, or that boy is not doing well, that is somewhat understandable. But if you say this community on the west-side Chicago where 80% of boys aren’t doing well, that’s systemic.” In particular, respondents noted that educational systems and the poor outcomes for Black males within the education system were responsible for much of the dire circumstances Black males experience today. Another respondent observed that young Black men buy into the “individual” argument unknowingly. He noted how “a lot of young men blame themselves for the conditions [they] experience, but it’s really that they don’t understand that the conditions [they] are faced with are part of a larger picture. They don’t understand and so they blame themselves for not meeting the standards society has set up for [them].”

And finally, respondents noted a lack of supports and resources for Black males, that there is no social welfare policy designed for these men: “as a society, we don’t look at adult men as needing support, we look at young boys. But these boys will become men with problems too, if we don’t deal with the broader issues of employment and real issue of racism and oppression.”

**Identifying Support Gaps**

“The interconnectedness among all these issues. Too much even good work is done in silos. The connection between fatherhood and incarceration, family and education... We see this and know this from our work, but at a macro, institutional level, these connections aren’t acted upon.”
Several respondents noted the institutional and systemic gaps in the support system for Black males, and families in general. For example, respondent noted that multiple systems have failed young Black men and this failure across systems makes it very hard for these men to catch up. Likewise, another respondent stated that there were huge gaps for Black children because their families were under such economic stress, and the institutions designed to help them could not help deep enough or fast enough. Several noted that there were not policies specifically targeted towards Black males—that although they may be helped by larger efforts, there needed to be policies specifically for them. Along this same line, one respondent stated that “Discussion needs to happen...understanding where we are, what the baseline is, and how we got here. [But] if no one is addressing the policy issue, providing programs isn’t going to work. If you just keep throwing programs out there without analysis, [you’re] not fixing the problem.”

Other respondents spoke more specifically about advocacy gaps. For example, one respondent remarked that there was not enough advocacy in the judicial system, that there were various groups speaking about the issues, but no real action around it: “right now we have the reentry programs, and people saying we need to address child support, but that’s it. There are some advocating to address custody, but that’s it. There’s deeper issues in the judicial system, as far as black male friendliness, father friendliness, rehabilitation, but [they’re] not being addressed the way they should be.” Still other spoke of the cultural gaps in the educational system, the lack of teachers who can relate to the experiences many Black students are dealing with outside of school. And lastly, one respondent noted that there is a lack of attention on Black male teens and their particular challenges, especially related to sexual abuse and homosexuality.

Local Assets and Opportunities for Black Male Achievement

In the Midwest region, respondents were able to list a handful of programs they felt were successful or doing good work to address some of the issues, but every respondent noted that although there may be good programs, they were not enough, and several went on to note that nor would they ever be enough to address the systemic challenges Black males face. One respondent summed it up by saying,

“There are good programs but none of that will ever fix the problem. Not even close to fixing the problem. [As far as best practices], they touch, inspire, connect to black boys. They occupy the time of black boys. They encourage black boys. But they don’t fix the systemic problems. They provide mentoring and tutoring, that’s great but those are programmatic fixes and not structural. Even with the support they get from these programs they still have to face structural obstacles and you cannot overcome structural obstacles with programmatic tools. Many of the programs are good at keeping the boys active but don’t make the kind of progress that is necessary to fix the problem, so we confuse activity with progress. So doing something does not mean you are actually moving the ball or creating a permanent fix for these problems. And this is what we need, a permanent fix. Not just keeping them active today or tomorrow, and this is what many mentoring programs do. They need
structural support that can guarantee they become successful Americans and human beings; they
don’t need to be kept out of trouble.”

Again, respondents were quick to highlight the spirit of survival and the resilience of Black men and boys as a key asset, and ones that were not tapped into to the extent possible.

“We have our resilience as Black males, we go through so much in our communities, and we are faced with so much adversity, but somehow we survive and push forward. We always seem to find a way even when the whole world tells us it’s not possible, or there are no other options, we find another one.”

Creativity and energy were also commonly cited assets.

“There’s great energy. There are open minds. One thing I’ve seen with my boys is if you show genuineness, if you show energy, that energy is going to be returned.”

“What happens is because the conversation always revolved around academically the numbers of how Black men don’t achieve, but if you talk to them, you realize they are smart—their innovation, their creativity, their willingness to survive in a situation where it looks hopeless. You don’t just wake up one day with that…. these boys are intelligent, but compared to the way things are measured, it doesn’t seem that way. A lot of the intellectual capital is there, it’s just not being fed in the right way—but think about what they’ve been given.”

Appendix B3 and B4 provide examples of “asset maps” where participants in the convenings were asked to identify the location of programs of which they were aware that supported Black males in the Chicago and Milwaukee regions. The value of such maps includes being able to see that there are people and organizations working in close proximity to one another who could potentially collaborate more, as well as highlighting parts of the region(s) that have concentrations of Black males, but few resources, at least that participants were aware.
V. Identifying Best Practices

Researchers and advocates have documented the effects of myriad factors that militate against the success of Black males in the United States. In the face of those obstacles, many Black men and boys thrive nonetheless, President Barack Obama being only the most prominent example. Recent years have also seen a growing philanthropic interest in the issue of Black male achievement, including the work begun under the Open Society Foundation’s Campaign for Black Male Achievement (CBMA). In CBMA’s three year strategic plan alone, they point to a multitude of foundations around the country that already are, or have the potential to be, partners in this work. Indeed, the Black community as a whole has a number of strong assets to draw upon, including the buying power of the Black community, its political power, its strong faith-based community, and the opportunities for multi-ethnic coalition-building.

Coalition-building Opportunities

The creation of alliances is a powerful asset to organizations, helping to position organizations and communities to overcome misunderstandings and attract resources for mutual benefit. They "provide a platform for the common interests of both groups to be successfully articulated with one voice. United through alliances, communities of color have been extremely successful in attaining goals and attracting funding." Despite the many benefits of alliances, there are often barriers to their formation. For instance, tensions and misunderstandings can hinder collaboration, as can language barriers and cultural differences. These challenges sometimes prevent organizations from pursuing collaboration and alliances altogether. The following examples examine how two local alliances were able to overcome these obstacles and create successful collaborations.

