

EMPOWER YOUTH | TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES

# Local Action Plan 2025–2030



HOUSTON HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT



HOUSTON  
Empower Youth | Transform Communities



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MBK Director Chazz Bailey alongside Mayor Pro Tem Martha Castex-Tatum's Chief of Staff Perdita Chavis presents 2024 MBK Houston RISE Scholarship recipients with their awards and surprised them with new laptops as they prepare for college.

# Our Purpose, Progress, and Vision

## PURPOSE

In 2014, Houston answered a national call to action by launching My Brother's Keeper (MBK), a movement committed to building pathways of opportunity for boys and young men of color. Over the past decade, MBK Houston has grown into a dynamic, citywide partnership grounded in the belief that every young person deserves a fair chance to thrive.

While our work centers on addressing disparities that most acutely impact boys and young men of color, our mission is broader: to improve outcomes for all of Houston's priority youth, regardless of race, ethnicity, or background. By lifting up those furthest from opportunity, we strengthen the entire community.

## PROGRESS

Since releasing our first Local Action Plan in 2015, MBK Houston has made great progress. Together with community partners, we have:

- > **Expanded access to early childhood programs and literacy supports**
- > **Graduated MBK Houston High School Students with a 95%+ percentage rate**
- > **Provided 1 million dollars of post secondary scholarships**
- > **Created pathways for college enrollment with collegiate underclassmen support systems**
- > **Developed mentoring initiatives and reentry supports for justice-impacted youth**

While these accomplishments are significant, disparities in education, health, safety, and economic mobility persist. The COVID-19 pandemic, economic shifts, and systemic barriers have underscored the urgency of this work.

## VISION

We envision a Houston where every young person no matter their zip code, race, or circumstance has the resources, relationships, and opportunities to reach their full potential. Over the next five years, this Local Action Plan will guide our collective efforts to:

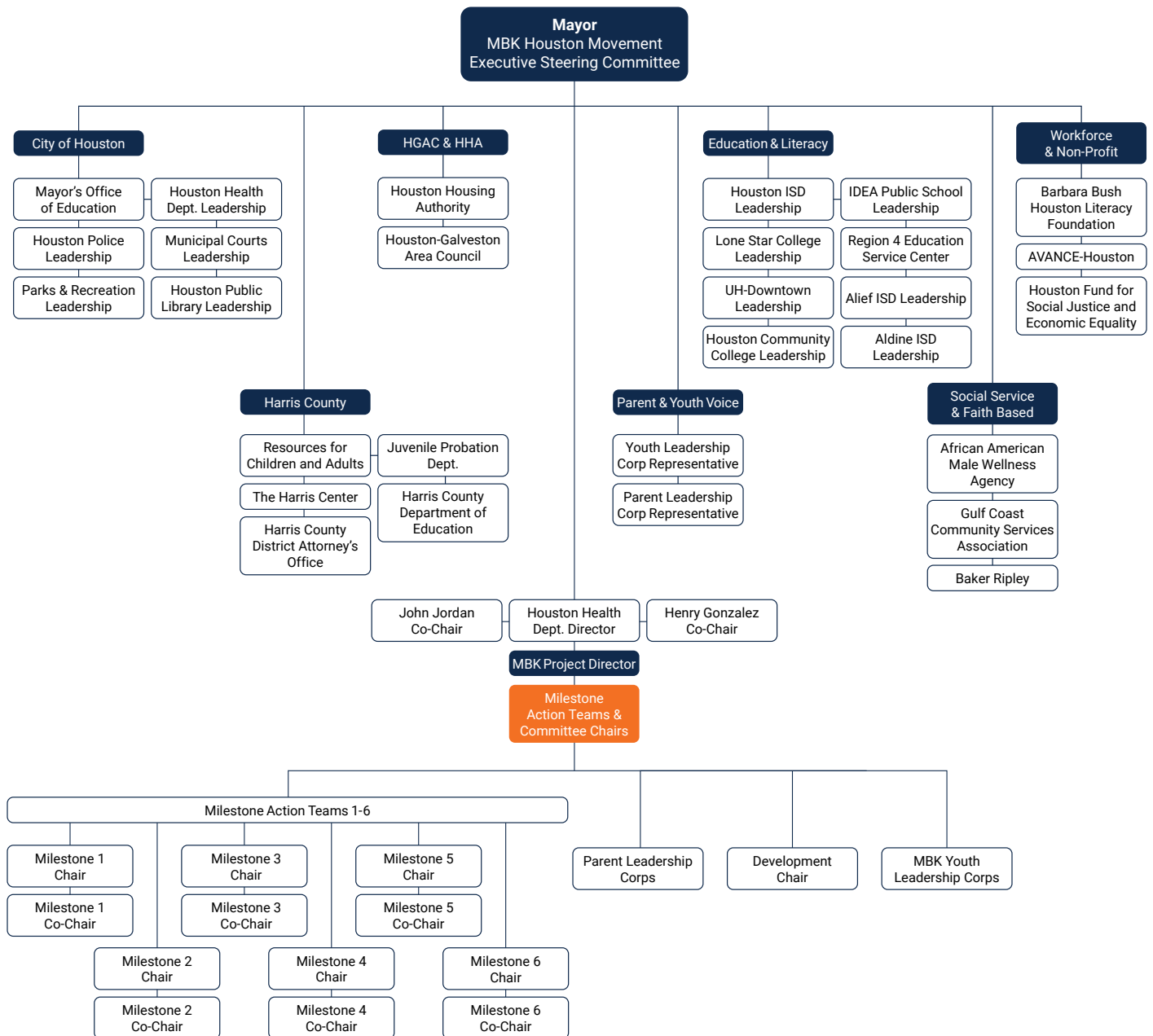
- > **Address the root causes of inequity**
- > **Advance evidence-based solutions**
- > **Center youth and community voices**
- > **Hold ourselves accountable for measurable results**

# Our Structure

## My Brother's Keeper Houston

### EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE & OPERATIONS WORK TEAMS

Faith-Based, Health, Education, Employment, Law Enforcement, Criminal Justice, Community Services, Cultural and Civic Engagement Collaboration



# Our Approach

The 2025 Plan is anchored by six milestones, each representing a critical stage in a young person’s journey.

National MBK Milestone

1.

Entering School  
Ready to Learn



National MBK Milestone

2.

Reading at Grade  
Level by Third Grade



National MBK Milestone

3.

