

All Black Boys Are Born of Heroes: How Local Service Provision Can Improve Opportunities for Disconnected Boys and Men of Color—A Practice Brief



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FOR BOYS AND MEN OF COLOR

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Abstract

Boys and men of color (BMoC) are disproportionately overrepresented in our nation's population of disconnected or "opportunity youth"—youth who are out of school and out of work and have a history of additional barriers, such as poverty, systems involvement, and nonmarital parenthood, that intersect with and result in specific challenges in need of thoughtful, local solutions. This brief presents a case study on Baltimore's disconnected BMoC, who are primarily Black,¹ to illustrate "intersectionality" and "embeddedness" in structural and local barriers these young men face in gaining social capital, economic mobility, and workforce participation. The importance and relevance of this research is to fill gaps in scholarship and practice related to how disconnected BMoC can acquire the technical, communication, critical-thinking, and problem-solving skills typically acquired during emerging adulthood, skills highly valued in the primary labor market, through local service provision.

Overview

“At the heart of these symptoms is a pervasive sense of disconnectedness and despair. Many African-American men have been beaten down by job discrimination, under-employment, and joblessness. The absence of economic opportunity robs them of the satisfaction of putting in an honest day’s work. It robs them of the security of being able to support their families. And it robs them of hope—hope of improving their condition and providing a better life for their children. These economic hardships are exacerbated today by the erosion of the traditional sources of our strength, that is, family and community.”⁵

— Dr. Louis Sullivan, former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, May 24, 1991, address to the 21st Century Commission on African-American Males.

The emergence of the interdisciplinary fields of Black Male Achievement (BMA) and Boys and Men of Color (BMoC) have galvanized public attention around the challenges faced by and the promise of young men of color. Dating back roughly to the early 1990s,² the two fields have been marked by significant grassroots leadership, targeted philanthropic investments,³ and key federal policy initiatives, from the \$5 million 1990 Minority Male Grants Program⁴ to the establishment of the My Brother’s Keeper Task Force and passage of the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

BMA/BMoC leaders and networks are making important strides in countering the false narratives around BMoC, highlighting that they are arguably the population most in need of innovative strategies and targeted investments to tap into their skills and talents and of programs to connect them to educational, training, and employment opportunities.

The gains in awareness, organizing, and leadership among BMA/BMoC stakeholders are clear, and policy and practice have added value to those efforts through various incarnations; yet questions remain unanswered. Most notable among them, Why is disconnection still more common among BMoC, particularly for young and poor Black men?

Black male disconnection defined by the litany of deficit-based indicators and statistics is all too familiar. With the establishment of BMA/BMoC also came promise and hope born again out of its unapologetic response to embedded structural barriers and oppressive public consensus—the *rejection of rejection*. This has become a rallying cry for many of us. But, despite adopting this bold stance on disconnection, we continue to experience the same lagging indicators couched in discourse we've been repeating for decades. If we keep asking the same questions, we are going to continue to get the same answers. In doing so, we are beginning to approach the point of diminishing knowledge and hope.

How best to connect detached BMoC to the workforce so they can begin to build stable lives for themselves and their families is a complex issue and a question that must be asked persistently. However, the overarching goal of this brief is to contribute four pertinent ideas to inform how, as BMoC stakeholders and practitioners, we might find better answers to that question:

1. We must be prepared to tailor programs to respond not only to the challenges of structural barriers and to the context of specific racial and ethnic groups, but to their strengths and resiliency as they relate to their collective identities.⁶ We also must tailor them to the realities disconnected youth face, particularly that they are more likely than their peers to be teen and unwed parents—youth who are forming families of their own.⁷ These tailored approaches must be delivered with historical and local contexts, drawing on past and present community champions and accomplishments for them to be meaningful to the young men we serve.
2. There is a need for more practitioners and stakeholders who understand that “all Black boys are born of heroes.”⁸ And, as a field, BMoC must reconcile the reality that these service providers will not always look like us. If we are to be an effective and flourishing community of practice, we are all accountable to and for BMoC; this accountability requires us to protect them from exploitation for program gains and even from subtle or unintended threats to their dignity whereby their improved circumstances and outcomes are perpetuated as novelties or program prowess instead of the result of BMoC ability, agency, and liberty.
3. Connecting BMoC to career pathways, training, and education will require us to be more disciplined in how we define specific approaches, particularly mentoring, case management, and teaching “soft” skills. As most practitioners understand, the intended skill sets associated with these activities are not soft at all. They involve the mastery of internal competencies such as metacognition, self-regulation, response inhibition, effective communication, task initiation, and empathy, among others. These skills are as—if not more—important than technical, job-based skills in predicting successful outcomes in employment and almost every other life domain. Let's stop calling them “soft.”
4. Employment and education can no longer be the end game we seek for boys and men of color. Jobs, higher earnings, and sound policies will never be enough, nor should they be. The goal is to empower, liberate, and arm BMoC with the knowledge and skills necessary to be active agents in their own lives and then agents of change and progress in their families and communities through civic engagement, business ownership, entrepreneurship, parenting practices, and service, to name a few. Let's have conversations about how to measure those outcomes.

What follows is a litany of deficit-based indicators and statistics about the state of disconnected BMoC nationally and in Baltimore, where the Center for Urban Families (CFUF) is based; the consequences of disconnection; and how CFUF service provision can inform opportunities for BMoC skill acquisition in other local areas.

1 Background

Far too many Americans in their teens and twenties are ill prepared to make the successful transition to adult self-sufficiency typically measured by educational achievement and the subsequent attainment of gainful employment. There are approximately 4.9 million disconnected youth in the United States, or about one in eight (12.3 percent) of all youth ages sixteen to twenty-four who are out of school and not working and who typically face additional barriers to consistent connection.⁹ Other estimates indicate as many as 10.2 million (16.9 percent) young people aged sixteen to twenty-nine are neither employed nor in education or training (or NEETs).¹⁰

The term “disconnected youth” and many of its derivations¹¹ refer to a wide range of youth in adolescence (thirteen to seventeen years old) and emerging and young adulthood (eighteen to twenty-four years old) who are not meeting conventional developmental milestones most often acquired during this timeframe through education and employment. The importance of age in this context is its use as a demographic indicator of the key developmental markers and skills typical of these stages, which are significant predictors of consistent employment,¹² such as “knowledge and credentials, social skills and networks, a sense of mastery and agency, an understanding of one’s strengths and preferences, and the ability to handle stressful events and regulate one’s emotions, to name just a few.”¹³ Recent brain science has shown that during adolescence and young adulthood, the brain is still developing and maturing, particularly the frontal cortex, increasing executive functioning skills and processes associated with positive behavioral outcomes. This is the time when, ideally, personal identity is solidified and wisdom and judgment evolve.

TABLE 1: Opportunity Youth Subgroups

SUBGROUP	Youth (Age 16 to 24) Disconnection Rate	Male Youth (Age 16-24) Disconnection Rate	Female Youth (Age 16-24) Disconnection Rate
U.S. Total	12.3%	12%	12.5%
Black	18.9%	21.9%	15.7%
Latino/a	14.3%	13.1%	15.6%
Native American	25.4%	25.4%	25.4%
Asian	7.2%	6.9%	7.5%
White	10.1%	10.2%	9.9%
Rural	20.3%		
Urban	14.2%		
Suburban	12.3%		

OPPORTUNITY YOUTH AND BMOG

The term “opportunity youth” is an attempt to reframe the narrative around disconnected youth by catalyzing hope and raising awareness of—and leveraging opportunities for—this collective demographic to help them gain critical developmental footholds and thrive as adult members of and contributors to society. Disproportionately young, poor men of color who have low levels of education and skills and limited or no work experience, and who face significant barriers to employment, represent a loss of opportunities to families, communities, the state, and the nation.¹⁴ They also represent resilience, courage, and promise.