United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations (UCCRO), Chicago, IL

Recognizing that communities of color cannot achieve all their goals through independent efforts, the UCCRO alliance was created to bring together resources, expertise, and constituencies to achieve long-term success. While each group recognized the importance of the alliance, because the communities “knew of each other primarily through media or other sources that reinforced misperceptions and stereotypes,” forging an alliance proved to be difficult. In an effort to dismantle the negative stereotypes, alliance leaders developed specific relationship-building programs, including two-day retreats and ongoing talks. During these events, community members with different ethnic backgrounds learned directly from one another, and this helped create greater cross-cultural understanding. As a result, the UCCRO alliance has been extremely successful. Its accomplishments include: the development and delivery of racial-justice report cards for state legislators, conveying a powerful, unified message to policymakers that multi-racial, multi-ethnic groups consider the advancement of all communities a top priority; advocacy for summer jobs for youths, which resulted in 10,000 jobs being created by gubernatorial action (almost 600 youths were then placed in positions by UCCRO); and the
development and implementation of a justice/human rights leadership program for future leaders (high school and college ages)—providing cross-cultural and social service experiences.\textsuperscript{249}

\textit{CASA de Maryland/NAACP}

In the Washington D.C. metro area, Latino immigrant communities had strong institutions, such as CASA, while African American communities generally lacked such institutional resources. However, although the NAACP lacked tangible resources, it could bring other less tangible resources, such as a large backing, to an alliance. Recognizing that both groups could benefit from an alliance and thereby achieve a greater impact in the community, CASA’s leader reached out to collaborate with the NAACP. However, the formation of the alliance came at a time when relations between the African American and Latino communities were strained, representing many barriers to its creation. Often the barriers were the result of “cultural and language differences, mutual stereotypes or biases, strained economic resources, power struggles, and the issue of race.”\textsuperscript{250} To overcome these obstacles, the groups addressed negative stereotypes and cultural misunderstandings and also purchased translational devices which allow people to speak in their preferred language while ensuring that everyone can understand. These efforts have helped the alliance achieve great success, including: alliance-sponsored voter registration drives, candidate debates, and multicultural door-to-door outreach that resulted in the election of the first African American and Latino county representatives; passage of education reform legislation that provides funding to help Latino and African American communities; and outreach around educational opportunities for media and the community in an effort to defeat anti-immigrant legislation, sponsored by alliance members.\textsuperscript{251}

Alliances are powerful assets in community capacity-building, but they are not necessarily easy to form—they take time, patience, resources, and commitment. However, as the examples above illustrate, overcoming the organizational, political, or cultural barriers to alliance formation can greatly enhance groups’ effectiveness in serving their constituents, and the broader community.

\textit{Models of Successful Programmatic Interventions}

We also acknowledge the invaluable work and commitment of mentors and mentoring programs in helping children navigate through such challenging environments. According to the MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, nearly 3 million young Americans are in mentoring programs, and several million more need or want mentoring programs.\textsuperscript{252} We hear countless stories about how one strong, compassionate individual has helped an at-risk youth turn into a success story. And of course, there are many more stories that we do not hear, including those relationships that exist outside a formal mentoring program. These relationships really matter. But we cannot rely on these programs alone to overcome the many structural barriers presented to children. As it stands, we do not have a robust evaluation of the mentoring programs available to Black male youth to determine what works best, for
whom, in what circumstances, and yet we rely heavily on the ability of these programs to overcome the myriad challenges facing these youth. Although individual behaviors and choices matter, if we are to make the substantial gains we wish to make, we must couple those cultural and behavioral interventions with those interventions aimed at the transformation of institutional policies and practices.

Indeed, we know that many of the most effective interventions are those that address both behaviors and institutions, both cultural and structural. For example, the sixteen-year old Brotherhood-Sister Sol is a Harlem-based, not-for-profit that provides comprehensive and long-term resources and support for Black and Latino youth, ages 8-22, growing up in impoverished communities. The program is designed to prepare successful adults through leadership training, community service, college preparation and educational achievement, sexual responsibility, social justice training, and global awareness. The organization provides the youth with after-school care, employment opportunities, counseling, and legal representation, among other services. And they have been successful. As of July 2008, 94% of their alumni graduated from high school or obtained a GED, and 85% were accepted into college. None of the alumni were incarcerated, and none were known to have a drug problem. Only 5% of their members had a child before the age of 22, and 100% of alumni remained involved with the mothers of their children, through either primary custody or regular visitation.254 The Brotherhood-Sister Sol has held true to its mission to provide “...a way of life. Providing youth with an opportunity to explore their ideas, identity and future among peers, with the support and guidance of their immediate elders, is a natural method of promoting positive development into adulthood.” For this continued achievement, the organization has received national recognition—both in the philanthropic community and in the media—for its success, and earned numerous awards.

In a national example, YouthBuild USA has been successful with its holistic approach to community development, growing from a youth program focused on affordable housing renovation in five distressed New York neighborhoods in 1988, to over 273 YouthBuild programs in 45 states today. In YouthBuild, low-income young adults, ages 16-24, work towards their high school diploma/GED through an alternative school while also gaining job skills by building affordable housing. The program also provides youth development, including counseling and life planning courses, as well as leadership development and civic engagement. The program encourages youth empowerment so that these youth can become active, engaged members of society.

YouthBuild won early recognition for its successful community improvement efforts and gained federal legislative authorization and appropriations of $40 million in 1993. Most recently, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act awarded an additional $50 million to the FY09 $70 million appropriation through the Department of Labor (DOL). Since 1994, HUD and DOL have both awarded YouthBuild grants and contracts totaling more than $755 million to local community and faith-based organizations. Not only does the program enjoy considerable federal support, but these funds have also been matched by the private and philanthropic sector. And the support is well-earned.
Finally, the Harlem Children’s Zone (HCZ) may be the most widely recognized neighborhood-based educational program in the country. In the 1990s, the Harlem Children’s Zone created the Harlem’s Children Zone Project which “is a unique, holistic approach to rebuilding a community so that its children can stay on track through college and go on to the job market.” Recognizing that the amelioration of poverty requires more than just an emphasis on education, the pilot program brought extended services to one block in Harlem. Following the success of the pilot program, HCZ was soon extended to serve 24 blocks, and nearly a decade later in 2007, HCZ had expanded to approximately 100 blocks.

