

The State of Black Men & Boys in the City of Philadelphia



Mayor's Commission on
African American Males
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA



Mayor's Office of
Black Male Engagement
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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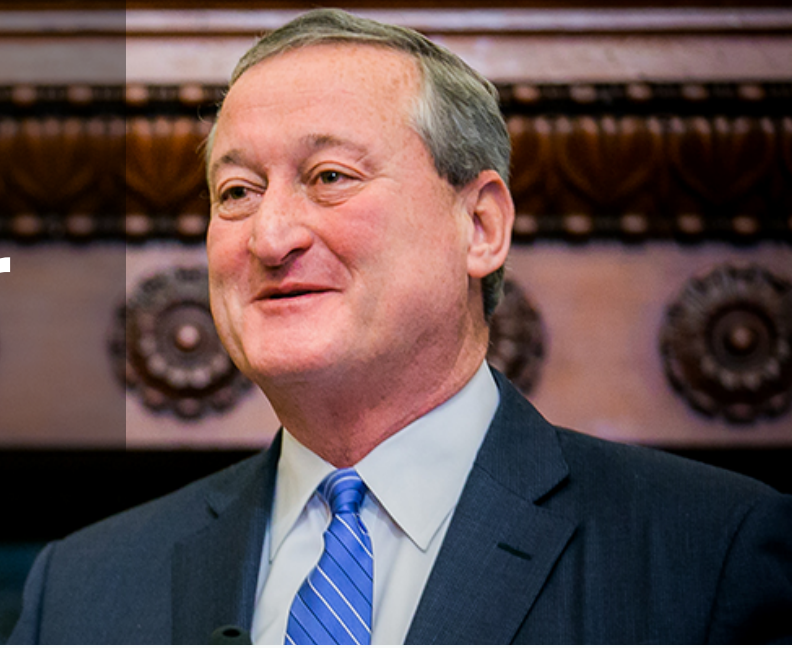
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Message from Mayor Jim Kenney



As Mayor of Philadelphia, I have long been committed to ensuring that marginalized communities not only have a voice, but have the opportunities and tools necessary for improving the world around them.

The Mayor's Commission on African American Males plays a critical role in this work. In partnership with the Mayor's Office of Black Male Engagement, they continue to ensure that this administration places the needs and concerns of Black men and boys at the forefront of all that it does, and more importantly, that we address them with the urgency they deserve.

Our collective efforts to bring greater results of impact for Black men and boys across Philadelphia can only be met through the continued and diligent efforts of collaboration and advocacy. By working together to uplift and amplify the voices of Black men and boys, we will move our great City forward.

Sincerely,

Jim Kenney

Mayor, City of Philadelphia

Message from Romana Lee-Akiyama



While so much of the world has turned upside down in the past several years, what has not changed is the commitment of our community leaders who serve on the Mayor's Commission on African-American Males (MCAAM). Through the murder of George Floyd, Walter Wallace Jr., the civil unrest in Philadelphia, the COVID-19 pandemic, to the current and pressing gun violence crisis, MCAAM has been an ever present partner in advancing justice for Black men and boys.

MCAAM has fostered relationships with key City offices and external partners alike to drive solutions and bring resources to the table. Their analysis, lens and voice on City policies and priorities have been critical for us as an administration to holistically respond to our residents.

Lastly, I extend my gratitude to MCAAM for their persistence and ongoing efforts to be a vital partner with the Mayor's Office of Public Engagement. Together, we have been able to elevate the perspectives of Black men and boys in Philadelphia, and create open dialogue between City and community leaders.

Sincerely,

Romana Lee-Akiyama

Executive Director, Mayor's Office of Public Engagement

Message from Eric Westbrook



As the Director of the Mayor's Office of Black Male Engagement, I am honored and thankful to work alongside such a dynamic group of men. The Mayor's Commission on African American Male's commitment to Black men and boys encourages and challenges me to keep working and ensuring that this office is more than a placeholder for representation, but it actually does the work of centralizing our concerns and broadening our narrative.

