WE DREAM A WORLD:
THE 2025 VISION FOR BLACK MEN AND BOYS
I DREAM A WORLD

I dream a world where man*
No other man will scorn,
Where love will bless the earth
And peace its paths adorn
I dream a world where all
Will know sweet freedom’s way,
Where greed no longer saps the soul
Nor avarice blights our day.
A world I dream where black or white,
Whatever race you be,
Will share the bounties of the earth
And every man is free,
Where wretchedness will hang its head
And joy, like a pearl,
Attends the needs of all mankind-
Of such I dream, my world!

- Langston Hughes

*THOUGH AHEAD OF HIS TIME ON MANY/issues, LANGSTON HUGHES DID NOT USE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE WITH REGARD TO GENDER IN THIS POEM. TO PRESERVE THE LYRICAL FLOW OF HIS PROSE, HIS WORDS HAVE NOT BEEN ALTERED.
In 2006, a group of Black thought leaders assembled in a room to consider the current condition of Black males in the United States. It was clear that something significant, sustained and effective needed to happen to change things, but exactly what was yet unclear. After a year of wrestling with myriad issues and defining the struggles imbedded in life circumstance for Black men and boys in America, the 2025 Campaign for Black Men & Boys was born. A key fact undergirding our work is in the year 2025, Black boys born in 2007 will be 18 years old. We envision for them an America that is much different than what Black men currently see and experience. We envision a nation that is whole and strong because the structural racism that impedes Black male progress would have been eliminated, where Black males can rightly take their place as a productive and thriving part of American citizenry and leaders of their communities and families.

The 2025 Campaign exists to advance a vision that extends the historic pursuit of social justice for our community. Standing on the shoulders of our ancestors’ legacy of struggle as well as our contemporary need for self-determination and community responsibility, we are determined to improve quality of life for Black men and boys.

Our vision is comprehensive. Our window of opportunity is rapidly closing. The needs of our young people are painfully urgent. This work requires an unprecedented level of collaboration, alignment of resources and clarity of message.

Achieving the policy and advocacy goals in this document by the year 2025 will only be accomplished through engaging a broad base of African Americans, working with allies and partners, and using well-targeted and sufficient resources – human, financial and spiritual. As a campaign, we intend to engage organizations and individuals, working in their own communities and political arenas, to “own” the campaign’s work. This means that our partners and affiliate local coalitions must advance the 2025 policy agenda in ways suited to local and regional contexts. That is, they must customize the policy agenda to respond to circumstances unique to the political, cultural, economic and social conditions in communities around the country. We believe that only through a thoughtful, yet urgent response in local communities can we build the momentum and unified voice capable of eradicating the root causes of economic, social and political inequities.

- Greg Hodge, Community Development Associates
Black men are vital and important members of American society, especially in their communities. Black families suffer a great loss when black men are unable to thrive. Throughout modern American history, black men have struggled to gain their footing and fulfill their destinies as strong, caring and productive members of our society and their families. The 2025 Campaign for Black Men and Boys seeks to shape a new future for black men and boys in which the social and economic realities of this country accommodate the pursuit of their dreams. The campaign strives to create conditions to enable black boys, youth and men to realize their goals and contribute greatly to their families, communities and our nation. By 2025, we dream of a world where black boys are highly educated, black men are anchored in the economic mainstream, black boys see in their fathers promising futures, and entire communities of black families are physically and emotionally healthy.

The precarious situation of our nation’s black men, youth and boys is due to a complex intersection of race, class, structural/institutional racism, and personal responsibility. Their failure to thrive ignites fiery debate and inevitably raises questions about the historical and present-day role this nation played and continues to play in perpetuating social and economic circumstances that produce undesirable life outcomes for black people, particularly black males. Meanwhile, black men, and boys don’t have the proper tools or resources to pursue their right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The time has come to get beyond debate and to implement bold solutions that focus on black men and boys.