Based on the concept of a holistic, cradle-to-college pipeline approach with the hope that families will stay in the program until their children graduate from college, the HCZ offers a range of programs. The pipeline begins with Baby College which teaches parenting skills and continues with a preschool Gems program where kids learn foreign languages as well as healthy eating habits. The HCZ also offers Promise Academy charter schools and, for those students who elect to attend public schools, provides support for the public schools in the Zone, both during the school day with assistants and after school with programs for students. While the project focuses on education, the HCZ recognizes that in order for children to do well, their families must also do well. Therefore the HCZ provides health clinics and social services. For instance, an asthma initiative to provide medical care and education to families has greatly reduced the number of missed school days by students suffering from asthma.

From its creation and implementation in the 1990s to today, the HCZ Project has been regarded as a great success, helping, among other factors, to reduce educational disparities. For example, at the Harlem Children’s Zone Promise Academy charter school, where the majority of students are African American, at least 97 percent of third graders scored at or above grade level on a statewide math test in 2008, outperforming the average scores of both Black and white children in New York City and New York State. This comes at a time when, in school districts across the country, African American students lag behind in terms of test scores and educational attainment.

While these programs have claimed early successes and a lot of attention, it is worth noting that such projects are small-scale initiatives. For instance the HCZ serves 10,000 children in a 97-block zone in Harlem. Despite operating on a smaller scale, such programs are costly, with HCZ reporting an annual operating budget of $84 million, two-thirds of which is from private donations. Officially, the two charter schools spend $12,443 in public money and $3,482 in private financing per student, each year. As a partial corrective to funding and scale issues, the Obama Administration has committed funds to replicate HCZ nationwide through the Promise Neighborhoods program. The program, which provides $10 million in matching funds, “will support up to 20 organizations with one year of funding to plan for the implementation of cradle-to-career services designed to improve educational outcomes for students in distressed neighborhoods.” The successes of HCZ and similar programs offer hope that a structurally-focused, neighborhood-based system of education and social services that also attends to individual and behavioral factors may in fact be the best approach to reducing disparities.
The programs highlighted herein all share a critical design characteristic: they attend both to issues of individual behavior and choice as well as structural factors. They recognize that educational and economic success cannot be separated from larger structural issues of community development, or be addressed one mentor at a time. Unfortunately, these programs represent the exception, not the norm. A vast majority of the programs aimed at Black males are focused on cultural and behavioral factors. Although all efforts have been designed in response to structural disadvantages, unfortunately they have not had any real effects on structural barriers, such as mass incarceration, economic restructuring, and discrimination and implicit bias in various domains (the courts, housing and credit markets, and so on). Given the breadth and the complexity of the issues facing Black males, programs need a tighter focus on the structural factors at play. And they need to be cross-cutting.
VI. So Where Are We? Possible Next Steps in Support of Black Men and Boys

“There are good programs but none of that will ever fix the problem. Not even close to fixing the problem... [There are strong programs that] provide mentoring and tutoring, that’s great, but those are programmatic fixes and not structural. Even with the support [Black males] get from these programs they still have to face structural obstacles and you cannot overcome structural obstacles with programmatic tools. Many of the programs are good at keeping the boys active but don’t make the kind of progress that is necessary to fix the problem, so we confuse activity with progress. So doing something does not mean you are actually moving the ball or creating a permanent fix for these problems. And this is what we need, a permanent fix.”

-Midwest interviewee, Campaign for Black Male Achievement

Since the explicit recognition of a “Black male crisis” in the early-1980’s we have seen a great many interventions aimed at improving outcomes for group members, most operating at the community level. As noted by the person quoted above, the vast majority of those interventions do not address the structural issues that undermine the well-being of Black males. Most interventions for African American males, including many of those represented in the Philadelphia and Milwaukee gatherings, work on the “agency” side of the structure-agency dynamic. They are intended to better prepare men and boys to make choices that will allow them to succeed in the world as they find it. Cultural resiliency operates in this arena as well. This is vital work. However, cultural resiliency and better personal choices alone cannot pave the path to the transformation for which we work. We must position the agency and cultural work within a structural context. We must devote more energy to transforming the systemic, institutional and spatial dynamics that so dramatically constrain the choices Black males face.

The most pressing needs identified by the people we interviewed in the Mid-Atlantic and Midwest regions was the need for major policy reform and the need to develop the advocacy capacity to promote such reform across a range of areas, from education to criminal justice to child support. Interviewees and participants in Milwaukee and Philadelphia also repeatedly drew attention to the problem of fragmentation in the field of Black male work – locally, regionally and nationally. They complained about nonprofits working in silos, about lack of communication as to who was doing what and what services were available to whom, and about excessive “head butting” and territoriality.

In the pages that follow we briefly describe a number of interventions we believe would respond effectively to widely expressed needs for greater policy attention, capacity building for policy advocacy, and field cohesion. We also offer possible prescriptions in two areas that received less notice from our
respondents: the politics of Black male movement-building and the need to address “hidden” biases against Black men and boys. The proposed areas of work are:

A. Demystifying Structural Racism: Workshops and trainings

B. Demystifying Structural Racism: An interactive website for educators and organizers

C. Providing policy advocacy trainings and technical assistance

D. Establishing a venture capital fund for collaborative policy work

E. Conducting Black male regional opportunity mapping

F. Creating a Black male researcher-advocacy database/field map

G. Documenting and remediating cognitive biases against Black males in K-12 settings

H. Engaging the politics of gender and struggle in the movement for Black male achievement

Over the 30 years since the explicit naming of a Black male crisis, many of the most critical outcomes – in education, criminal justice, employment, family life, and other arenas – have remained the same or become worse. We hope and believe that support for some or all of the following elements, along with all the work already being done under and outside the CBMA rubric will help ensure much greater progress over the next 30 years.

