

My Brother's Keeper

In September 2014, Mayor Paul Soglin together with the Common Council of the City of Madison and community partners accepted President Barack Obama's My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Community Challenge. The MBK initiative seeks to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color and ensure that all young people can reach their full potential through six focus areas.

- *Ensuring all children enter school cognitively, physically, socially and emotionally ready*
- *Ensuring all children read at grade level by 3rd grade*
- *Ensuring all youth graduate from high school*
- *Ensuring all youth complete post-secondary education or training*
- *Ensuring all youth out of school are employed*
- *Ensuring all youth remain safe from violent crime and receive second chances*

This effort comes at a time when the City of Madison is closely examining the racial disparities in graduation rates and crime and incarceration. Families, neighbors and political leaders continue to wrestle with the personal and political challenges inherent in these disparities. Thousands of on-going conversations have prepared the City of Madison to rededicate itself to meeting the needs of boys and young men of color.

My Brother's Keeper challenged the City of Madison to convene a "Local Action Summit" in November 2014, bringing together community leaders to assess needs and assets. In January of 2015 the City conducted a survey of boys and young men of color to choose priority areas to focus our work. The boys and young men chose:

- *Ensuring all youth graduate from high school and*
- *Ensuring that all youth remain safe from violent crime and receive second chances*

Now the City of Madison is developing a policy review and recommendations for action. The City Action Team gathered information about the experiences of boys and young men of color in our community. The Team explored policies, programs, and practices in each focus area and offers up opportunities to shift policies and build on existing programs.

Recognizing that all of the focus areas are interdependent, the working group investigated each issue carefully. The focus on graduation necessarily includes addressing school readiness and third grade reading and as such the policy recommendations supporting high school graduation focus on wrap around services for the student and family. The goal is to help students succeed at each milestone leading to graduation.

In the coming weeks the city will put forward policy and program recommendations to support the selected focus areas. The recommendations (developed in close partnership with the Superintendent and other community partners) include:

- *Full Service Schools (also known as Community Schools)*
- *New Opportunities for Restorative Justice*