This report is an overview of the work of the Mayor's Commission on African American Males (MCAAM) over three of the most challenging years our society has ever seen. Tasked to navigate their own personal challenges and tragedies, as well as maintain an awareness and sensitivity of how these same difficulties impacted other Black men and boys displays their passionate dedication to justice through policy making.

They have partnered with several community and City partners to ensure their work throughout the years could provide relevant and effective solutions to the concerns facing Black men and boys. Please read and share this report and feel free to provide feedback to us at obme@phila.gov.

Sincerely,
Eric Westbrook
Director, Mayor's Office of Black Male Engagement

YEAR IN REVIEW

Every year at the end of March, the Mayor's Commission on African American Males (MCAAM) is tasked with submitting an annual report covering the issues and opportunities facing Black men and boys in Philadelphia, and the activities and policy recommendations submitted to the Mayor, City Council, and City agencies by the Commission.

As we draft this report to the residents of Philadelphia, we do so in the spirit of Sankofa [sahn-koh-fah], meaning to "retrieve" or "seek and take." The Akan people of Ghana believe "it is this wisdom in learning from the past which ensures a strong future."

Marking the 30th anniversary of the creation of MCAAM, we look back at what we've left behind in order to learn from our past so that we may bring forward what we need to build a stronger future for Black men and boys.



YEAR IN REVIEW

Looking back, 2020 was unlike any year we've ever experienced. It brought with it events that would impact every sector of life for people all across the globe, particularly frontline workers, people of color, and people living in poverty.

Nearly two months after mandated social distancing was put into effect, the country witnessed the Murder of George Floyd, followed by Tarrana Burke and a rash of murders of Black trans women.

In major U.S. cities like Philadelphia that burden fell particularly hard on Black people. Locally, the shocking murder of Walter Wallace Jr. traumatized an entire community and sent reverberations throughout the city. While protests and Black Lives Matter marches grew across the country, Black men continued to die at the hands of other Black men right here at home and at an alarming rate. These tragic incidents revealed the deep inequities and unsettling conditions that exist across our country and particularly within our City.

The pandemic revealed to us how Black and disenfranchised people are more severely impacted by those inequalities and yet continue to carry the burdens of this country in ways no other group does. From the lack of access to healthcare, housing and jobs, to food insecurity, over policing and



THE CRISIS OF COVID-19: MASS INCARCERATION AND HOMELESSNESS

YEAR IN REVIEW

deadly treatment at the hands of the criminal justice system, Black communities have faced unprecedented hurdles. And, while the commissioners were weighed down by the challenges presented, they continued to press forward with the work of raising awareness of the physical, social, mental, emotional and financial impact the pandemic was having on Black men and boys.

Over the past 2 years the commission has convened a number of virtual town halls and webinars on issues such as gun violence, COVID-19 concerns, PPP Loans and resources for entrepreneurs.

MCAAM also held several meetings with city leaders including Mayor Kenney, PPD Commissioner Outlaw, Councilmember Jones, Commissioner Kathryn Ott-Lovell, Parks and Rec, the City Solicitor, and others. raising concerns and working towards solutions to the ills that plague Philadelphians.



In late 2021, MCAAM underwent an internal review process that resulted in the election of a new executive team as well as 6 new commissioners who bring a hunger for change along with their collective experience and activism in their respective communities. Another addition to this cycle of growth and change was the creation of the MCAAM Emeritus Committee.

YEAR IN REVIEW

First introduced by former Mayor Goode, this committee serves the purpose of acknowledging the service of long-standing commissioners who have contributed to the work of MCAAM but who wish to make room for new commissioners, allowing for new energy and ideas while still being accessible and supportive of the work of the commission.



The commissioners have also dedicated themselves to being more present and interactive with the community, starting with a minimum of four public events. These events will serve as listening sessions to the public and opportunities for the commission to act as a conduit between city government and Black men, boys and their supporters.