Important subsets of these youth bear mentioning. Black, Latino, and Native American youth, low-income youth, Black men and boys, BMOG with disabilities, young parents, and youth residing in rural areas are all respective subgroups who disproportionately struggle with disconnection (see Table 1).¹⁵

DISCONNECTED BLACK BOYS AND MEN

Black males represent a higher portion of disconnected youth (21.9 percent) than Black females (15.7 percent); disconnected Black males and females are most likely to be in poverty (49.7 percent and 51.4 percent, respectively);¹⁶ Black males have a 28.7 percent repeat suspension rate correlating to their high rates of expulsion; 41 percent of the male juvenile detention population are Black, almost 10 percentage points higher than any other group; and, while aggregate data show disconnection rates have been decreasing across the board, young Black males have experienced the lowest decrease among men and boys across all racial-ethnic groups. Disconnected males are also 50 percent more likely to be a person with a disability—accounting for almost one in five disconnected BMOG.¹⁷

The probability of disconnection falls as household income rises, but race still trumps income: Blacks are more likely to be disconnected than whites and Asians at the same income levels.

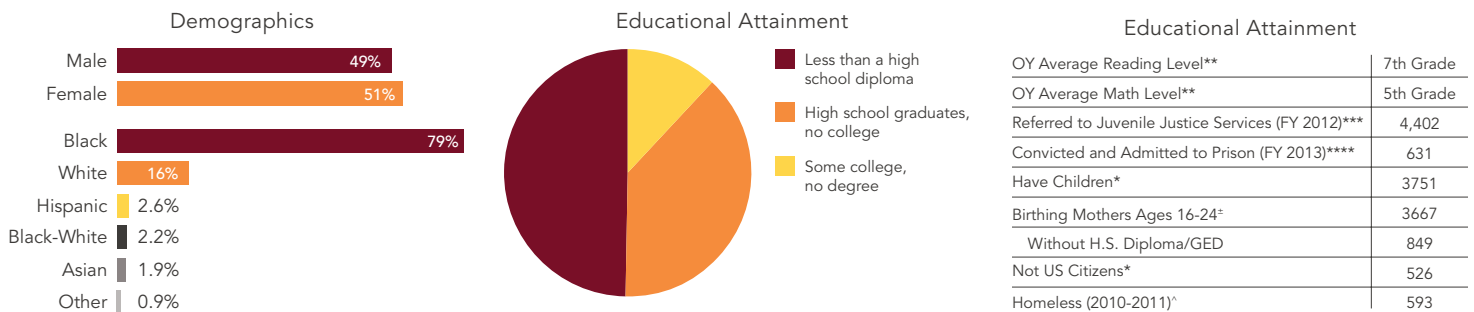
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

In Maryland, there are 81,300 disconnected youth—11.3 percent of all youth ages sixteen to twenty-four. While this percentage is lower than the national rate of 12.3 percent, it obscures racial disparities across Maryland with 16.4 percent Black disconnected youth—double that of whites (8.2 percent)—and within the state, where some counties have the largest white-Black disconnection gaps in the country (e.g., Howard County).¹⁸

In Baltimore, Maryland’s largest city, more than one in five youth are disconnected (20.4 percent, or 38,600 young people), putting Baltimore City as having the second-highest concentration of disconnected young people in the country and the “worst” metro area for economic mobility and future earnings.¹⁹ As seen in Figure 1,²⁰ youth with juvenile justice contact and young parents are an important subgroup among opportunity youth in Baltimore.

