A Closer Look: An Examination of
AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN IN ILLINOIS

Illinois Taskforce on the Condition of
African American Men in Illinois

2009 FINAL REPORT

Mandated by Legislative Decree Senate Bill 0776
A Closer Look:
An Examination of
African American Men in Illinois

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Final Report

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Prepared by the
Illinois Department of Human Services
for
Honorable Patrick L. Quinn
Governor of the State of Illinois
and the
Illinois General Assembly

June 2009
June 2009

To Governor Patrick L. Quinn and Members of the General Assembly of Illinois:

We are pleased to present to you the final report and recommendations of the first statewide Taskforce on the Condition of African American Men in Illinois. This document, A Closer Look: An Examination of the Condition of African American Men in Illinois, represents the work of the Taskforce over the past six months. Established by statute in August 2008 (20 ILCS 1305/10-32), the Taskforce has examined the persistent and complex disparities and profound lack of opportunities that create barriers to success for a disproportionate number of African American men.

Through formal assessment of resources and data and “grassroots” exploration of the opinions of over 500 African American males who participated in town hall meetings across Illinois, the Taskforce has formulated recommendations for policy in the areas of health, employment, criminal justice, education and fatherhood. These recommendations should guide us in our important work to improve the critical services African American men across Illinois – with such help these men will be enabled to realize their full potential and enriching life for all of Illinois’ citizens.

Sincerely,

State Senator Kwame Raoul
13th District
Illinois State Senate

State Representative Marlow H. Colvin
33rd District
Illinois House of Representatives
To Governor Patrick Quinn and Members of the 96th General Assembly of the State of Illinois:

We are pleased to submit the 2009 Final Report of the Illinois Taskforce on the Condition of African American Men in Illinois titled: A Closer Look: An Examination of African American Men in Illinois. This compendium reflects scholarly and applied research, as well as the testimony of African American men, of all ages. It gives voice to the adversities and aspirations of a group often studied, but seldom heard. Further, it builds upon the work of a prior task force, The Illinois Commission on African American Males, convened by then Illinois Attorney General Roland Burris, in June 1992.

The Taskforce hopes that this report serves as a call, indeed a springboard, to action and suggests that an implementation group be established to move us beyond rhetoric toward the kind of concrete systemic and structural reforms that bring about change. Socio-economic conditions in Illinois associated with the subsistence of many Black men are so uncompromising that programs designed to help in the past, barely achieved nominal success. So many factors interlace to form this reality.

We are grateful to Governor Quinn and the members of the Legislature for joining DHS, participating state-government agencies, regional and local organizations and coalitions, elected officials, community stakeholders and leaders in this worthwhile undertaking. We ask your continuing support as we seek to retire all barriers, and alleviate universal disparities facing African American men so that they may realize their full potential and contribute to the aggrandizement of all Illinoisans.

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Secretary
Illinois Department of Human Services
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the early 1990s there was a growing awareness among many, but particularly those in the community and in philanthropic sectors, that policy approaches taken to address the problems of urban populations, especially socio-economic conditions associated with African American men were punitive, regressive and, in the long-run, cloudy. Indeed, many perceptive, concerned leaders across the societal spectrum could see the early evolution of a massive social pipeline that would funnel African American men, (and those minorities of similar plight) not only into an emergent prison industrial complex, but also into a condition of permanent disadvantage in the society.

Through de-facto racial profiling, harsher and unequal drug sentencing, stiffer gun penalties, the infamous “three-strike law,” zero tolerance in schools, and more stringent and meticulous background checks by employers, calculating the sum total of these social policies were nearly as elementary as simple mathematics. Unfortunately, it has taken nearly 15-years for sufficient public and community consensus to render a summary verdict – particularly among many big city mayors, governors and federal legislators – that this approach is continuing to fail in many places around the nation and has indeed already failed in most.

From an economic perspective certain policies that have had a disproportionate impact on African American males – especially those between 16 and 44 years old – have resulted in a myriad of negative consequences. They have represented an expensive, long-term, burden on the taxpayer. They have deprived families of African American bread winners and contributed to an increasing welfare state. They have reduced the potential numbers of skilled, domestic workers that could have strengthened local businesses, built a stronger economy, and contributed to various tax bases.

Arguably, the most serious outcome has been that there is a conspicuous absence of African American men in the family, in the schools, and in the community which creates a negative, intergenerational syndrome among black males in general. Given the previously mentioned circumstances, these factors have permanently burdened our society.

The Taskforce on the Condition of African American Men in Illinois set about to provide the Governor and the Illinois General Assembly with an assessment of what the state has done to eliminate disparities in educational attainment, criminal justice involvement, economic development, health, well-being, and fatherhood. In so doing, we offer recommendations that can be implemented by Executive Order, administrative directives, legislation and most importantly, can be realized without committing new funds.
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**Acronyms**

IDCEO  Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
IHFS  Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services
IDCFS  Illinois Department of Children and Family Services
IDHS  Illinois Department of Human Services
IDMH  Illinois Division of Mental Health
IDOC  Illinois Department of Corrections
ISBE  Illinois State Board of Education
ISHE  Illinois State Board of Higher Education
INTRODUCTION

The causal factors to explain myriad disparities between African American males in Illinois and other racial/ethnic groups are complex and confounded. Without extensive, systematic research, real-time data collection, and advanced statistical analyses, it is difficult to clearly and concretely identify what is a cause and what is a result in the lives of African American men.

More often than not, determining the “cause” of a problem does not always capture the “essence” of the problem. However, reasonable ideas about causal factors can be reached by considering the readily available data from national and state sources. Additionally, “grassroots” data representing the feelings and opinions of more than 500 African American males participating in seven, Taskforce-led community forums across the state of Illinois, helps provide a better understanding of the perceived causal factors that negatively impact the lives of African American males.

In a review of available data however, we hypothesize that the primary causal factors underlying disparities for African American males are related to poverty, failures of our educational system to meet the needs of black males, unequal access to societal resources, and disproportionate involvement of African American men in the criminal justice system. These factors, which are often intertwined, underlie disparities in many areas of the lives of African American men including health, employment, criminal justice involvement, education, and fatherhood. The aim of this chapter on causal factors is to better answer the question: What happens to African American males that results in their deleterious conditions of disproportionality or disparity?” Senate Bill 776 noted the following differences when comparing African American males to other males in Illinois:

- Disproportionately less likely to complete high-school and obtain a post-secondary education;
- More likely to be incarcerated or on parole;
- More likely to have lower lifetime economic earnings;
- More likely to have been part of the child welfare population;
- More likely to have a shorter life expectancy; and
- More likely to have health problems such as HIV/AIDS, drug dependency, heart disease, obesity and diabetes.

In a strict definition of causality, a relationship exists between two or more events that can be traced to a preceding condition and then to a succeeding one. A common example of causality is found in the arguments that not completing high school or obtaining a post-
secondary education will lead to a lower lifetime of economic earnings, or that a health problem such as HIV/AIDS or heart disease leads to a shorter life expectancy. Both examples provide a relationship between an antecedent behavior (or condition) and a consequence from that behavior (or condition).

In actuality, identifying a causal factor applicable to an entire group is difficult. One challenge in doing so is assuming that antecedent factors are, in fact, precursors to the event. Another is assuming that other factors, not yet identified or measurable, are less impactful on the lives of individuals.

Discrimination, for example, is a known behavior in social interactions, but its measurable affect on future events is difficult to detect. The Taskforce grappled with the assignment of identifying causal factors and used a set of principles to guide its work.

The first principal broached the challenge of determining causality from an ecological or multi-level examination of conditions. A multi-level approach recognizes the importance of the person’s various environments and relationships that influence behavior. To illustrate, consider an elementary school student with “average” cognitive and physical abilities to succeed in school (Individual or 1st level). Other qualities or contexts which are important for the student’s success include the participation of his family in school and his learning process (family or 2nd level), quality of instruction and classroom environment (3rd level), school ambience and leadership (4th level), and the community in which the school is located (5th level). In other words, the roles(s) of each context can create situations that contribute to the student’s success or failure. Figure 1.1 provides the illustration of multi-level or embedded contexts involved in schooling.

![Figure 1.1 Multi-Level Contexts for School Success](image)
The second principle adopted by the Taskforce is the developmental lifespan perspective. A lifespan or lifecourse perspective allows for an inclusive examination, beginning at prebirth and advancing through infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and progressive aging. It considers multiple experiences and environments that shape the development of individuals, and highlight opportunities for interventions that promote success and prevent failure.

A person’s health is one of the best examples for using a developmental lifespan perspective. As shown in Table 1.1, the top five causes of death for African American males in Illinois vary according to age. In the first group of males under the age of one, most die as a result of pregnancy complications. In the second group of pre-school through third graders, the leading causes are homicides, accidents, and medical problems. The third group, representing teens to early 20-year olds, homicide and accidents are the two leading causes with a mental health illness—suicide—becoming the most occurring medical concern. The fourth category features adults in their mid 30s to 40s, where heart disease, accidents, and homicide are predominant causes of death. Finally, in the years leading up to retirement age, most deaths are related to medical problems.

A review of the leading causes of death across all ages indicates that prevention/health promotion strategies are necessary for four of the five categories (unintentional injuries, heart disease, cancers, cerebrovascular illness) and one that requires multiple approaches (homicides). A developmental lifespan allowed the Taskforce to recommend policies that focus on age specific, appropriate concerns for African American males.

Table 1.1  Top 5 Leading Causes of Deaths in 2005 for Selective Age Cohorts of Black Males in Illinois

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Under 1</th>
<th>5 – 9</th>
<th>15 – 24</th>
<th>35 - 44</th>
<th>55 - 64</th>
<th>All Ages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short Gestation</td>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>Heart Disease</td>
<td>Heart Disease</td>
<td>Heart Disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congenital Anomalies</td>
<td>Unintentional Injury</td>
<td>Unintentional Injury</td>
<td>Unintentional Injury</td>
<td>Cancers</td>
<td>Cancers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placenta Cord Membranes</td>
<td>Congenital Anomalies</td>
<td>Suicide</td>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Cerebrovascular (Strokes)</td>
<td>Unintentional Injury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIDS</td>
<td>Cancers</td>
<td>Heart Disease</td>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>Diabetes Mellitus</td>
<td>Homicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Pregnancy Comp. &amp; Unintentional Injury</td>
<td>Chronic Low. Respiratory Disease &amp; Influenza &amp; Pneumonia</td>
<td>Cancers</td>
<td>Cancers</td>
<td>Unintentional Injury</td>
<td>Cerebrovascular</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Source, CDC, via Internet site, http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars/
In that a plethora of statistical information on the condition of African American males exists, the fourth principal presents data to show developmental lifespan experiences in the environmental context: family, community and state, and in relation to other racial ethnic groups.

Returning to the “average” student example, the Taskforce was able to examine high school dropout rates over a five-year period (2003-2008), and discern that African American ninth graders were most at-risk for failing to complete their secondary school experience. Albeit the responsibility falls on the student to attend and do well in school, the prevalence of vulnerability in the freshman–sophomore years for African American students suggests that other factors are important to consider. Additionally, when compared to White students, Black students drop out less as they matriculate through high school. In other words, White students tend to drop out of schools while in higher grades whereas Black students tend to drop out in lower grades. Figure 1.2 portrays a troubling phenomenon for all racial groups and would suggest that differential policy recommendations to reverse the exodus of students from high schools would be in order.

The Taskforce adopted the use of risk and protective factors as its fourth principal, to supplement and/or substitute causal factors associated with African American males. The concept of risk and protective factors is taken from public health research.

Figure 1.2 Number of High School Drop-Outs Statewide by Race and Education
2003-2008

![Bar chart showing high school drop-out rates by race and grade from 2003-2008 for White Non-Hispanic, Black Non-Hispanic, and Hispanic students.](image-url)
Research conducted by Public Health experts indicates that the impact of a disease or a condition on a given population can be estimated based on the surveillance of factors that place individuals at risk for harm or contagion. Further, the concept of risk and protective factors fits our multi-level model and complements the developmental lifespan approach. A recent report on child and adolescent mental health illustrates the use of risk factors associated with the onset of mental illness; and, as shown in Table 1.2, the factors that affect healthy individual development are present very early in life and across family, school, and community contexts and relationships.

Last, but hardly the least important principle, the Taskforce members defined what is meant by the term “African American.” As used in this report, the African American male reflects a mosaic composition of color, hair texture, and facial features representing native-born, black Americans and descendents from first generation Caribbean Africans and sub-Saharan Africans. African American males, as counted in census data and other governmental surveys, are frequently combined into a monolithic group, without an appreciation for the inherent subjectivity and resulting confusion when categorizing individuals by color. The Taskforce recognizes the complexity of identity for African

### Table 1.2  Factors that Affect Healthy Development ³

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental Period</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>School &amp; Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infancy &amp; Early Childhood</td>
<td>Secure attachment; Self regulation; Adequate birth weight; functional language</td>
<td>Adequate pre-natal and post-natal nutrition; Cognitive stimulation in home</td>
<td>Availability of quality child care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Childhood</td>
<td>Attending &amp; behaving appropriately in school</td>
<td>Consistent discipline; Extended family support</td>
<td>Positive teacher expectations; Perceived teacher support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent</td>
<td>Positive physical development in adolescence</td>
<td>Physical &amp; psychological safety; Opportunities to belong</td>
<td>Support for efficacy &amp; maturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Adulthood</td>
<td>Identity exploration in love, work &amp; world view</td>
<td>Balanced autonomy &amp; relatedness to family</td>
<td>Opportunity for exploration in work &amp; school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² Race, as is often used in government reports and policies, is not based on distinctive genetic or scientific differences but rather social constructions that have been crafted out of our nation’s historical past to justify structural inequality and opportunity (i.e., discrimination). See also Hawkins, (1990) and Holton, (1992)

Americans and chose to offer composite portraits whenever possible. Because composite
data are not available, the conditions of African American males in Illinois could not be
reflective of places of origin.