As we look forward to the remainder of 2022 and beyond, we do so with the lessons of the (not so distant) past ringing loudly in our ears. We ask you to join us as we continue to learn new lessons and shape policy and procedure recommendations for all agencies that impact Black males in Philadelphia.

MCAAM OVERVIEW

In 1991, Mayor W. Wilson Goode Sr introduced Resolution #7-91 that would create the Mayor's Commission on African American Males.

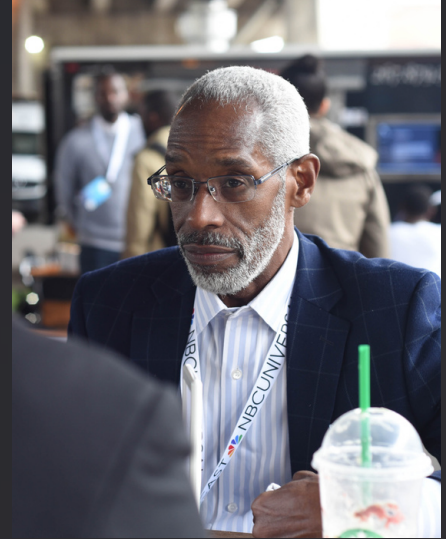
In 2011, then Mayor Michael Nutter would "reconstitute and revitalize" the commission under resolution #13-91, stating that "the formation of the commission was a positive step towards improving the situation of African American males in the city."

In 2015 Councilmember, Curtis Jones Jr. introduced Ordinance No. 150573-A as a ballot question voted on by residents which amended the City of Philadelphia Home Rule Charter to provide for the creation, appointment, powers and duties of an independent Commission on African American Males.

Mayor Jim Kenney reestablished MCAAM in 2015.



OUR MISSION



The mission of MCAAM is to improve, enhance and preserve the quality of life for Black men and boys in the City of Philadelphia.

MCAAM exists to encourage the development and implementation of policies, programs and practices specifically intended to improve conditions affecting the cultural, social, economic, political, education, health and general well-being of African American men and boys residing in Philadelphia.

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Eric Marsh Sr (Chairman)
Jason Smith (Vice Chairman)
Clarence Parker (Secretary)

Bilal Qayyum
Darren Lipscomb
Desmond Kirton
Donavan West
Dwayne Wharton
LuQman Abdullah
Michael Robertson
Phillip Roundtree
Rafiq Diya Al-Fareed
Tyrell Mann-Barnes

Rev. Wilson Goode, Sr. (Emeritus)
Wayne Williams (Emeritus)

Education Committee

The Education Committee's (EC) mission is to identify and advocate for practices in education that will help Black men and boys gain the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed academically in environments that honor their unique lived experiences.

The EC works toward a vision where Black boys receive an education that prepares them to compete on an equitable and even playing field for careers in the global economy.

CURRENT CONDITIONS & CONTEXT

There are 63 colleges, universities and technical schools in the Philadelphia metropolitan region. The school district is the 19th largest in the nation with over 198,000 students enrolled and an annual budget of nearly 4 billion dollars. [1]

52% of all PSD students are African American with 51% of those being Black males.

The average Graduation rate of a PSD student is 72% in 2019-20 (83.9% in 2018).

Black male SDP students with IEPs (for a reason other than "Gifted without Disability") have risen to 25% since 2018.

There are just some of the persistent challenges facing Black students in Philadelphia and the U.S. [2]

- AA youth lag behind all others in math and science at every grade level & later careers.
- 71% of teachers in high minority schools (HMS) were “highly qualified”, compared to 86% in LMS.
- Less than one-tenth of AA students (9.3%) in PSD take Advanced Placement (AP) courses, compared to 22.1% of their white counterparts.
- 25% of AAs have less than a high school diploma compared with 18% of whites.
- 11.8% of AAs possess a bachelor’s degree or higher compared to 28.2% of whites.
- In the U.S., Ethnic & racial minorities make up more than half of the student population but only 20% of teachers are POC & only 2% Black men (80% are white, 77% are female)

CURRENT CONDITIONS & CONTEXT

Well-being, safety and belonging are essential to the developmental life cycle of a Black boy in Philadelphia. Disillusioned by systems that don't fully see them and nurture their potential, many Black boys and men tune out education before fully accessing their own unique educational talent and curiosity.