A. Demystifying Structural Racism: Workshops and trainings

Because any promising attempt to dismantle the underpinning of durable racial inequality must account for structural dynamics, it is critically important that organizers and other community-based workers doing work to support Black males become familiar with the operations of structural racism. Virtually all societies feature institutional arrangements that create and distribute benefits, burdens, and interests in society. These structures are not neutral. And just as we cannot account for or address the impact of institutional racism by only considering a given individual’s actions or psychological state, we cannot understand the work structures do simply by looking at the practices and procedures of specific institutions in isolation. Structural racism refers to the reciprocal interaction of social structures and policies to generate cumulative, durable, race-based inequalities. The framework lends insight into how disparities are created and reinforced at a macro-level, and how historical legacies, individuals, structures, and institutions work interactively to distribute material and symbolic advantages and disadvantages along racial lines. It provides a powerful analytical lens through which practitioners can begin to engage questions of policy.
The Philadelphia meeting, in particular, underlined the need for broader structural racism training. Groups like the Aspen Roundtable for Community Change, the Center for Social Inclusion, and the Kirwan Institute can offer workshops to activists, advocates and organizers that introduce the principles of structural racism and begin to draw out the implications of the framework for their work.

**B. Demystifying Structural Racism: An interactive website for educators and organizers**

Workshops and trainings will not be enough. We propose to draw on our decades of experience in working on issues around structural racialization to create an interactive website geared towards people doing organizing and/or educational work around issues of racial justice, especially educators. This website would include different exercises/tools (for example, racial disparity quizzes, interactive maps showing racial segregation and opportunity, small simulations showing how disparities are cumulative and mutually reinforcing) that can be used with or without a facilitator. After a series of pilot tests, we would plan for a series of workshops for educators and interested others to illustrate how they could be used within a lesson, common discussion around issues that arise, and so on. The Kirwan Institute receives far more requests for presentations on structural racism and racialization than we can accommodate and many requests for the power point slides or movie clips used in the presentations we give. These slides and clips are “flat” takeaways and we hope, in the future, to offer more substantial resources through the site for organizations, groups and people who might find the structural racialization framework useful to their work.

**C. Providing policy advocacy trainings and technical assistance**

If in 10 or 20 or 50 years we are to have a different, more gratifying conversation about the status of Black men and boys than we are able to do today, it will almost surely be because we have been able to make substantial progress on reshaping the institutional arrangements and public policies and dynamics that mediate the opportunities to which they have access. We will need to significantly increase the field’s policy advocacy capacity to make such progress possible. Happily, policy advocacy methods and strategies can be taught and learned. Practitioners can learn to identify important gaps in policy advocacy along with emerging opportunities for policy reform. They can learn to develop effective models for collaboration, partnership, and dissemination with civil rights and other advocacy groups at the regional, community, state, and national levels working to influence and inform public policy debates and legislation. Foundations can do a great deal to support such efforts and build field capacity to do this work without bumping up against the federal strictures that attach to their legal status. As with structural racism training, a number of organizations offer trainings and workshops in policy advocacy for social justice.
D. Establishing a venture capital fund for collaborative policy work

In the private sector, venture capital refers to funding made available to start-up businesses with significant growth and profit potential, as well as risk. It is hard to imagine a more apt description of the policy work groups seeking to improve the well-being of Black men and boys need to do. Whether at the institutional, local, state, or federal level, policy advocacy is difficult work, but the potential benefits of success are incalculable. Just one example, what would it mean for the education of Black boys if we eliminated zero tolerance policies in schools, championed restorative justice alternatives to suspension and expulsion, and provided schools and teachers incentives to reduce their suspension and expulsion rates (per Susan Eaton, in *Changing Places: How Communities Will Improve the Health of Boys of Color*)? Yet the costs of policy advocacy work in money and time, for sure, and possibly also in fractured relationships, emotional well-being, etc., can be prohibitive for financially strapped grassroots groups and nonprofits, while success is far from assured. A “venture capital fund” dedicated to such efforts while requiring significant initiative from possible beneficiaries could make these costs less daunting.

Imagine several foundations teaming up to create a policy advocacy fund for work relating to Black male education, work and family outcomes. Grants from the fund might be made on the basis of criteria such as the following: Have the applicants established clear goals and objectives with respect to institutional or public policy advocacy? Are the advocacy goals and objectives clearly linked to real-world benefits for Black males through research and/or extensive experience? Do applicants have an advocacy plan that embodies a thoughtful set of strategies and approaches that might credibly accomplish said goals and objectives? Do applicants represent the core members of the coalition and resources needed to implement the stated strategies? Have applicants described a set of progress and outcome benchmarks that will demonstrate success (or not) in reaching strategic objectives? Do applicants have the means of monitoring and evaluating progress made toward those benchmarks?

Such a venture capital fund would encourage initiative-taking and collaborative outreach and exchange between groups and organizations in the field with complementary skills, talents and resources, while providing incentives for them to devote more of those skills and talents to critical policy advocacy. This in itself would be an important, partial solution to the problem of field fragmentation. A portion of the fund could be designated for capacity building purposes, provided applicants are able to identify policy targets to which they intend to apply their newfound advocacy skills and resources. The fund itself could also be broadened to support other non-policy kinds of advocacy, including administrative advocacy, media advocacy, litigation support, and voter education or even extended to important arenas beyond those of work, education, and family.
E. Conducting Black male regional opportunity mapping

Racial inequality has a geographic footprint. Maps can visually track the history and presence of discriminatory and exclusionary policies that spatially segregate people. Schools, doctors, jobs and other mediators of social opportunity distributed across a geographical region are often clustered in areas of high and low opportunity. To address the need for equitable opportunity and improved living conditions for African American males we need to assess the geographic differences in resources and opportunities across a region. To direct investment to the under-resourced and struggling areas that are home to many Black men and boys and connect them to good schools, stable jobs, and affordable housing we need to be able to quantitatively model opportunities throughout our regions. “Opportunity maps” have substantial analytical and policy advocacy value, as well as significant communications value: maps can capture and compellingly summarize a great deal of information. The Kirwan Institute has already mapped the state of opportunity for Black men and boys, in particular, in a dozen metropolitan areas. With information from the 2010 Census forthcoming and advocates working in many additional regions across the country, much more remains to be done.

