

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

December 11, 2018

**Supporting the Obama Foundation MBK Alliance Grant Award**

The My Brother’s Keeper Community Challenge (MBK) was launched by former President Obama to support local jurisdictions interested in increasing opportunities for young persons, especially boys and young men of color. The MBK Challenge asked cities, counties and tribal governments to develop plans that would close existing educational and opportunity gaps for boys and young men of color through a cradle-to-college-and-career approach.

Los Angeles County joined the MBK Challenge in 2015, developing and implementing a set of recommendations aimed at improving the circumstances for boys and young men of color. To date, the County’s MBK Initiative has birthed the following efforts:

- **Youth Diversion & Development (YDD)** – Youth, and especially male youth, of color are disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system. A countywide, development oriented and trauma responsive pre-arrest diversion model that diverts youth to community-based alternatives to arrest or citation is

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key to reducing the harms and risks caused by disproportionate justice system contact for youth. A new unit was created, funded and staffed within the Office of Diversion and Reentry (ODR), in the Department of Health Services (DHS), to coordinate this effort. In addition to advancing a network of youth diversion providers, YDD will work to support efforts aimed at improving youth development so that youth not only have limited contact with the justice system but are able to grow and thrive.

- **County Employee Mentoring Program** – Countywide effort to encourage County employees to mentor youth through community-based mentoring programs. This program attempts to address the fact that one in three young people will grow up without a mentor. This issue is particularly acute in communities of color where high youth unemployment rates, low graduation rates, and increased violence are all too common. The Department of Human Resources has set a goal of recruiting 500 employees to become mentors. The program launch is scheduled for January 2019.
- **County Career Exposure Program** - The program provided youth with ten weeks of paid work experience/career exposure in various County departments. Over 50 youth participated in the initial cohort, and the program and its curriculum have been incorporated into the Los Angeles County Bridges Program (Bridges) facilitated by the Department of Human Resources. Bridges provides at-risk and disconnected youth with career exposure opportunities within the County and supportive services to help prepare them for future success. This will ensure that the piloted program continues and that lessons learned are used

to inform the roll-out of the more expansive Bridges Program.

In April 2018, the Obama Foundation's MBK Alliance program launched the MBK Community Challenge Competition to accelerate impact for boys and young men of color. The Challenge sought to provide strategic support and more than five million in funding to select communities nationwide to expand evidence-based initiatives that will reduce youth violence, grow effective mentorship programs, and measurably improve the lives of boys and young men of color. Lead organizations were limited to nonprofit organizations with a strong community presence and focus, and who could demonstrate an existing partnership with an MBK jurisdiction.

The Liberty Hill Foundation served as the lead organization for the Los Angeles application, in partnership with the County's MBK Initiative, the California Community Foundation, the Department of Mental Health (DMH), and the Center for Strategic Partnerships. The application highlighted much of the work taking place in the County, including the three implemented efforts discussed above.

On November 15, 2018, the Obama Foundation announced that Los Angeles was selected as one of ten Impact Communities, the highest award tier in the MBK Community Challenge Competition, and is a recipient of a grant for \$425,000. The award was recognition of Los Angeles' role as a national model to expand evidence-based initiatives that will reduce youth violence, grow effective mentorship programs, and measurably improve the lives of boys and young men of color. The two-year grant will also include opportunities for the nationwide cohort to learn together and share best practices with one another to better support young boys and men of color in all of the communities.

Understanding the importance of addressing challenges faced by boys and young men of color and the impact unresolved trauma and violence can have on their ability to navigate life, DMH will provide \$287,500 annually in County funding to match the grant funding for two years for a total of \$575,000. This funding would expand school-based interventions intended to address trauma and increase the academic achievement of boys and young men of color.

**WE THEREFORE, MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

1. Delegate authority to the Director of the Department of Health Services (DHS) which houses ODR and YDD, in consultation with the Department of Mental Health to contract with the California Community Foundation (CCF) to expand its trauma-responsive school-based interventions in support of the MBK Community Challenge grant through sub-awards to community-based providers of youth development activities. The Contract will be funded with the MBK Community Challenge grant of \$425,000 and DMH funds of up to \$575,000 for a term of two years.
2. Direct the Chief Executive Office (CEO) and ODR to review existing staff for the division of Youth Diversion and Development (YDD) and make any adjustments necessary to support this work in the FY2019-2020 budget.
3. Direct ODR's division of Youth Diversion & Development to report back in writing within 180 days on how the expansion of trauma-responsive school-based interventions is being implemented, including information on youth engagement, academic achievements and improved school climate.

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