Additionally, the number of adults without a high school diploma is a little more than one in five (21.8 percent) for Blacks and one in ten for whites (12.8 percent). Furthermore, Baltimore is 62 percent Black and 30 percent white, yet almost 85 percent of those incarcerated in 2014 were Black. Finally, following release from prison, wages grow 21 percent more slowly for Black former inmates compared with white former inmates.²¹ Taken together, this cluster of young people faces specific challenges that are in dire need of practical, local solutions, and the situation is exacerbated by the immense taxpayer burden and unsustainable social burden associated with opportunity youth.²²

FIGURE 1: Opportunity Youth (OY) in Baltimore – Select Indicators



Source:

2 Opportunity Youth's Significance to the American Economy

The components of the social economic burden of opportunity youth include but are not limited to lost earnings (gross incomes, including fringe benefits for health and pension), lost tax payments (federal, state, and local income taxes), increased public expenditures related to crime (criminal justice system, policing, and corrections expenditures by federal, state, and local authorities), increased crime victim costs (reduced quality of life, monetary damages, lost earnings), additional public health expenditures (Medicaid and other government health agency expenditures), enhanced individual monetary burdens (out-of-pocket expenditures on medical treatments), decreased publicly supported programs (e.g., workforce training), increased need for government expenditures on public safety-net programs, reduced public savings on educational costs (resulting in lower school and college subsidies from government agencies), reduced savings on fees for private education (higher fees for college, expenses for families), and increased tax burdens (cost of raising taxes to pay for public services).²³



3 Race, Place, and Opportunity: Embedded Systems and Social Networks

Significant opportunity is created by the intersection of race, gender, and income inequities and their interaction with policy and place. Throughout U.S. history, public policy, service provision, and private-sector practices have resulted in negative and often devastating outcomes that disproportionately affect Black men and boys. Even well-intended, universally framed policies often have been unequal in their implementation, serving to further segregate Black individuals, families, and communities for generations. Given the current labor demand to fill nearly 6.2 million open, entry-level employment positions across the country,²⁴ questions about how best to support disconnected youth to move up the “rungs” of socioeconomic ladders and out of poverty are relevant to embedded social networks.

Embeddedness theory²⁵ views disconnection from school and work as “economically irrational,” arguing it is more accurate to view economically disconnected people as making decisions born out of isolated and locally embedded social networks that have become part of the processes in which intergenerational poverty and class inequalities are perpetuated. Networks of family, friends, and peers, rooted in severely disadvantaged, isolated neighborhoods without adequate public investments in education, local economies, transportation, housing, and other needed infrastructure and resources, shape how Black youth develop their identities and how many end up with a nihilistic view of the world and how it works.

Focusing on enhancing social networks as a strategy to address localized, concentrated, and chronic poverty and a lack of ties to workforce attachment calls for innovative practices beyond career pathways, increased wages and income, or job attainment. It requires an intimate understanding of how communities of disadvantaged racial and ethnic minorities, and BMoC particularly, acquire formal and informal information and adapt to norms and expectations around decision-making and acceptable behaviors.²⁶ That is, people who share a collective identity and specific geography tend to rely on people they know—not outsiders—and those they deem trustworthy to guide them and do right by them. They thereby embrace an informal, noneconomic social system that doles out rewards and punishments, which carries even more meaning because the people involved are known and trusted to do the right thing.²⁷ This idea has multiple implications for practitioners serving BMoC:

1. The shortage of qualified, entry-level workers is a challenge to local and national economies. These challenges and opportunities are playing out across workforce development organizations and intermediaries who are serving youth locally. Intermediaries, or community partners, who are known and trusted by community members and BMoC directly may be uniquely positioned to serve these youth in a variety of ways indirectly related to workforce development. For example, the first step may be helping them build social networks to that end.
2. Understanding that people in general, and young people in particular, are not rational is important for service providers because over the past thirty years, innovative behavioral science research has demonstrated that human decision making is often imperfect, imprecise, and irrational.²⁸ People—clients and program staff alike—procrastinate, get overwhelmed by choices, miss details, lose their self-control, rely on mental shortcuts, and are influenced by even small changes in the environment. People who have suffered trauma, are under toxic stress,²⁹ endure chronic health issues, or are hungry or sleep deprived often face even greater challenges in making decisions and completing simple tasks.³⁰ Viewing programs for low-income, disconnected BMoC and their families through a behavioral science lens is a relatively new approach to human service provision yielding some early, positive changes. Using behavioral insights to design and test interventions that will improve employment and potentially other outcomes for BMoC seems like a logical next step.