F. Creating a Black male researcher-advocacy database/field map

The field of people and organizations doing work on Black men and boys is deep and wide with respect to information and insights, but also extremely fragmented. One important partial solution would be to create and manage an interactive, web-based database that would allow policymakers, advocacy organizations or journalists to connect with data, research, researchers, policy-related materials and advocates quickly and efficiently – and vice versa. A well-indexed, searchable database would give people working in the Black male field at different geographic levels and from multiples perspectives easy and efficient access to an extensive range of relevant empirical data and research; identify the interests, skills and expertise that researchers bring to their work, while highlighting those researchers interested in actively supporting the work of advocates and policy-makers; and describe the missions and efforts of advocacy organizations whose work implicates issues of race and ethnicity. The database would also identify those organizations with demonstrable short, medium, and/or long-term needs for the range of services that researchers can best provide.

A related idea would be to develop and maintain an information clearinghouse that captures and classifies the efforts that have been brought to bear on the challenge of improving outcomes for Black men and boys. Who are the researchers, advocates, activists, journalists and policymakers doing this work? What key reports, centers, commissions and hearings exist or have been held and what contributions and insights do they provide?
G. Documenting and remediating cognitive biases against Black males in K-12 settings

In education, criminal justice, employment, the housing market — any arena where people have discretion to make important decisions affecting the lives of others — Black males, especially young Black males, are apt to suffer from the negative cognitive biases that decision-makers are likely to harbor toward them. These biases often are hidden to the decision-makers themselves. What is needed is a compelling way of revealing the presence and impact of these biases when and where they exist, and of fashioning and testing interventions that might undermine their effects and perhaps eliminate them altogether. Kirwan is already working to develop a computer software product called the “Virtual Social Lab,” an interactive research tool designed to assess a subject’s sensitivity to issues of race, gender, and other social factors in the K-12 context. We plan to use this tool to test for “hidden” and unintended teacher bias along various dimensions in selected schools, as well as to design interventions that hold the promise of mitigating those biases and/or their effects.

H. Engaging the politics of gender and struggle in the movement for Black male achievement

What roles do and should women — mothers, sisters, daughters, teachers, partners, employers — play in the advancement of Black men and boys? Second, how do we support Black men to engage effectively in the political process, to fight for policies and practices that improve their communities, to develop and participate in movements meant to change not only the direction of Black communities but that of the country? These are critical and arguably missing pieces to the Black male movement puzzle we have started discussing with Cathy Cohen, Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, who participated in the Milwaukee convening. We have not discussed a vehicle for moving work on these items, but believe it important to create a forum for engaging them explicitly.
End notes

1 Poverty and Race Research Action Council Annotated Bibliography: The Impact of School-Based Poverty Concentration on Academic Achievement and Student Outcomes. Page 3.
8 Poverty and Race Research Action Council Annotated Bibliography: The Impact of School-Based Poverty Concentration on Academic Achievement and Student Outcomes. Page 3.
13 Id.
14 Id.
15 Id.
16 Id.
18 Id. at 47.
20 Id.
21 Id. at 12.
22 Id. at 8.
28 Id.
39 Poverty and Race Research Action Council Annotated Bibliography: The Impact of School-Based Poverty Concentration on Academic Achievement and Student Outcomes.
41 Id. at 8.
45 Id.
Id.


Id. at 4


Spalter-Roth and Deitch (1999) studied the experiences of Black, White, and Hispanic men and women once they’ve regained employment after displacement from previous jobs, finding that the displacement costs among groups are unequal. Based on data of workers that were displaced between 1993 and 1995 who had found new jobs by February 1996, the results show that Black men appear to lose ground upon reemployment.

Id. at 475


Id. at 88 citing Mincy, 2006; Edelman et.al. 2006; Bound & Holzer, 1993

Id. at 99

Averaging quintiles III-V for White neighborhoods, for comparison purposes.
Stoll analyzed the employment outcomes for Black and White male youth in central city Washington DC, and surrounding suburban areas, using the more racially segregated Prince George's County (where Blacks are relegated to the inner beltway and whites to the outer beltway), and Montgomery County (where Blacks are less segregated). Both of the suburban areas had strong employment growth and rapid suburbanization of Blacks. This research lends support to research elsewhere that suggests employment discrimination may be more severe in suburban labor markets than in the central city. For example, in Prince George's County, race explained 50% of the disparity in Black-White male youth employment rates, whereas location explained only approximately 13%. Interestingly, location explained 69% of the disparity in Montgomery County, whereas race explained about 62%; essentially, race and place were equal contributors to the disparity in employment rates between Black and White male youth in Montgomery County. Stoll suggests this may be because not only was there substantial job growth in Montgomery County, but there is relatively less racial discrimination than in either central city DC or Prince George's County. Taken together, the study shows that mobility programs that only focus on place will not be as effective; anti-discrimination efforts in suburban labor markets can improve employment outcomes of mobility policies.


Id. at 325. Citing Corcoran et al., 1980, Elliott & Sims, 2001, and Green et al., 1999.


Id. at 325. Citing Fischer et al., 1977.


Holzer, Harry J., Paul Offner, and Elaine Sorenson. “What explains the continuing decline in labor force activity among young Black men?” Labor History Vol.46: 37-55. 2005. Page 47. The researchers conducted regression analyses, the results of which showed that increased enforcement over time could explain a 4 percentage point drop in the labor force activity of men ages 25-34, and similar reductions for men ages 16-24.  

Id.


Id.


Id.  


The Kirwan Institute has addressed this question extensively in its Opportunity Communities work. Please visit us online for various reports addressing space, race, and revitalization at http://kirwaninstitute.org/research/opportunity-communitieshousing/index.php


Id. at 72.