As indicators of intra-group differences, distinctive variables such as class, age, locale,
and immigration status were used. Class is usually linked to income and/or occupation
status and is a well-documented variable affecting conditions such as health status or
educational achievement. Age is a fluid condition that is paired to individual efficacy and
responsibility; locale refers to the variation in quality of life found in urban neighborhoods,
suburban, or rural settings; and lastly, immigration status captures the acculturation
experiences of first generation African Americans.

CAUSAL FACTORS: POVERTY AND RESOURCE INEQUITY

Poverty and low socioeconomic status have often been linked to disparities in the
conditions of living for African Americans, generally, and African American males,
specifically. In a letter to President Bush, U.S. Rep. Danny K. Davis, D-Ill., wrote:
“Based upon statistical data, it is my contention that conditions relating to
African American males are continuing to decline and thereby require intervention. For example, the unemployment rate among African American
males is approximately 31.9 percent, which is triple the national average.
According to the Census Bureau, 30 percent of African American males under 18
live below the poverty line.”

The 2008 report on poverty by the Heartland Alliance stated that 28 percent of African
Americans in Illinois live below the official poverty level in comparison to 7.7 percent of
Non-Hispanic whites (Heartland Alliance, 2008). Poverty and low socio-economic status are
linked to living in communities with greater exposure to physical environmental risks such
as chemical and other toxins, socio-environmental risks such as illicit drugs, and poor
quality housing (Kawachi & Berkman, 2003), and violent crime (Sampson, Morenoff, &
Raudenbush, 2005). Whether poverty is a cause or a result for disparities is difficult to
ascertain. However, African American males that are attempting to strive forward in an
impoverished environment will, undoubtedly, face disadvantages.

Although there are many examples of resource inequities that contribute to a lopsided
playing field for African American males particularly related to economic development and
educational opportunities, examples of disparities in access to health care services have also
been well documented. Along with general barriers to services arising from an often
fragmented and inadequately resourced system of care, specific social and economic factors
endemic to the situation of African American men in Illinois have further negative impacts
on both access to services and service quality when it is available.

Access issues include financial barriers resulting from inadequate insurance coverage (US
Census, 2006), loss of health care benefits for incarcerated and detained African American
men with serious mental illness, (Commission on Safety and Abuse in America’s Prisons,
2006; Cuellar, Kelleher, Rolls, & Pajer, 2005), and stigmatizing social factors that may make African American men a less desirable treatment population in the eyes of service providers (Smedley, Stith, & Nelson, 2003). Barriers to receiving quality treatment may include lack of access to best treatment practices, involvement in treatment practices that are not culturally and gender sensitive, and greater involvement in short term emergency care versus longer term recovery oriented services (Collins, Hall, and Neuhaus, 1999).

In Illinois, where the prison population is 62 percent African American, the lack of access to health resources for the incarcerated becomes a causal factor for worsening health status. Given the fact that many Illinois prison inmates do not have healthcare benefits, and those who do have health benefits will lose them as a result of incarceration, access to healthcare will become an issue when they return to their communities.4

Table 1.3  **African American High School Graduation Rates—Worst States** 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lowest Performing States</th>
<th>Total Black Male Enrollment</th>
<th>Graduation Rates 2005/06 Cohort</th>
<th>Gap*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Black Male</td>
<td>White Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. Georgia</td>
<td>308,716</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Illinois</td>
<td>216,782</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. Nevada</td>
<td>23,553</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. New York</td>
<td>285,694</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. Florida</td>
<td>326,757</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. Louisiana</td>
<td>147,030</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. South Carolina</td>
<td>142,496</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Wisconsin</td>
<td>46,379</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Michigan</td>
<td>174,790</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Illinois Taskforce on the Condition of **African American Men in Illinois**
CAUSAL FACTOR: EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM FAILURE

The failure of the public educational system to provide quality, and gender and culturally sensitive education is a key causal factor. It impacts both the positive potential success of African American males economically and the negative potential for involvement in the criminal justice system for African American males who do not complete the process of primary education. In a Chicago Tribune newspaper article published July 8, 2008, regarding academic achievement in Illinois, the state ranked 43rd among 50 states in the number of African American students graduating from high school (see Table 1.3). The article further stated that in the Chicago public school system African American males graduated at a rate of only 37 percent. These statistics provide a local reflection of national data.

In a Chicago Urban League report titled *The State of Black America, 2007: Portrait of the Black Male*, it is cited that in many inner cities more than half of African American males do not finish high school, and in 2004, 72 percent of African American high school dropouts in their twenties were unemployed. The report further states that 25 percent of African American men over 25, have no high school diploma as compared to 10 percent of white males.

Educational disparities continue in higher education with African American males obtaining college and graduate degrees at half the rate of white males. Again, the Chicago Urban League report links these educational disparities to causal factors related to the lack of quality education afforded to African Americans. They use an equality index measurement to identify lower skill and experience levels of teachers, teachers teaching courses for which they are unqualified, and inadequate curriculum quality in preparing youth in inner city and publically funded schools for post high school education.

CAUSAL FACTOR FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE: DISPROPORTIONATE INCARCERATION

Disproportionate incarceration can be seen as a result of a myriad of other causal factors such as the failure of the educational system, poverty, poor access to quality legal defense, racial profiling, and criminalizing anti-drug laws. However, as a causal factor within itself, disproportionate incarceration has a devastating impact on the living conditions of African American men who have justice involvement as part of their backgrounds. Incarceration impacts employability and capacity of African American males to support families and be successful in their roles as fathers.

The stigma of having a criminal record impacts access to housing, job opportunity, and even the ability to get financial support for higher education. These factors continue to operate in the lives of African American males who may have made mistakes when they were young and are attempting to be productive citizens. In Illinois, 62 percent of the prison population is comprised of African American males. The Cook County Jail detains as many as 10,000 people on a given day, and 87 percent are African American men. These state
and local statistics regarding disproportionate levels of minority involvement in the criminal justice system are consistent with national data reported by the Bureau of Justice Administration (BJA) in 2005, which indicated that 42 percent of inmates serving more than a year in federal and state prisons were African American.

The criminal justice system in the United States has had an extremely detrimental and tragic impact on African American males. Statistics have shown that African American males are disproportionately arrested, prosecuted and convicted in comparison to their male counterparts from other races. These convictions and arrests have torn apart families, crumbled communities, and hindered the ability of African American males to be considered self-sufficient and competitive in today’s society.

During the last three decades there has been a rise in the criminalizing of African American males. These convictions are not limited to African American adults, however disproportionality is evident in the juvenile justice system. African American youth make up 30 percent of youth arrested while they represent only 17 percent of the overall youth population. Additionally, African American youth are 62 percent of the youth prosecuted in the adult criminal system and are nine times more likely than white youth to receive an adult prison sentence. These disturbing nationwide trends are also evident on a local basis in Illinois.

African American adults are three times more likely to be convicted and given lengthy prison sentencing for drug-related offenses than their fellow citizens of the state of Illinois. African American youth compose 84 percent of the population of the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center, and 92 percent of those youths are male. African American youth in Illinois are arrested at a rate of three times their representation in the general population. A closer examination of data of the arrestees in Cook County shows a more disturbing picture. Table 1.4 shows the total arrests made in 2006, in Cook County, Illinois were equivalent to half the total population of 20-years olds.

More often than not, justification for these approaches has been rooted in racially prejudicial legislation, and systematic discrimination that has been interwoven into mainstream society. Nevertheless, this disproportional rate of conviction and arrest has legitimized the building of prisons, jails, the hiring of police officers, prison guards, judges, and attorneys, in addition to the disenfranchisement and the dehumanizing which has created a feeling of hopelessness amongst African American males in Illinois.

Children, who enter the juvenile justice system, are likely to reenter the system as adults. It is critically important to ensure that African American males are not disproportionately placed into the system, and that utilizing alternatives to detention are encouraged rather than ignored. It is also important that favorable conditions are available for African American adult offenders, to provide successful rehabilitation, equitable sentencing guidelines with their white counterparts, and assistance with reentering society productively.
CHAPTER 2
TASKFORCE ORIGIN, CONSTRUCT, AND PROCESS
by Terence Mitchell

INTRODUCTION

The governmental opportunity to describe and discern the status of African American males in Illinois was created by passage of Senate Bill 776 in 2007. The original bill, sponsored by Illinois State Senator Kwame Raoul (D-Chicago) and Illinois State Representative Marlow H. Colvin (D-Chicago), authorized the appointment of a bi-partisan Taskforce on the Condition of African-American Men in Illinois: “Operating within the Department of Human Services, the taskforce, a first of its kind, will develop strategies aimed at improving the lives of black men. It will start by examining key issues including incarceration rates, education, economic earnings and child welfare,” according to the press release from the Office of the Governor. The 95th Illinois General Assembly found and declared that African American males were:
1) Disproportionately less likely to complete high school and to obtain a post-secondary education;
2) More likely to be incarcerated or on parole;
3) More likely to have lower lifetime economic earnings;
4) More likely to have been a part of the child welfare population;
5) More likely to have a shorter life expectancy; and
6) More likely to have health problems, such as HIV/AIDS, drug dependency, heart disease, obesity, and diabetes.

SEVERITY OF PROBLEM

The severity of the problems facing African American males in Illinois compelled the 95th General Assembly to declare that, “In the best interest of all residents, the State of Illinois must act to determine the causal factors for these problems and develop appropriate remedies.” As a result, Illinois Senate Bill 776 (SB776) unanimously passed both houses of the 95th Illinois General Assembly on May 29, 2007; the Office of the Governor received the bill on June 27, 2007, and signed it into law on August 13, 2007. The Act took effect upon becoming law.

PHASE 1 - LEGISLATION

(Illinois Public Act 095-0062 mandates the Phase 2-Plan of Action) The Law/Public Act 095-0062 amended the Illinois Department of Human Services Act to create the Taskforce on the Condition of African American Men within the Department of Human Services. No budget, appropriations, and/or line item to facilitate the mandates and activities of the Taskforce passed, so the Department of Human Services provided a taskforce coordinator, staff, and other assistance to the Taskforce.
Illinois Public Act 095-0062 mandated six issues to be addressed by the Taskforce:
1. To determine the causal factors for the condition of African American males;
2. To inventory State programs and initiatives that serve to improve the condition of African American males;
3. To identify gaps in services to African American males;
4. To reduce duplication of services to African American males;
5. To develop strategies to maximize coordination between State agencies, providers, and educational institutions to the delivery of services to African American males; and
6. To develop benchmarks to measure future progress for Phase (2).

Illinois Public Act 095-0062 also required the Taskforce on the Condition of African American Males to submit recommendations and findings in the form of a Final Report-Phase 2 due to the Office of the Governor and the 96th Illinois General Assembly.

Illinois Public Act 095-0062 mandated that the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the Senate, and the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives should each appoint two members to the Taskforce. In addition, the Director/Secretary, or his or her designee of the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Illinois Department of Corrections, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, the Illinois Department of Human Rights, the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, and the Illinois Community College Board were appointed as official taskforce members as outlined by the bill.

TASKFORCE: “THEN …AND NOW”

In June, 1992, the Illinois Commission on African American Males (ILCAAM) was established. The convener and chairman was Illinois Attorney General Roland Burris. At the conclusion of its work in 1994, the ILCAAM issued its report, *A Call to Action: Recommendations of the Illinois Commission on African American Males*.

The 1994 ILCAAM report did not provide a Phase 2, road map, or strategy to systematically and collectively address the problems facing African American males across the State of Illinois at that time. It did provide a long list of recommendations, some of which were to be achieved by state government.¹ Further, there was an absence of community, public, and political will to make the necessary changes. As a result, the findings contained herein indicate that over the past 15 years, conditions have not improved. In fact, the conditions for African American males have continued to deteriorate since the ILCAAM report of 1994.

¹ A comparison of the 1994 ILCAAM recommendations and the current Taskforce recommendations is provided in Appendix C to this report.
TASKFORCE METHODOLOGY

The Methodology for developing the content of the Final Report - Phase 2 recommendations and implementation strategies are derived from the remedies provided via first-hand testimonials of “real life” triumphs and life-changing experiences, collected over the course of statewide town hall hearings, and listening sessions in sites home to 70 percent of the 1,000,000 African American males who reside in the State of Illinois.²

Within a 24 day period, the Illinois Taskforce on the Condition of African American Males conducted seven, statewide town hall hearings collecting oral stories and personal testimonials from an audience of more than 3,000 stakeholders. In addition, the sponsors of Illinois Senate Bill 776, State Senator Kwame Raoul and State Representative Marlow Colvin, along with Illinois Legislative Black Caucus Joint Chairman, William Davis, Illinois Black Caucus Leader of the House of Representative Esther Golar, State Representative Constance A. Howard, State Representative Al Riley, and Senate Appropriations Chairman Donne E. Trotter participated and attended at least one statewide taskforce town hall hearing.