Graduating from  
High School Ready  
for College and Career



National MBK Milestone

**4.**

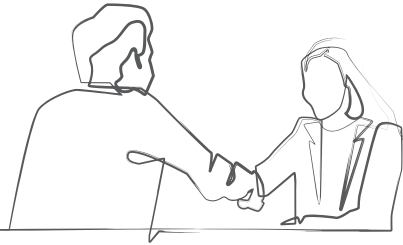
**Completing Postsecondary Education or Training**



National MBK Milestone

**5.**

**Successfully Entering the Workforce**



National MBK Milestone

**6.**

**Reducing Violence and Providing Second Chances**



**Across these milestones, **MBK Houston** will focus on:**

**Community Partnerships:**

Collaborating with families, schools, nonprofits, employers, and public agencies

**Inclusive Engagement:**

Lift up the voices and lived experiences of youth, parents, and community leaders

**Data and Accountability:**

Using evidence to inform action and measure progress

**Sustained Investment:**

Securing resources to drive long-term change



# The Need & Cross-Cutting Strategies

National MBK Milestone

**1.**

**Entering School  
Ready to Learn**



**Recommendation 1.1**

Helping Kids Get Ready for School  
the Same Way Everywhere

**Recommendation 1.2**

Lifting Up Parents as Leaders &  
Spreading the Word

**Recommendation 1.3**

Supporting Expectant Moms Before  
Baby Arrives

National MBK Milestone

**2.**

**Reading at Grade  
Level by Third Grade**



**Recommendation 2.1**

Integrate Early Literacy into Public  
Health Services

**Recommendation 2.2**

Expand Access to Literacy Tools &  
Strengthen Library to School to Home  
Connections

**Recommendation 2.3**

Launch Community-Based Reading  
Engagement Programs

National MBK Milestone

**3.**

**Graduating from  
High School Ready  
for College and Career**



**Recommendation 3.1**

Strengthen Supports and College  
& Career Exposure for All Youth

**Recommendation 3.2**

Mobilize Family & Community  
Support Systems

**Recommendation 3.3**

Reengage Disconnected Youth and  
Provide Comprehensive Support

**National MBK Milestone**

**4.**

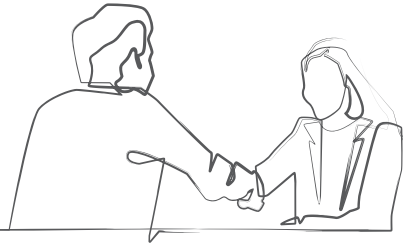
**Completing Postsecondary Education or Training**



**National MBK Milestone**

**5.**

**Successfully Entering the Workforce**



**National MBK Milestone**

**6.**

**Reducing Violence and Providing Second Chances**



**Recommendation 4.1**

Increase Postsecondary Preparation Access, Financial Aid Literacy, and Advising

**Recommendation 4.2**

Optimize Career and Technical Education (CTE) Pathways Aligned to Growing Industries

**Recommendation 4.3**

Improve Mentoring and Life Skills Support for First-Year College and Training Students

**Recommendation 5.1**

Workforce Development Resource Hub

**Recommendation 5.2**

Community-Based Organization Led Skills Development & Mentorship

**Recommendation 5.3**

Career Counseling, Search Support & Fairs

**Recommendation 6.1**

Leverage Youth Voice for Community-Based Violence Prevention

**Recommendation 6.2**

Expand Trauma-Informed School-Based Mentorship & Conflict Resolution

**Recommendation 6.3**

Establish a Youth Re-Engagement & Re-Entry Partnership Network

**MBK Houston belongs to all of us.**

Whether you are a parent, educator, policymaker, business leader, youth advocate, or caring neighbor, your perspective and participation matter.

No single organization or program alone can transform the systems that shape young people's lives. True change happens when we work together, align our efforts, and stay focused on what matters most: helping every young person feel safe, supported, and inspired.


# Our Community Focus

&

# Call to Action

**This plan is both a roadmap and an invitation.**

An invitation to imagine what's possible when we put youth at the center of everything we do and to commit ourselves to creating a future where every young person in Houston has the opportunity to thrive.



**Join us!**  
**Your engagement, leadership,**  
**and partnership will help bring**  
**this vision to life.**

MBK Director & RISE College Support Program Student engage in conversation at the winter break celebration session.



RISE Scholarship recipients receive recognition and acknowledgement by MBK Houston, the Houston Health Foundation leadership, City of Houston, and sponsor of the scholarship Freeport LNG leadership.

# Local Action Plan Summary

Led by the Houston Health Department (HHD), the MBK Houston Local Action Plan is a culmination of strategic partnerships across the public, private, and community sectors. Each milestone has been assigned to a milestone lead (a strategic partner or group) who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of recommendations, data collection, and management of talent and resources provided by their respective working groups. To build strategic alignment across all milestones, milestone leads have identified milestone targets based on the 2024 MBK Houston Preliminary Data Report, U.S Department of Health and Human Services' Healthy People 2030 Leading Health Indicators (LHI) and Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Domains. See the Appendix for more information.





RISE Scholarship recipients receive recognition and acknowledgement by MBK Houston, the Houston Health Foundation leadership, City of Houston, and sponsor of the scholarship Freeport LNG leadership.

## Progress Monitoring and Evaluation

This Local Action Plan will be data-driven and focused on consistent evaluation to ensure that MBK Houston's collective action is delivering results for boys and young men of color and, in turn, improving the lived experiences of families, communities, and the City of Houston at large. MBK Houston and HHD's Data Services Team are responsible for overall data management and oversight. Milestone leads and their working group partners are responsible for quarterly reports to help the data management team monitor progress on outcomes, SDOH domains, and Healthy People 2030 indicators. Progress monitoring and evaluation updates will be shared with the public biannually through the MBK Houston website, community reports, and MBK Houston Steering Committee meetings.

Each milestone will include the following sections:

- > **National MBK Milestone**
- > **Background**
- > **Our Approach**
- > **Key Strategies**
- > **Desired Outcomes by 2030**

# 1. Entering School Ready to Learn

*In partnership with The Basics Houston*

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## **Background**

We believe every child in Houston deserves a strong start. From prenatal care and developmental screening to early learning and family engagement, schools, clinics, nonprofits, and community centers are already partnering to support young families. By weaving together health, education, and culturally responsive services, we ensure every child steps into kindergarten ready to learn and grow.

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## **Our Approach**

### **Building Strong Foundations through Early Learning, Family Engagement, and Health Integration**

Our prevention-and-empowerment framework begins in pregnancy and continues through the early years of life. By equipping families, caregivers, educators, and community leaders with one shared readiness checklist and culturally grounded supports, we shift life trajectories, especially in underserved neighborhoods.

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## **Key Strategies**

1. Collaborate with providers and families on one clear set of kindergarten benchmarks.
2. Host storytelling circles, peer-mentoring, and community-led workshops that honor local traditions.
3. Offer developmental screenings and follow-up activities at clinics, libraries, and neighborhood hubs.

## Desired Outcomes by 2030

**15%**

increase in kindergarten readiness in MBK  
priority areas

**75%**

of children in MBK-affiliated programs  
demonstrate age-appropriate  
development

**1,000**

families are engaged annually through  
community events

**60%**

of participating families report increased  
literacy engagement and parenting  
confidence

**60%**

of pregnant clients in priority zip  
codes receive at least one early  
literacy intervention

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## Why These Targets Matter

### **Advances Equity Through Early**

**Investment:** Milestone 1 targets are rooted in data and community insight. They aim to close opportunity gaps in early education, health, and family support, especially in historically underserved neighborhoods.

### **Strengthens the Ecosystem Around**

**Children:** These targets intend to enhance caregiver confidence, family resilience, and community capacity, fostering a supportive environment that promotes healthy development and school readiness.

### **Drives Measurable, Long-Term**

**Impact:** These efforts will ensure that Houston's youngest residents are equipped to thrive academically and developmentally, reinforcing the public health and equity goals of the MBK Houston initiative (reducing disparities, building resilience, and driving long-term impact).