Id. at 35.
118 Howard Dubowitz et al. “Low-Income African American Fathers’ Involvement in Children’s Lives.” It was a study of only 19 fathers.
120 Armon R. Perry, “The Influence of the Extended Family on the Involvement of Nonresident African American Fathers.”
121 E. A. Anderson et. al, “Predictors of depression among lowincome, non-residential fathers,”
124 Id.
131 Poverty and Race Research Action Council Annotated Bibliography: The Impact of School-Based Poverty Concentration on Academic Achievement and Student Outcomes.
133 Id.
134 Id.
137 Id.


See Table 8.


Associated Press. “Attendees: Million Man March made a difference; Sequel: 5 years later, many report that black men are being more responsible for their families.” Telegraph Herald. October 13, 2000.

We are cautious about this research. It is unclear whether it is single-mother households per se that are a key influence in these educational outcomes, or whether it is the environment within which many single mothers are compelled to raise their children.


According to Superintendent Arlene Ackerman, school administrators are required to suspend a student or group of students for 10 days with intent to expel when there is a reasonable and probable ground to believe that a student or group of students has: Assaulted an adult or another student Committed or incited an act of violence or Possessed or has transported onto school property materials to utilize as potential weapons. Students who commit these offenses will neither remain at the present school nor will be transferred to another District school. Instead, the student will immediately be enrolled in an alternative school placement and, pending the result of an expulsion hearing by the School Reform Commission, and will not be allowed to return to a District school for a minimum of one year. 167

Id.


171 Id.


173 Id.

174 Id.


178 Based on American Community Survey Census data, 2006-2008. Note: this data counts an Associate’s Degree as “less than college degree”.


180 Id.


182 Savage, David G. “High court backs black job seekers; Chicago firefighter exam had a ‘disparate impact’ based on race, the justices rule.” *Los Angeles Times*. May 25, 2010.


185 Id.


188 Id.


190 Id.


194 Id.

195 Id.


197 Id.


199 Id.


205 Id.
207 Based on American Community Survey Census data, 2006-2008. Note: this data counts an Associate’s Degree as “less than college degree”.
211 Id.
214 The Schott Foundation for Public Education (2010). Yes We Can: The Schott 50 State Report on Public Education and Black Males. Page 35. Accessed October 6, 2010. The high school graduation rate information includes Black males who received their high school diploma, and does not include GED or other alternative methods.
http://www.blackboysreport.org/?report=state&page_id=629
219 American Community Survey 2006- 2008. Note: data includes Associate Degrees as “less than college”
224 Id.


230 Id.


243 The nation’s Black buying power increased from $318 billion in 1990 to $590 billion in 2000, to $910 billion in 2009, with buying power projected to be $1.1 trillion in 2014. From 1990 to 2014, this is a 257.3 percent change in buying power, compared to a 189.1 percent change in buying power for whites. While some of this growth can be attributed to the increase in Black population, one of the most important forces responsible for this pattern has been the growth in Black-owned businesses. According to the 2002 Survey of Business Owners released by the Census Bureau in 2006, the number of Black-owned businesses increased by 45 percent from 1997 to 2002; this is greater than the 10 percent increase in the number of all U.S. businesses. See “The Multicultural Economy 2009.” *Selig Center for Economic Growth, the University of Georgia*. Third Quarter 2009, Vol. 69, Num. 3. Accessed November 15, 2010 at http://www.terry.uga.edu/selig/docs/GBEC0903q.pdf.


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http://www.urbanyouth.org/docs/AfricanAmericanMalePerspectivesOnMentoring_08.pdf


For example, since 1994, 92,000 young people have participated in building 19,000 units of affordable, green housing. For the years 2005-2009, over 17,000 students were enrolled, approximately half of whom is African American, and 74% of students are male. The program has a 78% attendance rate, and 64% completion rate. 69% of students went on to find employment or further education. While 92% of students entering the program during this period were without a high school diploma, 53% successfully obtained either a diploma or GED.


Cost-per-pupil does not include after-school programs, student rewards for performance, administrative and most building costs, and a portion of students’ health and dental care costs. Further, some of the results of the Harlem Children’s Zone have recently been challenged as to whether a schools-only approach produces as good of, if not better, educational results as a schools-plus-community approach. See Grover J. Whitehurst and Michelle Croft. “The Harlem Children’s Zone, Promise Neighborhoods, and the Broader, Bolder Approach to Education.” The Brookings Institute Brown Center on Education Policy, July 20, 2010. Available at http://www.brookings.edu~/media/Files/rc/reports/2010/0720_hcz_whitehurst/0720_hcz_whitehurst.pdf

Appendix A: Compiled Survey Responses (Midwest and Mid-Atlantic)

Registrants for both the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic convenings, as part of their registration forms, were asked a series of questions regarding their work around Black male issues in their respective regions. Below is a compilation of some of the responses that are suggestive of areas for further investment or attention. Interestingly, the charts done for each question were comparable for each region, and we estimate that the combined analysis is a fair representation of what is happening elsewhere, at least in the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic regions. A major caveat is in order as well: we do not know the process by which participants were invited to the convenings, so there may be a “selection bias” present, i.e. there were a lot of education-focused folks that attended the convenings, and this may in turn account for why educational support was seen as a critical gap.

Question 8:

Total number of respondents: 63

![Bar Chart]

Where in the life cycle of black men and boys does your work most directly intersect?

The major takeaway from Question 8 is the lack of focus on children in Black male work. This is a surprising finding given the depth of experience and literature that documents the value of early childhood interventions as a key path to lifelong achievement. For example, research indicates that the first three years of a child’s life are critical in laying the foundation for lifelong academic success. During this time, children acquire skills such as the ability to think, speak, learn and reason, and by the age of 5,
90 percent of a child’s brain is developed. By the time low-income children reach preschool they are already being outperformed by their middleclass counterparts. This dearth is even more unfortunate when we consider the school-to-prison pipeline. For example, reports from California indicated that correctional officials estimate the number of prison beds to fund based on the number of children who cannot read at grade level by the fourth grade. When we consider that nationally, approximately half of African American men in prison are considered functionally illiterate, it is clear that more attention and resources are needed in this area.

There is also suprisingly little support for elders in this work.