Key decision-makers from cities and counties in Illinois participated in these public forums. Along with representatives from community-based and faith-based organizations, delegates from every level of education, people from private enterprises, and numerous stakeholders from diverse communities, gave input on issues surrounding African American males. In addition, young and old African American males, fathers and sons, uncles and nephews, mothers and grandmothers, “big mamas”, wives, girl friends, “baby-mamas”, and children directly affected by the negative conditions impacting their African American fathers, collectively spoke to the immediate need for “new” public policy, practices, and programs that would redirect funding to stimulate changes needed for African American males in Illinois.

Townhall meeting sites included Chicago, East St. Louis, Matteson, Peoria, Springfield, and Rockford, Illinois. The directed, discussion breakout format of the sessions allowed facilitators from the Taskforce to collect information from over 500 participants throughout the state about their views of causal factors. Interestingly, comments related to causal factors identified individual responsibilities for the conditions of African American males in addition to system and societal failures. A bullet-pointed summary of views and reasons for disparities in education, economic development, health, criminal justice, and fatherhood from the five community areas is listed here:

CAUSAL FACTORS RELATED TO EDUCATION DISPARITIES:

• Education is not valued enough by Black males.
• Teaching methods do not grab the interests of kids.
• Education is “dumbed” down for Black males.

² Source: U.S. Census, 2002
Why don’t Black Men succeed more in Math and Science? The main reason is poor teaching methods.
Black males are competitive. This energy should be harnessed for better classroom instruction.
Racial discrimination creates problems at home which impact a parent’s ability to educate their children.
Too much time is spent on video games and distractions that compete with time that should be spent on education.
Teachers do not have skills to teach.
Role models and male mentors are lacking in elementary schools.
Character and ethics education is lacking.
Educational mandates are not funded.
Community environments lack youth activities.
An African American curricula for males in Pre-K through high school is needed.
Social promotion undermines educational achievement.
African American males are not graduating from high school.
Parental involvement is not great enough.
Fathers are not involved in school activities.
Teachers do not communicate well with students.
Vocational Education needs to be expanded.
Disparity in teacher qualifications
Funding is not adequate for African American males with learning disabilities.
Classroom sizes in urban schools are too large resulting in less opportunity for individual attention.
School administrators don’t hold teachers accountable.
More African American teachers are needed.

CAUSAL FACTORS RELATED TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- There is racial discrimination no matter how qualified a black male is.
- Discrimination is a factor in recruitment into professions and trades.
- The “legacy” of opportunity is not strong due to absence of black men in trades. The passing down of union jobs to the next generation is biased towards the majority culture.
- Television, looking for a fast buck, and video games, are distractions for young black males. This time should be spent on education.
- Black male youth are not exposed to areas of opportunity in the professions and trades.
- African Americans do not control businesses and systems that provide jobs and professional positions.
- African American youth need more apprenticeship experiences.
- There should be more local sites where information about businesses and entrepreneurial opportunities is available.
- Resources do not get to community (i.e., Universities get research money to identify problems that already exist, instead of using the money in the community)
CAUSAL FACTORS RELATED TO HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH DISPARITIES:

- Mental health problems with black males are often self-inflicted as a result of self-medication with alcohol and drugs.
- Slower development in some youth may be misclassified as a need for special education.
- Black youth may be incorrectly labeled and separated in the school system.
- Blacks become successful and move away from their communities, taking away role models and mentors.
- There is a lot of anger that is not resolved in black males and that leads to mental health problems.
- Not enough resources available for African American males
- Mental Health is stigmatized in the black community.
- Lack of medical assistance for single African American adults.
- African American men lose healthcare benefits when jailed or incarcerated.
- African American men can’t afford health care.
- African American men tend not to seek healthcare due to denial.
- African American men often receive mental health care based on mandates.
- African American men are guarded and private about their health needs.
- The health system is viewed as unfriendly by African American males.
- Crisis with HIV and AIDS. It is the second leading killer of African American men
- Not enough emphasis on prevention.
- Services lack cultural sensitivity and competence.
- Disparities in access to services.
- School lunches are often unhealthy.
- Proper nutrition is not emphasized in the black community.
- No early intervention programs for youth with emotional problems.
- Young African American men may suffer from undiagnosed depression.

CAUSAL FACTORS RELATED TO CRIMINAL JUSTICE DISPARITIES:

- Racial Profiling by police departments
- Proper representation is needed in court.
- Jobs are hard to find with felony convictions.
- Drug penalties are too harsh.
- Felony conviction is for life.
- No respect for dependents from bailiffs and judges.
- Zero tolerance policy.
- Too many gangs/not enough jobs.
- System does not emphasize restorative justice.
- Public perceptions of ex-felons are negative.
- Not enough substance abuse programs.
- Educational, vocational, and employment programs are not available during incarceration.
- Not enough consideration given to expungement and sealing criminal records.
CAUSAL FACTORS RELATED TO FATHERHOOD DISPARITIES:

- Ex-Offenders face challenges in parenting.
- Child support can be challenging when employment is unstable.
- State laws can impact parenting.
- Fathering children at a young age leads to difficulties.
- Programs are needed to help Black males learn how to be Fathers.
- Limited examples of good fatherhood practices.
- The definition of manhood is often not clear.
- Not enough marketing campaigns about African American mentors.
- Insurance may be lacking to care for children’s and families health needs.
- Many African-American households are missing productive parenting.

TASKFORCE LOCAL AND NATIONAL NETWORK

The Taskforce operating structure was built on a framework developed from literature and the current body of knowledge that addressed African American male issues within the family construct. Working partnerships were established with local and national organizations and existing African American male programs and initiatives already in place. As a result, the participation of local and national philanthropic organizations, universities, colleges, think tanks, and entities already monitoring implementation strategies for previous or existing Federal Commissions on this topic, and experts in the field were invited to join the Taskforce’s round-table discussions and framework via their participation in retreats and statewide town hall hearings. Ongoing discussions continue and provide additional data, recommendations, testimony, and proven plans of action. In addition, the local branches of several national organizations such as the Chicago United Way and Chicago Urban League also participated.

The Taskforce established a five-tier, subcommittee structure that mirrored the design and framework of the existing programs and initiatives already in place. The structure includes tenets similar to those of the: (1) 21st Century Foundation in New York; (2) New York City’s local Black Men and Boys 2025 Initiative; (3) Chicago Urban League IAM African American Male Initiative; (4) Chicago Community Trust African American Male Initiative; and the Dellums’ Commission which published the 2007 Report on the Condition/Status of African American Males in the United States. Former US Congressman Ron Dellums (D-Ca) established a federal taskforce while he was a Member of Congress. Today, he is the Mayor of Oakland, California.

Each Taskforce statewide, Town Hall Hearing and Listening Session utilized the five-tier subcommittee structure by hosting breakout sessions focused on specific topics from each area. Furthermore, this platform or structure was the catalyst or vehicle for collecting and categorizing taskforce information, data, testimonies, and future recommendations.

The breakout sessions within these five topic areas: education, fatherhood, economic development, criminal justice, and health, streamlined the process of working across

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agencies, operational structures, policy, practice, programs, and issues impacting African American males. This allowed the Taskforce to quickly gain specific insight within each area as to how to develop and improve policy, programs, and practices. Therefore, the Final Report Phase 2 Recommendations and Findings are categorized within this framework and address specifically Education, Fatherhood, Economic Development, Criminal Justice, and Health issues utilizing data, testimonies, proven plans of action, and “best practices” currently working across the State of Illinois and the Nation.

Directors, agency staff, community organizers, youth counselors, licensed counselors, faith-based leaders, program managers, professors, teachers, principals, superintendents, ex-offenders, parolees, probation officers, scholars, and participants and members of existing African American male initiatives, campaigns, and programs participated in this systematic and collaborative, methodological process to develop the Taskforce’s final recommendations and implementation strategies for Phase 2 Action Steps to be taken by the Illinois State Legislature and the Office of the Governor.

All of the Taskforce’s local and national partners were invited and encouraged to take part in bi-monthly meetings, work group meetings, subcommittee meetings, taskforce retreats, and statewide town hall hearings and listening sessions. For each taskforce meeting, teleconference and videoconference access was provided to potential participants who resided in the State of Illinois and across the entire country. Furthermore, the Taskforce’s local and national partner network members facilitated a number of information-gathering breakout sessions that took place at the statewide town hall hearings.

**TASKFORCE FRAMEWORK**

Taskforce Subcommittees
- Education
- Health
- Criminal Justice
- Fatherhood
- Economic Development
- Senate Bill Working Groups
- Determining Causal Factors
- Inventorying State Programs
- Identifying Gaps in Services
- Reducing Duplication
- Maximizing Coordination between Agencies
- Developing Bench Marks
CHRONOLOGY OF TASKFORCE ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

• **January 2008** Secretary Carol L. Adams, Illinois Department of Human Services, identified a Taskforce Coordinator, internal staff, and facilitated the orientation session for the initial planning process for this initiative.

• **February 2008** Illinois Department of Human Services conducted orientation for mandated State Agencies identified in SB776 and the General Assembly Leadership to obtain the names and contact information of their Appointees to the Taskforce.

• **March 2008**

• **April 2008** Taskforce (operational) conducted its first official meeting, with the 10 appointed members. DHS/African American Men staff, sub-committees and protocols were established.

• **May 2008** Taskforce planned the first public retreat event to take place at the DePaul University Egan Urban Center in Chicago. Fifteen of the 16-mandated members participated along with local and national partner-network representatives.

• **June 2008** Taskforce, with local and national network participants, conducted its first, public, planning retreat which resulted in the process being redefined to broaden the focus and comply with legal mandates by examining the issues that impact black males from birth to death. Members agreed that addressing systemic issues at the adult stage in a man’s life or development is too late. They emphasized that it is critical that these issues are addressed at birth in order to produce measurable results.


• **August 2008** Taskforce agreed to the statewide, Town Hall hearings process and methodology for collection of pertinent data, oral testimonials, findings, and recommendations as guidance for developing next step strategies.

• **September 2008** Taskforce conducted seven, statewide Town Hall hearings during a 24-day period in: Champaign, East St. Louis, Matteson, Pembroke, Peoria, Rockford, and Springfield.

• **October 2008** Taskforce analyzed town hall data and testimonies along with national data, trends, and network and think tank data to develop recommendations and best practice models and applications.

• **November 2008** Taskforce established working groups for each goal to assure that deliverables are met for legal mandates.

• **November 2008** Taskforce completed second public retreat at the Northeastern Illinois University, Center for Inner Cities Studies, in Chicago to present and receive feedback on work to date.
• **December 2008** Taskforce selected a Writer and summarized findings, recommendations, and strategies for Phase 2.

• **January 2009** Taskforce unanimously agreed to utilize the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Statewide Data Base (SPD) System to meet the mandates of SB776.

• **February 2009** Taskforce met, developed protocols, restrictions, and limits for the Taskforce Statewide Provider Data Base System and select key areas to vet final report recommendations before submission.

• **March 2009** Taskforce presented preliminary findings, recommendations, and next step strategies to the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus at a Breakfast Briefing in Springfield and conducted final Statewide Public Vetting Sessions of Phase 2.

• **April 2009** Final Report-Phase 2 due to 96th Illinois General Assembly and to Governor Patrick Quinn.

**TASKFORCE TOWN HALL HEARINGS**

- Matteson, September 9, 2008
- Peoria, September 11, 2008
- Rockford, September 16, 2008
- Springfield, September 18, 2008
- East St. Louis, September 23, 2008
- Urbana, September 30, 2008
- Chicago, October 2, 2008
- Pembroke, October 23, 2008
CHAPTER 3
FINDINGS
INVENTORY OF STATE FUNDED PROGRAMS AND SERVICE GAPS

by Arthur Bishop & Dana Weiner
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INTRODUCTION

African American males often become involved with multiple State agencies. In order to effectuate successful outcomes, it is vital that strategies are developed to reduce duplication of services and maximize coordination between State agencies, providers and educational institutions.

The critical process of inventorying state programs that serve African American males and identifying service gaps (Gap Analyses) provides a foundation for measuring investment of time, money and human resources required to improve the lives of African American males.

In December 2008, the Taskforce produced an inventory of programs that provides services to African American males. This list was augmented by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, using the Statewide Provider Database, a comprehensive, geocoded search tool that allows access to human service provider information. This preliminary inventory is included at the conclusion of this chapter.

STATEWIDE PROVIDER BASE SYSTEM

On January 29, 2009, the Taskforce unanimously decided to utilize the Statewide Provider Data Base (SPD) System. They concluded that the system could address four of their six goals:
1) Inventorying state programs that serve African American males
2) Identifying gaps in services to African American males
3) Reducing duplication of services
4) Maximizing the coordination among agencies

The SPD presents an opportunity to avoid building additional structures within the silos of the existing service delivery system, and instead develop a coordinated system of care. Already it has already been used to supplement the attached inventory of state programs by providing additional information about programs targeting fathers and offering specialized treatment to African American males. In addition, the system can facilitate the development of maps that clearly illustrate disparities in the availability of services, as well as the distribution of services offered by the different departments across the state.

The Statewide Provider Database (SPD) began as a pilot in Cook County, as part of a
project funded by the MacArthur Foundation. Its initial purpose was to identify services for youth involved in the juvenile justice system as an alternative or follow-up to detention or incarceration. In 2004, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS) began to expand the system to include other types of services across the state. Today, the SPD contains information on thousands of programs that address the needs of children and families, including Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Parenting, Domestic Violence, and other “nonclinical” services including vocational, educational, mentoring, and recreational services.