African American men easily forgo seeking education opportunities beyond high school, representing the smallest segment of students enrolled at colleges and universities throughout the country. Philadelphia is not immune to this trend, with only 13.2 percent of African American men in Philadelphia holding a bachelor's degree. [3]

Recognizing that the root of these outcomes are multifaceted and may extend beyond the scope of the city, an in-kind approach to understanding educational barriers for African American males must be explored.

Use of self-reporting via surveys and focus groups as well as reporting from teachers and points of contacts within organizations that work with African American men may help to shed light on root causes.

Moving forward, the Mayor's Commission on African American Males will partner with the Office of Black Male Engagement, School District of Philadelphia and Community College of Philadelphia (Institutional Research Office and Center for Male Engagement) to facilitate this review.

STEPS TOWARDS SOLUTIONS

From June of 2020 through July of 2021 MCAAM's Education Committee has taken numerous steps to ensure Philadelphia students receive the attention and resources they need and deserve, including:

- Meeting with Superintendent Hite, Chief Education Officer Otis Hackney, Board of Education Member Wayne Walker and the Fellowship of Black Male Educators around opportunities to grow the number of Black male educators in Philadelphia.
- MCAAM Commissioners identified and recommended Black male candidates for recent School Board Member vacancies to Mayor Kenney. One of the recommended candidates made it to the finalist round of the process.
- Met with a Gateway to College representative to discuss engagement & mentoring opportunities with young men enrolled in their program.
- Met with Career & Technical Education representatives to gain a better understanding of CTE enrollment practices as well as how CTE education can connect to sustainable career and financial outcomes for young Black males.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CLEAN & SAFE FACILITIES

A child's education should reflect their lived experiences and culture along with the positive direction and possibilities in their future.

BLACK MALE TEACHERS

Currently less than 2% of all teachers are Black men. A Johns Hopkins University economist found that having just one Black teacher in elementary school significantly increased a low-income Black student's likelihood of graduating from high school and considering college; for a very low-income Black boy, the risk of dropping out was reduced by 39 percent.

HUMAN-CENTERED, CULTURALLY RELATABLE CURRICULUM

A child's education should reflect their lived experiences and culture along with pointing them in a positive direction and help them envision possibilities in their future.

EQUITABLE FUNDING

PA is the 19th state in the nation for funding per student. PSD spends on average \$10,796 per student, below the state average of \$13,688



Health & Wellness Committee

The Health & Wellness Committee's (HWC) mission is to advocate for better outcomes for Black men and boys across all major areas of health including but not limited to physical, behavioral, social and spiritual wellbeing.

The H&W committee works towards a future where Black males lead healthy, active lives with equitable access to high-quality healthcare, nutritious, fresh food, clean, safe environments that are free from the physical, mental and economic conditions that have traditionally led to poor health outcomes.

CURRENT CONDITIONS & CONTEXT

Some health disparities facing Black men and boys in Philadelphia and the U.S. include [4]:

- AA men experience poorer general health than any other group - lowest life expectancy & highest death rate.
- AAs in Philadelphia die at a 25% higher rate. Males aged 15-19 die at a rate 2.5 times higher than their white counterparts.
- More than 5 times as many AAs are murdered (per 100,000 persons) as whites in Philadelphia.
- AAs suffer from disease at higher rates than whites, particularly HIV (74% more frequently), diabetes (57% more frequently), and prostate cancer (54% more frequently).
- Almost 2 times as many AAs in Philadelphia do not have health insurance compared to whites.
- Disparities in mental health care including stress management between AAs and whites is a persistent problem as fewer AAs seek treatment upon diagnosis—49% versus 59% of whites.

