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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG LAUNCHES NATION'S MOST COMPREHENSIVE  
EFFORT TO TACKLE DISPARITIES BETWEEN YOUNG BLACK AND LATINO  
MALES AND THEIR PEERS**

*New Policies and Practices, Plus City Resources and Private Funding, Will Address  
Challenges in Key Areas of Education, Employment, Health and Justice*

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg today announced the launch of the Young Men's Initiative, the nation's boldest and most comprehensive effort to tackle the broad disparities slowing the advancement of black and Latino young men. This cross-agency enterprise is the culmination of 18 months of work begun when the Mayor committed in his 2010 State of the City address to find new ways to tackle the crisis. Through broad policy changes and agency reforms over the next three years, a public-private partnership will invest more than \$127 million in programs that will connect young men to educational, employment, and mentoring opportunities across more than a dozen city agencies. Mayor Bloomberg announced the Initiative at a breakfast co-hosted by the Council of Urban Professionals and the New America Alliance at the offices of Kirkland & Ellis LLP, where he was joined by Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Linda I. Gibbs, Schools Chancellor Dennis M. Walcott, President of the Eagle Academy Foundation David Banks, President of the New York Women's Foundation Ana Oliveira, and George Soros.

"When we look at poverty rates, graduation rates, crime rates, and employment rates, one thing stands out: blacks and Latinos are not fully sharing in the promise of American freedom and far too many are trapped in circumstances that are difficult to escape," said Mayor Bloomberg. "Even though skin color in America no longer determines a child's fate – sadly, it tells us more about a child's future than it should. And so this morning, we are confronting these facts head-on, not to lament them, but to change them, and to ensure that 'equal opportunity' is not an abstract notion but an everyday reality, for all New Yorkers."

Key programmatic components include the overhaul of the Department of Probation, which has supervision of almost 30,000 New Yorkers—the majority black and Latino males. As part of the Young Men's Initiative, the Department of Probation will take responsibility for connecting probationers to the economic and educational opportunities that can prevent

(more)

recidivism and will launch five satellite offices in neighborhoods with the highest number of disconnected youth.

To strengthen educational supports, \$18 million will help provide transformative mentoring and literacy services while a \$24 million investment will launch the Expanded Success Initiative, a pioneering effort that will target schools that have shown progress in closing the achievement gap in high school graduation and use them a laboratory for strategies to eradicate the achievement gap in college and career readiness.

Additionally, an investment of almost \$25 million will connect young men with employment opportunities via an expansion of Jobs-Plus, an evidence-based program that saturates public housing communities with high-quality services, community support for work, and removes barriers to obtaining employment.

Key developments to policy and agency practice include: new metrics in School Progress Reports to hold schools accountable for the performance of black and Latino males; a requirement for City agencies to encourage and support young people in obtaining government-issued identification, the lack of which serve as a barrier to employment; the development of criteria for teen-friendly clinics that will lead to more young people being able to access appropriate health care services; a review of agency policies to identify where obstacles to father involvement can be reduced; and an Executive Order ensuring that City agencies do not place undue barriers in their own hiring processes for people with criminal convictions unrelated to the jobs for which they are applying.

Over the next three years, the programmatic innovation portion of the initiative will be funded with \$67.5 million of city funding, \$30 million from the Campaign for Black Male Achievement of the Open Society Foundations (OSF) and \$30 million from Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs and Chancellor Dennis Walcott will supervise implementation of the Young Men's Initiatives across city agencies. The Mayor has directed all involved agencies to report to him each month on their progress. These standing meetings will ensure that agencies are held accountable for success.

"The obstacles faced by young men and boys of color are appalling and inconsistent with the open society we aspire to be," said George Soros. "I know from practical experience that it is possible to make meaningful improvements and transform the lives of our most vulnerable."