## Recommendation 1.1

# Helping Kids Get Ready for School the Same Way Everywhere

### OUTCOMES

**15%** increase in kindergarten readiness in MBK priority areas

**75%** of children in MBK-affiliated programs demonstrate age-appropriate development

### DELIVERABLES THAT HELP GET US TO OUR OUTCOME

**1. Stakeholder Alignment & Indicator Development:** Convene a cross-sector workgroup of early childhood educators, pediatricians, public health professionals, and community leaders to develop a unified set of school-readiness indicators across core domains.

**2. Creation of a Readiness Assessment Toolkit:** Design and pilot a school readiness toolkit with early childhood providers that includes screening tools, observational checklists, family engagement materials, and culturally responsive implementation guides.

**3. Data Collection & Integration:** Develop a shared data infrastructure for partner organizations to track school-readiness metrics while protecting family privacy. Align these data-reporting systems to identify trends, gaps, and early learning needs across MBK Houston neighborhoods.

**4. Family & Provider Engagement:** Distribute family-friendly versions of the readiness indicators to empower parents and caregivers as partners in early learning. Offer professional development for educators and pediatric providers on interpreting and applying data for instruction and referrals.



## Recommendation 1.2

# Lifting Up Parents as Leaders & Spreading the Word

### OUTCOMES

**1,000** families are engaged annually through community events

**60%** of participating families report increased literacy engagement and parenting confidence

### DELIVERABLES THAT HELP GET US TO OUR OUTCOME

**1. Family Nature Festival (Starting Year 2):** Host an annual family nature festival that features interactive learning stations, resource navigation support, nature-based play, and wellness booths to raise awareness of early brain development and foster connections to early childhood programs.

**2. Brain Builders\* Alumni Peer Mentor Program:** Recruit and train at least 10 Brain Builders alumni annually to serve as peer mentors and co-facilitators, and match them with new or expecting mothers.

**3. Storytelling and Awareness Campaigns:** Launch a multilingual public awareness campaign highlighting the lived experiences of Basics and Brain Builders participants. Promote the campaign through barbershops, churches, clinics, and WIC offices.

**4. Community Leadership Development Workshops:** Offer quarterly caregiver-led workshops on topics such as advocacy, mental health, early literacy, and civic engagement. Provide small stipends, child care, and meals to reduce participation barriers and promote sustained involvement.

\* Brain Builders is a support program that empowers mothers with brain-science based tools to support early childhood development in their babies.

## Recommendation 1.3

# Supporting Expectant Moms Before Baby Arrives

### OUTCOMES

**60%** of pregnant clients in priority zip codes receive at least one early literacy intervention

### DELIVERABLES THAT HELP GET US TO OUR OUTCOME

**1. Integrated Prenatal Mental Health & Parenting:** Embed mental health check-ins, wellness activities, and culturally responsive referrals into prenatal workshops. Integrate Basics tools, parenting education, and on-site support in Prepare for Baby events.

**2. Culturally Tailored Outreach and Community Partnerships:** Launch inclusive prenatal outreach campaigns and partner with trusted community figures such as doulas, midwives, and faith-based leaders to amplify Basics prenatal resources and increase community trust.

**3. Community Engagement and Resource Navigation:** Build a referral system linked to neighborhood clinics, WIC sites, and social service hubs that connects families with early intervention services and parenting support.

# 2. Reading at Grade Level by Third Grade

*In partnership with the Houston Public Library  
& the Houston Health Department*

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## **Background**

We believe literacy is the foundation of lifelong learning and vital to every child's mental, emotional, and social development. Our commitment is to ensure that all children in Houston read at or above grade level by the end of third grade—a pivotal milestone for academic achievement, future career pathways, and the overall health of our communities. Through equitable access to books, free literacy resources, early health education, and culturally responsive, family-centered programming, we empower parents and caregivers to serve as active partners in their children's learning journey.

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## **Our Approach**

### **Creating a Culture of Literacy Through Libraries, Health Systems, and Community Partnerships**

Integrating literacy into public health, education, and community systems helps build a cohesive ecosystem that supports reading from birth through the early elementary years. By intentionally focusing on key transition points, we are establishing coordinated systems of support that engage families, reinforce learning, and promote early brain development.

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## **Key Strategies**

1. Early interventions in maternal and child health clinics
2. Access to books and family literacy resources in homes
3. Community-based reading programs that build skills and confidence

## Desired Outcomes by 2030

**90%**

of maternal and child health touchpoints are embedded with early literacy promotion

**5,000**

literacy interventions delivered, including book distributions and developmental milestone checklists

**85%**

of MBK partners will implement at least one literacy activity with Houston Public Library

**60%**

of families report reading at home ≥4 times/week and maintaining a home library of 10+ books

**1,000**

K-3 students from MBK priority areas participate in literacy programs

**70%**

of participants demonstrate improved reading confidence, fluency, or frequency

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## Why These Targets Matter

### Lays the Foundation for Lifelong

**Success:** Early literacy initiatives, such as embedding literacy in health care and expanding access to books, equip children with the skills they need to succeed academically and beyond.

### Empowers Families as Educational

**Partners:** These efforts strengthen families' confidence and capacity to actively support their child's learning, fostering greater engagement and agency.

### Builds Resilient, Literacy-Rich

**Communities:** By treating early literacy as a public health priority, Milestone 2 strengthens community systems and creates lasting, citywide impact on child development and well-being.

## Recommendation 2.1

# Integrate Early Literacy into Public Health Services

### OUTCOMES

**90%** of maternal and child health touchpoints are embedded with early literacy promotion

**5,000** literacy interventions delivered, including book distributions and developmental milestone checklists

### DELIVERABLES THAT HELP GET US TO OUR OUTCOME

- 1. Early Literacy Integration in Health Visits:** Incorporate early literacy promotion into maternal and child health visits (e.g., WIC, immunization clinics).
- 2. Practitioner Training:** Train community health workers and clinic staff to promote brain development and reading milestones during routine family interactions.
- 3. Mobile Literacy Kit Distribution:** Partner with mobile health units and clinics to distribute age-appropriate books and literacy kits in underserved areas.
- 4. Public Health Literacy Toolkit Development:** Develop a public health literacy toolkit with multilingual messaging and culturally relevant materials.

## Recommendation 2.2

# Expand Access to Literacy Tools & Strengthen Library to School to Home Connections

### OUTCOMES

**85%** of MBK partners will implement at least one literacy activity with Houston Public Library

**60%** of families report reading at home  $\geq 4$  times/week and maintaining a home library of 10+ books

### DELIVERABLES THAT HELP GET US TO OUR OUTCOME

- 1. Library Card Campaigns:** Launch library card sign-up campaigns in high-need schools and community centers to expand access to free digital and print resources.
- 2. Family Literacy Kit Distribution:** Distribute literacy kits to families that include age-appropriate books, phonics games, culturally responsive materials, and caregiver activity guides.
- 3. Caregiver Confidence Workshops:** Host quarterly caregiver workshops at libraries, clinics, and schools to build caregiver confidence in supporting reading at home
- 4. Public-Facing Resource Portal:** Develop and promote a public-facing online portal with downloadable reading resources, multilingual literacy tools, and tutorial videos.
- 5. Home Library-Building Initiatives:** Provide free book giveaways at all MBK reading campaigns and integrate home library-building initiatives through Family Place Libraries and Little Free Libraries.