Question 9:

Total number of respondents: 60

Where along the pipeline of black male achievement are your efforts concentrated?

Question 9 further highlights the lack of programmatic investment and attention paid to both children and elders.
Question 11:

Total number of respondents: 50

What are the most critical gaps that exist in the support system for black male achievement in your region?
APPENDIX B-1: BALTIMORE BLACK MALES & COMMUNITY ASSETS

Description: This map represents the proximity of CBMA convening participants and other community assets to the Black Male population in their respective region.

Sources: 05-09 ACS, CBMA Participant Survey
APPENDIX B-2: PHILADELPHIA BLACK MALES & COMMUNITY ASSETS

Description: This map represents the proximity of CBMA convening participants and other community assets to the Black Male population in their respective region.
APPENDIX B-3: CHICAGO BLACK MALES & COMMUNITY ASSETS

Description: This map represents the proximity of CBMA convening participants and other community assets to the Black Male population in their respective region.

Convening Participants
Service/Program Focus
- Education
- Family
- Work
- Midwest Convening Assets

Black Males
- 0% - 5.1%
- 5.2% - 15.7%
- 15.8% - 29.9%
- 30% - 42.1%
- 42.2% - 79.5%

Sources: 05-09 ACS, CBMA Participant Survey
APPENDIX B-4: MILWAUKEE BLACK MALES & COMMUNITY ASSETS

Description: This map represents the proximity of CBMA convening participants and other community assets to the Black Male population in their respective region.

Convening Participants
Service/Program Focus
- Education
- Family
- Work
- Midwest Convening Assets

Interstate
Major Highways

Black Males
- 0% - 4.2%
- 4.3% - 14.7%
- 14.8% - 27.6%
- 27.7% - 37.7%
- 37.8% - 58.7%

Sources: 05-09 ACS, CBMA Participant Survey

Appendix B-4: Milwaukee Black Males & Community Assets

Description: This map represents the proximity of CBMA convening participants and other community assets to the Black Male population in their respective region.
Black Male Achievement: Taking Stock, Moving Forward
Andrew Grant-Thomas
Deputy Director, Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity
Black Male Achievement Campaign, Midwest
Regional Convening
Milwaukee, WI
December 1-2, 2010

Overview
I. A Demographic Snapshot
   - Economics
   - Education
   - Family
II. Looking for explanations: A research review
   - What the research says
   - Some critical gaps
III. Moving the Needle: Highlighting some challenges for the field
IV. Moving Forward: Identifying our Assets and Strengths

I. A Demographic Snapshot
   Tremendous progress AND tremendous vulnerability

- 2002–2007: number of black-owned businesses grew by 61%
- 1980–2009: percentage of black men earning at least $50k rose from 11% to 20% ($2009)
- 1970–2008: proportion of black males who are high school grads rose from 30% to 82%
- 1990–2006: births to black teens drop from 23% to 17% of black births


Appendix C

Many signs of progress
- 2002–2007: number of black-owned businesses grew by 61%
- 1980–2009: percentage of black men earning at least $50k rose from 11% to 20% ($2009)
- 1970–2008: proportion of black males who are high school grads rose from 30% to 82%
- 1990–2006: births to black teens drop from 23% to 17% of black births

The SRICH have become $SRICHER

Yes, We Can!
Blacks More Upbeat on Many Fronts
% of blacks who say...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blacks are better off than they were 20 years ago</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>+19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacks are satisfied with where we are today</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They expect their health will be better</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>+11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They see “no progress” with black community</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacks and whites get along “very well” or “pretty well”</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>+31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The SRICH have become $SRICHER, small groups get the biggest gains.
Mapping opportunity for Black males in 7 large metro areas

- Indicators of economic well-being
  - access to jobs
  - unemployment
  - job trends

- Indicators of educational well-being
  - student poverty rates
  - test scores
  - student/teacher ratios

- Indicators of neighborhood quality
  - vacant and abandoned properties
  - crime rates
  - neighborhood poverty rates
Mapping Opportunity for Black males in Milwaukee and Chicago

- Indicators of economic well-being and mobility
  - Percentage of population on Public Assistance
  - Mean Commute Time
- Indicators of educational well-being
  - Adult Education Attainment
- Indicators of housing neighborhood quality
  - Homeownership rate
  - Residential vacancy rate
  - Neighborhood poverty rates

Black men and boys' access to opportunity in Chicago

*73% of Black men and boys live in low to very low opportunity areas*
*Nearly 80% of Black men and boys live in low to very low opportunity areas.

*About 75% of Black men and boys live in low to very low opportunity areas.

*Nearly 60% of Black men and boys live in low to very low opportunity areas.
Appendix C

Population at or Below Poverty Level, 1970-2008


National Black male population at or below poverty level
Milwaukee Black male population at or below poverty level
Baltimore Black male population at or below poverty level
Philadelphia Black male population at or below poverty level
Chicago Black male population at or below poverty level

Population at or Below Poverty Level, 1970-2008


National Black male population at or below poverty level
Milwaukee Black male population at or below poverty level
Baltimore Black male population at or below poverty level
Philadelphia Black male population at or below poverty level
Chicago Black male population at or below poverty level

Percentage of Population at or Below Poverty Level, 1970-2008


National Black male population at or below poverty level
Milwaukee Black male population at or below poverty level
Baltimore Black male population at or below poverty level
Philadelphia Black male population at or below poverty level
Chicago Black male population at or below poverty level

Median Individual Earnings (2008 dollars)


National median Black male individual earnings
Chicago median Black male individual earnings
Philadelphia median Black male individual earnings
Milwaukee median Black male individual earnings

Median Individual Earnings (2008 dollars)


National median Black male individual earnings
Chicago median Black male individual earnings
Philadelphia median Black male individual earnings
Milwaukee median Black male individual earnings

Median Individual Earnings (2008 dollars)


National median Black male individual earnings
Chicago median Black male individual earnings
Philadelphia median Black male individual earnings
Milwaukee median Black male individual earnings

Median Individual Earnings (2008 dollars)