Changing the landscape for black men, youth, and boys requires tremendous commitment from all sectors and levels of government and society. It is a commitment that is both necessary and long overdue. The 2025 Campaign for Black Men and Boys focuses its work in five key areas: education, fatherhood and families, employment and wealth, health, and criminal justice. Across all of these areas, the campaign believes that four key things need to happen:

- Evaluate and amend existing public policies to support of the needs of black males, their families and their communities.
- Support communities’ need to create sustainable, systemic solutions to address the needs of black males.
- Think differently about the manner in which programming and services are rendered and work more diligently to ensure that approaches are culturally appropriate and of high quality.
- Increase the level of investment for services and interventions that help low-income individuals and aid their implementation so these services actually reach black males.

“We Dream a World” is a call to action for America to begin strategically addressing the problems that hinder black men and boys. It lays out a comprehensive agenda of reform that, if implemented, will significantly change the life trajectory of black men and boys. This document should be used in several significant ways to turn the dream into a true vision by committing to action:

- Policy makers can use the ideas and recommendations presented in this paper to be more intentional about their consideration of the needs of black males as they deliberate about policies. Evaluate potential policies through a lens of race and gender, seeking to understand the implications of particular policies on blacks and males.
- Advocates and organizers in communities can use the ideas and recommendations presented to work for local change. Elevate leadership and communities’ consciousness and understanding. Help the community to make the connection between their direct actions and change for black men and boys.
- Direct service organizations can contemplate how their services meet the needs of black men and boys in their communities. Consider if services may be strengthened to be more effective, and identify ways to increase awareness of black male issues to leverage partnerships in the community for the betterment of black males served by your programs.
FIVE CAMPAIGN AREAS

**EDUCATION**
We dream a world where all black males receive a quality education that empowers them to be economically productive, thus able to support themselves and improve the quality of life for their families and communities. To attain this dream, we need to:

- Ensure a Quality Education Along the Educational Continuum that Provides Rigorous Curriculum, Strong Teachers, and Equitable Treatment of Students
- Serve Needs of the Whole Child through School and Community Partnerships
- Create Educational Pathways to Re-Engage Black Youth Who Have Dropped Out Of School
- Distribute Education Resources Equitably
- Support Families Engagement in the Education of Their Black Boys and Youth
- Remove Barriers to Participation in Post Secondary Educational Options for Youth and Low-Skilled Adults
- Increase The Access Rate Of Black Males To Health Services.
- Take A More Holistic Approach To Black Male Health Issues

**HEALTH**
We dream a world where all black males live in communities that support their healthful living over the life span, and where black males are able to enhance the health of future generations within their communities. To attain this dream, we need to:

- Create National And State-Level Goals For Reducing Health Disparities For Black Boys And Men.
- Develop Health Services That Address The Health Needs Of Black Men And Boys.
- Develop A Culturally Competent Medical Workforce And Practices.
- Scale Up Work Support Programs That Work
- Make Child Support and TANF More Supportive of Fathers and Fatherhood Involvement
- Open Doors for Black Men to Be Custodial Parents
- Increase Parent Support Services Targeted to Black Fathers and Their Families
- Provide Specific Supports to Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Fathers and Their Families
- Remove Racial or Cultural Bias from the Practices of Social Service Workers

**FATHERHOOD & FAMILIES**
We dream a world where all black fathers are knowledgeable, informed and prepared to make positive choices about fathering, and all black boys have relationships with either their biological fathers or a positive black male at every stage of their development. To attain this dream, we need to:

- Scale Up Work Support Programs That Work
- Make Child Support and TANF More Supportive of Fathers and Fatherhood Involvement
- Open Doors for Black Men to Be Custodial Parents
- Increase Parent Support Services Targeted to Black Fathers and Their Families
- Provide Specific Supports to Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Fathers and Their Families
- Remove Racial or Cultural Bias from the Practices of Social Service Workers
EMPLOYMENT & WEALTH
We dream a world where all black males are prepared to secure living wage employment based on their aspirations, will have equal access to careers and professions that will enhance economic wellbeing, and will have equal opportunities to accumulate wealth and assets that can be transferred to support their families and communities. To attain this dream, we need to:

• Take a Community-Wide Approach to Employment Issues for Black Males
• Create Career Pathways for Young Black Males
• Identify Black Males as a Priority Group for Funding and Services
• Adopt Policies to Eliminate Discriminatory Hiring and Employment Practices
• Create Strategies to Expand of Black Enterprise and Wealth Accumulation

JUSTICE, RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITES & OPPORTUNITIES
We dream a world where black males live free with all rights and responsibilities provided by a democratic society committed to justice, equality, due process and the pursuit of happiness, and where black men and boys are accountable and engaged with self and community. To attain this dream, we need to:

• Address Disproportionate Incarceration of Black Males
• Reform the Juvenile Justice Systems to Be Less Punitive
• Create Pathways to Successful Reentry for Youth and Adults Returning to Impoverished Communities
• Make the U.S. Justice System Better Reflect of the American Population

FIVE CAMPAIGN AREAS
The 2025 Campaign for Black Men and Boys will be a galvanizing force for a national movement to ensure our black men and boys have a brighter future. The Campaign will advocate nationally and support communities to be local advocates for the change that is needed to realize the dream of a better world for black men and boys by the year 2025.

**CAMPAIGN STRATEGIC GOALS**

- Raise the visibility of critical issues facing black men and boys nationally and in select local communities in a manner that informs substantive action and positive change.

- Develop effective strategies and effect positive change on the circumstances and conditions that negatively impact black men and boys by closing the gap on inequities.

- Foster the development of programs and systems that will positively impact the understanding, knowledge, values and skills that enable black men and boys to succeed in an American society.

- Develop and sustain partnerships and coalitions that reflect black men and boys’ needs and impact systemic change.

- Develop and steward financial resources that exist within and external to our communities by maximizing existing resources and continuously surfacing new support sources from individual donors, community organizations and institutional philanthropy to supplement this effort.

**RAISING AWARENESS TO CHANGE BEHAVIOR**

The Campaign for Black Men and Boys will work to raise public awareness about issues confronting black men and boys, promote healthy and positive images about black men and boys, share information and resources about programs, services, and support for black men and boys, support knowledge creation and dissemination around these issues, and provide a forum for black men and boys to speak for themselves. Taken collectively, these actions will begin to change institutional, individual and systemic behaviors that affect on the people we seek to serve.

**LOCAL IMPACT COALITIONS**

The 2025 Campaign for Black Men and Boys will work to develop relationships with local collaborative efforts and place-based coalitions focused on black men and boys through offering support and assistance to enhance their positive local impact.

**POLICY ADVOCACY**

The 2025 Campaign for Black Men and Boys will create an advocacy plan to influence decision makers and promote changes in policies important to improving life circumstances for black men and boys. This federally-focused agenda will also be relevant at the state and local levels, aimed at specific legislation, as well as policy, structures, and systems that impact black men and boys, both directly and indirectly.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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All 2025 Campaign materials are guided by input from the National Steering Committee. However, the views expressed in this report represent those of the author and not necessarily of any affiliated individuals or institutions.

ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

The 2025 Campaign for Black Men and Boys is a national collaborative effort of several organizations and individuals. The mission of the 2025 Campaign is to collaboratively develop and implement an initiative for the educational, social, emotional, physical, spiritual, political and economic development and empowerment of Black men and boys in the United States. The Campaign is currently housed at the Twenty-First Century Foundation (21CF), a national public foundation with a mission to advance strategic Black philanthropy aimed at having a positive impact on social and economic issues in the Black community. The Campaign's work is guided by the National Steering Committee that represents organizations and individuals working in areas of both policy and practice. As individuals, each member may or may not agree with potential policy solutions and prescriptions for action, but all believe that greater attention must be paid to understanding issues plaguing Black males in the United States.

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