4 The Center for Urban Families (CFUF): A Case Study in Local Service Provision

CFUF is an independent 501(c)3 organization located in West Baltimore. Since its founding in 1999, CFUF has been a stalwart organization creating and maximizing opportunities for many boys and men of color. It has specialized in serving the needs of Baltimore’s hardest-to-reach populations, including the formerly incarcerated, those with a previous history of substance abuse, and low-income, noncustodial fathers.

Central to CFUF’s mission is the belief that men—the most disconnected and underserved citizens in urban communities who connect with women, their children, and the workplace—are key to the restoration of stability and hope in Baltimore and nationally.

CFUF is recognized nationwide for its advocacy and workforce and parenting services, undertaken while also tackling many long-standing structural problems faced by Baltimore residents, including staggering unemployment, poverty, crime, and incarceration rates amid aggressive police tactics and civil unrest laid bare since Freddie Gray’s death in 2015. See Table 2 for a snapshot of indicators in five Baltimore City zip codes CFUF serves.³¹ (CFUF is located in zip code 21217.)

CFUF has been the bridge many Baltimore families have needed to attain stability and economic success, while emerging as a leader in the national conversations on boys and men of color, black male achievement, and responsible fatherhood. CFUF’s president and CEO, Joseph T. Jones, has a long history of advocacy in Baltimore and close partnerships with city and state policy makers; for example, he is a member of the Baltimore Workforce Development Board, among many other activities.

TABLE 2: CFUF Community Indicators

ZIP CODE	Percentage of Unemployed	Percentage in Poverty	Percentage with Post-secondary Education	Median Household Income	Total State-Owed Child Support Arrears	Outstanding Child Support Warrants
21205	24.9%	33.9%	6.3%	25,522	unavailable	unavailable
21213	17.8%	22.3%	10.9%	34,046	9,630,841	34
21215	18.3%	25.8%	17.1%	34,471	10,335,817	25
21216	19%	27.8%	12.5%	31,988	6,474,857	38
21217	20.3%	34.1%	18.7%	26,187	9,228,471	29
21218	12.6%	23.9%	31.7%	38,261	7,282,588	28

CFUF'S DIRECT SERVICE INITIATIVES FALL INTO THREE FOCUS AREAS:

- 1. Economic success**, which offers STRIVE³² Baltimore, STRIVE Future Leaders, and Back to Business (B2B) and includes pre-employment training, job placements and re-placements, job retention and advancement assistance, career mapping support, job coaching, and occupational skills trainings and education;
- 2. Family stability**, which offers family-oriented services to low-income fathers and couples with children through the Baltimore Responsible Fatherhood Project and the Couples Advancing Together Program, respectively; and
- 3. Supportive services**, which connect members to critical barrier removal services that are necessary to sustaining members' long-term progress toward greater self-sufficiency and personal fulfillment.

CFUF's approach to service delivery is founded on a series of self-sufficiency metrics, grouped together under the banner of Family Stability and Economic Success. These metrics are a reflection of one basic finding, observed for more than a decade of working with Baltimore's most vulnerable citizens: to help families attain and sustain self-sufficiency requires a holistic approach.

TARGET POPULATION

CFUF's target population confronts the issues faced by disconnected youth, adults, and families living in Baltimore's economically isolated communities. Its services and programs are open to Baltimore City residents age eighteen and older. CFUF's members are 98 percent Black and 60 percent male. On average, at the time of enrollment, 34 percent do not possess a high school diploma or GED equivalent; 51 percent possess a misdemeanor or felony conviction, or both; 50 percent lack stable housing; and 47 percent had no employment within 12 months before seeking CFUF's services.