## Recommendation 2.3

# Launch Community-Based Reading Engagement Programs

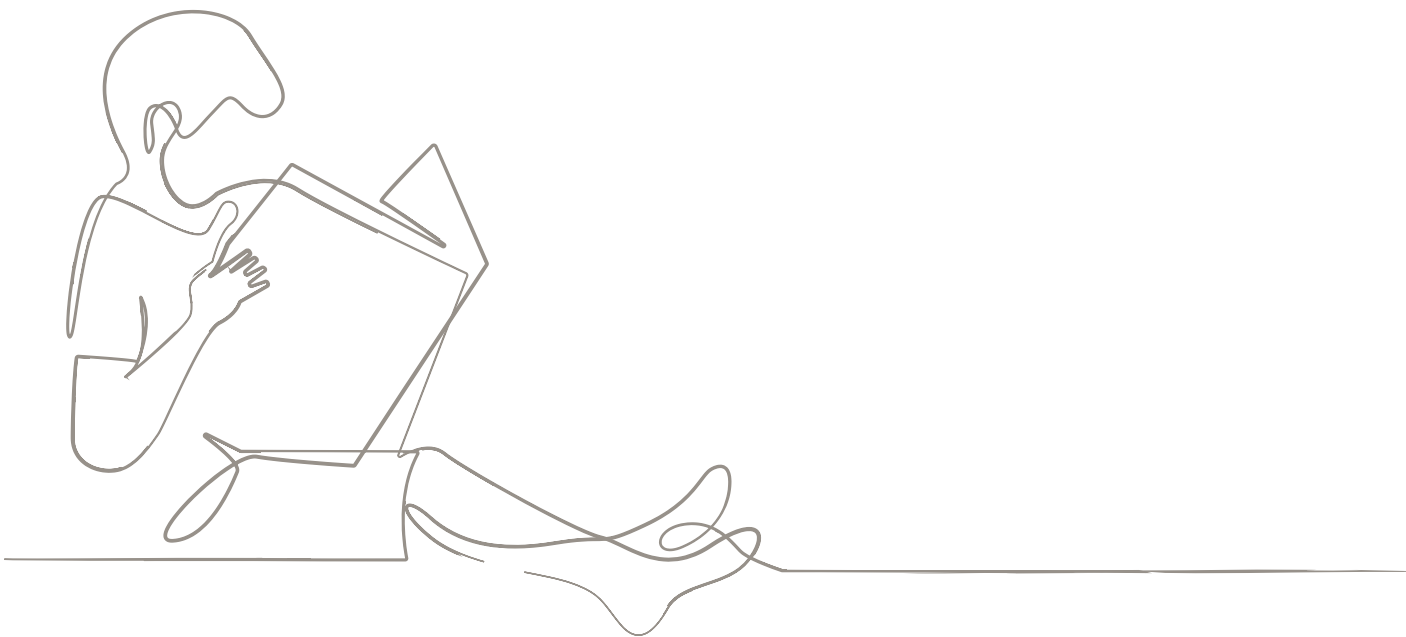
### OUTCOMES

**1,000** K-3 students from MBK priority areas participate in literacy programs

**70%** of participants demonstrate improved reading confidence, fluency, or frequency

### DELIVERABLES THAT HELP GET US TO OUR OUTCOME

- 1. Reading Buddies Program:** Develop and launch a Reading Buddies Program by Summer 2026, pairing high school mentors with elementary students (1st–5th grade) at Houston Public Library branches.
- 2. Family Reading Pledge:** Establish Family Reading Nights and Literacy Workshops at library branches and partner schools, and incorporate the Family Reading Pledge as a badge in seasonal reading challenges.
- 3. Early Phonemic Awareness:** Early language and phonemic awareness development through sound awareness toolkits.
- 4. Reading Sensory Barrier Removal:** Distribute sensory supports (e.g., noise-canceling headphones, fidget tools, lap blankets) to improve reading comfort and focus.
- 5. Culturally-Responsive Literacy Programming:** Develop and distribute culturally-responsive literacy programming.



# 3. Graduating from High School Ready for College and Career

*In partnership with the Harris County Resources for Children and Adults & the Houston Health Department*

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## **Background**

We believe that when young people are affirmed, supported, and empowered, they not only transform their own lives but also strengthen and uplift entire communities. This transformation begins by ensuring that every young person in Houston, regardless of circumstance, has the opportunity to define their own path, access essential resources, and shape a future of their choosing. This is a pivotal moment for structural change and a shared commitment to invest in the next generation of compassionate, capable, and confident leaders.

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## **Our Approach**

### **Promoting Equity and Academic Readiness through Community Health and Systemic Support**

Evidence-based strategies are key to creating lasting and transformative outcomes for youth across Houston and Harris County. By fostering self-worth, resilience, and a sense of belonging, we equip young people to succeed in school, work, and life, leading to meaningful change in their communities.

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## **Key Strategies**

1. Affirm personal identity
2. Promote healing from systemic inequities
3. Cultivate individual agency and purpose

## Desired Outcomes by 2030

**80%**

of MBK-engaged youth will be on track during key academic transitions (5th–6th, 8th–9th, and 10th grade), using metrics such as credit attainment, course pass rates, and attendance

**75%**

of MBK programs will provide annual college or career exposure opportunities

**80%**

of MBK youth receiving support from Community Youth Services (CYS) show a 25% reduction in chronic absenteeism or disciplinary referrals

**85%**

of caregivers report increased ability to advocate for their child's education and understand academic milestones

**60%**

of disconnected youth reengaged through MBK and CYS demonstrate school persistence (consistent attendance or re-enrollment) within 12 months

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## Why These Targets Matter

### Strengthens Houston's Future

**Workforce:** Preparing students for postsecondary success cultivates a skilled, motivated, and diverse talent pipeline aligned with the city's evolving economic needs.

### Expands Community-Wide

**Impact:** Investing in student outcomes enhances family stability, neighborhood vitality, and local economic growth, generating lasting benefits across the region.

### Demonstrates Shared Values in Action:

This work demonstrates that Houston and Harris County are committed to empowerment, access, inclusion, and long-term, positive change.



## Recommendation 3.1

# Strengthen Supports and College & Career Exposure for All Youth

### OUTCOMES

**80%** of MBK-engaged youth will be on track during key academic transitions (5th–6th, 8th–9th, and 10th grade), using metrics such as credit attainment, course pass rates, and attendance

**75%** of MBK programs will provide annual college or career exposure opportunities

### DELIVERABLES THAT HELP GET US TO OUR OUTCOME

- 1. Life Skills & Leadership Development Programs:** Partner with schools and community organizations to deliver culturally responsive leadership and resilience-building programs across grade levels.
- 2. Early College & Career Readiness Exposure Starting in Middle School:** Collaborate with school districts and postsecondary partners to host career fairs, industry site visits, and early college programs (e.g., dual credit, certifications).
- 3. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Mentoring Models in Schools:** Implement group mentoring and SEL frameworks that support healthy decision making and emotional regulation.
- 4. Youth Entrepreneurship Programs:** Programs will prioritize culturally relevant models of entrepreneurship and support pathways to self-employment and innovation.