"This is a crisis that demands a crisis response," said Deputy Mayor Gibbs. "Expressly naming the problem of disparities and aggressively fighting barriers is how we are going to begin to achieve change. New York City is going to send a signal that the situation facing young black and Latino men requires the same kind of aggressive, cross-agency response that a natural disaster would demand, because fixing these outcomes is critical to the City's health and future."

“This initiative provides the support our most vulnerable students need to graduate high school, while setting a high bar to ensure they are prepared for success in college and careers,” said Chancellor Walcott. “We’ve come a long way in improving achievement for black and Latino young men, helping to narrow the racial gaps in state exams and graduation rates. But in order for all students to meet our highest expectations and have a chance at successful futures, we need to go a step further.”

“Our goal is to create economic opportunities for all New Yorkers, and these initiatives will target a population that for too long has not had the same access to those opportunities as other groups,” said Deputy Mayor for Economic Development Robert K. Steel.

In January 2010, Mayor Bloomberg asked two experts on youth development – David Banks, President of the Eagle Academy Foundation, and Ana Oliveira, President of the New York Women’s Foundation – to lead an investigation into the barriers that black and Latino young men encounter, the disparities between them and their peers, and what the City could do to better connect them to opportunities. They produced a report that found that, though the population of men ages 18-24 is roughly divided among whites, blacks and Latinos, their outcomes couldn’t be more different: across the five boroughs black and Latino young men have a poverty rate that is 50 percent higher than white and Asian young men; their unemployment rate is 60 percent higher; they are two times more likely not to graduate from high school; they are more likely to become teen fathers; and more than 90 percent of all young murder victims and perpetrators are black and Latino.

The Report recommended that the City take the following actions:

- Reduce the achievement gap in schools by implementing targeted strategies and improving outcomes for black and Latino youth in our public schools.
- Reform the juvenile and criminal justice systems so that our interventions produce young people prepared for second chances and not to return to jail.
- Connect more black and Latino young men to employment by reducing the barriers they may experience in obtaining work.
- Improve the health of young men, encouraging more fathers to be involved in the lives of their children, and breaking the cycle of premature fathering.

In response to these recommendations, Mayor Bloomberg charged Deputy Mayor Linda Gibbs and Chancellor Dennis Walcott with developing an Action Plan that includes: policy changes; reform in the practices of agencies that interact most directly with black and Latino young men; and the launch of pilot programs that can impact the most affected neighborhoods. Over a dozen agencies were involved in the design of the Young Men’s Initiative Action Plan and will be responsible for its implementation.

“I am so proud to have been a part of Mayor Bloomberg’s Young Men’s Initiative. This Mayor has been fully engaged in this project since day one. The initiative is the first of its kind in the country where the private and public sector have joined together to say that we intend to reclaim the lives of our young African American and Latino men. It is a call to

action, a challenge, not only to the community and its leaders, but to the donor community, to step up and help us alter the future of these young men,” said David Banks, the President of the Eagle Academy Foundation. “Under the Mayor’s leadership, the Department of Education has seen the first real movement in narrowing the achievement gap in a generation. However, the disparities between the achievement of boys of color and their white peers remain stark and unsustainable. If we fail to bridge this gap, we will once again be leaving another generation of young men of color on the sidelines of our economy. The answer lies in the quality of our schools and how they address the educational challenges our young men of color face each and every day. The Mayor’s initiative will implement targeted, innovative strategies to solve this achievement gap and confront the other challenges facing our young men.”

“We know how important family support is to the health of our children,” said Ana Oliveira, President of the New York Women’s Foundation. “Children who grow up with active fathers in their lives are less likely to live in poverty, do better in school, with less involvement with the criminal justice system, and have a smaller chance to become teenage parents. This is particularly true for New York City’s black and Latino children, who are more likely to grow up without active fathers. The City of New York cannot single-handedly change the fact that so many young boys are born in households without fathers; yet, it can and must reduce barriers in its policy and practice that would block fathers from being more involved in the lives of their children, and it can and must invest in promising mentoring initiatives.”