National median Black male individual earnings
Chicago median Black male individual earnings
Philadelphia median Black male individual earnings
Milwaukee median Black male individual earnings

Median Individual Earnings (2008 dollars)


National median Black male individual earnings
Chicago median Black male individual earnings
Philadelphia median Black male individual earnings
Milwaukee median Black male individual earnings

Median Individual Earnings (2008 dollars)


National median Black male individual earnings
Chicago median Black male individual earnings
Philadelphia median Black male individual earnings
Milwaukee median Black male individual earnings
### Media earnings (Philadelphia)

![Graph showing median individual earnings in Philadelphia](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National Black Male Individual Earnings</th>
<th>Philadelphia Black Male Individual Earnings</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>$26,784</td>
<td>$28,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>$26,623</td>
<td>$29,581</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### High school graduation (Chicago)

![Graph showing high school graduation rates in Chicago](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National White Male</th>
<th>National Black Male</th>
<th>Chicago City White Male</th>
<th>Chicago City Black Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### High school graduation (Milwaukee)

![Graph showing high school graduation rates in Milwaukee](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National White Male</th>
<th>National Black Male</th>
<th>Milwaukee White Male</th>
<th>Milwaukee Black Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### On-time HS graduation (Baltimore)

![Graph showing on-time high school graduation rates in Baltimore](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National White Male</th>
<th>National Black Male</th>
<th>Baltimore City White Male</th>
<th>Baltimore City Black Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### On-time HS graduation (Philadelphia)

![Graph showing on-time high school graduation rates in Philadelphia](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National White Male</th>
<th>National Black Male</th>
<th>Philadelphia White Male</th>
<th>Philadelphia Black Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Without college degree (Chicago)

![Graph showing without college degree rates in Chicago](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>61.7%</td>
<td>64.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
<td>69.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This data is for the population 25 years and older.
*2006-2008 data includes people with associate degrees.
This data is for the population 25 years and older.

*2006-2008 data includes people that have Associate's Degrees.
II. Looking for explanations: A research review
   > Economic, Education, Family

Factors underlying economic hardship
- Economic restructuring
- Residential–jobs spatial mismatch
- Low educational attainment
- Skills mismatch
- Discrimination
- Stigma of criminal records
- High out-of-wedlock births
- Low marriage rates

Factors underlying educational status
- Cultural incompetence
- Lowered teacher expectations
- Discrimination/student misclassification
- Poor school funding and resources
- Zero–tolerance policies
- Weak supports for college persistence
- Poor college preparation

Factors underlying family instability
- Lack of "marriageable" men
- Male/female status mismatch
- Male joblessness/underemployment
- Mass incarceration
- "Perverse welfare disincentives"
- Lower cultural premium on marriage
- Normalization of unwed parenting
- Racism and social stresses

“Ill effects of single–mom homes”
- Higher HS drop–out rates
- Lower rate 4–year college enrollment and graduation rates
- Greater likelihood of children outside marriage
- Higher incarceration rates

Are these findings about single moms OR about the hard conditions under which they often must raise children?
Marriage, Family, and Reality

- Declining marriage rates across all groups

What do we mean by “Family”?
- Marriage is not the only path to family formation

More research attention needed
1. Resiliency of many black males vs. “deficits”
2. Relationship instability vs. “family pathology”
3. Opportunity structures vs. “culture” and individual behaviors
4. Hidden bias and its effects vs. explicit bias
5. Impact of race-and–gender identity
6. Cross-issue/domain connections
7. (Counterproductive) social policies

III. “Moving the needle”
- Highlighting some challenges for the field (advocates, researchers, funders, etc)

6 key challenges
1. Field fragmentation
2. Too little focus on structure (vs. agency)
3. Reaching across domain boundaries
4. The scale of our interventions
5. Outreach to “unusual suspects/allies”
6. Taking collaboration seriously
Much of our dropout problem is located in our poorest schools. School poverty, more than individual poverty, shapes student outcomes.

A few ideas...

1. Field fragmentation
   - Extensive field mapping
   - Researcher–advocate database
   - A venture capital fund for the field
   - Rethinking “collaboration”
   - A strategic summit

Moving Forward

Identifying our assets and strengths

1. Spending Power of the Black Community
   - Nationally, from 1990–2014
     - Black buying power is expected to increase 257.3%
     - White buying power is expected to increase 189.1%
   - Why?
     - Increase in Black population
     - Growth in Black-owned businesses
       - The number of Black-owned businesses increased by 45% from 1992 to 2002, compared to the 1% increase in the number of all U.S. businesses
       - Black-owned businesses account for $100 billion in annual sales
     - Concerted efforts in Milwaukee and Chicago to promote Black-owned business and captured spending potential

2. Political Power of the Black Community
   - From 1970 to 2000 the number of elected Black officials in local, state, and federal government rose more than six-fold
   - The importance in gaining the Black vote has been recognized as critical to the success of political campaigns
     - In Chicago, Black electorate represents approximately 33% of voters
     - Can’t find Milwaukee stats

3. Coalition-building Opportunities

Appendix C
Coalition-building Opportunities

- Coalitions among Blacks and immigrant communities can:
  - Enhance the impact and reach of an organization
  - Attract funding from public and private sources
  - Enhance cultural understanding
  - Ensure common concerns are heard by policymakers, elected officials, etc.

- Examples:
  - United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations (UCCRO), Chicago IL
  - The Infant Mortality Reduction Initiative (IMRI), New York City, NY
  - Gamaliel of Metro Chicago, Chicago, IL
  - CASA de Maryland – NAACP, MD
  - Mississippi Immigrants’ Rights Alliance (MIRA) – Mississippi Workers’ Center, MS

Growing philanthropic interest

- OSI has identified at least 8 foundations in the Midwest region who are existing or potential partners in supporting Black Male Achievement work:
  - Chicago Community Trust
  - Joyce Foundation
  - 21st Century Foundation
  - Association of Black Foundation Executives
  - Lloyd A. Fry Foundation
  - Greater Milwaukee Foundation
  - White House Office of Neighborhood and Faith-based Partnerships
  - OSI Cross Fund Collaboration: EOF, TIF, CJF, D&P

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