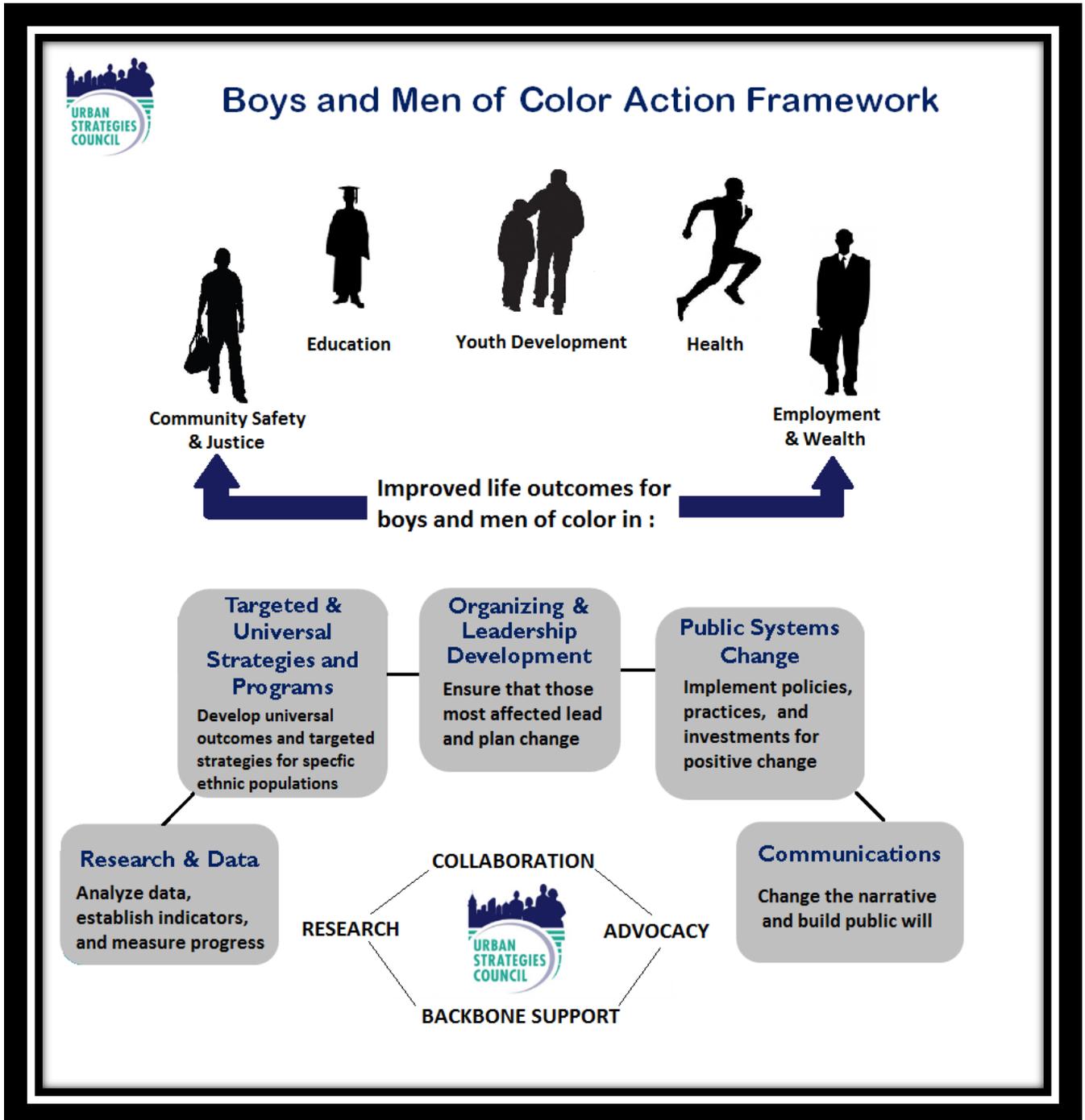


# URBAN STRATEGIES COUNCIL'S BOYS AND MEN OF COLOR (BMoC) ACTION FRAMEWORK



## Introduction

The work of Urban Strategies Council (the Council) and our partners for boys and men of color is gathering momentum locally and at the state and national levels. Our framework for this work involves bringing to bear our core competencies of research, policy, collaboration, innovation and advocacy to affect the levers of change that impact outcomes in health; education; youth development; criminal justice; and employment and wealth for boys and men of color.

To support the success of boys and men of color, the Council's work focuses on the following levers of change:

1. **Public systems change:** Advocating for development and implementation of policies, practices, programs and investments for positive change;
2. **Targeted and universal strategies and programs:** Working to develop universal and targeted outcomes and strategies for specific ethnic and gender populations;
3. **Organizing and leadership development:** Working to ensure that those most affected help to plan and lead change;
4. **Communications:** Communicating with boys and men of color, their families and supporters, and the public to change the narrative about BMoC and build public will for change;
5. **Research and data:** Conducting research to analyze data, establish indicators, and measure progress.