The New York City Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO), under the leadership of Executive Director Veronica M. White, will assist in the implementation of our newest innovations, bringing the same evaluation rigor and accountability to this set of investments as they have in the design and testing of the administrations anti-poverty programs

Following is a list of individual initiatives and their goals by issue area, for the next three years. All dollar amounts reflect total spending over three years.

- 1. Reduce the achievement gap in educational outcomes by reducing disparities, removing barriers, creating new strategic investments designed to inform the entire system about how to better serve black and Latino males, launching innovative programming to support young people in their educational journeys, and promoting accountability throughout the Department of Education.**
  - **System-wide accountability for bridging the achievement gap:** As of September, School Progress Reports feature new metrics focused on the achievement of black and Latino males. These metrics spotlight school performance with black and Latino youth in elementary, middle and high schools, and ensure that each school is focused on bridging the achievement gap.
  - **Strategic investments for systems change:** New investment of \$24 million will launch the Expanded Success Initiative. ESI is the first effort in the country to focus on erasing the gap in college and career readiness—not just high school graduation

rates. Through work with 40 high schools that have had success in graduating black and Latino males, ESI will determine which strategies work best to graduate black and Latino males ready to succeed in college and careers. These lessons will be leveraged for systems change throughout the Department of Education.

- **Reducing disparities and removing barriers:** DOE will 1) develop strategy to promote the successful transition of suspended students back to schools to help ensure positive growth, performance and reduce recidivism; and 2) report annually on the impact of broader special education reforms on referral rates of black and Latino boys.
- **Developing expertise and sharing knowledge:** Department of Education's Empowering Boys website and the Closing the Achievement Gap series will share best practices between schools
- **Literacy programs for disconnected youth:** New innovative programming is required to support young adults who read at Pre-GED levels. A new investment of \$3 million will target curriculum and instruction to the needs and interests of young adults who read at Pre-GED level while offering a work readiness and/or internship/job placement component, modest participant incentives, and case management.
- **Mentoring as a strategy to promote education success:** New investment of \$3 million to provide mentoring to middle-school boys through community-based after-school programming, and \$750,000 will support the establishment of a peer mentoring component for adult literacy programs that have shown success in dramatically increasing the rates of GED passage.

**2. Improving outcomes for black and Latino males in the justice system by reforming how we serve juveniles in New York State, how we serve youth at Rikers Island, and removing barriers to the very things—employment, education, civic engagement—that will help people with criminal records turn the page in their lives. The City will take responsibility for its own agencies improving service delivery through focused efforts at the Department of Corrections for young people and reinventing the role of the Department of Probation.**

- **Reform juvenile justice in New York State:** Keeping children in their communities rather than sending them upstate to private detention facilities should be the policy of New York State; it will save dollars and serve young people better. The City will advocate for State Juvenile Justice reforms to allow young people to remain in community-based alternatives to detention in New York City, while also investing \$6 million to expand and strengthen the continuum of local programming for 100 youth who would otherwise be sent to OCFS-run or –contracted facilities.
- **Restructure jail for youth:** New investment of \$9 million will enable the Department of Corrections to undertake comprehensive restructuring of in-jail services to inmates ages 16-18 to better prepare them for success upon release
- **Reinvent Probation:** New investment of \$18 million to support transformative mentoring and literacy services in newly created Neighborhood Opportunity Networks, a fundamental innovation in Department of Probation practice that will set up satellite offices in communities to improve service delivery and reduce recidivism