STEPS TOWARDS SOLUTIONS

Over the past year MCAAM's Health & Wellness Committee has taken steps to ensure Black men and boys in Philadelphia receive the healthcare and resources they need to lead healthy lives, including:

- Health and Wellness met with Catherine Ott - Lovell, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department to advise on the use of neighborhood recreation centers as community hubs as resource centers partnering with local nonprofits to stem violence in the community.
- Health and Wellness met with Temple University College of Public Health to collaborate on community health and nutrition workshops across the city for 2022
- H&W convened a meeting between MCAAM, OBME and the Black Doctors COVID Consortium to assess the need and strategize a plan for more financial support by local government.
- H&W partnered with OBME on the Brothas Stroll for Black Men's Health
- Met with DBHIDS, EMOC and Black Men Heal to promote behavioral health resources, counseling and therapy for men and boys.

RECOMMENDATIONS

INTERGOVERNMENTAL

Trauma informed training and support made available in all public schools through DBHIDS

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

Trauma training, conflict mediation, stress reduction and access to free or low-cost counseling

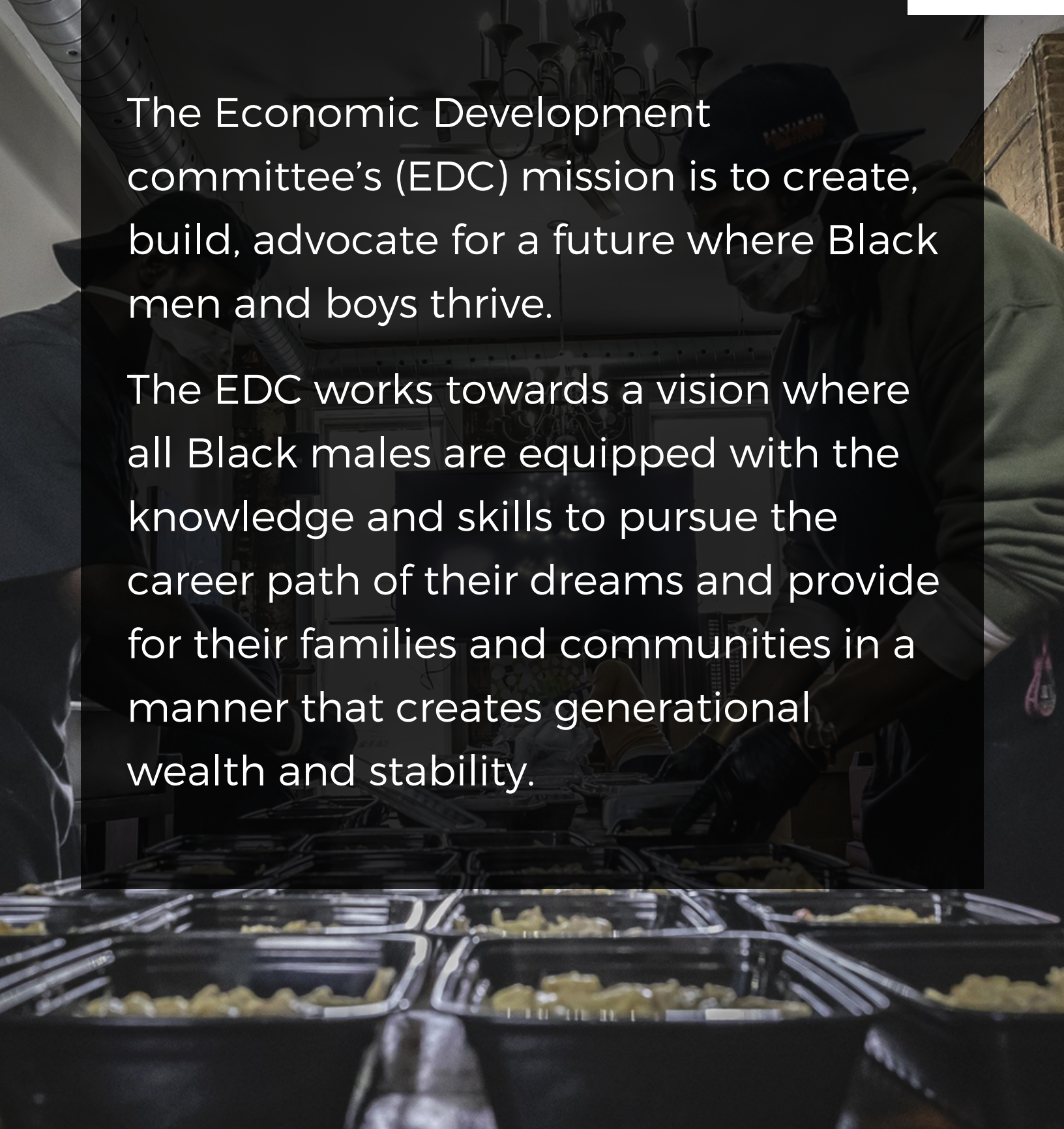
IMPROVED RECREATION CENTERS

ACCESSIBILITY AND EDUCATION ON HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES

Economic Development Committee

The Economic Development committee's (EDC) mission is to create, build, advocate for a future where Black men and boys thrive.

The EDC works towards a vision where all Black males are equipped with the knowledge and skills to pursue the career path of their dreams and provide for their families and communities in a manner that creates generational wealth and stability.



CURRENT CONDITIONS & CONTEXT

According to the Pew Charitable Trusts 2022 report on the State of the City, Before the pandemic, the total number of city jobs increased but many of the gains for city residents tended to be low-wage positions in low-paying areas of the economy. This resulted in wages for Philadelphians working in the city declining by 5% over nearly a decade. [5]

The loss of jobs from the pandemic and the economic impact on lower-wage sectors such as retail, leisure and hospitality had a disproportionate impact on Black employees and Black-owned businesses. The unemployment rate in Philadelphia stood at 8.9% in 2021, the 2nd highest in the nation after Detroit and 3% higher than pre-pandemic numbers.