**The SPD was initially developed to accomplish a set of client-level goals, including:**
- Providing linkages to resources that are better suited to client needs.
- Providing information that can facilitate access to and utilization of services.
- Providing referrals to the most clinical and geographically appropriate providers.
- Improving staff access to provider information.

**and a set of system-level goals including:**
- Identifying gaps and shift existing community resources to most needed areas.
- Building capacity, in underserved areas, specific to the needs of the local population.
- Identifying providers that offer services that successfully address clients’ needs, and target others for improvement.

**GEOMAPPING**

In addition to these goals, the SPD was also envisioned as a tool that can bridge gaps between human services departments, offering opportunities to reduce inefficiencies, costs, and duplication, while maximizing access and utilization of existing resources and guiding system planning. In order to take advantage of this opportunity, it will be necessary for all of the human services departments in Illinois to collaboratively integrate data into the system. A process is underway between the Illinois Department of Human Services and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services to integrate Community Health and Prevention Programs, Domestic Violence Programs, and Mental Health programs into the SPD. It maps these programs along with DCFS-funded programs to reflect the degree of overlap so that coordination can begin.

As each data file is incorporated into the SPD, the contents are enriched. Then the SPD staff conducts ongoing telephone interviews with providers to obtain detailed program information that can facilitate access to and utilization of services. In addition data files, imported into SPD, are automatically geocoded, meaning the locations are assigned latitude and longitude codes for inclusion in geomapping files to create visual maps.

To provide an example of the interplay between multiple state agencies that can be addressed using inter-departmental collaboration and the power of geomapping for clarifying service system issues, this document includes several maps. The first set of maps illustrates the location of correctional facilities and children involved with DCFS. In the first map (below), small circles represent children and youth involved with DCFS; larger circles represent correctional facilities by race of inmates.
In this map (below), the small circles represent children and youth involved with DCFS. The larger circles represent correctional facilities, by distance, to the children of the inmates of the facility.
This map illustrated the utility of geomapping for planning interagency collaboration to meet the needs of a particular population. This map denotes the distribution of DHS programs contracted through its Division of Community Health and Prevention, superimposed with DCFS-contracted counseling programs.
EXPUNGEMENT
by Miguel Millett
Illinois Department of Human Services

OVERVIEW: THE IMPACT OF EXPUNGEMENT OBSTACLES ON COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

One of the critical issues facing a disproportionate number of African-American young men in Illinois is the existence of juvenile delinquency records which constrict employment, education and other opportunities. To compound this matter, expunging these records is unnecessarily costly and complex. Addressing barriers to expungement could help ensure that young men and women of color – even if previously involved in the juvenile justice system – have equal access to the employment, education, military service and other opportunities fundamental to healthy communities.

Throughout Illinois, permanent records are created every time a youth is arrested or referred to juvenile court, even for minor or non-violent offenses. The confidentiality of these records is a key premise in achieving the fundamental purposes of a juvenile justice system – namely, to address delinquency, while enabling youth to become contributing members of their communities. Unfortunately, the permanency of juvenile arrest and court records and the use of these records by schools, employers, the military, and the government create very real obstacles to rehabilitation of youth in conflict with the law. In fact, having even a minor or years-old delinquency record can create insurmountable barriers to opportunities available to other young men and women to become productive, contributing members of their communities.

Unlike other states, Illinois has no mechanisms for “automatic” expungement of juvenile arrest or court records – even for minor, non-violent offenses or when a youth is picked up by police but not prosecuted for a delinquent offense. To make matters worse, the expungement processes in Illinois are complex, costly, time-consuming, and often unnecessarily confusing to youth and adults who seek to expunge these records. As a result, Illinois citizens who pose no danger to communities are hampered in efforts to become contributing members of society when they are denied school, employment, housing or military service opportunities, based on records of juvenile justice system involvement.

While these cumbersome expungement processes affect all Illinois communities, communities of color tend to be disproportionately disadvantaged and African American males bear this burden even more than other populations. Of the 49,886 youth arrested in Illinois in 2005, 61 percent were African American. More than 70 percent of those African Americans who were arrested were male. Thus, because youth of color are disproportionately pulled into the juvenile justice system, communities of color are hit particularly hard by the existence of juvenile arrest and delinquency records. Conversely, reforming Illinois’ expungement laws could open doors to employment, education, military service and other pathways for all youth, particularly African American males who are otherwise shut out of opportunities to grow and contribute to their communities.

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WHAT IS EXPUNGEMENT? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Expungement is a process by which a court can order records associated with arrests, offenses and adjudications of juvenile delinquency be treated as though the delinquency actions never occurred. Although the terms sometimes are used interchangeably, “expunged” records are to be distinguished from “sealed” records, under Illinois law. Sealed records are acknowledged to exist by the record-keeping agency but, pursuant to a court order, are separated from public records and are maintained as confidential. Once an order of expungement has been entered, law enforcement agencies, courts and others with knowledge of the records can and must indicate that no record exists.

Even when a delinquency case is dismissed or the juvenile is not adjudicated delinquent, a juvenile record will still exist. These records can make it more difficult to obtain employment, housing and financial assistance for school. For example:

- A student may not be eligible to receive federal student aid if he or she has been convicted of selling or possessing illegal drugs.
- The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) prohibits the recruitment of athletes with a juvenile record. Athletes are subjected to background checks and are subject to increased monitoring or restrictions if a record is found.
- The Illinois Board of Admission to the Bar specifically requires disclosure of any delinquent act.
- A juvenile record may preclude a youth or even his or her family, when living within the same household, from receiving public benefits.
- A youth adjudicated delinquent for “gang activity” involving a motor vehicle may have driving privileges delayed or denied.

BARRIERS IN ILLINOIS’ JUVENILE EXPUNGEMENT STATUTES

Expunging a juvenile’s record is a confusing and difficult legal process. Because Illinois law does not provide for automatic expungement, even of arrest records, the burden is on the person to determine his or her eligibility for expungement and to file a formal petition to a court to have a record expunged. Illinois law provides little guidance on how to complete this process, and there is no right to counsel for expungement proceedings. Consequently, only 95 of the 28,000 youth arrested in 2004 have petitioned to have their records expunged. This means that more than 27,900 youth in one year are at risk of suffering adverse future consequences because they failed to have their eligible records expunged. To make matters worse, even when courts grant expungement orders, the law does not include mechanisms to enforce that order.

Not only must the juvenile complete three complex legal forms: the notice for petition of expungement, a petition specific to each arrest; and an expungement order for each arrest, but he or she must also provide details that can be difficult to recount, such as the specific police departments performing the arrest, the final disposition of any arrest, and whether the charges filed were classified as misdemeanors or felonies.
In addition to being complex, the cost of pursuing an expungement may be prohibitive. Fees associated with expunging a juvenile delinquency record may include a fee for obtaining police records, a fee to the Clerk of the Court for filing the expungement petition, and an additional fee to the Illinois State Police for processing the expungement order. The law provides no guidance on the criteria or processes to request that these fees be waived.

If a petition is filed successfully, and if the State’s Attorney or any law enforcement agency to which an expungement order would apply, objects to the petition, within 45 days a hearing must be held on the petition. The law does not require that information be made available explaining the court proceeding, nor is there a right to legal counsel for this proceeding. In addition, the statute does not provide criteria or factors on which a judge must base his determination, giving the judge complete discretion as to whether or not to grant the expungement petition.

Even if an expungement order is entered, the petitioner’s responsibilities are not over. The statute is vague about specifying agencies or departments responsible for complying with an expungement order. Additionally, deadlines for compliance with such orders do not exist. Instead, the petitioner must follow up with all agencies that potentially hold his or her records to ensure the juvenile record was properly expunged. If records are not properly expunged, Illinois law provides no remedies for harm caused because an expungement order was violated or neglected. In fact, a Cook County judge received media attention when he reprimanded the Illinois State Police for “routinely” disobeying court orders to expunge criminal records and noted that he had witnessed non-compliance with expungement orders during his seven years on the bench. (“Judge Orders Illinois State Police to Follow Orders to Expunge Criminal Records,” Chicago Tribune, June 5, 2008). While the case in question may have been resolved, few petitioners have the resources necessary to pursue expungement, much less enforce expungement orders that have been disregarded.

REFORMING EXPUNGEMENT:
OPENING DOORS FOR COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

Clearly, Illinois’ current expungement policies are flawed. Equally clear is the profound impact that reforming these flawed policies can have on opportunities available to African American men. There are several narrowly-focused strategies to reform the expungement processes in Illinois, including reducing the amount of time individuals must wait to expunge arrest or court records, decreasing the fees to file petitions, ensuring that court orders for expungement are honored by law enforcement agencies and others. One of the most effective reform strategies, however, would be to provide for automatic expungement of all juvenile records or, minimally, automatic expungement of specific categories of juvenile charges, such as misdemeanors or non-violent offenses.

As noted here, expungement must currently be initiated, pursued, confirmed and sometimes enforced by the individual who seeks to expunge the records. As also noted, thousands of Illinois youth do not understand their expungement options, are unaware of the consequences of un-expunged juvenile records or, perhaps more likely, are discouraged
by the complicated, intimidating and cost prohibitive nature of expungement processes. Automatic expungement would address these legislative and practical barriers by transferring responsibility from individual youth to courts and law enforcement agencies to initiate and implement the expungement process when certain benchmarks or criteria have been met.

With automatic expungement, no hearing is needed and the expungement order can be immediately entered and implemented provided relevant criteria or timelines are verified. Varied automatic expungement standards have been offered in recent years, including automatic expungement in cases in which a youth is arrested but no delinquency petition is filed, when a petition is filed but the youth is not found delinquent or the petition is dismissed, upon a successful completion of the terms of a sentence of supervision and / or if a youth has committed no subsequent delinquent offenses upon turning 21 years of age or 5 years have passed since the juvenile court proceedings have terminated. Other reform platforms propose automatic expungement for specific categories of minor and non-violent charges. Maryland and Florida are two states that offer automatic expungement. Florida's statute on automatic expungement reads as follows

According to s. 943.0515, Florida Statutes, the criminal history records of a minor, classified as a serious or habitual juvenile offender or committed to a juvenile correctional facility or juvenile prison, are automatically expunged when the person reaches the age of 26. The criminal history records of other juveniles are automatically expunged when the person reaches the age of 24.

The automatic expungement law is subject to exceptions applicable to minors adjudicated as an adult for a forcible felony, persons charged or convicted of a forcible felony after reaching 18 years of age but before the records are destroyed, and minors adjudicated delinquent for certain sex offenses.

A juvenile may be eligible for a court-ordered juvenile diversion expungement by applying within six months of completion of a qualified diversion program. In addition, a juvenile may be eligible for a non-juvenile court-ordered sealing or expungement – the same type of sealing or expungement that is available to eligible adults. Either of these types of court-ordered expungement takes effect upon entry of the court order, rather than when the person turns 24 or 26 years of age. A juvenile diversion expungement does not count as a prior sealing or expungement. However, a non-juvenile sealing or expungement does count as “a prior,” so as to prevent the person from obtaining a subsequent sealing or expungement.

Regardless of the specific criteria and standards, the fundamental reform offered by automatic expungement is that the process would be initiated either by a court, a clerk of the court or by the relevant law enforcement agency. The responsibility of informing the youth of the criteria, conditions, process and consequences of expungement would rest with the legal and law enforcement agents at the time of arrest or adjudication. All organizations, including public and private entities that maintain electronic databases of law enforcement and court records, would immediately be notified of the order of expungement and therefore required to comply within a defined period of time. Additionally all entities
bound by the order, including clerks of the court and law enforcements agencies would be clearly instructed to respond to inquiries with a response that “no records exist,” thus allowing young men and women to pursue the opportunities available to their counterparts across the state.

CONCLUSION

Reforming Illinois’ flawed and cumbersome expungement policies would ensure that all Illinois citizens, who have been involved in the juvenile justice system, have meaningful opportunities to make changes in their lives and better themselves through work, education or military service to their country. Because youth of color – particularly African American males – are disproportionately disadvantaged by Illinois’ unnecessarily difficult expungement mechanisms, addressing these obstacles is an important part of ensuring that young men and women of color have meaningful access to the employment, education, military service and other opportunities that build healthy communities. Opening up these positive pathways would not only allow more young men and women to take care of themselves and their families – but perhaps as importantly, would provide meaningful opportunities for education, work, and military service which will enhance the quality of their lives significantly.

The Inventory of State Funded Programs, indicated below, reflects services available throughout Illinois, designed to improve conditions among the African American male population.