Recommendation 3.2

Mobilize Family & Community Support Systems

OUTCOMES

80% of MBK youth receiving support from Community Youth Services (CYS) show a 25% reduction in chronic absenteeism or disciplinary referrals

85% of caregivers report increased ability to advocate for their child’s education and understand academic milestones

DELIVERABLES THAT HELP GET US TO OUR OUTCOME

- 1. **Emergency and Basic Needs Assistance Delivery:** Provide direct support (food, housing referrals, emergency clothing/supplies) to stabilize students and families in crisis.
- 2. **Family Empowerment & Navigation Resource Development:** Launch family support sites offering workshops, referrals, and advocacy services rooted in cultural humility and local relevance.
- 3. **Cross-Sector System Alignment Around Student Needs:** Convene public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders to build shared strategies addressing social determinants of education success.

Recommendation 3.3

Reengage Disconnected Youth and Provide Comprehensive Support

OUTCOMES

75% of disconnected youth reengaged through MBK and CYS demonstrate school persistence (consistent attendance or re-enrollment) within 12 months

DELIVERABLES THAT HELP GET US TO OUR OUTCOME

- 1. **Integrated Student Reengagement and Support Teams:** Establish multidisciplinary teams made up of educators, counselors, social workers, and community partners to identify and reengage students who are chronically absent, withdrawn, or experiencing crises at home.
- 2. **Access to Mental Health and Trauma-Informed Services:** Provide direct referrals and connections to licensed mental health professionals, trauma-informed counseling, and crisis intervention services for students and families in need.
- 3. **Wraparound Case Management and Family Stabilization Plans:** Implement individualized case plans that include home visits, resource navigation, and referrals to services addressing domestic violence, substance abuse, housing instability, or child welfare concerns.

# 4. Complete Post-Secondary Education or Training

*In partnership with the Social Justice Learning Institute*

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## **Background**

We believe that education is a key driver of equity, opportunity, and long-term success, particularly for first-generation and low-income students. Historically, barriers such as college affordability, lack of guidance, and life responsibilities have contributed to low completion rates for these students. We know that postsecondary success begins with strong aspirations and early preparation. When institutions work together to increase access, reduce barriers, and connect education to meaningful employment, we improve outcomes not just for individuals but for the entire city. Cities that invest in degree and credential attainment become more competitive, attract families and businesses, and foster economic mobility for future generations.

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## **Our Approach**

### **Building Sustainable Futures Through Equity, Access, and Persistence**

We work to align cross-sector partners, including K-12 systems, higher education institutions, and community-based organizations, to close opportunity and information gaps. Through intentional coordination, we embed navigation, accountability, and wraparound services at key academic transitions, ensuring students not only start but finish their postsecondary journeys.

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## **Key Strategies**

1. Providing sustained support and culturally relevant mentorship
2. Aligning cross-sector partnerships
3. Embedding navigation and wraparound services at academic transitions

## Desired Outcomes by 2030

**1,000**

students and caregivers participate in college prep programming

**5,000**

College & Career Readiness toolkits distributed with ongoing user feedback

**500**

youth enrolled in career and technical education or workforce development, with 70% achieving program alignment or completion

**1,000**

first-year students connected to mentoring or life skills programs

**65%**

of first-year students attend at least two engagements; 50% complete check-ins or assessments

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## Why These Targets Matter

### **Transforms Student Trajectories:**

Outcomes like persistence, credential completion, and career transitions open pathways to economic mobility, personal agency, and purposeful futures for young people.

### **Advances Family and Generational**

**Progress:** Postsecondary success fulfills long-held aspirations, creating new opportunities for families and laying the foundation for sustained upward mobility.

### **Strengthens Communities and**

**Drives Equity:** When young people succeed in postsecondary pathways, they contribute to stronger local economies, help close health and opportunity gaps, and return as leaders to invest in the communities that shaped them.

Recommendation 4.1

Increase Postsecondary Preparation Access, Financial Aid Literacy, and Advising

OUTCOMES

- 1,000 students and caregivers participate in college prep programming
- 5,000 College & Career Readiness toolkits distributed with ongoing user feedback

DELIVERABLES THAT HELP GET US TO OUR OUTCOME

- 1. **Landscape Gap Analysis:** Baseline assessment of Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completions, student-to-counselor ratios, and provision of in-school college entrance preparatory courses.
- 2. **Landscape Intervention Strategy:** Formulate a detailed document to enhance FAFSA completions, increase the presence of college counselors, and improve college prep course success.
- 3. **Intervention Strategy Measurement:** A dashboard to track key performance indicators and establish partnerships to ensure effective delivery of FAFSA assistance, college counseling, and preparatory support.

Recommendation 4.2

Optimize Career and Technical Education (CTE) Pathways Aligned to Growing Industries

OUTCOMES

- 500 youth enrolled in CTE or workforce development, with 70% achieving program alignment or completion

DELIVERABLES THAT HELP GET US TO OUR OUTCOME

- 1. **Intentional Connections to Industries:** Develop a comprehensive mapping that aligns existing CTE programs with the demands and opportunities in local growth industries, including internships and apprenticeships.
- 2. **Focused Recruitment Strategies:** Develop targeted recruitment CTE strategies for young men of color, with emphasis on making the appeal of CTE to the idea of making money and supporting family.
- 3. **Key Outcome Measurement:** Develop a dashboard of key outcome measures for connections to jobs.

## Recommendation 4.3

# Improve Mentoring and Life Skills Support for First-Year College and Training Students

### OUTCOMES

**1,000** first-year students connected to mentoring or life skills programs

**65%** of first-year students attend at least two engagements; 50% complete check-ins or assessments

### DELIVERABLES THAT HELP GET US TO OUR OUTCOME

- 1. Mentoring Program Landscape Analysis:** Build a detailed list of current and future programs that teach life skills and provide mentoring. Note which areas need more help, which programs work well, and where we can expand.
- 2. Mentor Resource Guide:** Create a guide based on what works best in mentoring and support from examples in schools and workplaces. This guide will help improve and set up new programs.
- 3. Sustainable Program Measurement:** Set up a system to keep these programs running well over time. This system will bring different groups together to work on this goal and use a special dashboard to keep track of how well the programs are doing.



# 5. Successfully Entering the Workforce

*In partnership with the Social Justice Learning Institute, Dwyer Workforce Development, & Workforce Solutions*

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## **Background**

We believe every young person in Houston deserves equitable access to opportunity. Workforce development is not just about jobs. It's about restoring dignity, fostering agency, and enabling youth to build generational wealth. The pathway towards a sustainable future demands addressing the structural drivers that impact economic stability, education access, and social support systems.

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## **Our Approach**

### **A Holistic Workforce Development Approach Grounded in Public Health and Equity**

This work addresses both the immediate barriers and systemic inequities faced by disconnected youth. By integrating wraparound supports, mentorship, and culturally relevant career pathways—anchored by a citywide Workforce Development Resource Hub and CBO-led training—we are building conditions for lasting economic mobility.