Here are just some of the persistent economic challenges facing Black men and boys in Philadelphia and the U.S. [5]

- The median income of AA families (\$27,000) is about two-thirds that of whites (\$42,500).
- The AA unemployment rate, nearly 10 percent, is more than twice the unemployment rate among whites.
- Only one of five AA youth who are out of school has a job compared with three of five white youth.
- AA business owners are fewer and further between than their white counterparts; the rate of AA business ownership is only 50% that of whites in Philadelphia.
- 32% of AAs live below the poverty line compared to 16% of whites.

RECOMMENDATIONS

REBUILD READY

Rebuild Ready offers support to help small, diverse businesses qualify for contracts.

GAP PROGRAM

The joint collaboration between the MCAAM EDC and City's Commerce Department – Neighborhood Services Unit evolved to the Growth Advisory Program.

The Growth Advisory Program (GAP) is an entrepreneurial and business development program designed to support existing and new development of black male-owned businesses in Philadelphia.

The GAP intends to promote investment, job creation, retention and contract opportunities enhancing the City's economic development engine by increasing access to capital, capacity building and business development training opportunities.

BLACK CONTRACTORS

City officials have a goal of giving 25 to 30% of contract funding for the multi-million-dollar initiative to minority-owned businesses, and 15 to 20% to woman-owned businesses.

EMERGING VENDORS

Emerging Vendors Program allows participants to count toward diversity goals on city contracts as they work toward permanent certification as a minority- or woman-owned business.

Social Justice Committee

The Social Justice (SJ) committee's mission is to identify, advocate for and recommend policies and practices that will end the systemic targeting and persecution of Black men and boys that has been and continues to be the legacy of this country.

The SJ committee strives towards elevating Philadelphia to become a city where Black men and boys are uplifted from under the boot of the criminal justice system to their rightful place as leaders, defenders and protectors of their communities and equal citizens under laws that are just and equitable.