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<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Catchment Area</th>
<th>State Agency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Englewood Family Reunification</td>
<td>Former offender program in the Englewood community, designed to offer developmental services e.g., substance abuse, spiritual counseling, GED, and employment search. This program involves the family in administering services to the offenders. Also it offers activities that bring families together and supports the family dynamic by developing healthy relationships.</td>
<td></td>
<td>HCD/Secretary's Office/IDHS</td>
<td>Gloster Mahon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Community Based Youth Services</td>
<td>Services are for youth, ages 10-17, who are at risk of involvement in the child welfare and/or juvenile justice system.</td>
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<td>CH&amp;P/IDHS</td>
<td>Mary O'Brian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community For Youth</td>
<td>Serves youth, ages 10-17, who are involved in risk-taking behaviors, youth who have been station adjusted (arrested but not referred to court) which prevents youth from going any further into the juvenile justice system.</td>
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<td>CH&amp;P/IDHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saving Our Seeds</td>
<td>A former offender-led project that is compiling a curriculum to use inside and outside of prison to help offenders atone for their actions and begin to take charge of their lives in a positive way. Offenders formed this organization with the support of IDHS and IDOC. Since their staff configuration is 70 percent offenders they offer services in a unique and engaging way.</td>
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<td>Secretary's Office/IDHS</td>
<td>Gloster Mahon</td>
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<td>Unified Delinquency Intervention Services</td>
<td>Services are focused on youth at risk of placement with the Illinois Department of Corrections. The target population is youth between the ages 13 to 17, that: (1) have been found delinquent at least once and are in violation of probation for another delinquent act; (2) who have had at least two delinquent adjudications in the juvenile court; or (3) who have committed an extremely serious offense warranting commitment to IDOC.</td>
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<td>CH&amp;P/IDHS</td>
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<td>Crossroads</td>
<td>Provides services to intervene in the lives of youth ages 10-17 who have engaged in risk-taking behavior (gang involvement, violence, drug use, chronic truancy) and have been arrested.</td>
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<td>CH&amp;P/IDHS</td>
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<td>Gear-Up Program</td>
<td>This program is designed to help minorities, who are the first in their families to go to college, to enroll in school and stay. The program also helps parents by advising them about how to support a child in college.</td>
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<td>CH&amp;P/IDHS</td>
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<td>Redeploy Illinois</td>
<td>This program offers two counties, alternatives to locking up youth in adult institutions by allowing them to receive extensive services in the community or in the juvenile justice system, while waiting for a court appearance.</td>
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<td>CH&amp;P/IDHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>African American Prevention Coalition</td>
<td>This organization has been formed and funded by IDHS to review issues facing the African American community and to develop strategies to address those issues. Also, its members act as advocates for high profile legislation impacting the constituent community.</td>
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<td>CH&amp;P/IDHS</td>
<td>Deyon Dean</td>
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<td>Teen Reach Program</td>
<td>Afterschool activities for children</td>
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<td>Summer Youth Employment Program</td>
<td>Provides summer employment opportunities for youth, to work on community development projects.</td>
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<td>Secretary's Office/IDHS</td>
<td>Gloster Mahon</td>
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<tr>
<td>System of Care</td>
<td>Division of Mental Health initiative in the Englewood community that gives parents, whose children are impacted by mental illness, the opportunity to form and/or monitor the system of care that will service the youth. This program is available in public schools and is offered by community based providers.</td>
<td></td>
<td>DMH/IDHS</td>
<td>Anderson Freeman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teen Parent Family Services Project</td>
<td>A federally-funded five-year demonstration program designed to work with families of teen mothers at DHS Teen Parent Services. Currently, the program serves young fathers of the teen mothers, and young men who may be in a relationship with a teen mother. Program focuses on educational advancement, parenting, and reduction of unproductive behaviors</td>
<td>Zip codes: 60601-60609, 60615-60616, 60623-60624, 60653</td>
<td>CH&amp;P/IDHS</td>
<td>Javin Foreman</td>
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<td>The Safety Net Works</td>
<td>Violence prevention initiative comprised of community coalitions that target youth and young adults. Important feature of the program places youth, ages 16-24, into developmental service tracts.</td>
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<td>Secretary's Office/IDHS</td>
<td>Xavier Williams</td>
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<td>Food Stamps and Employment Training</td>
<td>This program is for single adults who are able to work and who have no dependent children. They receive cash assistance for the work they do. For 60-hours of work they received a stipend of $294. The outcomes expected from this program include acquiring new work skills and/or employment.</td>
<td></td>
<td>HCD/IDHS</td>
<td>Lloyd Sutton</td>
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<tr>
<td>AmeriCorps</td>
<td>A national service program where participants volunteer in communities, and develop good service ethics while strengthening their communities.</td>
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<td>CH&amp;P/IDHS</td>
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<td>Cook County Mental Health Court Program</td>
<td>Substance Abuse Mental Health Service Administration Grant expansion of mental health court linkage services for severely, mentally ill arrestees who are placed on probation. Fifty percent of service recipients are African American males.</td>
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<td>DMH/IDHS</td>
<td>Anderson Freeman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental Health Juvenile Justice Program</td>
<td>Program identifies mentally ill youth in all Illinois detention centers and youth in Juvenile Justice Department and links them to comprehensive outpatient mental health services upon release. Thirty-eight percent of service recipients are African American youth.</td>
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<td>DMH/IDHS</td>
<td>Anderson Freeman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jail Data Link Program</td>
<td>Mental Health linkage services in five, county jails including Cook County use computer technology to identify open DMH cases in jail, and link them to community services upon release. Service recipients are predominantly African American males with mental illness.</td>
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<td>DMH/IDHS</td>
<td>Anderson Freeman</td>
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<td>Youth Build</td>
<td>Services targeted towards youth and young adults ages 16-24, who have dropped out of school, are unemployed and have limited job skills.</td>
<td>CH&amp;P/IDHS</td>
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<td>Disproportionate Minority Contact</td>
<td>African American youth and, to a lesser extent, Hispanic youth are over-represented in the Illinois Juvenile Justice System. Their representation in the system exceeds their portion of the general population.</td>
<td>CH&amp;P/IDHS</td>
<td>Miguel Millett</td>
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<td>Delinquency Prevention Services</td>
<td>Funding to local agencies to intervene in the lives of delinquent youth using evidence-based intervention programs to keep youth from continued involvement with the criminal justice system</td>
<td>CH&amp;P/IDHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teen Parent Family Services Project</td>
<td>A DHS federally-funded, five-year Demonstration Project that serves young fathers or significant others of teen Moms receiving TANF. Services include: Employment, Educational Advancement, and initiatives to reduce repeat pregnancies and problem behaviors</td>
<td>IDHS</td>
<td>Javin Foreman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversifying Higher Education Faculty in Illinois Program</td>
<td>This program serves under-represented minority graduate students who are pursuing degrees at an Illinois higher education institution. Competitive financial awards between $14,000 and $20,000 awards are made to eligible minority students (including African American men) to pursue a masters or doctoral degree. In exchange, students agree to accept a faculty position at an Illinois higher education institution. This $2.8 million program was established in 1985. It was vetoed by former Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich, in 2008.</td>
<td>Illinois Board of Higher Education</td>
<td>Terry Nunn</td>
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<td>Higher Education Cooperation Act Program</td>
<td>Since 1979 the HECA Grant program has provided competitive grant opportunities to colleges and universities to collaborate in creating partnerships among, at least, two, higher education institutions to support innovative educational programs. Traditionally, HECA has contained a provision to support projects that promote access and diversity of under-represented students including African American men.</td>
<td>Illinois Board of Higher Education</td>
<td>Terry Nunn</td>
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<td>Chicago Health and Medical Careers Program (CHAMCP)</td>
<td>This program is now a direct appropriation to support educational programming and under-represented minority students interested in careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines. It provides mentoring and academic support in the sciences including graduate and professional school tests preparation for minority students in the Chicago area. This $900,000 program is longstanding and has an outstanding track record of supporting and nurturing minority physicians, dentists or medical professionals in Chicago.</td>
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<td>Illinois Board of Higher Education</td>
<td>Terry Nunn</td>
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<td>Center For New Horizons</td>
<td>Paternal Involvement Centers- provide an array of services to African American males in the form of health, education, employment, parenting, and family reunification</td>
<td>Cook North boundaries extend south to 55th street east to the lake, and northwest Chicago to the northwest suburbs</td>
<td>IDCFS</td>
<td>Floyd Garrett</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversified Behavioral Comprehensive Services; MLK Community Service of Illinois; Passages Males with Foster Children</td>
<td>Paternal Involvement Centers- provide an array of services to African American males in the form of health, education, employment, parenting, and family reunification</td>
<td>Chicago (Cook Central area) from Lake Michigan (East) to Hillside (West) and 22nd St. (South) to Rogers Park (North).</td>
<td>IDCFS</td>
<td>Donald M. Waddell, Rev. Charles Collins Larry Sowell, Robin Dellahousaye, Ken Butler</td>
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<td>Diversity Awareness</td>
<td>This half-day training identifies the ongoing process of recognition, understanding and acceptance of the variety and complexity of people with whom employees must interact. It gives participants an opportunity to explore diversity issues from personal and professional perspectives through lecture, group interaction, open dialogue and short exercise.</td>
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<td>IDHR</td>
<td>Vincent Stokes</td>
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<td>Conflict Resolution</td>
<td>This half-day training explains how to manage and resolve conflict effectively. Distinguishing types, causes and stages of conflict; learning to diminish destructive outcomes and employ constructive uses of conflict; being able to develop confidence in handling confrontational situations; and having the ability to identify and apply five, major personal styles of managing conflict are presented.</td>
<td>IDHR</td>
<td>Vincent Stokes</td>
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<td>Student Success Grants</td>
<td>The students to be served by the Student Success Grant have social, economic, physical, or developmental disabilities, and/or academic deficiencies that make it difficult for such a student to adapt to a college environment. Colleges designate which of their students are eligible for services through the Student Success Grant as determined by college assessment procedures and instruments selected by the colleges. The priority populations served by the grant include racial and ethnic minority students.</td>
<td>Illinois Community College Board</td>
<td>Karen Hunter Anderson</td>
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<td>Black Hawk College</td>
<td>The college has implemented intentional co-curricular activities to engage males, especially minority males, in activities which promote interaction with African American faculty and staff. A Process Improvement Impact Team Project Charter; Minority Student Persistence to Goal Attainment Taskforce was implemented. This taskforce comprised of faculty and support staff; focused on minority students, retention, and completion rates of male and minority male students.</td>
<td>Illinois Community College Board</td>
<td>Karen Hunter Anderson</td>
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<td>City Colleges of Chicago/ Richard J. Daley College</td>
<td>The Process Improvement Team is currently meeting with community agencies at the Community Caring Conference to address the external barriers to minority course completion and retention rates. This partnership assists students with financial literacy, serves as advocates between the student and the employer, collaborates with the Career Service Center and assists with child care. The coordinator of the program is available to assist on campus and to provide assistance to students “where they live” in their own neighborhoods.</td>
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Illinois Taskforce on the Condition of African American Men in Illinois
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<tr>
<td>Olive-Harvey College</td>
<td>Olive-Harvey College has participated in the Young Fathers’ Success Program in partnership with Metropolitan Family Services, a comprehensive social service agency in Chicago. The intensive two-week program provides African American men with workforce preparation, career direction, fathering skills enhancement, financial literacy and contextualized basic skills.</td>
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<td>Illinois Community College Board</td>
<td>Karen Hunter Anderson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harold Washington College</td>
<td>A Male Mentoring Program was established at Harold Washington College to support male students by guiding and nurturing them with the expectation that they will succeed in higher education. The program addresses some of the underlying problems of male retention and completion with the intent of contributing to elevated enrollment and graduation rates. The Advising Office’s Male Mentoring Program Committee also sponsors workshops and events for the higher education community with an emphasis on addressing the needs of males.</td>
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<td>Illinois Community College Board</td>
<td>Karen Hunter Anderson</td>
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<td>Joliet Junior College</td>
<td>Joliet Junior College, in collaboration with the South Metropolitan Higher Education Consortium (SMHEC), has begun a regional multi-institutional initiative to assist the academic persistence of African-American and Latino Males. The program entitled Brother to Brother (B2B) provides support and cultural reinforcement to students by providing linkages to African-American and Latino male role models and opportunities for engagement. In keeping with the motto of the program, “I am my brother's keeper and together we will rise”, the students serve as accountability partners to one another by encouraging the members of B2B to progress in their classes and to mentor minority males in partnering high schools.</td>
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<td>Illinois Community College Board</td>
<td>Karen Hunter Anderson</td>
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<td>Kishwaukee College</td>
<td>The programs and services offered by the Minority Transfer Center, Learning Skills Center, Counseling &amp; Student Development, Special Grant Programs, the Black Student Union and Latinos Unidos have contributed to improved outcomes for many minority students. Kishwaukee College’s Minority Transfer Center cooperates with Northern Illinois University’s Center for Black Studies in a mentoring program called Achieving Success in College Settings (ASICS), and the Black Male Initiative (BMI) program. The BMI program pairs upperclassmen at NIU and sophomore level Black students at Kishwaukee College. The program provides positive role models, creates a group of familiar faces on the NIU campus that fosters an elevated sense of community, and facilitates a smoother transition from Kishwaukee College to NIU for Black Males.</td>
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<td>Illinois Community College Board</td>
<td>Karen Hunter Anderson</td>
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<td>Lewis &amp; Clark Community College</td>
<td>The TRIO Student Support Services Program is a federally-funded program designed to support the needs of the first-generation, low-income or disabled students and to encourage their success in college, their graduation and/or transfer to a four-year college or university. Currently, 26-African American males participate in this program at Lewis and Clark Community College and receive academic, career, financial aid, transfer and personal counseling.</td>
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<td>Illinois Community College Board</td>
<td>Karen Hunter Anderson</td>
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<td>College of Lake County</td>
<td>Real Men Talk- A bi-weekly gathering of African American male students and staff, who get together to informally talk about academics, relationships, politics and more. This bi-weekly activity allows the students an opportunity to be heard and to be open amongst their African American male peers. Black Student Union- A weekly meeting for African American students to discuss campus and community involvement as well as plan activities related to the African American culture. The Black Student Union also focuses on academic, interpersonal and leadership development of the students who participate. Thrive- A campus initiative that specifically relates to the recruitment and retention of African American &amp; Latino students with grade point averages between 1.5 and 2.2. Students in this category are assigned a Retention Specialists and a mentor. Conferences, mini-workshops and one-on-one coaching were the major components of this initiative.</td>
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<td>John A. Logan College</td>
<td>John A. Logan College has taken steps to improve and increase the recruitment and retention of underrepresented and underserved populations, including African American males. A new position, Director of Educational Planning, was created to coordinate and promote diversity and multicultural initiatives. Employees from the Department of Academic Affairs and Student Services attended a nationwide symposium in Kansas City, on the retention and recruitment of students of color. Logan College is one of the participating institutions in the College and Career Readiness Pilot Project which places importance on targeting underrepresented and underserved students to promote successful college and career degree completion. The Logan community participated in an international and interdisciplinary symposium on <em>Wole Soyinka, Africa and the World</em>, at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale in February 2009. This event engaged students, faculty and staff in a dialogue on diversity and multicultural issues, in addition to concerns about human rights in Africa and elsewhere. The College is reactivating the Minority Teacher Education Association to support minority students' retention and teaching effectiveness. The college’s Black Students Association is an organization that supports academic and social development of African American students through various activities.</td>
<td>Illinois Community College Board</td>
<td>Karen Hunter Anderson</td>
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<td>Oakton Community College</td>
<td>In Fall 06, Oakton began a mentoring program for the Men's Basketball Team. The majority of students on the team are African-American. Each player was paired with a mentor. Mentors were volunteers from all employee groups (Administrators (including the President and several Vice Presidents), Faculty and Staff all served as mentors). Mentors met regularly with their mentees. The mentors provided support and guidance related to the individual needs of the student (assistance with the financial aid process, registration, tutoring, planning for the future etc). The cost associated with the program is minimal -- several lunches were provided to the group as a whole. The real investment is one of time and for those who invested the time, benefits were realized -- student GPAs improved, students attained their degrees, continued their education at Oakton or successfully transferred to a four- year institution.</td>
<td>Illinois Community College Board</td>
<td>Karen Hunter Anderson</td>
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<td>Prairie State College</td>
<td>The program currently serves 15 students but a new Summer Enrichment Program focused on resident students will provide direct services to a maximum of 100 students. The Office of the Dean of Students, Student Activities, and the Office of Multicultural Affairs are collaborating to develop and implement a five-week summer bridge program called Wolf Pac aimed at African-American male athletes that move into residence housing early to participate in athletics program training camps. This program requires enrollment in a College Success Course (GSD-100) during the first week that students move onto the campus. In addition, the program requires three-days a week participation in programming that covers leadership, diversity, college success, money management, community development, nutrition, and sexual health.</td>
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<td>Illinois Community College Board</td>
<td>Karen Hunter Anderson</td>
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<td>South Suburban College</td>
<td>B2B is a local initiative, in partnership between South Suburban College and the South Metropolitan Higher Education Consortium, which is designed to empower individuals and promote brotherhood while retaining and graduating male students of color. SSC uses B2B as an intervention to mentor and work with our African American and Minority Male students to help them connect and engage with the community through active service and to develop personal and strategic plans, which support their retention and degree achievement. Operational dollars were initially used to support this program. The partnership through the SMHEC consortium grant has yielded additional funds to expand services.</td>
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<td>Illinois Community College Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southeastern Illinois College</td>
<td>Southeastern Illinois College has a very successful study group program that was established many years ago. Student groups are required to attend a bi-weekly, one-hour, supervised study group. The men’s athletic basketball team makes up one of those study groups. It is made up of predominately African-American students. For the last two years, the GPAs of the student body have been compared to the GPAs of this subgroup. The findings indicated that GPAs of the subgroup have consistently been higher than the average GPA of a random sample of the entire student body.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Illinois Community College Board</td>
<td>Karen Hunter Anderson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Catchment Area</td>
<td>State Agency</td>
<td>Contact Person</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater West Town Training Partnership</td>
<td>Since 1993, Greater West Town Training Partnership has maintained one of the strongest track records among community development agencies in Illinois through the extraordinarily high level of service to African American men. Its publicly-funded Woodworking and Solid Surface Fabrication Training Program and its Shipping and Receiving Training Program are designed and targeted to address the employment and career barriers faced by non-college bound minority males. GWTP will continue service to African American men, who represent 44 percent of GWTP 1,150 program graduates.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Illinois Community College Board</td>
<td>Karen Hunter Anderson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Literacy Council</td>
<td>Although not specifically designed for African American males, this population is welcome in all programs: One-on-one tutoring, small group instruction, English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction/tutoring, mathematics instruction, computer classes/open lab, GED Illinois Online, family literacy programs, tutoring for Juvenile Probation and classes at Winnebago County Jail.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Illinois Community College Board</td>
<td>Karen Hunter Anderson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern IL Professional Development Center</td>
<td>Parents can be positive role models for their children and are vital to the healthy development and growth of children. Fatherhood is the focus of the parenting workshop. Despite the prevalent belief that all younger men are either absent of uncaring fathers, research suggests that the majority really do want to be involved in their children’s lives. This program is an excellent opportunity for participants to compare and contrast their own experiences with fatherhood against the results of the research.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Illinois Community College Board</td>
<td>Karen Hunter Anderson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 4
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
by Members of the Illinois Taskforce on the Condition of African American Men in Illinois