CHILD SUPPORT DEBT FORGIVENESS PROGRAM

CFUF efforts have also focused on ameliorating, reducing, and more effectively managing child support payments through its child support debt reduction program, ROLE,³³ for noncustodial fathers living in one of five Baltimore zip codes³⁴ and where 4,642 noncustodial parents owed over \$63 million in child support arrears. In January 2014, ROLE materialized from CFUF's long-standing partnerships with Maryland's Child Support Enforcement Administration and the Baltimore City Office of Child Support Services.

As of June 2016, ROLE participants collectively earned forgiveness of \$45,358 in child support arrears, and 99 participants have made child support payments totaling \$335,673 during their enrollment in the ROLE program.

CFUF'S EIGHTEEN- TO TWENTY-FOUR-YEAR-OLD MEMBERS

CFUF uses data for development of evidence-informed programs and implementation of its service delivery systems. CFUF conducted an internal scan of the number of men who received services from September 1, 2015, through August 14, 2017. Findings identified 2,094 male members CFUF served during that period, of which 604 (28 percent) were eighteen to twenty-four years old.

Given that 28 percent of CFUF's caseload consisted of young men in that age category, the organization began a more concerted effort to serve male youth and launched the Strive Future Leaders Program (SFL), a six-week cohort program for opportunity youth. Each cohort consists of fifteen to eighteen guided sessions, case management, and mentoring within a positive youth development framework. Active creative exploration classes are offered to provide SFL participants with hands-on exploration into four industries: construction, manufacturing, health care, and food service. Community Benefit Projects are another component of SFL, which afford the leader an opportunity to gain work experience while providing direct service to the community.

5 Conclusion

The emergence of the BMA and BMoC fields has galvanized public attention around the promise of BMoC opportunity youth and the barriers they face, typically defined by their disconnection from education and employment and their ages, sixteen to twenty-four. CFUF's SFL program is an example of how it tailors service provision to meet the needs of young clients by including more experiential learning, more service work, and less didactic instruction. At the same time, CFUF is keenly aware that limiting engagement of BMoC to age twenty-four is shortsighted given that 62 percent of its male members are fathers, and 30 percent of those fathers are between twenty-five and thirty years old, have similar needs as twenty-four-year-olds, and are responsible for 846 children (2.2 children each on average). Failing to have effective supports in place for this group and by extension their children is unthinkable.



CFUF's body of work dates back almost twenty years, not including the founder's work with Baltimore fathers and families in the 1980s and has affected more than 37,000 Baltimore lives. With each case, CFUF has developed an intimate understanding of how policies—set at the local, state, and national levels—both help and hinder families in their quest for economic stability. As a result, "advocacy runs in CFUF's blood." Members of CFUF, from organizational leadership to families affected by its programs, have risen to the podium time and time again to speak up for public policies that engage fathers, empower couples, train disconnected workers, and help families achieve economic success.

CFUF'S EXPERIENCE SUGGESTS THAT POLICIES AND PROGRAMS AIMED AT ASSISTING DISCONNECTED BMOG SHOULD CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- Look at program and organization caseloads, characteristics, and demographics of who is being served and what overlapping or intersecting challenges they face. This can be done through a formal data scan if the data are being collected or through an informal review of case management notes.
- Explore expanding the BMOG opportunity youth cohort age to twenty-nine. This is how youth or young adult age brackets are defined in the United Kingdom and European Union (ages sixteen to twenty-nine). In addition, emerging adulthood research suggests for many males, milestones of adulthood may not occur until around age twenty-nine or later.³⁵
- Plan to tailor services for opportunity youth *who have already started families of their own*. Services must attend to the needs of young fathers and parents (as resident and nonresident fathers, intact couples, or co-parents); establish a relationship with your local child support office as soon as possible to prepare to address the needs of BMOG with child support challenges.
- Actively model advocacy and civic engagement to those you serve by demonstrating awareness of local, state, and national policy issues that affect your clients. CFUF's civic participation and advocacy model has not been formalized. Advocacy efforts are something staff are expected to engage in and, by extension, members receiving services often will too; however, plans are under way to add this as a more clearly defined component of service delivery moving forward.
- Consider needs that BMOG have for relational and executive skill sets, particularly for youth and adults who have been incarcerated. Black males returning from prison often share their particularly acute anxiety about not knowing how to relate to others. Coming from prison where being "tough" is part of the culture and a much-needed survival skill, the men CFUF serves express their desires to learn effective communication and interpersonal skills necessary for successful parenting, co-parenting, and employer-employee relations.