CURRENT CONDITIONS & CONTEXT

Here are just some of the persistent challenges facing Black male students in Philadelphia and the U.S. [6]:

- More than three-quarters of male homicide victims are AA, compared to 22% of white males.
- AAs are arrested at significantly higher rates than whites in Philadelphia. As a percentage, 70% of AA adults were arrested compared to 29% of whites in 2006.
- 82% of juvenile AAs were arrested compared to 17% of juvenile whites in 2006.
- AAs are more likely to be imprisoned once arrested than whites. As a percentage of arrests, 2.8% of AAs are imprisoned once arrested compared to 1.2% of whites.
- AAs are incarcerated in prison and jail at more than five times the rate of whites.
- More than three times as many AA offenders receive probation for crimes than white offenders.

STEPS TOWARDS SOLUTIONS

From June of 2020 through July of 2021 MCAAM's Social Justice Committee has taken numerous steps to ensure Philadelphia Black men and boys receive the attention and resources they need and deserve, including:

- Called for implicit bias and anti-racism training for all departmental personnel and ensured annual, mandatory compliance.
- Advised the mayor against the Sentence Risk Assessment Summary assessment tool being considered in PA because of inherent bias.
- Advocated for youth involvement, on government and community boards seeking input from youth in diverse communities. Efforts were made to improve communication between police and youth in the community and to build new bridges for mutual respect.
- MCAAM Members organized over 125 former gang members in collaboration with the Delaware Peace Commission, Family and Community Engagement Action Team (FACE-A-TEAM) and Treasures Banquet Hall to strategically plan to go into the community and bring peace to the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CRISIS RESPONDERS

A child's education should reflect their lived experiences and culture along with the positive direction and possibilities in their future.

ACT 111 REFORM

PARTICIPATORY DEFENSE HUBS

DRIVING EQUALITY BILL

BLACK MALE RESOURCE FINDER

According to the Brotherly Love Health Report, in Philadelphia roughly 23% of Black men and boys live in poverty. This staggering statistic exists because of the many gaps of service and opportunity.

To ensure residents are aware of the many resources and services available, we noticed a need for an interactive, user- friendly finder that will empower residents to find and enlist city and community programs.

Our Black Male Resource Finder, enables Philadelphia residents to access City and community resources more effectively through a digital platform.

This finder houses the contact information of city agencies, Black owned businesses, community organizations, programs, services, resources and community stakeholders that provide support for Black males in Philadelphia.

We want this digital tool to serve as an interactive resource for our community to discover and enroll in programs and services committed to helping Black males in the city!

Learn more about the Black Male Resource Finder :



Community Engagements



Collaborated with OBME on the

Black Generational Wealth Series

2019 - 2023

Collaborated with OBME on TEN

Brothas Stroll: Health Walk for Black Men & Boys



Collaborated with OBME on TEN

Community Listening Sessions

Virtually & In-Person

Hosted over FIFTEEN

Mayoral & Departmental leader advocacy meetings





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank everyone who has played a role in helping us continue toward our goal of connecting with and advocating for Black men and boys in the city of Philadelphia.

We extend a special thanks to Mayor Jim Kenney, his staff and the entire Kenney administration along with:

- Romana Lee-Akiyama and Saptarshi Dutt of the Office of Public Engagement
- Eric Westbrook and Octavius Blount of The Office of Black Male Engagement
- Jovida Hill and the Office of Engagement for Women & The Millennial Advisory Committee
- Jeanette Bavwidinsi and the Office of Youth Engagement
- Councilmember Curtis Jones Jr
- Councilmember and former commissioner Isaiah Thomas
- Dr, Jean Wright, DBHIDS
- Gabriel Bryant, EMOC
- Catherine Ott-Lovell, Parks & Recreation,
- Police Commissioner Danielle Outlaw,
- Commerce Department
- The School District of Philadelphia
- Enon Tabernacle, NOMO Foundation

Contact



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CITATIONS

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[2] *Philadelphia City School District (2023) - Philadelphia, PA*. (2023, February 23). <https://www.publicschoolreview.com/pennsylvania/philadelphia-city-school-district/4218990-school-district>

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