K-12 EDUCATION

The six recommendations for education have been developed to ensure that African American male students are provided a quality education in Illinois schools.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS EDUCATION: LEGISLATIVE, ADMINISTRATIVE, AND EXECUTIVE ORDER

1. Issue an annual Illinois report, by school district, which includes the number of suspensions, expulsions, and truancy rates, disaggregated by race and gender. This report is to be posted on the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and Regional Offices of Education (ROE) websites. Advisement by community stakeholders indicate that there are significantly disproportionate numbers of suspensions and expulsion incidents among African American and Hispanic males as compared to their white male counterparts. This recommendation would strengthen district accountability and better enable the Illinois State Board of Education to monitor and investigate districts with a high propensity for suspensions, expulsions, and truancy.

2. The African American Taskforce recommends that the Illinois School Code be amended to address paucities with current policies which, perhaps, add to the disproportionately high number of suspended and expelled minority students. In the information received from town hall meetings held across Illinois, parents, community stakeholders, and educators agree that less punitive sanctions must be enacted when appropriate. School board trustees have the authority to restore students who have made an unwise choice. However, most districts have adopted and enacted a “Zero tolerance” policy which is not always the best approach, and does not ensure that students with social and emotional issues are provided appropriate intervention.

The Taskforce recommends that the Illinois School Code require school districts to identify research, evidence-based practices, and other options such as “Balance and Restorative Justice” types of interventions.

3. Further, the African American Taskforce recommends that a special commission be created by the Illinois State Legislature to monitor academic achievements of minority students, and, review incidents which often adversely effect minority male students in Illinois. Each school district should include and report data regarding educational and socio-emotional progress of students attending alternative schools. In addition, the ISBE must ensure that programs provide academic enrichment strategies and practices aligned with research-evidence based programs, particularly, Title I, also known as.
Improving The Academic Achievement Of The Disadvantaged, No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, should be monitored and regulated for program effectiveness and accountability to ensure the success of minority male students in Illinois.

4. Encourage, as part of the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind Act, the development of performance standards and outcomes that require ISBE and school districts to appropriately address the subgroup of minority males that are not achieving prescribed Annual Yearly Progress.

5. The Taskforce recommends that ISBE advocate and demonstrate statewide a comprehensive approach to parental involvement for minority students, in particular, African American parents. ISBE should provide informational meetings regarding parents’ rights and responsibilities as required by No Child Left Behind.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS EDUCATION: SHORT TERM - NO COST AND ADMINISTRATIVE

6. The requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 must be reconciled with the need to develop performance standards and outcomes which support programs that re-enroll students who are low skilled and high risk. This is a critical issue because school districts may be reluctant to re-enroll dropouts – particularly those students who are far behind in their skills – as it may affect the district’s ability to achieve Annual Yearly Progress goals as required by the act. This is a recommendation that was submitted by the Taskforce on Re-Enrolling Students Who Dropped Out of School. The African American Taskforce supports this recommendation.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS EDUCATION: ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGISLATIVE

7. Develop and monitor a professional development plan that will be integrated into the Illinois State Board of Education Consolidated State Application, as part of the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, to ensure appropriate, differentiated instruction for minority students who are most at risk of failing and not making AYP.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS CRIMINAL JUSTICE: EXECUTIVE ORDER AND LEGISLATIVE

1. Petition the Illinois General Assembly to review sentencing and discriminatory laws that have contributed to the significant increase in the number of African American men incarcerated in the Illinois penal system since the first report was submitted in 1994.
2. Reinstating the use of Adult Transitional Centers (ATCs) for inmates transitioning back into Illinois communities. These centers are useful and allow programming to be instituted to parolees recently released from prison. Services such as fatherhood programs, job training, anger management, and educational programs can be introduced to help change behaviors.

3. The State, in its planning process for future funding, should require mandatory collaboration between organizations providing similar services for African American men and encourage subcontracting by organizations who win competitive funding streams. This approach reduces the competitiveness between organizations by stipulating that they must collectively work with similar groups and issue subcontracts for limited funding, thereby expanding the community’s service capacity. Utilizing this process, organizations would inadvertently become linked and would be required to participate in the strategic planning process and offer advisement about reporting measurable outcomes and data collection.

4. Enforce automated legislation to allow automatic expungement for juveniles.

5. Program Statewide Data Collection System to present real-time information.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS CRIMINAL JUSTICE: STRATEGIC FUNDING

6. The development of advisory or steering committees to evaluate the progress of initiatives should be tied to new funding. The state does not have a system of accountability among the majority of its providers and generally funds organizations based on historical relationships rather than change or outcomes. These bodies, comprised of stakeholders and other interested parties, can evaluate and work to improve performance and monitor service delivery, which could have a more positive impact on the community.

7. Community organizations must develop the expertise to serve an increasingly complicated and difficult population of African American men. This population brings multiple etiologies to the service equation e.g., co-occurring issues such as substance abuse and mental illness, illiteracy, lack of employment experience and felony convictions. Organizations may have expertise on one issue but may not have capacity to deal with others. Therefore these groups must be exposed to new forms of assessment tools, life skills development curriculums, elementary educational tools and longer periods for participants to be in their programs.

8. Revise School House Adjustment Programs.

9. Program Statewide Data Collection System to present real-time information.
IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS CRIMINAL JUSTICE: ADMINISTRATIVE

10. Better communications between state agencies, community-based organizations, law enforcement agencies, and religious organizations to create a pool of services for African American males in transition back to the community. A listing of services accessible to all stakeholders should be developed to eliminate duplication of services, and to inform African American males about access and eligibility.

11. Increased and standardized training for school security officers

12. School adjustment programs

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS CRIMINAL JUSTICE: SHORT-TERM (NO COST)

13. Automatic Expungement System


FATHERHOOD

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS FATHERHOOD: LEGISLATIVE

15. Evaluation of existing programs through Questions and Answers by the State. This could have implications for reallocation of funds.

16. Establishment of an ongoing quality improvement process to review outcomes and progress (accountability/outcomes).

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS FATHERHOOD: STRATEGIC FUNDING

17. Increase “voluntary clients” through utilization and establishment of community-based Family Advocacy Centers. These providers would serve dual purposes of prevention and advocacy. This requires funding by multiple state agencies.

18. Establishment of a statewide, provider data-base that will include all state-funded, and non-state funded, service providers. All state agencies will have access to this system.

19. Development of additional housing assistance.

20. Development of additional programs to meet the needs of African American male teens that are parenting.
IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS FATHERHOOD: SHORT-TERM (NO COST)

21. Establish linkages and referral agreements between providers.

22. Enhanced collaboration between judicial and mental health systems servicing dually involved African American males.

23. Enhance information and data sharing between service providers.

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH: EXECUTIVE ORDER

24. Establish a taskforce on African American Males in every state agency to track proposals and policy initiatives that impact African American males. These taskforces should convene periodically and prepare a report for an ongoing legislative committee responsible for monitoring activities related to statute on conditions of the African American male.

25. The agency taskforce members report should address utilization of health and mental health services by African American men. This report would include action plans, and the results of efforts to address areas of disparity identified through service utilization data and quality management activities. The report also makes policy and legislative action recommendations.

26. Train more African American physicians and health care providers.

27. The Illinois Department of Public Health should expand collaboration with agencies and groups in the black community and provide positive healthcare strategies and practices focused on African American men.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH: ADMINISTRATIVE

28. Present more success stories in the media with positive images of African American males in healthcare roles.
   a) High profile African American leaders should promote and share their positive experiences with preventive healthcare practices (i.e., early screening for prostate cancer).
   b) Eliminate business ads directed at the African American community that promote practices that undermine good health (i.e., alcohol, unhealthy food products).
   c) Promotion of positive healthcare practices should include oral healthcare.
   d) Church and organizational events in the African American community where food is served should emphasize proper diets and healthy foods.
   e) Restaurants in the African American community should emphasize balanced diets and promote increased consumption of fruits and vegetables.
IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH: LEGISLATIVE

29. Introduce new legislation to assure that service-related health RFPs and agency funding in targeted areas include strategies for identifying and addressing service disparities for African American males. This should include state agencies.

30. Assure that legislation to maintain the Medicaid eligibility of incarcerated and detained individuals is passed, House Bill 2303.