- **Intensive mentoring for youth most at risk:** New investment of \$6 million to provide intensive mentoring and case management to juvenile offenders, most at risk of being permanently lost to crime and incarceration
- **Launch new models of civic engagement for youth:** New investment of \$7 million will support the launch of Justice Scholars and Justice Community, which will offer programming to court-involved young adults to facilitate re-entry into their communities through civic engagement.
- **Expand effective model to promote re-entry into communities:** New investment of \$6 million will allow for the expansion of the Civic Justice Corps, which partners community groups, justice agencies and employers to invest in the development and self-sufficiency of court-involved young adults.
- **“Ban the Box”:** City of New York will issue guidance to its agencies for the consideration of criminal record in hiring and licensing. In doing so, the City will join many municipalities and state governments that are “banning the box” to ensure that people with criminal records don’t encounter unreasonable barriers in pursuit of employment.
- **Clean up RAP sheets:** City will advocate for process to clean up RAP sheets so people seeking employment aren’t deterred by misinformation in their record
- **Promote civic participation among ex-offenders:** City will implement and advocate for steps that will promote voting and community service among people with criminal records.

**3. Promoting employment by removing barriers faced by black and Latino males in the pursuit of work, transforming the culture of public housing authorities to support connections to employment, and recruiting public-private partnerships to provide summer jobs for young people.**

- **Removing barriers:** Mayoral Executive Order will require City to encourage and support young people in obtaining government-issued identification, the lack of which serve as a barrier to employment
- **Connecting public housing residents to employment opportunities:** New investment of \$24,750,000 will allow the City to take JobsPlus to six Public Housing Authorities in our targeted neighborhoods. JobsPlus is an MDRC evaluated program, run by the Center for Economic Opportunity, that connects residents to jobs and skills-readiness, and reinforces the importance of pursuing advancement through employment.
- **Invest in innovative programming that ties young people to internships, jobs and education:** New investment of \$9,225,000 will expand the Young Adult Internship Program and connect young people, ages 16-24, who are out of school and work to a 14-week internship program and support from a CBO. Additional investment in job training and placement, such as training and certification for paramedics, commercial truck drivers, and other in demand position
- **Public-private partnerships to support summer jobs:** Build on successful outreach efforts in 2011 to develop a robust public-private partnership to support more summer jobs for youth in a time of decreasing federal and State support.

- **Create more youth employment opportunities through smarter coordination:** City agencies will partner to develop a stronger continuum of services using existing resources, and do more to target resources to high-need communities and populations.

**4. Improving the health of black and Latino youth and their families by reducing barriers to father engagement, promoting memorable moments between fathers and their children, making sure that young black and Latino males have access to health care services appropriate for them so they will avail themselves of care, promoting more mentoring opportunities, and taking a public health approach to violence prevention.**

- **Promoting fatherhood:** Launched the Citywide multi-agency Fatherhood Initiative and hired first Citywide Fatherhood Services Coordinator. Six months in, Fatherhood Initiative has already begun to reduce barriers to father engagement, promote father friendliness at City agencies, and create new opportunities for dads and their children. New investment of \$3,000,000 will launch Project REDRESS, a CUNY initiative to boost fathers' parenting skills while connecting them to employment and education and the Male Leadership Institute to prepare men to enter early childhood education professions.
- **Teen-friendly clinics:** DOH/MH will establish criteria for teen friendly clinics and create incentives for participation so more youth will access appropriate and inviting care
- **Help teens access services:** City will advocate for easing the process to connect young people to the Family Benefit Planning program, connecting more young people to confidential sexual health services
- **Train health practitioners to work with teens:** New investment of \$1.5 million for the establishment of a training program to better prepare physicians, nurses, and other providers and allied health professionals to work with adolescents, including providing sexual/reproductive health services. These trainings would be open to enrollment among HHC employees and, eventually, may be extended to other health practitioners outside of HHC.
- **Prevent violence through proven models:** New investment of \$2.4 million to support public health models of violence prevention that focus on highest-risk communities, highest-risk youth, and leverage experience of young black and Latino men and existing community resources including hospitals.
- **Strengthening City mentoring programs:** Comprehensive review of City's youth mentoring programs to promote cross-agency collaboration and identify successful practices
- **Mayor's Youth Leadership Council:** New investment of \$500,000 will establish a Mayor's Youth Leadership Council program with the Coro New York Leadership Center to train young people in leadership skills who will then advise the City on matters of youth policy.


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