## Public Systems Change

At the core of creating sustainable change for current and future generations of boys and men of color is advocacy for public systems to incorporate policies, practices and investments that create positive change for boys and men of color. Education, social services, probation, health care, and police agencies serve some of our most vulnerable males of color. Working with these public systems, Urban Strategies Council seeks to foster dialogue and action among the leaders of these public systems on how best to serve boys and men of color of all ages. Equally important, the Council facilitates cross-sector community partnerships and collaboratives to create innovative and effective services for boys and men of color. Additionally, a major body of our work involves improving and supporting the data-sharing and collection practices and relationships across systems that support the coordination and effectiveness of service delivery. Lastly, we aim to introduce and create both evidenced-based and practice-based innovative policies, programs and tools that demonstrate the most effectiveness for improving outcomes for boys and men of color.

## Targeted and Universal Strategies and Programs

Part of our work to build capacity and produce results for boys and men of color is to find and uplift, or in some cases even create, innovative programs and tools that effectively serve boys and men of color. Urban Strategies Council is particularly sensitive to the need to build the capacity of community and systems partners to produce data and evaluations documenting strategy and program effectiveness for boys and men of color so that we continue to foster innovation while simultaneously promoting effectiveness within the field. Of particular importance to our approach is the concept of targeted universalism as advanced by John Powell. He argues that programs should be universal in outcomes but utilize strategies targeted to specific populations because treating people who are situated differently as if they were the same can result in even greater inequities. Targeted universalism is a critical foundation for our simultaneous focus on boys and men of color collectively and our support of initiatives directed specifically at Black, Latino, Asian Pacific Islander, or Native male achievement initiatives. Addressing the

specific needs and priorities of various ethnic/racial and gender groups is also the basis for building strong, cross-ethnic/racial alliances which are necessary for effective advocacy on behalf of improved outcomes for boys and men of color.

### **Organizing and Leadership Development**

Improving outcomes for boys and men of color will depend on the leadership efforts of males of color themselves and their ability to help envision, plan and lead the changes they want to see. Urban Strategies Council has approached our work with the lens of promoting leadership development and opportunities for males of color. The Council collaborated with local partners to develop a statement of values and principles for our collective efforts to ensure that programs, policies and practices advance an equity agenda that improves outcomes for boys and men of color. Additionally, we have focused on ways in which we can support capacity development among allies who are not males of color to promote and address issues critical to males of color.

### **Communications**

Just as important as understanding problems and implementing solutions is our ability to communicate opportunities, success and challenges to partners doing this work, as well as to unlikely allies and the public. Both national and local conversations around boys and men of color too often are rooted in a deficit framework and in negative stereotypes. The Council has collaborated with local and statewide partners with the goal of reframing and reclaiming the ways boys and men of color are represented within the media, public systems, service-providers, and communities. We also recognize the critical importance that communications strategies and tools play in building public will for the policies and programs that will make a difference for boys and men of color. Engaging and educating the media, community, and other stakeholders on issues most impacting boys and men of color and their successes will catalyze the support needed for policy and systems reform.

### **Research and Data**

Our approach to boys and men of color work is driven by the need for community and systems partners to analyze the issues, measure need, and assess the impact of interventions. From the disaggregation of data by race/ethnicity and gender to development of measurable outcomes and program performance measures, individuals and systems need accessible data to make informed program and policy decisions. While generally finding and uplifting evidenced-based strategies, Urban Strategies Council is also acutely aware of the need to create pathways and supports to develop the “practice-based evidence” from emerging, innovative strategies and programs and to bring those to scale.

### **Putting the Council’s BMoC Action Framework into Practice**

The Council staffs the Oakland-Alameda County Alliance for Boys and Men of Color and convenes a Public System Leaders’ Table composed of county, city and school district agency leaders as well as a Community Partners’ Table which includes leaders of non-profit, community-based and faith organizations.

The Alliance currently focuses on employment and workforce development as a grant recipient of Aspen Institute’s Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund (OYIF) to work with 18-24 year olds who are not in school and not employed, in obtaining stabilization services needed for high school and post-secondary education credentials leading to family sustaining, career employment in the growth sectors of the East Bay economy. The employment and workforce development efforts have provided an opportunity to focus on young adult leadership development through their inclusion on the steering committee for the OYIF initiative and the formation of a young adult leadership work group to engage them in the planning and development of programs for opportunity young adults. Our employment and workforce

development work also focuses on systems change by advocating for policy and practice changes to increase public employment of men of color as well as use of public procurement as sources of both employment and business opportunities.

The Alliance is also working to refine and expand culturally-focused manhood development programs that build the skills and resiliency of young men of color. Several partners of the Alliance have invested in programs that work directly with boys and young men of color, building their cultural assets and resiliency, reducing their risk of chronic absence and suspensions, and increasing their academic performance through culturally/ethnically-focused instructional and mentoring programs led by males of their same cultural/ethnic background. The culturally-focused manhood development initiative is designed to strengthen and expand the this model in Oakland and Alameda County through forming a learning community among providers, incorporating trauma and healing informed assessments, strengthening program curriculum and design, developing common metrics, and improving delivery and service referrals among providers.

The Council also is involved in research and data analysis regarding boys and men of color, including developing a data profile of boys and men of color in Oakland and Alameda County, research on African American Male Achievement in the Oakland Unified School District, and developing outcomes and indicators for the employment and workforce development efforts of the Alliance.

**For more information on the Council's BMoC work, contact:**

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Or visit our website at <http://www.urbanstrategies.org/bmoc>