31. Train more African American physicians and health care providers.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH: SHORT-TERM (NO COST)

32. Health service utilization patterns by African American men should be examined and analyzed to determine areas of disparity in access to services, services provided, and service outcomes.

a) Services used by African American men should be integrated in quality improvement activities within health service agencies.

b) In the instance where service disparities are identified, planning, which includes benchmarks to measure progress towards addressing disparities, should be undertaken by service agencies.

33. Given the volume of African American men re-entering the community from the Illinois Department of Corrections and county jails, it is important to include an analyses of health and mental health service usage issues for this population including ex-offenders on parole.

34. Develop Outcome Measures to include the following:

a) Improved life expectancy for African American males.

b) Increased outpatient service utilization by African American males.

c) Increased participation in positive healthcare practices by African American males.

d) Increased number of African American healthcare professionals.

35. The Illinois Department of Public Health should increase collaboration with agencies and groups in the African American community in providing positive healthcare strategies and practices focused on African American men.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH: STRATEGIC FUNDING

36. Use tele-psychiatry to provide mental health services to underserved African American communities and school systems with large minority populations.

37. Create more affordable and accessible nutrition programs in the African American community.
38. Provide diversity and cultural sensitivity training to health system gatekeepers and service providers.

39. Fund more early education programs in the African American community that focus on healthy lifestyle practices.

40. Fund additional early intervention programs in schools to address youth with emotional problems.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: EXECUTIVE ORDER AND LEGISLATIVE/ADMINISTRATIVE

41. Provide meaningful tax credits for companies hiring African American men.

42. Create legislation requiring all state contract awardees in excess of $500,000 to have a community development plan directed toward African American men and a business enterprise program.

43. Create African American male resource centers to connect men to services available in the State of Illinois.

44. Allocate portions of advertising budgets to promote programs and services available to African American men.

45. Increase number of public projects in African American communities that hire African American men.

46. Direct additional agency and state resources to provide incentives to strengthen the family unit.

47. Amend the Illinois Procurement Code to allow contracts to be set aside for African American Men

48. Require vocational training in secondary schools that will match the projected job market for African American men.

49. Create incentive programs for high paying employers to move to African American communities and hire African American men.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS: STRATEGIC FUNDING

50. Establish a job training program to address the needs of the 21st Century job market for African American men.
51. Overcome barriers to employment, such as lower level of educational attainment and ex-offenders.

52. Prepare African American men for higher paying job classifications.

53. Ensure that job training programs provide for the attainment of soft and pre-employment skills.

54. Create a Mentor/Protégé Program for businesses owned by African American men.

55. Provide resources to create, support, and promote African American small business incubators
   • Encourage business collaboration
   • Support and encourage black male youth entrepreneurship
IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE AND OVERSIGHT

by Terry Nunn
Illinois State Board of Education

A vital aspect to be considered regarding the work of the Taskforce on the Condition of African American Men in Illinois is the development and implementation of action steps that operationalize recommendations and creates strategies that transform ideas to reality. Described below is implementation and oversight guidance envisioned by the Taskforce to ensure the successful implementation of the report recommendations.

THE BURRIS COMMISSION

During its deliberations, the Taskforce examined the work of a previous State of Illinois commission that examined factors impacting African American men in Illinois. This commission is commonly known as “The Burris Commission.” The June 1994 report titled “A Call to Action—Recommendations of the Illinois Commission on African-American Males” issued by the Illinois Commission on African American Males was chaired by then Illinois Attorney General, Roland W. Burris. The Burris Commission Report presented significant recommendations in the areas of: Crime and Drugs; Economic Development and Employment; Education; Family Life and African American Manhood; Health; Housing; Racism and Politics; and Religious and Community Organization. Each of these categories was carefully crafted to address vital factors impacting African American men. If implemented, the recommendations could have made significant impact on the lives of African American men in Illinois. However, little evidence exists to indicate that the recommendations of The Burris Commission report were implemented. The current Taskforce believes that comprehensive implementation strategies and oversight measures must be developed to affect change, overcome barriers, and improve the conditions for African American men in Illinois.

MOVING BEYOND RECOMMENDATIONS

Similarly, the current Taskforce on the Condition of African American Men in Illinois has developed and presented recommendations under critical categories including: Health Care, Fatherhood, Education and Criminal Justice. However, the goal is to move beyond the recommendation stage into the development of strong accountability measures. It is believed that in order for successful implementation of strategic recommendations to benefit African American men in Illinois these provisions must be incorporated:

• Increased statewide visibility on the critical factors facing African American men in Illinois.
• Expand statewide leadership to address and guide the implementation of recommendations.
• Extend accountability measures to establish benchmarks and monitor implementation progress.
RECOMMENDATIONS TO INCREASE STATEWIDE VISIBILITY

- Taskforce members believe that successful implementation of strategic recommendations, affecting the lives of African American men in Illinois, must include systemic and continuous statewide publicity that highlights challenges they encounter each day. Therefore it is recommended that media coverage be designed to emphasize the depth of issues confronted by African American men like: health, safety, welfare and the education of African Americans in Illinois. Further, media campaigns must be developed and implemented as a critical component of state agencies’ services that target the needs of African American men in Illinois.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO INCREASE STATEWIDE LEADERSHIP

- Taskforce members recommend that each state government agency establish and demonstrate responsible leadership to implement recommendations presented in this report. It is envisioned that each agency would establish a division or work unit that leads and guides the work of each agency to effectively serve the needs of African American men. Further, any such unit established within state agencies would responsibly work across divisions and units for data collection, analyses, duplications, overlaps and gaps in services. Additionally, it is envisioned that each agency would report performance of agencies relative to services provided to African American men in Illinois.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO INCREASE ACCOUNTABILITY IN EFFORTS TO ENHANCE THE SUCCESS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN IN ILLINOIS

The Taskforce believes that in addition to statewide leadership efforts established within each state agency, effective accountability measures include the creation of overarching accountability measures.

- The Taskforce recommends the establishment of The Illinois Commission for the Success of African America Men in Illinois. The commission would be tasked with working across all state agencies, including colleges, universities, and public schools, and would be funded to provide programs for African American men. The commission would monitor the performance of entities funded with state resources for African American men in Illinois.

- It is recommended that periodic meetings be convened by state agency officials to discuss strategies for increasing the effectiveness of services. The Commission for the Success of African American Men would be charged with convening statewide hearings and requiring statewide accountability reporting to be presented to the Illinois General Assembly on an annual basis. The Taskforce believes that the proposed Illinois Commission for the Success of African American Men can be duly funded by state appropriations and can have a budget sufficient to carry out the required accountability measures. Further, the commission would be consulted by legislative committees, as appropriate, during the annual budget process to provide data on the performance of state agencies.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The Taskforce believes that the key to successfully educating African American males begins at a very young age.
• Role models and male mentors should be introduced to African American males in elementary school.
• Leadership programs should be mandatory and included in school curriculums.
• “Character (building) Education” programs should be offered in schools in addition to regular studies.
• Schools and community leaders should work to affect change in the community’s environment, by providing positive activities for youth that are proven to result in successful outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE ISSUES

The Taskforce condemns Racial Profiling by all law enforcement agencies in the State of Illinois.
• The Taskforce recommends on-going programs to facilitate expungement in a timely manner.
• The Taskforce recommends changes in laws for felony convictions. Taskforce members believe that employment opportunities for African American men in Illinois will increase significantly when felony laws are modified and when African American men are properly represented in courts.
• The Taskforce strongly recommends that bailiffs, judges and all other Court Room personnel remain always respectful to families and dependents, to be enforced by the presiding judge.
• It is recommended that the number of contacts for in-prison support, i.e., through family unification, professional counselors and other relative support groups be increased.
• Resources should be designated to support programs for ex-offenders’ entrepreneurial opportunities.
• Work to affect change in the community’s environment, by providing positive activities for youth that are proven to result in successful outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HEALTH ISSUES

The Taskforce believes that barriers to receiving quality treatment include the lack of access to best treatment practices, involvement in treatment practices that are not culturally and gender sensitive, and greater involvement in short term emergency care versus longer term recovery-oriented services. The reality is that African American men do not seek healthcare like they should due to an inherent tendency to be guarded and private about health and mental health issues. Many are uncomfortable when talking about health problems and are often in denial about certain ailments and conditions.
• The Taskforce condemns the stigmatization of mental illness. Rarely is mental illness
clearly defined in a manner that African Americans understand that the goal for good mental health is the expectation of 100 percent recovery, not maintenance.

- Medical services should be readily accessible to single, African American men who can not afford health care.
- Increase the number of public health awareness campaigns for prostate cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease.
- The healthcare system in the State of Illinois should be more user friendly for African American men.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Taskforce believes that African American males who attempt to strive forward in an impoverished environment will face multiple disadvantages.

- The Taskforce recommends that internships that lead to permanent employment be available to African American men.
- Taskforce members recommend government-funded programs to subsidize African-American businesses.
- Programs should be developed to help keep businesses and revenue in the African American Community.
- The Illinois State General Assembly should mandate that African Americans be awarded 33 percent of all government contracts let.
- It is recommended that local manufacturing initiatives be increased significantly to provide more employment opportunities for African American men.
- Illinois state agencies should increase the provision of technical assistance in the African American community.
- Increase support for youth entrepreneurship programs in African American communities.
- The Illinois Department of Housing Authority should offer more training programs and earmark funds for “soft rehab.”
- The Illinois Department of Transportation should offer more training programs and mandate set-asides for contracts to African Americans.
- There should be specific allocations designated for jobs for youth.
- Increase the number of African Americans employed in Illinois state government finance agencies like the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Illinois Finance Authority and the Illinois Department of Housing Authority.
- Establish a 90-day revolving Community Loan Fund in the African American community.
- African American men from the “grassroots” community should be appointed to state boards and commissions.
- Programs that target African American men should have leaner requirements and stress accountability.
REFERENCES

APPENDIX A. LEGISLATION CREATING TASKFORCE ON THE CONDITION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN IN ILLINOIS

SB 0776 Enrolled

AN ACT concerning State government.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:

Section 5. The Department of Human Services Act is amended
by adding Section 10-32 as follows:

(20 ILCS 1305/10-32 new)

Sec. 10-32. Task Force on the Condition of African American
Men in Illinois.

(a) The General Assembly finds and declares that African
American men: (1) are disproportionately less likely to
complete high school and to obtain a post-secondary education;
(2) are more likely to be incarcerated or on parole; (3) are
more likely to have lower lifetime economic earnings; (4) are
more likely to have been a part of the child welfare
population; (5) are more likely to have a shorter life
expectancy; and (6) are more likely to have health problems,
such as HIV/AIDS, drug dependency, heart disease, obesity, and
diabetes. The General Assembly further finds and declares that
the State of Illinois has a compelling interest in determining
the causes of these problems and in developing appropriate
remedies.

(b) The Task Force on the Condition of African American Men
in Illinois is created within the Department of Human Services.
Within 60 days after the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 95th General Assembly, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the Senate, and the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives shall each appoint 2 members to the Task Force. In addition, the Director or Secretary of each of the following, or his or her designee, are members: the Department of Human Services, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of Human Rights, the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, and the Illinois Community College Board. Members shall not receive compensation, but shall be reimbursed for their necessary expenses from appropriations made for that purpose. The Department of Human Services shall provide staff and other assistance to the Task Force.

(c) The purposes of the Task Force are as follows: to determine the causal factors for the condition of African American men; to inventory State programs and initiatives that serve to improve the condition of African American men; to identify gaps in services to African American men; and to develop strategies to reduce duplication of services and to maximize coordination between State agencies, providers, and educational institutions, including developing benchmarks to measure progress.
(d) The Task Force shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 2008.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.
APPENDIX B. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION VIA TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Town Hall meetings were held to receive input from citizens, stakeholders, and other interested parties on the status of African American males and the role of state government in addressing and improving said status. Town Hall meetings are tools of governments that involve and engage citizenry in recommending policies, hearing complaints, compliments, and holding elected officials accountable.