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## **Key Strategies**

1. Integrated wraparound support for career pathways
2. Development of a citywide Workforce Development Resource Hub
3. Community-based skills training and access expansion

## Desired Outcomes by 2030

### Develop a citywide hub

that provides youth with access to job readiness tools, employment pathways, and real-time wraparound service availability

# 85%

of youth complete job readiness workshops  
(covering soft skills, digital literacy, and  
industry alignment)

# 75%

of MBK youth in workforce programs  
will be referred to at least one  
wraparound service

# 100%

of workforce partners utilize  
a shared tracking system for service  
coordination

# 1,000

youth reached cumulatively through  
annual career readiness workshops

# 65%

matched with mentors for  
at least 3 months

# 70%

of participants show measurable gains  
in job readiness 70% of participants  
receive personalized career planning

# 80%

of career fair attendees complete  
a follow-up action (e.g., job interview,  
training application)

## Why These Targets Matter

### Advances Equity Through Actionable

**Support:** Our targets prioritize real access to wraparound services, job readiness programs, and personalized career guidance, responding to the urgent needs expressed by young people and grounded in their lived experiences.

### Drives Long-Term Health and

**Economic Stability:** By equipping youth with the tools for meaningful employment, we strengthen their well-being, increase future earning potential, and create clear pathways to economic mobility.

### Builds Generational and Community

**Resilience:** These measurable goals reduce economic inequities, expand social connections, and reinforce the idea that employment is not just about income but about lasting transformation for families and communities.



## Recommendation 5.1

# Workforce Development Resource Hub

### OUTCOMES

**Develop a citywide hub** that provides youth with access to job readiness tools, employment pathways, and real-time wraparound service availability

**75%** of MBK youth in workforce programs will be referred to at least one wraparound service

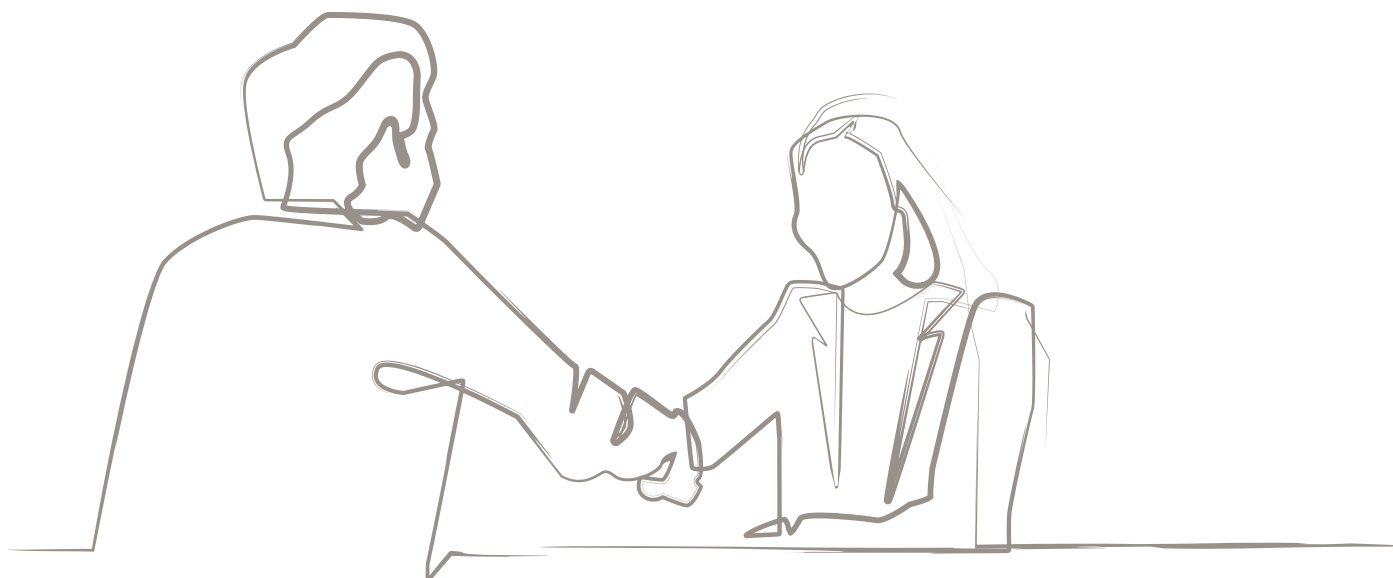
**100%** of workforce partners utilize a shared tracking system for service coordination

### DELIVERABLES THAT HELP GET US TO OUR OUTCOME

**1. Citywide Workforce Resource Inventory:** The creation of a comprehensive map of Houston's youth-focused training, employment, and mentorship programs.

**2. Resource Utilization Tracking & Expansion System:** Develop a shared system to track usage, identify gaps, and expand access to high-impact workforce resources.

**3. Analysis of Wraparound Services in Workforce Success:** Evaluate how supports like housing, transportation, and childcare influence youth employment outcomes.



## Recommendation 5.2

# Community-Based Organization (CBO) Led Skills Development & Mentorship

### OUTCOMES

**85%** of youth complete job readiness workshops (covering soft skills, digital literacy, and industry alignment)

**65%** matched with mentors for at least 3 months

**70%** of participants show measurable gains in job readiness

### DELIVERABLES THAT HELP GET US TO OUR OUTCOME

**1. Develop Skills Assessment & Development Framework:** The creation of a tool to identify, track, and grow essential skills for youth success in high-demand careers.

**2. Create Coordinated Skills Workshop Series:** Develop a unified set of workshops led by partners to build youth readiness in communication, tech, and career navigation.

**3. Provide Structured Mentorship & Career Placement System:** Lead a partner driven pathway that connects youth to mentors, internships, and job opportunities with lasting impact.

## Recommendation 5.3

# Career Counseling, Search Support & Fairs

### OUTCOMES

**70%** of participants receive personalized career planning

**1,000 youth** reached cumulatively through annual career readiness workshops

**80%** of career fair attendees complete a follow-up action (e.g., job interview, training application)

### DELIVERABLES THAT HELP GET US TO OUR OUTCOME

**1. Formalized CBO Workforce Service Agreements:** Develop Partnership agreements to align services, expectations, and outcomes across community-based organizations.

**2. Quarterly Career Readiness Workshops:** The Facilitation of regular sessions focused on resume building, interview prep, and essential job skills for youth.

**3. Individualized Career Counseling & Job Search Support:** Provide one-on-one guidance to help youth explore careers, build plans, and access real-time job opportunities.

**4. Semi-Annual Resource & Networking Fairs:** The creation of events connecting youth to employers, training providers, and support services across the city.

# 6. All Youth Remain Safe from Violent Crime

*In partnership with the Harris County District Attorney's  
Office & the Houston Health Department*

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## **Background**

We believe that meaningful change is possible when we come together with purpose, compassion, and determination. We have a shared commitment to service, whether through empowering underserved communities, advancing equity, or innovation for the greater good. Justice-impacted youth deserve more than just second chances. They deserve systems that recognize their potential, respond to their realities, and actively work to reduce harm. We recognize that healing, stability, and opportunity, not punishment, are the cornerstones of long-term safety and community well-being.

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## **Our Approach**

### **Crime Prevention, Public Safety, and Second Chances Through a Public Health and Equity Lens**

Reducing crime and violence begins by recognizing that justice-impacted youth are not problems to be solved. They are young people filled with potential, forced to navigate crippling and highly flawed systems. Investing in second chances through mentorship, community outreach, and school-based programs can lead to safer communities for everyone.