To be sure, the basic building blocks of economic stability are more than simply having a job. Housing, reliable child care, transportation, and sobriety, not to mention the job's pay rate, all work together to help families emerge from poverty and become self-sufficient. An organization such as CFUF, in taking on the lofty goal of helping Baltimore's most disengaged citizens, must intimately understand each factor in a person's life and be prepared to help in all areas, not just one. CFUF learned that a referral is not good enough; their service model is one of true membership, mentorship, coaching, and the building of social networks for clients that include CFUF staff and members. At CFUF, "clients must walk out of its doors with more than job skills; they must be prepared to succeed in all aspects of their daily life."³⁶

Endnotes

- ¹ The capitalization of 'Black' in this document is both a reflection of reality and of respect, as many Black people describe themselves as being "Black" and share a collective identity around its racial, ethnic, and cultural meaning. This reality is reflected in a body of literature, music, and fields of academic study. The term 'white' is not capitalized herein because people in the white majority don't typically think of or describe their European ancestry with that term, but instead use terms like "Irish" or "Italian," which are capitalized.
- ² See Campaign for Black Male Achievement, "History of the BMA Field," <https://www.blackmaleachievement.org/about/bma-field>.
- ³ While foundation investments in BMoC have been increasing modestly, foundations contributed "less than one-tenth of 1 percent of the \$45.7 billion awarded by America's 76,000 grantmaking institutions in 2010." See Carson, E. D., "Foundations and the Fallacy of a Post-Racial America: African American Men and Civic Engagement, University of Arkansas, Little Rock, 2013, p. 2, <http://www.abfe.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Foundations-and-the-Fallacy-of-a-Post-Racial-America.pdf>.
- ⁴ See https://archive.org/stream/minoritymalegran00uns/minoritymalegran00uns_djvu.txt
- ⁵ Dr. Louis Sullivan, former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, May 24, 1991, address to the 21st Century Commission on African-American Males, retrieved from the Federal News Service Transcript, https://archive.org/stream/minoritymalegran00uns/minoritymalegran00uns_djvu.txt
- ⁶ Carson, "Foundations."
- ⁷ Houseman, A., "Introduction in Leave no youth behind: Opportunities for Congress to reach disconnected youth." Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy, 2003.
- ⁸ From "We Are Heroes," composed by Lee Cooper and Linda Twine, for the Harlem Boys Choir.
- ⁹ Burd-Sharps, S., & Lewis, K., *Promising Gains*, Persistent Gaps: Youth Disconnection in Congressional Districts, Measure of America of the Social Science Research Council, 2017, <http://www.measureofamerica.org/youth-disconnection-2017/>. See also Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions, "Opportunity Youth Network," <https://aspencommunitysolutions.org/the-fund/opportunity-youth-network/>.
- ¹⁰ Desilver, D., "Millions of Young People in U.S. and EU Are Neither Working nor Learning," Pew Research Center, FactTank, January 28, 2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/01/28/us-eu-neet-population/>.
- ¹¹ Out-of-school out-of-work (OSOW) youth; not in employment, education or training (NEET); youth in transition; transition age youth; youth aging out; youth at-risk; detached youth; marginalized youth; etc.
- ¹² Sum, A., McLaughlin, J., Ishwar Khatiwada, et al., *Still Young, Idle, and Jobless: The Continued Failure of the Nation's Teens to Benefit from Renewed Job Growth* (Alexandria, VA: Jobs for America's Graduates, January 2006), <http://wtb.wa.gov/Documents/AttachmentFStillYoungIdleandJobless.pdf>.
- ¹³ Burd-Sharps & Lewis, *Promising Gains*.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ Matthew, S., "Targeted Supports Benefit Us All: Applying a Racial and Gender Equity Lens to Serving Disconnected Youth," Ready by 21 National Meeting, Austin, TX, 2017, http://scho.wa.gov/hosted_files/2017readyby21nationalmeeting/ba/Targeted%20Supports%20Benefit%20Us%20All.pdf.
- ¹⁸ Governor's Office for Children, Maryland, "Disconnection by Jurisdiction," updated October 2015, <http://goc.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2015/10/Disconnected-Youth-Jurisdictional-Data.pdf>.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Job Opportunities Task Force and Baltimore's Promise, *Connecting Baltimore's Opportunity Youth to Careers*, February 2016, <http://www.baltimorespromise.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Connecting-Baltimore-Opportunity-Youth-to-Careers.pdf>.
- ²¹ *The Racial Wealth Divide in Baltimore* (n.d.): n. pag. JP Morgan Chase & Co, Jan. 2017, https://prosperitynow.org/files/PDFs/profiles/Racial_Wealth_Divide_in_Baltimore_RWDI.pdf.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Granovetter, M., "The Impact of Social Structure on Economic Outcomes," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 19, no. 1 (Winter 2005), 33–50. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4134991>.
- ²⁴ See U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Job Openings and Labor Turnover Summary—December 2017," <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/jolts.nr0.htm>.