MATTESON TOWN HALL MEETING – SEPTEMBER 9, 2008

EARLY INTERVENTION
• Teach language to our children
• Classroom size in urban schools
• Policies relaxed for children with special needs
• Understanding the law
• School Principal that is active
• Administration to hold teachers accountable
• How can we get more African American teachers
• Teach parenting skills
• School should be more inviting to parents, parenting needs
• More mentoring programs, social clubs

HEALTH
• Concerns about at-risk behaviors
• Family dynamics
• Anecdotal
• Historical wrongs
• Insurance
• Engage in dialogue
• Health issues for men: Prostate, Blood Pressure, Breast Cancer
• Anger Management, Addictions, Sex, Pornography

CRIMINAL JUSTICE
• IDOC
  • Need to open up talks
  • Advocate for restorative justice
  • Peer Media
  • Coalition-building with other state government agencies

EDUCATION
• African American Male Curriculum (Pre-K – Elem.- Middle - High School)
• Enhancing various learning styles
• Social promotion, testing and policy review
• African American Males not graduating from High School
• Need more parental involvement
• Mandates (local and state) no monies
• Property values related to school districts
• Encourage fathers to attend school activities; activities that target Fathers
• Lack of good communication with students
• Vocational Education
• Attitudes regarding self image; adjust media outlooks
• Curriculum based to include life skills
• Parity in spending for schools
• Pay for Performance
• Disparity in teacher qualifications
• Voucher Systems
• Parent Participation
• Funding for African American Males with learning disabilities

FATHERHOOD
• At Risk-Youth
• Ex-Offenders
• Child Support
• Back Child Support
• State Laws
• Fathering children at a young age
• Job to support kids
• Disconnect in our communities
• Better collaboration between IDOC and IDHS
• Helping men deal with multiple families
• Women with men with multiple families
• Rid the community of “Baby Momma, Baby Daddy,” labels
• Lack of affordable recreational programs
• Training of mentors; developing new mentor programs
• Responsible Mentorship (Responsible)
• How to Father
• Providing good examples through experience
• Definition of Manhood
• Women reaching out to positive role models
• Women working with men
• Not enough marketing campaigns about African American Male Mentors
• Insurance
• Conflict Resolution for adults and youths
• Policy and governing of pre-existing conditions
PEORIA TOWN HALL MEETING, SEPTEMBER 11, 2008

- Need programs funded to create employment opportunities for ex-offenders. GED completion leading to employment; strong youth component.
- Something is needed to keep youth off the street and monies in their pockets. If there is nothing, youth will find something to do.
- Account for job market shifts in any job-training programs that may be developed.
- Pre-employment skills: Dependability, Punctuality, Job Retention components are lacking.
- Workforce development requires African American men to have these skills. There are many individuals that do not have the pre-employment skills necessary to obtain gainful employment.
- Education – Employment opportunities for utility company workers; companies claim that they can not find qualified African American men and when found through an external resource such as the local Urban League chapter, test results indicate a high failure rate. Need basic skills such as reading and writing.
- Need for Mentorship Program for young men. Young men and women are not prepared. They are not Internet savvy, no email address; do not know how to prepare a resume together.
- There is a need to revise the curriculum to teach youth these skills and offer skill sets out of the norm especially if typical jobs are leaving the community. We must prepare African American men for opportunities in the community.
- Ex con received degree but background prevented him from getting a job. Easier to go to school while in jail. Problem qualifying for grant dollars after release because of income restrictions.
- We need to prepare African American men for college. The current structure prepares you to get a job. We need to change our curriculum. The curriculum should accommodate various learning styles. The alternative to not getting a good paying job is to do something to make money.
- Apathy is a great concern in the African American community. Easier to point outward rather than inward. Men need to be awakened to their responsibilities. Members of our community leave it once they achieve a level of success. Mentors are needed!
- Many students that attend high school do not live with Mom and Dad. Mentors that are committed to the community are needed. Education takes place outside of the classroom. It also takes place in the relationships we have with others.
- Participant noticed the seating arrangement in the room. There were no people sitting in the front of the room. Does this represent fear of Black Men?
- Mentorship is universal. Kids emulate what they see. If they see people being successful doing negative activities, that is what they will seek. Mentorship does not require a lot of resources to start up.
- In the past youth had programs offered by park districts, after school programs, or community center programs. We must be proactive. There is a sense that it is ok to get in trouble with the law. Scholarship athlete gets in trouble while in college. It is important to teach that we must take advantage of these opportunities. There is a disparity in coaching. There are tons of black athletes. Where are the leaders/mentors?
There needs to be more African American male teachers.

- Use athletic tools to our advantage. If youth want to be athletes that must have the grades. We have to teach young people early to value these opportunities and to overcome obstacles.

- Create positive self-images for our kids. Counselors to talk with when trouble arises. We need Life Coaches to direct and encourage black men. Speak promises to their life. Where do you see yourself in three, five years?

- Racial Profiling is an issue in this community. The officer can issue discretionary misdemeanor charges. The African American Male has no one to help him when discrimination occurs. There are things African American men can be charged with that can prevent him from obtaining a job. Misdemeanor vs. Felony. A policeman in the community has filed discrimination charges. If the police is in that situation, what about the regular African American male?

- State needs to support degree incentive program. If students aspire to teach, tuition assistance is available if you agree to come back and work in your community for number of years as a teacher, counselor. If these programs are in place, can the state help to promote it more and provide additional funding?

- Community Capacity Building. There is a need to identify resources in the community and promote what is currently available and identify what is not present and needed in that community.

- Incentive program for marginal students. Promote students that are doing what they are supposed to be doing. There are lots of people at basketball games but few at academic functions.

- Job market needs a sense of fairness. Whites are given jobs although they may have the same stripes as an African American Male.

- Bridge between parent and teacher has been broken. We can’t blame society when we can’t walk through our own community.

- We need to support one another. Sports teach teamwork and discipline.

- Transportation was an issue in this community; getting people to jobs or training programs.

- The last couple of generations do not have the drive to make it on their own.

- There is a need to promote successful programs.

- The answer is reestablishing the role of the father in the community. There needs to be involvement of the church in helping the father understand his role and who he is.

- Would you rather have a part time dad or no father at all?

- There needs to be a curriculum to deal with self handicapping behaviors.

- There needs to be one roof where a man can go for assessment and then be directed to appropriate resources

- Review the Violence Against Women Act. It allows men to be removed from their children’s life unjustly.

- Let the youth know we are dealing with generations of racism. The solution will not come overnight.

- It should be a shared responsibility of engaging a father in the life of a child. It should involve the mother, father and any programs that support parenting.
EAST ST. LOUIS TOWN HALL MEETING, SEPTEMBER 23, 2008

HEALTH/MENTAL HEALTH
- Poverty; insurance program for men
- Nutrition; need for healthy eating; parity for males
- Single Parent Homes (Mother) – Research
- Education
- Physical Fitness
- Lack of Resources to Exercise
- Not a priority for African American men 30-years and under in this culture.
- Access – disparities
- Barriers to health care: transportation, education, follow-up
- Stigma attached to poor health
- Relationship drama
- Expectations
- Interpersonal Relationship
- Cultural competency
- Cultural sensitivity
- Spiritual leaders
- Hopelessness is a real factor

EDUCATION
- Law and Drugs
- Hard drug penalties
- Theft of retail goods
- Mob action and others
- Felony conviction is for life!!!

DISTORTIONS MEDIA IMAGERY
- Societies response, no empathy for men
- Lack of opportunity
- Down playing of spiritual groups church
- Lack of Education
- Unidentified issues
  a. Depression
  b. Voids
- Lack of cohesiveness

SOLUTIONS
- Positive Images at the grass roots level
- Broaden the male image
- Depict the full spectrum of African-American Men
- Real models instead of role models
- America must admit to disparities
- Employment, besides just fast food. More employers willing to hire ex-cons
• Use same message with new methods
• Start employment training at a much earlier age. Cutting grass, paper route
• Identify strengths
• Accountability amongst social groups
• Less bureaucracy

CHICAGO TOWN HALL MEETING, OCTOBER 2, 2008

CRIMINAL JUSTICE
• Education vs. Incarceration
• Services provided after parole
• Expungement for Juvenile, non-violent offenders
• Employment service provided after parole
• Review the 13th Amendment
• Parolees should be hired to work for companies that have contracts with prisons
• Access to the courts to file complaints
• Opportunity to go to school while incarcerated; college education
• Pass legislation to give tax breaks to employers who hire ex-offenders
• Law taught in high school (minimal)
• Youth and juvenile institutions need more programs
• State to partner with employers for tax credit
• Technology to sustain families
• Remove restrictions on employment hiring
• Tax breaks to employers who hire ex-offenders
• Early intervention for repeated contact with law enforcement
• Funding for service inside institutions
• Separation of violent and non-violent offenders in Cook County Jail
• Gang Abatement and Violence Prevention Act of 2007 (SB456)
  • Investigate progress
  • Advocate to pass the Senate
• Remove ban to join the military
• Need stress relief; more female visitation

ISSUES - COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE
• Education is Critical
• Male population versus female population
• Need more exposure in Englewood
• The way things are taught
• Lack of teachers of same cultural background
• Physical and emotional safety
• Listening to the kids (Reporting, Disruptive, and Behavior)
• High School feels like a jail (from student’s perspective)
• Zero tolerance policy
• Gangs: not enough jobs
• Literacy: students ashamed of the lack of reading skills
• Participation on local school council in neighborhood
• Participation in community programs (Re: “No Child Left Behind”)
• Value our youth
• Invest in our children
• Most shortfalls are connected
• In high schools, security does not really offer a feeling of safety; talk to young students
• Teachers are sometimes disrespectful to students
• Students need to feel respected
• Brother initiative: lack of reality of successful professional
• Everyone in room, invest in CPS student
• Teacher accountability; police are excused from accountability
• Parental accountability, reach out and touch someone else
• Single Parenting Factor
• Teachers do not have skills to teach

INCENTIVES, PARTNER WITH COMMUNITY FOR CHILD, OR PARENT DOING WELL IN SCHOOL
• Taking children out to see other things, historical events
• Security issues, young men shot by police
• Children should not be afraid to go to school
• Students don’t finish high school
• Magic Chicago – Holistic approach
• Young men should be able to express themselves; other men being role models.
• Hunger, college funding, being proactive; get off our tails and do something

TEACHERS NEED TO BE EDUCATED ABOUT ISSUES STUDENTS HAVE
• ISBE – more culturally relevant for city school
• Standard testing of students who live in the inner city
• More gender specific for African American male
• Paid internship for students
• Mentoring for students for professional careers, other than sports
• Problems with Chicago Public Schools; jobs, contrast on spending too wide - $10,000 per child)
• ISBE does not work; outward bound works
• Reading
• Math
• No relationship with police in the community
• Change curriculum; should be geared toward content of classes for African Americans
• Training students, not teaching
• Hire more African American professors
• Provide proper tools for professors to connect with students
• Funding cutbacks
• Students do not always understand what they are being told to do
• Students come to school hungry
• Students GED; literacy; students are teased for speaking proper grammar
• Money for more books at younger age (book fair)
• Students afraid to show who they really are
• Students think it’s cool to dropout
• Peer pressure; called names for getting straight A’s

Congressman Danny Davis (30th District)
• Running for office, getting on school boards

Representative Colvin
• Dropout rates.
• HJR0071 – Local school council
• Public Hearings
• School board members should be elected rather than appointed
• 76 percent of students have to take remedial courses

HOW WE VIEW AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE HEALTH? PHYSICAL AND MENTAL
• Statistics show that Africans American men have shorter life spans
• Not enough resources available for African American men
• African American men need to see themselves flourish
• Family structures needed
• Screening Center in the community is needed
• Access to data for African American men needed
• State of Illinois should include African American men in writing public policy
• Knowledge base building needed

BLACK MALES TO BECOME A CONSUMER
• Consumers make up an advisory board

INDICATORS NEEDED TO SEE HOW WELL WE’RE DOING
• Illinois children mental health partnership exists
• Save Hospitals that African Americans visit
• Doctors need proper education
• Customer services and more patient advocates needed
• Poor mental health is synonymous with substance abuse

STATE OF ILLINOIS SHOULD BE MORE INCLUSIVE FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAMS
• Crisis w/HIV and AIDS
• Leading killer of child bearing women of color
• Second leading killer of African American men
• More awareness programs for HIV/ AIDS Crisis
• Prevention needed
STATE OF ILLINOIS NEEDS TO INVESTIGATE WHY AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN ARE NOT AT HEALTH FAIRS
(Historical example of Miles Square Health Center to be remembered and mimicked)

- Schools to develop social emotional development
- Use of Illinois History Regarding African American negotiations
- State of Illinois has put African American men last
- Make mental health services more popular and inviting
- Build a coalition to support funding of the SEL standards
APPENDIX C: STATE PROGRAMS RELEVANT TO TASKFORCE MISSION

CRIMINAL JUSTICE
   Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission
   Illinois Violence Prevention Authority
   Sex Offender Management Board
   Redeploy Illinois Oversight Board

EDUCATION
   Ensuring Success in School Taskforce
   After School Funding Policy Taskforce
   Re-enroll Students Taskforce
   Truants Alternative and Optional Education Taskforce
   Governor's Youth Services Initiative Board
   Programs to develop Minority Teachers
   Grow Your Own Teacher Program-ISBE

HEALTH
   Diabetes Commission
   African American HIV/AIDS Response Panel
   Rural Seniors Taskforce
   Health Improvement Plan Taskforce
   Nutrition Services Advisory Committee
   Medicaid Managed Care Taskforce
   Health Care Advocates Committee
   Health Care Worker Taskforce
   Senior Pharmaceutical Assistance Review Committee
   Schedule II Controlled Substance Prescription Monitoring Program
   Advisory Board
   Cervical Cancer Taskforce
   Health Education Advisory Board
   Adequate Health Care Taskforce
   Illinois Long-Term Care Council
   Long-Term Care Facility Advisory Board

FATHERHOOD
   Council on Responsible Fatherhood

ETHNIC GROUPS
   Taskforce on the Condition of African American Men
   African American Family Commission
   Latino Family Commission
   Mayor's Advisory Council on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs
   Social Services Advisory Council

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
   Illinois Workforce Investment Board
   Business Enterprise Council

Illinois Taskforce on the Condition of AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN IN ILLINOIS
APPENDIX D: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BURRIS COMMISSION AND THE TASKFORCE ON THE CONDITION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN IN ILLINOIS

1994 COMMISSION (BURRIS)

CRIME AND DRUGS
- Establish Crime Prevention Cabinet Position
- Develop protocols and policies that minimize racial bias and discrimination in the criminal justice system

2009 TASKFORCE

CRIMINAL JUSTICE
- Alternatives to school suspensions/expulsions, contact with police on school grounds and review of station adjustments (formal and informal).
Programs, activities and employment opportunities in the Illinois Department of Human Services are open and accessible to any individual or group without regard to age, sex, race, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic origin or religion. The department is an equal opportunity employer and practices affirmative action and reasonable accommodation programs.

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