---

## **Key Strategies**

1. Expand education, employment, and reentry support
2. Implement trauma-informed and restorative practices
3. Scale violence interruption through trusted community partnerships

## Desired Outcomes by 2030

100

high-risk youth will be engaged in MBK-led outreach campaigns

80%

of youth leaders and partners will attend biannual convenings, co-developing new events

3

schools or community hubs will host youth-led violence prevention initiatives

90%

of youth referred to Re-Direct mentors will be matched within 30 days

60%

of participants report improvement in protective factors such as stress management or peer relationships

3–5

verified partners (education, legal aid, etc.) help implement a referral protocol

75%

of youth served through re-entry referrals will be tracked for engagement at 30 and 90 days

---

## Why These Targets Matter

### **Grounded in Evidence and Lived**

**Experience:** Our targets are shaped by the real-world experiences of justice-impacted youth and supported by public health data and proven models, ensuring meaningful and measurable outcomes.

### **Promote Community Stability and**

**Systems Change:** These indicators align with national benchmarks and are designed to strengthen families, stabilize neighborhoods, and disrupt cycles of violence, poverty, and incarceration.

### **Advance a Public Health Approach to**

**Public Safety:** Our work in Milestone 6 reduces harm and establishes a scalable, healing-focused model for addressing youth violence by embedding trauma-informed, community-based, and youth-centered strategies.

## Recommendation 6.1

# Leverage Youth Voice for Community-Based Violence Prevention

### OUTCOMES

**100** high-risk youth will be engaged in MBK-led outreach campaigns

**80%** of youth leaders and partners will attend biannual convenings, co-developing new events.

**3** schools or community hubs will host youth-led violence prevention initiatives

### DELIVERABLES THAT HELP GET US TO OUR OUTCOME

**1. Community-Based-Violence Program Campaigns:** Increase awareness of and participation in the existing community-based violence prevention programs targeting at-risk youth.

**2. Community Mentors and Credible Messengers:** Recruit and train community mentors who can serve as positive role models and provide guidance to youth at risk of engaging in violent behavior.

**3. Conflict Resolution Workshops:** Facilitate conflict resolution workshops in schools, community centers, and after-school programs to teach youth nonviolent conflict management techniques.

**4. Co-Facilitated Conversations on Safety:** Engage local law enforcement, community leaders, and youth organizations in creating safe spaces for dialogue on violence prevention.



## Recommendation 6.2

# Expand Trauma-Informed School-Based Mentorship & Conflict Resolution

### OUTCOMES

**90%** of youth referred to Re-Direct mentors will be matched within 30 days

**60%** of participants report improvement in protective factors such as stress management or peer relationships

### DELIVERABLES THAT HELP GET US TO OUR OUTCOME

**1. Increased Educational Pathways for Justice-Involved Youth:** Establish partnerships with local community colleges, vocational schools, and online learning platforms to provide educational opportunities for youth who have had contact with the justice system.

**2. Early Intervention and Redirection:** Launch reentry liaisons or school-based mentors to help youth navigate school systems post-detention.

**3. Reentry Support and Placement:** Provide mentorship and wraparound services to youth who have been in contact with the justice system to guide them through reentry into society and school.

**4. Flexible Credential Attainment:** Expand access to flexible GED and diploma-granting programs tailored for youth who face reentry challenges.

**5. Connection to Legal Services:** Facilitate access to legal aid and advocacy to ensure that youth and their families understand their rights and opportunities for second chances.

**6. Mindfulness and Stress-Management Strategies:** Provide safe spaces where youth can discuss their challenges and learn coping mechanisms, mindfulness, and stress management techniques.

## Recommendation 6.3

# Establish a Youth Re-Engagement & Re-Entry Partnership Network

### OUTCOMES

**3-5** verified partners (education, legal aid, etc.) help implement a referral protocol

**75%** of youth served through re-entry referrals will be tracked for engagement at 30 and 90 days

### DELIVERABLES THAT HELP GET US TO OUR OUTCOME

**1. Restorative Justice Practices:** Collaborate with local schools and justice systems to introduce restorative justice practices, focusing on repairing harm, rebuilding relationships, and reintegrating youth into the community after an offense.

**2. Expansive Mental Health Services:** Increase access to mental health services for youth involved in violence or the justice system, providing therapy, counseling, and trauma recovery programs.

**3. Restorative Justice facilitation:** Train youth and adult residents in restorative justice facilitation and conflict transformation.



MBK Houston celebrates the Social Justice Learning Institute's Urban Scholars program 2025 High School Graduates.





MBK Houston students attend a corporate site visit through partner CareerSpring, learning about the energy sector in Houston and received guaranteed internship interviews.



# Together, We Can Transform What's Possible

The milestones, strategies, and recommendations outlined in this Local Action Plan are more than aspirations, they are our shared commitment to building a Houston where every young person has the opportunity to thrive.

We know the challenges are real. Persistent disparities in education, health, safety, and economic opportunity continue to shape too many futures. But we also know that when communities come together with courage, vision, and collective resolve, transformation is possible.

My Brother's Keeper Houston began with a promise: that no young person should be limited by circumstances they did not choose. Today, that promise continues renewed, expanded, and strengthened by the thousands of voices that have contributed to this plan.

While our focus remains on closing gaps that disproportionately affect boys and young men of color, the work is bigger than any single group. This is about lifting up all of Houston's priority youth, regardless of race, neighborhood, or background and ensuring no one is left behind.

This is Your Invitation. Whether you are a policymaker, educator, parent, business leader, nonprofit partner, faith leader, young person, or simply someone who cares, you have a role to play. Together, we can:

> **Invest in proven solutions.**

Support programs and policies that create measurable, lasting impact for youth and families.

> **Champion equity and inclusion.**

Speak up for practices and systems that recognize the dignity, potential, and humanity of every young person.

> **Lift up community voices.**

Center the lived experiences of youth and families in shaping decisions that affect their futures.

> **Collaborate boldly.**

Break down silos and build cross-sector partnerships rooted in trust, accountability, and shared purpose.

> **Celebrate progress and drive accountability.**

Commit to transparent measurement, learning, and continuous improvement.



MBK Houston Director Chazz Bailey addresses young men and their families at the Smart'n Up Male Summit

## How You Can Take Action Today

### Connect.

- > Sign up for updates and explore partnership opportunities at [www.MBKHouston.com](http://www.MBKHouston.com).
- > Follow MBK Houston on social media to share resources and amplify success stories.

### Engage.

- > Join a milestone working group or volunteer as a mentor, advocate, or community ambassador.
- > Participate in upcoming events, trainings, and community conversations.

### Invest.

- > Contribute funding, expertise, or in-kind resources to help expand and sustain this work.

### Advocate.

- > Use your voice to champion policies and investments that advance equity, opportunity, and justice for all Houston youth.

**Our Collective Future Starts Here.**

This plan is a blueprint and an invitation.  
An invitation to stand together. To lead with purpose.  
To choose hope over hesitation and action over inaction.

**This is our moment.  
This is our movement.**

This is our commitment  
to every young person in Houston:

**You matter.**

**You belong.**

**Your dreams deserve our best.**



MBK Houston Director Chazz Bailey addresses MBK Houston students on finding their "why" at Wheatley High School.