²⁵ Granovetter, M., "The Impact of Social Structure on Economic Outcomes."

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Office of the Administration for Children and Families, Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency (BIAS) Next Generation, 2015–2022, <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/behavioral-interventions-to-advance-self-sufficiency-bias-next-generation-2015-2022>.

²⁹ Murray, D., Rosanbalm, K., Christopoulos, C., and Hamoudi, A., *Self-Regulation and Toxic Stress: Foundations for Understanding Self-Regulation from an Applied Developmental Perspective*, OPRE Report #2015-21 (Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, January 2015), https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/report_1_foundations_paper_final_012715_submitted_508.pdf.

³⁰ Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Office of the Administration for Children and Families, "Nudging Change in Human Services: Final Report of the Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency (BIAS) Project," May 17, 2017, <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/nudging-change-in-human-services-final-report-of-the-behavioral-interventions-to-advance-self-sufficiency-bias-project>.

³¹ Wallace, V., "Fatherhood and Child Support: Partnering for Success," National Child Support Enforcement Association Leadership Symposium, July 31–August 3, 2016, New Orleans.

³² STRIVE is a national employment model of job readiness and skills training, combined with intensive wrap-around case management and proven methods of reengaging disconnected individuals and instilling behaviors and skills that lead to sustained employment in living wage jobs. See <https://www.striveinternational.org>.

³³ **ROLE** = **R**ight-sizing the child support obligation based on the noncustodial parent's present ability to pay; **O**btain a job that enables the noncustodial parent to pay the newly right-sized obligation; **L**ift any child support suspension of the noncustodial parent's Maryland driving or occupational licenses; **E**arn reduction of child support arrears owed to the State of Maryland.

³⁴ Zip codes 21215, 21216, 21217, and 21218. In 2015, zip codes 21205 and 21213 were added.

³⁵ Arnett, J. J., "Emerging Adulthood: A Theory of Development from the Late Teens Through the Twenties," *American Psychologist* 55 no. 5 (2000), 469–480; Arnett, J., Žukauskien, R., & Sugimura, K., "The New Life Stage of Emerging Adulthood at Ages 18–29 Years: Implications for Mental Health." *Lancet Psychiatry* 1 (2014), 569–576; Tribble, H., "Emerging Adulthood: Defining the Life Stage and Its Developmental Tasks," *Educational Specialist*, paper 2 (2015).

³⁶ Quote from Joseph Jones, CFUF founder and CEO, quoted at www.cfuf.org.

RISE is a joint initiative co-led by Equal Measure and the University of Southern California Race and Equity Center.

RISE for Boys and Men of Color

www.risebmoc.org

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