# Appendix

## Milestone Action Teams

National MBK Milestone

### 1. Entering School Ready to Learn

Chair: **Robyn Kebede**  
*The Basics Houston*

National MBK Milestone

### 2. Reading at Grade Level by Third Grade

Chair: **Crystal Swimmer**  
*Houston Public Library*

Chair: **Dr. Cydnee Patterson**  
*Houston Health Department*

National MBK Milestone

### 4. Completing Postsecondary Education or Training

Chair: **Kimberly Upchurch**  
*Social Justice Learning Institute*

Chair: **Dr. Liza Alonzo**  
*University of Houston–Downtown*

National MBK Milestone

### 3. Graduating from High School Ready for College and Career

Chair: **Lequita Hamm**  
*Harris County Resources for Children and Adults*

Chair: **April Bass-Bonton**  
*Houston Health Department*

National MBK Milestone

### 5. Successfully Entering the Workforce

Chair: **Alyska Malveaux**  
*Social Justice Learning Institute*

Chair: **Anisha Thornabrar**  
*Dwyer Workforce Development*

Chair: **Stacey Camille**  
*Workforce Solutions*

National MBK Milestone

### 6. Reducing Violence and Providing Second Chances

Chair: **Tanisha Manning**  
*Harris County District Attorney's Office*

Chair: **Andetria Lockett**  
*Houston Health Department*

## 2024 MBK Houston Preliminary Data Report





# Social Determinants of Health



Source: Healthy People 2030, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Retrieved 08/17/2025, from <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health>



### Education Access & Quality

Increase educational opportunities and help children and adolescents do well in school.



### Health Care Access & Quality

Increase access to comprehensive, high-quality health care services.



### Neighborhood & Built Environment

Create neighborhoods and environments that promote health and safety.



### Social & Community Context

Increase social and community support.



### Economic Stability

Help people earn steady incomes that allow them to meet their health needs.

## Healthy People 2030 Overview

Healthy People 2030 is a data hub for measuring U.S. progress across vital public-health areas, empowering organizations and citizens to promote better health for everyone. Objectives related to MBK Milestones can be found online and filtered through various topic areas.

Source: <https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/find-objectives>

<https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/about-objectives/healthy-people-2030-objectives-and-measures>

### Healthy People 2030 Objectives and Measures

#### Vision

A society in which all people can achieve their full potential for health and well-being across the lifespan.

#### Overall Health and Well-Being Measures

Broad, global outcome measures intended to assess the Healthy People 2030 vision

#### Core Objectives

Measurable public health objectives that have 10-year targets and are associated with evidence-based interventions

#### Leading Health Indicators

A small subset of high-priority Healthy People 2030 core objectives selected to drive action toward improving health and well-being

#### Developmental Objectives

Public health issues with evidence-based interventions but lacking reliable data

#### Research Objectives

Public health issues that are not yet associated with evidence-based interventions

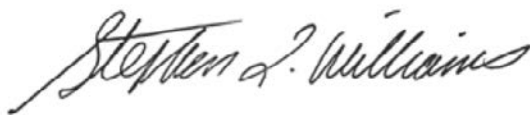
# From the Houston Health Department

As one of the original champions who helped bring the My Brother's Keeper initiative to Houston in 2014, I am proud to witness the release of the 2025 Local Action Plan. Over a decade ago, the City of Houston answered the call to meet the needs of young people in our region. The Houston Health Department specifically understood there was an opportunity to invest in this vulnerable population, eliminating barriers to access and success so they wouldn't be left behind.

Since then, My Brother's Keeper—Houston has firmly embedded itself in the city. This updated plan reflects nearly a decade of progress, partnership and persistence. It is rooted in sound public health principles to address early childhood development, educational access, workforce preparation and community safety. It has introduced a brighter future for young people across the city, one filled with opportunities to shape the life they want to lead. Through targeted action and a strong commitment to collaboration with our community partners, we have created a resource that is offsetting the challenges young people face. I am proud of how far we have come. But there is still plenty of work to do, and we are prepared to meet this challenge.

The Houston Health Department remains committed to ensuring that every child and young adult in our city has the opportunity to thrive, regardless of their background or starting point. Each of the six milestones outlined in the plan represents a key moment where public health, education and community organizations can come together to create real impact. We are proud to continue serving as the backbone agency for MBK Houston. This work is about improving the conditions in which people live, learn, work and grow. With the 2025 Local Action Plan as our guide, we remain committed to building a healthier, stronger and more resilient Houston for all.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen L. Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Stephen" being more prominent than the last name "Williams".

**Stephen L. Williams, M.Ed., M.P.A.**

*Director*

**City of Houston,  
Department of Health and Human Services**

# A Note of Gratitude

Dear Partners, Friends, and Community Champions,

On behalf of **My Brother's Keeper Houston**, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to every individual and organization that has played a role in shaping the 2025 Local Action Plan. This work would not be possible without your commitment, vision, and collaboration.

Your dedication has not only informed the recommendations and bold actions outlined in this plan but has also strengthened our collective resolve to create lasting pathways of opportunity for Houston's boys and young men of color. Each meeting, conversation, data point, and shared resource represents a step toward a more equitable and thriving Houston.

We recognize that systemic change is never the work of one person or one organization, it is the work of a committed community. Thank you for lending your time, your expertise, and your voice to this effort.

First and foremost, we'd like to extend our sincere gratitude to **Mayor John Whitmire**, **Director Stephen L. Williams** of the Houston Health Department, and **ALL City and County Officials** whose leadership and support have been instrumental to the success of this plan. We also would like to thank our **Executive Steering Committee Members** and **Milestone Chairs**, as well as every individual organization listed below, each of whom has played a vital role in shaping and advancing this work.

#### **City of Houston**

Houston Health Department, Houston Health Foundation, Houston Public Library, Department of Parks & Recreation, Mayor's Office of Education, Houston Police Department, and the Houston Housing Authority

#### **Harris County**

Harris County Resources for Children & Adults, Harris County Juvenile Probation Department, Harris County Attorney's Office, Harris County District Attorney's Office, Harris Center for Mental Health & IDD, Harris County Precinct 1, Harris County Precinct 2, and the Harris County Department of Education

#### **Community-Based Partner Organizations**

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Barbara Bush Literacy Foundation, African American Male Wellness Association, BakerRipley, Gulf Coast Community Services Association, AVANCE Houston, CareerSpring, Miles Ahead Scholars, Houston Fund for Social Justice and Economic Equity, 100 Black Men of Metropolitan Houston, Tech Fest Live, Emerging 100 Houston, The BASICS Houston, Social Justice Learning Institute, World Youth Foundation, The Parent Teacher Collaborative, US Dream Academy, and Workforce Solutions.

#### **Educational Institutions**

Alief ISD, Aldine ISD, Houston ISD, IDEA Public Schools, Texas Southern University, Prairie View A&M University, Houston Community College, Lone Star College, University of Houston, University of Houston—Downtown, and the Region IV Education Service Center

In closing, we thank each of you for believing in the vision of MBK Houston and for working alongside us to turn that vision into action. The achievements of the next five years will be a testament to the power of partnership.

With gratitude,



**Chazz Bailey**

*Project Director*

**My Brother's Keeper Houston**



**Let's build the future they deserve together.**



**[MBKHouston.com](http://MBKHouston.com)**